

Infrastructure and Environment Services Committee
4 February 1998

Irvine, 4 February 1998 - At a Meeting of the Infrastructure and Environment Services Committee at 2.00 p.m.

Present

David Munn, Jack Carson, Ian Clarkson, James Clements, John Donn, Margaret Hight, Elizabeth McLardy, Thomas Morris, Robert Reilly, John Sillars, George Steven.

In Attendance

R. Loney, Director of Planning, Roads and Environment, N. Buchan, Head of Roads, J. McCorkell, Head of Planning, Roads and Environment, A. Herbert, Head of Accountancy, S. King, Corporate Policy Officer, and M. McKeown, Administration Officer (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Mr Munn in the Chair

Apologies for Absence

Samuel Gooding

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 10 December 1997 were confirmed.

2. Capital Programme 1998/99

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on the prioritised capital expenditure bids for consideration in the Capital Plan for 1998/99.

The Committee agreed that the prioritised programme of Capital Bids should be submitted to the Corporate Strategy Committee for consideration in the Capital Plan for 1998/99.

3. Nobel Business Park, Stevenston

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on the proposed joint ownership and development of Nobel Business Park with Enterprise Ayrshire.

In January 1996 the Infrastructure and Environment Services Committee agreed in principle that the Council should accept as joint owners with Enterprise Ayrshire, land and buildings to be conveyed by ICI at Ardeer, Stevenston for the purposes of regeneration.

Draft legal documents have now been prepared for the necessary acquisition of the site, at a cost to the Council of £0.50 (exclusive of legal fees etc.), together with associated partnership agreements between Enterprise Ayrshire and the Council for the development and management of the Business Park..

In formally agreeing to joint ownership of the land and buildings, the Council would be committing itself to substantial investment over a lengthy period of time, likely to be in excess of 10 years. Moreover given the previous use of the site, the acquisition of the land and premises will

carry with it certain liabilities of ownership, with costs being incurred in the redevelopment and ongoing management of the site and buildings. The Council require to meet a half share of revenue costs commencing 1998/99, until such time as income balances expenditure.

At present, cost projections indicate that expenditure exceeds income by some £30,000. This shortfall in revenue funding is mainly due to the present low levels of site occupancy. There is, in addition, an urgent need to provide site security to prevent vandalism of the buildings and security costs, in terms of revenue, could add a further £30,000.

After a full discussion, the Committee agreed (a) to accept as joint owners with Enterprise Ayrshire land and buildings being conveyed by ICI at Ardeer, Stevenston; (b) to pursue an agreed master plan and programme of works for the refurbishment and future development of the Business Park with Enterprise Ayrshire, and to conduct further discussions with ICI at board level to seek necessary support funding and agree site access arrangements, safeguarding issues etc; (c) to remit to the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment to discuss the revenue funding implications, within the constraints of the 1998/99 revenue budget, with the Director of Financial Services, and also to examine possible ERDF and Scottish Office funding, and to report back in due course; and d) that a site visit should be arranged for members of the Committee in due course.

4. National Food Safety Week 1998

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on a request from the organisers of the Foodlink Campaign that the Council participate in the 1998 event.

The Foodlink Campaign is mounted by the Food and Drink Federation in association with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland, and promotes the need for greater awareness and application of the simple precautions that can be taken to ensure that food is safe and wholesome.

The Committee agreed (a) to participate in the Foodlink National Food Safety Week 1998; (b) to promote and raise the profile of the Campaign; and (c) to pay £500.00 plus VAT for Campaign material.

5. Proposed Alteration to the Strathclyde Structure Plan 1995

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on an alteration to the Strathclyde Structure Plan proposed by Glasgow and Clyde Valley Structure Plan Committee following a study which they undertook in conjunction with representatives from The Scottish Office, Locate in Scotland and Scottish Enterprise.

The approved Strathclyde Structure Plan identifies seven areas where the search for 6 or so industrial should be directed. This includes the M77/A77/Corridor/(Kilmarnock). The Joint Technical Group of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Structure Plan Committee has identified six locations and five further options which it now plans to incorporate into the approved Structure Plan using expedited procedures. Their study did not however extend any consideration to opportunities in Ayrshire and the protection of these areas through the planning system or their promotion through inward investment by Locate in Scotland raises concerns for Ayrshire in terms of competing interests and resource allocation. It was therefore recommended that the Council should formally object to the proposed amendment to the approved Structure Plan.

The Committee agreed (a) to submit a formal objection to the proposal and to co-ordinate the response on a joint basis with East and South Ayrshire Councils and the Ayrshire Structure Plan Joint Committee; (b) to advise the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Structure Plan Joint Committee of this intention by their deadline of 6 February 1998; (c) to instruct the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment to raise these issues directly with the Scottish Office Planning Division; and d) to instruct the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment to submit a report on the draft Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan to the next meeting of the Committee.

6. North Ayrshire Household Projections 1997-2004 & 2008

Submitted report by the Director of Planning Roads and Environment on the most recent household projections for North Ayrshire and its constituent planning areas.

The preparation of accurate household estimates and projections is a key element in the formulation of Council policy on the provision of adequate housing and related services. It was noted that current projections indicated a 10.3% increase in the number of households in North Ayrshire between 1997 and 2008 which is in line with national trends.

The Committee approved the adoption of the projections as the basis of the planning of both strategic and local household related services.

7. Compulsory Purchase of Property: Beith Town Centre

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on the proposed compulsory purchase of No. 6 Eglinton Street, Beith to facilitate proper planning of the area.

The Consultative Draft Replacement Garnock Valley Local Plan identifies the importance of the need to tackle the problem of the regeneration of the Valley town centres which have been declared Smaller Urban Renewal Initiative Areas by the Scottish Office. However given existing budgetary constraints the Council has been unable to embark on a programme of rehabilitation.

The St. Vincent Crescent Preservation Trust, a Building Preservation Trust with charitable status, has commissioned a Feasibility Study with a view to rehabilitating the listed buildings at 20 - 32 The Cross and 2 - 8 Eglinton Street, Beith, which are currently in poor condition. The Study has revealed that with grant assistance it is a feasible proposition to restore these buildings. The Trust therefore intends to proceed on this basis, and is arranging a package of funding from such sources as the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland.

The owner of the property at No. 6 Eglinton Street cannot however be traced and the Trust have written to the Council requesting that it use its power of compulsory purchase to acquire No. 6 at District Valuer's valuation and thereafter sell it to the Trust.

The Committee agreed (a) that the compulsory acquisition of the property at No. 6 Eglinton Street, Beith is necessary in the interests of the proper planning of the area; (b) to remit to the Support Services Committee to consider making a resolution to compulsory acquire the property at No. 6 Eglinton Street, Beith under Section 189 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and the Acquisition of Land (Authorisation Procedures)(Scotland) Act 1947; and (c) to serve a Notice under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 to permit action to render the property wind and watertight in the interim.

8. Compulsory Purchase of Abbey Park, Kilwinning

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on the proposed acquisition by the Council of Abbey Park, Kilwinning to secure the proper planning of the area.

The future of Abbey Park, Kilwinning, has been the subject of lengthy negotiations and discussions with the owner for a number of years. The owner has been refused planning consent for housing on the site, and this decision was upheld on appeal. The park is presently leased to the Council. This lease expires on 30 June 1998 and the Council has been unable to secure an extension. In order to ensure that the Abbey park site is preserved as open space and secured for long term leisure use, the Department of Community and Recreational Services has requested that consideration be given to the compulsory purchase of the site.

The Committee agreed (a) that the compulsory acquisition of Abbey Park is necessary in the interests of the proper planning of the area; and (b) to remit to the Support Services Committee to consider making a resolution to compulsory acquire Abbey Park, Kilwinning under Section 189

of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1998 and the Acquisition of Land (Authorisation Procedures)(Scotland) Act 1947.

9. Development Briefs

a) Irvine: Annickbank

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on a proposed development brief to guide business development at Annickbank.

The Committee approved the development brief.

b) Isle of Arran: Kildonan: Kildonan School and School House

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on the proposed development brief for Kildonan School and Schoolhouse, Kildonan, Isle of Arran.

The Committee approved the development brief.

10. Cycle Maintenance Video

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on the development of a Cycle Maintenance Video.

The Cycle Testing Programme carried out by Roads Section staff in 1997 found that 10% of all the bikes tested had dangerous or potentially dangerous faults. In response to this situation, and with the agreement of the Education Department, the Technician Support Services has produced a training video, for use by primary school age groups, which offers guidance on cycle care and maintenance. The video is presented by Graham Obree, former world cycling champion, and seeks to bring about a reduction in road accident casualties caused by dangerous bikes.

Initially 100 copies of the video will be produced for distribution to all primary schools carrying out cycle training programmes and to all North Ayrshire libraries.

The Committee (a) welcomed the production of the video; and (b) agreed to approve a formal launch to ensure its promotion.

11. EC Bathing Water Directive 76/160/EEC Bathing Water Quality Results 1997

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on EC Bathing Water Directive 76/160/EEC which requires Member States to take all measures to bring identified bathing waters up to specified quality standards contained in the Directive and describes the frequency of sampling, methods of analysis and inspection of bathing areas.

This work is undertaken for The Scottish Office by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA). At the present time the beaches at Irvine/Gailes (New Town) and Saltcoats/Ardrossan (South Beach) are identified bathing waters in terms of the Directive and as such have to comply with the Directive's mandatory standards. In addition SEPA has taken samples from 3 other non-identified marine waters within North Ayrshire at Largs, Seamill and Stevenston.

In terms of the 1997 bathing water samples, the identified beaches at Irvine and South Beach have failed to meet the mandatory standards. The non identified marine waters at Largs also failed while Stevenston and Seamill each secured a pass.

The reasons for the failures on the two identified beaches are unclear and a major investigation has now been initiated by West of Scotland Water and SEPA, in association with the

Council, to investigate this situation.

Following consideration, the Committee (a) acknowledged the results for the three non-identified beaches within North Ayrshire; and (b) agreed to endorse the action to investigate the failures.

12. A78 Signing - West Kilbride/Seamill Area

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment direction and boundary signing on the A78 trunk road in the West Kilbride/Seamill area.

In September 1997 the Committee considered a report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment which highlighted the difficulty in establishing whether there were clear boundaries between West Kilbride and Seamill. The report concluded that there was no clear evidence to establish whether or not there were two distinct communities i.e. West Kilbride and Seamill or whether West Kilbride was the sole community and therefore included Seamill. The latter view was expressed by Councillor McLardy.

The view of the Roads Section and of The Scottish Office was that the practice of signing Seamill on the A78 and showing West Kilbride as being the area to the east of the A78 should be continued in the absence of any strong evidence to the contrary. The Scottish Office had indicated that if North Ayrshire were to strongly favour a change they would be prepared to reconsider their stance. However after considering the background information and a plea from Councillor McLardy that West Kilbride should be shown on all direction signs on the affected section of the A78, the Committee had agreed to continue the current practice.

The Committee agreed to the suspension of standing orders at this stage to allow reconsideration of this item.

The Committee were advised that following the September meeting the requisite signs have been manufactured. However the signs have not yet been erected as a request has been received from Councillor McLardy together with a petition indicating strong local support for the matter to be re-examined. In particular the petitioners are requesting that i) West Kilbride be shown on road signs on the A78 from Ardrossan to Largs; ii) Welcome to West Kilbride signs be erected south of The Waterside and north of the B7048; and iii) the boundary sign for Seamill at the south end be the same sign as the existing boundary sign at the north end.

Councillor McLardy was then heard in support of her request to have the earlier decisions altered and the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment and the Head of Roads then advised the Committee as to the implications which this would have.

After a full discussion, the Committee a) agreed that the circumstances surrounding the signing issue have not substantially changed since the matter was last considered; and b) agreed to endorse the decision taken at the September meeting.

13. Support for Apprenticeships: Virement to Youth Employment Training Initiative Scheme

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on a proposal to vire funds from the Employment Grants Scheme (EGS) to the Youth Employment Training Initiative (YETI) in order to increase the number of Apprentices employed in North Ayrshire companies.

Research conducted by North Ayrshire Business Development and Enterprise Ayrshire has identified a shortfall in recruitment of apprentices in North Ayrshire despite indications from local companies that they would be willing to provide additional apprenticeships.

An underspend on the 1997/98 EGS budget is and South Lanarkshire Council, who administer the European aspects of the YETI scheme for the West of Scotland Unitary Authorities

have indicated that the vired funds could be matched.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed (a) to vire £20,000 of North Ayrshire Councils portion of the EGS budget to the YETI project; and (b) to seek match it with European Social Fund monies.

14. Largs Replacement Railway Station

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the outcome of the meeting with representatives of Railtrack held on 19 December 1997 to discuss the proposed replacement of Largs railway station which was the subject of a planning application.

The development had been discussed in some detail, with the Architect and Engineer explaining how the proposals had evolved since they were first at an earlier meeting. It was noted that the current application reflected the confines of the site and took account of regulatory controls imposed, or likely to be imposed, by The Office of the Rail Regulator. Concerns were however expressed about the location, design and functionality of the proposed station building, the impact of vehicular access into the station; and the effect the proposed station building would have on Largs townscape. Members were also keen to ensure that the opportunity would not be lost to explore other options, perhaps through acquisition or lease from, or a joint venture with owners of sites peripheral to the station.

Following discussion, the following action points had been agreed:

- 1) Railtrack would approach the agents of the prospective developer of the former Presto site to examine the possibility of using part of the site for station accommodation, and also with a view to securing shared vehicular access to the station parking area across their site;
- 2) Railtrack would approach the owner of the site at the corner of Main Street and Crawford Street, with a view to incorporating it into the station redevelopment.
- 3) Railtrack would as a last resort consider the possibility of withdrawing the application if the above discussions proved unsuccessful.

The Committee were advised that discussions between Railtrack and the developers were ongoing but that there was some way to go before any proposal could even be viewed as a viable option.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that Railtrack should now be asked to withdraw the current application pending the outcome of the ongoing discussions.

15. Traffic Regulation Order: Bank Street, Irvine

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on a proposal to introduce full waiting restrictions on the south side of for Bank Street, Irvine, between numbers 54 and 76 with additional loading restrictions along the frontage of number 54 to Kilmarnock College.

The Committee (a) approved the investigation and preparation of the requisite Traffic Regulation Order; and (b) agreed that it should be advertised.

16. 20 mph Speed Reduction Initiative

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on proposals for a national trial programme of advisory 20 mph speed limit in residential areas.

In response to pressure for lower vehicle speeds in residential areas the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) and the Scottish Office Development Department have agreed to promote a national trial programme of 20mph zones operating with advisory rather than statutory speed limits. The trial is intended to test the effectiveness of 20mph zones in the absence of traditional traffic calming measures and also to influence driver behaviour so that there

is a voluntary reduction in speeds within residential areas.

After assessing areas in all communities in North Ayrshire against recommended criteria for areas participating in the pilot, three possible locations have been identified in Ardrossan (Parkhouse Road to Stanley Road), Kilbirnie (Milton Road) and Kilwinning (Blacklands area).

The Committee agreed submission of these three proposed areas for inclusion in the trial programme.

17. Marine Fish Farm: Review of Planning Arrangements

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on the response to a consultation from The Scottish Office on a proposal to transfer the regulatory function of determining the establishment of marine fish farms to local authorities. There are currently 2 fish farms within North Ayrshire.

At present (with the exception of Shetland and part of Orkney) all applications to establish marine fish farms are submitted to and considered by the Crown Estate. Details of applications are advertised and an extended consultation is then carried out with a range of interests including local authorities. The Crown Estate will presently refuse to grant approval against a confirmed objection by a "statutory" consultee, and in such cases the issue is referred to the Fish Farming Advisory Committee.

Despite these consultative arrangements concern has been expressed that there remains a conflict of interest between the Crown Estate's financial responsibilities as owner of the seabed and its role as regulator of marine fish farm development. There is also a concern that the system lacks the necessary transparency and democratic accountability and that insufficient attention has been given to conflicting uses and to the environmental impact of such developments.

In reviewing the matter the Government has identified the fundamental issue as the need for greater local involvement and clearer accountability to local communities for developments which will have an economic, social and environmental impact on their lives, and has concluded that these requirements would best be met by local authorities taking over responsibility for determining the siting of fish farms. The Government is therefore seeking views on its proposal to transfer the regulatory function of determining the establishment of marine fish farms to local authorities.

While accepting that this arrangement would allow greater local involvement and clearer accountability to local communities this proposal has resource implications and special expertise requires to be developed. Additionally the proposed responsibility for ensuring that environmental concerns of the local community would have to be clarified to ensure a consistent approach COSLA and the Scottish Office are however organising discussions on this proposal with all affected local authorities and an initial meeting was held on 2 February 1998 and attended by a Planning Officer.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed (a) to formally advise the Secretary of State of the views set out above; and (b) that a Planning Officer should continue to participate in discussions with COSLA and the Scottish Office.

18. Outstanding Applications for Planning Permission for Determination

Arran: Holy Island; Application No 01/97/0504

Submitted report by the Director of Planning, Roads and Environment on the application submitted by the Holy Island Development Co. (Samye Ling) to erect a monastic retreat complex at the southern end of the Holy Island off Arran.

Objections to the application have been received from Mr D C Stubbs, Ling Moor, Mrs A

W Morgan, Merrick, and Mrs E C Ure, Seaholm, all Kings Cross, Isle of Arran; Mr R & Mrs A Dargie, 4 Dolphin Road, Glasgow; and Mr J W H Abram, Seagate, Craigend Road, Troon, and numerous representations in favour of the application were noted.

After a full discussion, and after consideration of the terms of the objections, the Committee agreed to grant the application subject to the following conditions:-

(1) That the proposed development shall be provided with an adequate and wholesome water supply, details of which shall be submitted for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

(2) That effluent disposal arrangements shall comply with the terms of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, with particular regard to details of the reed beds, the possible effect on the borehole for the drinking water supply and pollution prevention during the construction phase, to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

(3) That the developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to any archaeological organisation acceptable to North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority and shall allow them to observe work in progress and record items of interest and finds. Notification of the commencement date, information as to whom the Regional Archaeologist should contact on site and the name of the Archaeological organisation retained by the developer shall be given to the Planning Authority in writing, not less than 14 days before development commences.

(4) That no site construction staff, or individuals associated with the retreat, shall be in the vicinity of the peregrine nesting area already notified to the applicants by RSPB during the months March to July inclusive in any year, to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

(5) That there shall be monitoring of bird strikes at the wind turbines and, if they are occurring, alternative methods of marking the turbines and guy ropes shall be agreed in writing with North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority and thereafter implemented.

(6) That prior to the construction of the wind turbines details of the final number and location shall be submitted for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

(7) That prior to the commencement of the development revised details of cairns and other boundary markers shall be submitted for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

(8) That prior to the commencement of the development further details of specifications for re-vegetation of land, paths and roofs shall be submitted for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

(9) That the premises shall be used for the purposes of a monastic retreat and for no other purpose.

(10) That prior to the commencement of any phase of the development the applicant shall submit for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority commencement dates for preparation works and construction works and the construction period for that phase and that the dates shall be accompanied by confirmation that funding is in place for that phase.

19. Clydeport Liaison Meeting

Submitted report by the Chief Executive being the Minutes of their Meeting held on 9 December 1997.

Noted.

20. Conferences

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on invitations to attend conferences.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Chair and Vice-Chair or their nominees to attend (a) The Scottish Housing and Town Planning Council Annual Conference from 1 to 3 April 1998 in Peebles; and (b) The Scottish Road Safety Campaign Conference from 30 September to 1 October 1998 in Dunblane.

The meeting ended at 3.45 p.m.