

Local Development Plan Committee
18 May 2009

IRVINE, 18 May 2009 - At a meeting of the Local Development Plan Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

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

In Attendance

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

Also In Attendance

K. Anderson, Anderson Bell and Christie, and R. Martin, TPS Planning.

Chair

John Reid in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Peter McNamara, David O'Neill and Robert Rae.

1. Chair's Remarks

The Chair extended his thanks to officers, Members of the Committee and external contributors for their participation in the workshop events which took place prior to the Committee Meeting.

2. Supplementary Planning Guidance - Design Guidance Development in the Countryside

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on non-statutory Supplementary Planning Guidance to replace existing Supporting Information on Rural Design.

The current adopted Rural Design Guidance does not cover rural development in sufficient detail and has become outdated both in terms of the policy it reflects and how its intentions are described and shown. Consultants Anderson Bell and Christie were commissioned to produce new Guidance to reflect the approved Alteration No. 1 and to raise the overall standard of rural design.

The Guidance aims to promote development which complements North Ayrshire's rural landscape character, reconciling the requirements of a modern lifestyle with the principles underpinning traditional rural development, while at the same time promoting distinctive good quality contemporary design proposals.

K. Anderson of Anderson Bell and Christie provided a presentation on the guidance. Ms. Anderson provided visual examples of the diversity of North Ayrshire's rural landscape, together with an analysis of the context in which future development will sit. Illustrations were provided of the negative impact of incremental and inappropriate development and issues, including access, proportion and mass, setting and the use of materials, were highlighted.

Members discussed the following issues:-

- the intention of the guidance to provide for a context-driven response to development proposals, rather than a subjective judgement of their merits;
- the assessment of exceptional individual developments with the potential to become the listed buildings of the future;
- the level of discussion which took place with Planning Officers prior to the development of the draft guidance; and
- the opportunity for Members to give more detailed consideration to the guidance via the Local Development Plan process.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the Design Guidance Development in the Countryside as a replacement for the outdated Rural Design Guidance; and (b) that the application of the guidance would be monitored prior to its formal adoption as Statutory Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Local Development Plan.

3. New Local Development Plan - Progress Report

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

At its meeting on 16 March 2009, the Committee agreed the Main Issues, noted the concept of a "Vision" and approved the timescale for delivering the new Local Development Plan. The next step in the process is the publication of the "Main Issues Report", which will focus on the key areas of change and set out ambitious ideas for future development. Members will be engaged in preparing the Main Issues Report via workshops and Committee meetings programmed over the next few months.

The appendix to the report summarised the work accomplished to date in the preparation of the new Local Development Plan, set out current work and matters being considered by the Committee and identified the immediate next steps.

The intention is for the Committee to explore the Vision further and examine the first of the 5 Main Issues - Rural and Coastal Development. Members will be invited to agree the general direction for the Vision, approve the exploration of the Options presented and suggest additional options for inclusion.

The Committee agreed to note (a) the contents of the progress report; (b) that a Members' workshop would be held prior to the next meeting of the Committee on the subject of town centres and new uses for old sites; and (c) that the progress report would be placed on the Council's website for information.

4. North Ayrshire Local Development Plan - Developing the Vision

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on options to inform development of the Vision Statement for North Ayrshire.

The first stage of the Local Development Plan process will be the publication of a Main Issues report, accompanied by a Vision Statement. The latter should provide a realistic expression of what North Ayrshire could be like in 20 years' time and how this will be achieved.

At its meeting on 16 March 2009, the Committee gave consideration to some initial suggestions for branding the Vision Statement to reflect its key message. These included either a statement such as *"North Ayrshire will build on the strengths provided by its coastal and rural environment, recognise and welcome the benefits of new development and investment in the area, and continue to improve its communities"* or a headline for the Vision, such as *"Close to the City, Close to the Coast", "Living the Dream", "Sustainable Economic Regeneration", "Glasgow's Playground" or "North Ayrshire - a Place to Work, Rest and Play"*.

Further consideration was given to the Vision Statement and Main Issues at the Members' workshop held prior to the Committee meeting. Ross Martin of TPS Planning informed the Committee that the Members who attended this workshop agreed that the Vision Statement should reflect the core values of diversity, flexibility and vitality.

The appendix to the report provided a summary of reasonable options for the Vision, upon which the LDP may be based, subject to future assessment by officers, Member involvement and consultation with key agencies. The tables in the appendix focussed on options in terms of the key drivers for development as well as planned population size and distribution.

Members discussed the following issues:-

- the timescale for developing the Vision;
- provision for different land uses to meet the needs of different parts of North Ayrshire;
- the need to consider options to facilitate further development of the North Coast;
- the key role of the A737 in facilitating, or limiting, economic development in North Ayrshire;
- the development of tourism in Irvine; and
- the importance of diversity for sustainable economic development.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the options for assessment as set out in the appendix to the report; (b) that officers also take into consideration the issues highlighted by Members during discussion and incorporate these into the identified options; and (c) that measures to lobby further for improvements to the A737 be the subject of early discussion by political Group Leaders.

5. Rural and Coastal Development - Baseline Constraints and Opportunities

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on baseline information to Members on constraints and opportunities relating to Rural and Coastal Development.

At its meeting on 16 March 2009, the Committee identified "Rural and Coastal Development" as one of the 5 Main Issues. Subsequent discussion at the Members' workshop highlighted the need to amend this to include reference to the islands which form part of North Ayrshire.

3 maps, illustrating current land uses within the rural and coastal areas of North Ayrshire, were circulated at the meeting for the information of Members. They highlighted the range of protective designations in place, together with other constraints to development and the opportunities which exist. The baseline information will be used to aid Members' consideration of the issue of development within North Ayrshire's rural, coastal and island areas.

Noted.

6. North Ayrshire Local Development Plan Main Issue - 'Rural and Coastal Development'

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on options for responding to rural, coastal and island development issues.

At its meeting on 16 March 2009, the Committee agreed the following 5 Main Issues for inclusion in the Main Issues Report:-

1. Rural and Coastal Development (subsequently amended to include a reference to islands);
2. The Future of our Town Centres;
3. New Uses for Old Sites;
4. How much Housing and Where?; and
5. Providing Infrastructure.

The first Main Issue presented to Members is "Rural, Coastal and Island Development". The report identified the following issues in relation to this matter:-

- Pressure for rural housing development;
- Rural design;
- Crofting potential on Arran and the Cumbraes; and
- Coastal development (such as the Coastal Park, key coastal development sites and coastal access).
- Intensification of residential use at coastal locations;
- Hunterston Power and Port proposals;
- Tourism-related development; and
- Fish farming.

Some of the areas of change under consideration require to be dealt with outside of the Main Issues Report and within Supplementary Planning Guidance or the Development Management Statement. In particular, it is intended that rural design guidance, crofting and fish farming will be covered by Supplementary Planning Guidance. However, options for matters such as the definition of the coast, rural housing, tourism proposals, Hunterston and coastal access, will require a new policy approach and will be addressed in the Main Issues Report. The appendix to the report provided a flowchart summarising the process for assessing the various options.

The following suggestions emerged from discussion:-

- the inclusion of options for the protection of good agricultural land;
- the inclusion, during later mapping of the Infrastructure Main Issue, of aspirations in terms of the development of the A737 and the Fairlie by-pass; and
- amendment of the maps to more clearly illustrate areas of undeveloped coast and main roads.

The Committee agreed (a) the options for future assessment, as set out in the report; and (b) that officers take into consideration the issues highlighted by Members during discussion.

The meeting ended at 3.30 p.m.