

Local Development Plan Committee  
21 June 2010

**IRVINE, 21 June 2010** - 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, Ian Clarkson, Margie Currie, Anthea Dickson, John Ferguson, Alex Gallagher, Tony Gurney, John Hunter, Ruby Kirkwood, Margaret McDougall, Elizabeth McLardy, Ronnie McNicol, Pat McPhee, Elisabeth Marshall, John Moffat, Alan Munro and David O'Neill.

**In Attendance**

M. Ferrier, Team Leader, D. Cameron, D. Hammond, A. Laurenson and A. McNair Planning Officers (Development Plans)(Corporate Services); and C. Rowney, Communications Officer and P. Shiach, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's Service).

**Chair**

Councillor Reid in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

Matthew Brown, Jean Highgate, Peter McNamara, Pat McPhee, David Munn and Robert Rae.

**1. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations by Members in respect of Standing Order 16.

**2. Local Development Plan (LDP) Status Report**

Submitted report by the Solicitor to the Council on the status of preparation of the Local Development Plan to date, in the context of the approved Development Plan Scheme.

The first main issue of the new development plan process was the publication of the "Main Issues Report" (MIR) in December 2009, which focussed on the key areas of change since the last plan and set out ideas for future development. The next step of the process is the "Proposed Plan", which is a draft version of the new Local Development Plan (LDP).

The Proposed Plan will consist of the following: -

- Vision - A statement providing a realistic expression of what the plan area could look like in 20 years time.
- Spatial Strategy - Setting out map based land use allocations, as well as reflecting a locational strategy for new development up to year 10 from plan approval and a broad indication of the scale and direction of growth to year 20.
- Development Management Statement - A document containing general planning policies and principles which will guide decisions on planning applications.
- Supplementary Guidance - Providing detailed policy and/or guidance on a wide range of specific topics such as Town Centres, Housing, Hunterston and Developer Contributions.
- Action Programme - A document setting out actions for North Ayrshire Council and a variety of stakeholders, with lead partners identified and specific timescales to implement the policies/proposals of the LDP. The Action Programme will be updated every two years.

Neighbour notification requires to be undertaken for any areas of land undergoing a change of allocation from the previous plan. In addition, the Council must publish with the LDP a schedule of its ownership insofar as any land or buildings are affected by a change in allocation or specific new proposals.

Various components of the Plan will be prepared and presented to the Committee during the course of 2010, as detailed in appendix 1 to the report.

Noted.

### **3. Overview of Consultation on the Main Issues Report**

Submitted report by the Solicitor to the Council on the consultation process undertaken and related issues in respect of the Main Issues Report.

In preparing the Local Development Plan (LDP) the Council must engage communities, Government agencies and others involved with the development industry as early and as fully as possible. Details of the undernoted were contained in the report: -

- The consultation undertaken on the Main Issues Report;
- The number and content of representations made;
- Those areas of policy where there is consensus or disagreement with the direction of policy;
- The amended Vision, and
- The amended Site Selection Criteria.

The Main Issues Report was extensively consulted upon during the eight week period from 22 January to 19 March 2010. The MIR sets out the Council's vision for development in the area and where development should and should not occur, while looking at the key areas for change in terms of planning policy and land use. The MIR reflects Members' development aspirations for North Ayrshire.

Details of the engagement techniques employed to publicise the MIR, and allow individuals and interest groups to make comments on the Council's Vision and options for the five Main Issues, were contained in the report. Appendix 1 listed those consulted and respondents to the MIR.

The main areas of consensus or disagreement were:-

- The Vision - Comments were generally supportive of the Vision's focus on regeneration, tourism and transport improvements, although some suggested the need for a more explicit island dimension.
- New Uses for Old Sites - Stakeholders were generally supportive of the preferred options, including a rationalisation of North Ayrshire's supply of employment land, which is focussed on Irvine Bay and the Garnock Valley. Owners of businesses and industrial land in these areas favoured the reallocation of their sites as either housing or "mixed-use".
- Rural, Coastal and Island Development - A number of representations were submitted with respect to the options for rural housing. The majority of residents on Arran who made representations on this issue stressed that a more flexible approach to rural housing would benefit the island, particularly its young population, and affordability. A number also requested that Arran's heritage assets be given a high degree of protection from development in the LDP.
- How Much Housing and Where - There was general support among the development industry for the preferred housing locations identified indicatively in the MIR, although the number of units proposed far exceeded what was required to meet the identified housing requirement and national policy. A significant number of representations opposed the preferred option of development identified to the north west of West Kilbride, mainly on the grounds of landscape impact, the quality of agricultural land and community separation.
- Providing Infrastructure - Local groups stressed that the delivery of road upgrades, particularly on the A737 and A78 would reduce traffic congestion and encourage new inward investment. They also suggested that the capacity of local schools, roads, health centres etc. should be confirmed and, where appropriate, increased before any new development comes forward.

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) - Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Historic Scotland questioned the methodology used within the Environmental Assessment, primarily due to the use of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis to identify significant impacts rather than the use of a "toolkit" incorporating a checklist of potential constraints. SEPA welcomed the approach adopted.

An amended version of the Vision, setting out the context for work in preparation of the Proposed Plan was contained in appendix 2 to the report.

The use of selection criteria will be carried forward with the following amendments: -

- Criteria to be entitled "site selection assessment criteria" to remove ambiguity regarding the use of criteria in selecting rather than programming sites;
- Simplification of the scoring to remove definitive numerical scoring and its replacement with comment on whether the proposal is positive/negative or neutral, which will allow a broader perspective to be taken, and
- Consideration of a wider range of factors including infrastructure, local amenities etc.

Details of the amended criteria on assessment and selection of housing sites were contained in appendix 3 to the report.

In terms of site selection for residential development to meet the identified requirement, the MIR sets out criteria for comparatively assessing submissions. Prioritisation criteria were presented as a means of selecting sites to meet housing land requirement from the preferred options. While welcoming this approach, the view was expressed that the criteria presented lacked flexibility, were over sensitive and would be difficult to apply to differing sub housing market areas. Details of the consultation responses were contained in appendix 4 to the report.

Members of the Committee sought, and received, clarification in terms of the methodology used with regard to the Environmental Assessment.

The Committee agreed to (a) note the steps taken to engage stakeholders on the content of the MIR and the key points raised during the consultation thereon, and (b) approve (i) the amended Vision for the LDP, and (ii) the amended site selection criteria for the assessment of housing sites.

#### **4. Design Supplementary Guidance**

Submitted report by the Solicitor to the Council on the proposed supplementary guidance on Coastal, Town Centre and Neighbourhood design.

The Scottish Government policy document "Designing Places" sets out the national policy context for design, and stresses the importance of development plans in providing the basis for more detailed guidance on how policies should be implemented in specific areas and sites. Supplementary Guidance provides additional information or detail on policies or proposals set out in the LDP, and must be consistent with the LDP, prepared through consultation with the public, and formally approved by the Council. Statutory Guidance will form part of the development plan and will have considerable weight as a material consideration in the planning process.

In 2009, Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company and the Council appointed consultants Anderson Bell Christie to produce design guidance to draw on best practice. The guidance was completed in April 2010 and contains three sections as under:-

- Coastal Design Guidance
- Town Centre Design Guidance, and
- Neighbourhood Design Guidance

The guidance documents were contained in appendices 1 - 3 of the report.

Public consultation will be undertaken following the publication of the Proposed Plan with a view to adopting the Guidance as Statutory Guidance to the LDP.

The Committee sought, and received, clarification on responsibility for signing the draft guidance documents.

The Committee agreed that, subject to the foreword to the three guidance documents being signed off by North Ayrshire Council, the proposed Supplementary Guidance on design be incorporated into the Local Plan Proposed Plan, and adopted as interim non-statutory Guidance until the Plan is adopted.

## **Exempt Information**

### **5. Exclusion of Public**

Resolved, in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the Meeting, the press and the public for the following item of business on the grounds indicated in terms of Paragraph 13 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

### **6. Proposed Plan Policy: Town Centres and Retailing**

Submitted report by the Solicitor to the Council on a proposed policy regarding Town Centres and Retailing.

Scottish Planning Policy SPP, February 2010, indicates that town centres are a key element of the economic and social fabric of Scotland, acting as centres of employment and services for local communities. The Scottish Government's key policy principles for town centres are:-

- The identification of a network of centres;
- Improving town centres; and
- Applying the sequential to retailing.

Scottish Planning Policy encourages development plans to identify a network of centres and explain the role of each centre in the network. The Development Plan should enable gaps and deficiencies in the provision of services to be remedied by identifying appropriate locations for new development and regeneration.

The Main Issues Report proposed a preferred option (B), whereby a primary centre would be identified, together with area and local centres identified in a hierarchical system, with retail opportunities permitted which were commensurate with the scale of a centre and its position within the hierarchy.

Councillor O'Neill, seconded by Councillor Reid, moved that the Committee agree to take forward policy regarding Town Centres and Retailing to be incorporated into the Local Development Plan Proposed plan for approval in November 2010.

As an amendment, Councillor Gurney, seconded by Councillor Hunter, moved that paragraph 3.4 of the report be amended as follows:-

"The adopted Local Plan should propose a single tier approach to development, where each proposal is considered on its merits".

On a division, there voted for the amendment 6, and for the motion 9, and the motion was declared carried.

Accordingly the Committee agreed to take forward policy regarding Town Centres and Retailing to be incorporated into the Local Development Plan Proposed plan for approval in November 2010.

The meeting ended at 3.25 p.m.