

Local Development Plan Committee
24 September 2009

IRVINE, 24 September 2009 - At a Meeting of the Local Development Plan Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 pm.

Present

Elizabeth McLardy, Robert Barr, Matthew Brown, Ian Clarkson, Margie Currie, Anthea Dickson, John Ferguson, Alex Gallagher, Jean Highgate, Margaret McDougall, Elisabeth Marshall, John Moffat, David Munn, Alan Munro and Robert Rae.

In Attendance

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

Also In Attendance

A. Pollock and R. Martin (Consultants, TPS)

Chair

Councillor McLardy in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

John Reid, John Bell, Ronnie McNicol, Pat McPhee and David O'Neill.

1. Declarations of Interest

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

2. New Local Development Plan: Status Report

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on the status of preparation of the Local Development Plan, 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 will focus on the key areas of change since the last Plan and set out ambitious ideas for future development. At its next meeting in November 2009, the Local Development Committee will be asked to consider and approve for consultation the Monitoring Statement and draft MIR.

The appendix to the report contained a status report, highlighting milestones achieved to date, future targets and outstanding risks. The status report, which is the third since the publication of the Development Plan Scheme in March 2009, also acts as a project management tool to assist those involved in the process in adhering to a challenging, deliverable timetable for plan production.

The Team Leader - Development Plans advised the Committee that, although the status report reflected that the project was currently on target ("green"), any further delay in the completion of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) by external consultants had the potential to impact negatively on progress.

The Committee agreed (a) to note the current position; and (b) that consideration be given at the next meeting to approving for consultation the Monitoring Statement and draft MIR.

3. Local Development Plan: Report on Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on the work undertaken to engage the community and other stakeholders in relation to the Local Development Plan and to reaffirm the strategy for consultation during the next phase of the plan process.

Whilst there is a minimum statutory requirement to consult with 'key agencies' such as Scottish Water, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and Scottish Natural Heritage in terms of the compilation of the Main Issues Report (MIR), there is no obligation on the part of the Council to consult with the general public or other stakeholders. Nonetheless, the report indicated that consultation has taken place with a number of non-statutory stakeholders including young people, community councils, Irvine Bay Regeneration Company, Ayrshire Joint Planning Unit, Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce, Transport Scotland and various Council Services. The key findings of the consultation exercise on the compilation of the MIR were set out in section 2.6 of the report.

The MIR itself is scheduled for publication in December 2009, with the formal 8-week consultation period due to commence in January 2010. Section 3 of the report provided details of the planned consultation exercise, including a series of public exhibitions, press releases and the establishment of a Local Forum. Representations will be invited from landowners, developers and agents where they are proposing policy changes or new allocations and there will also be further dialogue with key agencies during this period.

Members requested, and received, further information on the participation in the informal consultation exercise of the community councils within the North Coast area. In relation to the Stevenston area, the view was expressed that there was significant potential for housing development close to the town centre and that this should be flagged up to developers.

Noted.

4. Local Development Plan Main Issue 'Providing Infrastructure'

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on potential options for dealing with the Main Issue of 'Providing Infrastructure'.

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 set out the policy context for the issue of 'Providing Infrastructure' and identified the pressures which impact on the physical infrastructure, social infrastructure and green infrastructure of North Ayrshire. Appendix 1 to the report provided further background information on these pressures, as well as economic, social and environmental opportunities which exist.

Areas of change which are deemed significant will require to be included in the Main Issues Report (MIR). However, other matters can be dealt with either within Supplementary Guidance (SG) or the Development Management Statement. Section 3.3 of the report set out the various issues identified and how they will be handled. Section 3.4 of the report provided options for the following issues which do require to be covered in the Main Issues Report:-

- A737/78 improvements - Kilwinning and/or Fairlie bypass;
- Stevenston rail crossing;
- Improving public transport connections in Irvine;
- Waste;
- Cemetery provision;
- Replacement Magnum Centre; and
- The Green Network.

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

Members discussed the following issues:-

- the rationale for identifying the Stevenston rail crossing as an issue in its own right in addition to its links with the future development of Hunterston;
- the potential for including a further issue, in relation to the upgrading of the road network on Arran;
- the possibility of resurrecting dormant sections of rail-line;
- the importance of flooding as an issue and whether it might be included in the MIR;
- whether, in the context of the replacement of Garnock Academy, it was appropriate to include a reference to the identification of alternative sites;

- the current position in respect of a replacement for the Magnum Centre;
- any other communities which might require to be considered for by-passes on the A78; and
- the establishment of an A737 working group in recognition of its key role for the future North Ayrshire.

The Committee agreed (a) to take forward for further assessment the options set out in section 3.4 of the report; and (b) that the Team Leader - Development Plans provide clarification to the next meeting on the position with regard to proposals for the replacement of the Magnum Centre.

5. Local Development Plan (LDP) Main Issue: "How Much Housing and Where?"

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on options for addressing housing need and demand throughout North Ayrshire.

The future delivery of housing in North Ayrshire will make a significant contribution to the Council's vision and spatial strategy for the area, with new housing development having a potential influence on the perception of an area, its ability to attract and retain people and investment, and its regeneration of existing communities. The housing market area of North Ayrshire can be broken down into the five sub-housing market areas of Irvine/Kilwinning, the Three Towns, North Coast, the Garnock Valley and Arran.

The report referred to work to assess housing need and demand both within mainland North Ayrshire and on the islands of Arran and Cumbrae. A mainland Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), commissioned by Housing Services in October 2008 and due for completion by June 2009, is still awaited and is expected to be the subject of a report to the Executive of North Ayrshire Council. The report summarised the preliminary findings of the mainland HNDA and the findings and recommendations of studies in respect of Arran and Cumbrae.

Appendix 1 to the report contained a methodology to enable the comparison and prioritisation of sites. Appendix 2 provided further information on the factors to be included in a sustainability appraisal.

The Main Issues Report (MIR) will focus on key areas of change, with less significant issues being dealt with by other mechanisms, such as Supplementary Guidance, the Development Management Statement or the Action Programme. Section 3.3 of the report set out the following matters to be addressed by the MIR, along with reasonable alternative options:-

- Defining the scale of the housing land supply in North Ayrshire (including the islands);
- The distribution of the housing land requirement by sub-market area in North Ayrshire; and
- Prioritising housing site allocations.

The options contained in the report will be assessed through social, economic and environmental reports, with a preferred option emerging. This will be presented to Members for approval in November 2009 in advance of the publication of the MIR.

Members discussed the following issues:-

- the extent to which the density and design of developments can be controlled or influenced;
- ensuring flexibility in terms of setting and reviewing the level of housing land supply;
- the potential application of the principle of planning gain to issues such as educational/social services and roads infrastructure;
- difficulties and delays associated with the acquisition and development of land for social housing;
- the environmental constraints in relation to housing development in the North Coast area;
- the delay in relation to the mainland HNDA report; and
- the need to ensure that housing provision reflects factors such as the growing proportion of older people in the population and the increase in smaller households.

The Committee agreed to take forward for further assessment the options set out in section 3.3 of the report.

6. Ayrshire Joint Planning Steering Group: Shared Planning in Ayrshire

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on the outcome of the first meeting of the Ayrshire Joint Planning Steering Group.

Following changes in planning legislation, there is no longer a requirement to produce a Structure Plan for Ayrshire. However, the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan Team, now named the Ayrshire Joint Planning Unit (AJPU), has been retained under a governing group called the Ayrshire Joint Planning Steering Group (AJPSG). The following matters arose at first meeting of the AJPSG, which took place on 30 April 2009:-

- A draft work programme for the AJPU has been prepared, further information on which was contained within section 3.1 of the report;
- The Unit has finalised the preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance on Wind Farms, for approval by each member Council;

- A Household Shopping Survey was undertaken across North Ayrshire to better understanding shopping patterns and their implications for the future role of town centres and retail areas.

The Minute of the last meeting of the AJPSG was set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 4.00 p.m.