

Local Development Plan Committee
15 June 2009

IRVINE, 15 June 2009 - At a Meeting of the Local Development Plan Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

John Reid, Elizabeth McLardy, Robert Barr, Tom Barr, Matthew Brown, Andrew Chamberlain, Ian Clarkson, Margie Currie, Anthea Dickson, John Ferguson, Alex Gallagher, William Gibson, Ronnie McNicol, Pat McPhee, Elisabeth Marshall, John Moffat, David Munn, Alan Munro, David O'Neill and Robert Rae.

In Attendance

R. Forrest, Planning Services Manager; M. Ferrier, Team Leader; A. Laurenson, D. Hammond, A. McNair and K. McKelvie, Planning Officers (Development Plans) and J. Miller, Chief Development Management Officer (Development Management) (Legal and Protective) and P. Shiach, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's).

Also In Attendance

A. Pollock (Consultant, RPS), R. Martin (Consultant, TPS) and J. Esslemont (Shared Services Joint Planning Unit).

Chair

Councillor Reid in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

John Bell and Jean Highgate.

1. New Local Development Plan (LDP) - Status Report

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on the status of preparation of the Local Development Plan to date, in the context of the approved Development Plan Scheme.

The first main output of the Local Development Plan process is the publication of the "Main Issues Report" (MIR) which focuses on the key areas of change since the last plan, and sets out ambitious ideas for future development. The Development Plan Scheme sets a target of December 2009 for publication of the MIR.

The report contained as an appendix, a Status Report which highlighted milestones achieved to date, future targets and outstanding risks. The Status Report also acts as a project management tool assisting those involved in the process to adhere to a challenging, deliverable timetable for plan production.

The report indicated that issues to be investigated at this Committee in terms of the development of the Local Plan were the future of town centres and new uses for old sites. These are both important in terms of economic activity and jobs.

Noted.

2. Local Development Plan (LDP) Main Issue: "The Future of our Town Centres"

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on options for promoting town centres as the focus of activity and regeneration in North Ayrshire.

The Local Development Plan Committee previously agreed 5 Main Issues for consideration i.e. Rural Coastal and Island Development, The Future of our Town Centres, New Uses for Old Sites, How Much Housing and Where, and Providing Infrastructure.

The report defined "Town Centre" as relating to land for town centres and retail uses in the adopted Local Plan. The town centres identified within this description are Irvine, Kilwinning, Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Stevenston, Kilbirnie, Beith, Dalry, Largs, West Kilbride and Millport. Core Shopping Areas are defined in Irvine, Kilwinning, Saltcoats and Largs.

The Local Development Plan will review the network of North Ayrshire's town centres and assess how deficiencies can be remedied, which may involve the identification of appropriate sites for new development and regeneration. The report detailed the pressures which have emerged in the context of "The Future of our Town Centres". The need for clarity of the role of town centres, particularly the importance of Irvine, was highlighted.

The report detailed matters which the Main Issues Report will address and provided options in terms of the following headings:-

- a Hierarchy of Town Centres;
- Town Centre Boundaries; and
- Town Centre Regeneration.

Preferred options with reasonable alternatives will be presented to Members for approval in November 2009, in advance of the publication of the Main Issues Report.

In response to a question concerning representation from the Irvine Bay Regeneration Company, the Committee was advised that IBRC had been consulted on the proposals and had submitted comments.

The Committee agreed (a) the options for future assessment of promoting town centre as set out in the report, and (b) representatives from Irvine Bay Regeneration Company be invited to attend future workshops and meetings of the Committee.

3. Local Development Plan (LDP) Main Issue: "New Uses for Old Sites"

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on options for safeguarding land for economic development and promoting alternative development on surplus Business and Industrial sites.

The Local Development Plan has an important role to play in revitalising North Ayrshire's economy by facilitating job creation through available employment land and sustaining existing employment. In this context, there is also a large amount of land and buildings in the Council area allocated for business and industrial use which appears vacant, derelict, under utilised or lacking in amenity.

The new LDP will confirm those existing sites for business/industrial development which will collectively form the employment land supply (ELS). An Employment Land Review (ELR) is currently being undertaken to assess current and future demands for employment land. The key output is to determine whether sites will remain allocated for business and industry, or whether they should be declared surplus. The interim findings have informed this report.

The report identified the key concepts for this Main Issue as under:-

- Assessment of supply and demand;
- Assessment of the suitability of existing employment land supply;
- Addressing market failure, and
- Declaration of the surplus employment sites and prioritisation for development.

The report detailed options for dealing with the Main Issue, "New Uses for Old Sites" under the following headings:-

- Defining ELS;
- Prioritising the surplus sites;
- Addressing market failure; and
- North Coast employment land.

The need to offer continued safeguarding to Hunterston and Ardeer (Energetics Cluster), given their reference in National Planning Framework 2, was highlighted. The importance of employment allocations along the A71 corridor was noted, as was the scope for their continued contribution to economic development in North Ayrshire.

The report indicated that some sites would be considered for deletion from the employment land supply. The need for prioritisation of these was discussed, which is referenced in the options in the committee report.

The potential for a wider range of economic activities on employment sites was explored.

Members reiterated their views regarding upgrading of the length of the A737.

The Committee approved the options for future assessment as set out in the report.

4. Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) - Consultation Response

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on the proposed response to the consultation on the consolidation of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) documents.

Scottish Planning Policy and National Planning Policy Guideline (NPPG) documents set out Scottish Government policy on planning topics such as housing, economic development and open space.

In the interest of delivering planning reform, the Scottish Government undertook a review of the structure of various SPPs following which it was decided that SPPs and NPPGs should be rationalised into one document.

The Scottish Government has prepared a draft SPP document for consultation, a copy of which was contained in appendix 1 to the report. The Ayrshire Joint Planning Service has prepared a response to the consultation on behalf of North Ayrshire Council, a copy of which was contained in appendix 2 to the report.

The Committee approved the response to the consultation document on Scottish Planning Policy as outlined in appendix 2 to the report.

The Committee agreed that the appendix to the report be approved as the Council's consultation response.

The meeting ended at 3.10 p.m.