

6 Environmental Assessment

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of the Environmental Report, as previously explained, is to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects (both beneficial and adverse) on the natural and built environment of implementing the Plan. This chapter presents the outcomes of the environmental assessment process and also sets out mitigation measures and recommendations proposed.

The Environmental Report has been carried out alongside the development of the MIR to allow for direct feedback of proposed mitigation, alternatives and recommendations into the plan so that adverse environmental effects can be avoided and also the MIR enhanced as appropriate.

6.2 Compatibility Assessment Findings

6.2.1 Preferred Vision and Alternatives Compatibility Assessment

As detailed in Chapter 5, the preferred option for the LDP vision and its reasonable alternatives were assessed as to their compatibility with the SEA objectives. Full details of the assessment can be found in Appendix D of this Report.

Overall, it was considered that the preferred vision option was the best option to take forward into the LDP. Although Option 3 was the best environmentally preferred option, it was acknowledged that this may not consider economic growth effectively and therefore it was concluded that the preferred vision option offered the best balance between economic, social and environmental objectives.

The following sections summarise the findings of the compatibility assessment.

Preferred Vision Option

The compatibility of the preferred vision option against the SEA objectives found that there was potential incompatibility with several of the objectives including the soils objective 2, landscape objective 2, the air quality objectives and human health objective 1. Several others had uncertain links whilst the remainder were potentially compatible or compatible.

To achieve a better balance between development and the environment, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) suggested, based on information provided to them within the SEA Scoping Report, that the text in the preferred vision statement was altered to reflect this balance. It was recommended that the word ‘underpinned’ be replaced with ‘guided’.

*‘The LDP will be a development strategy that maximises sustainable economic growth, **guided** by sound social and environmental objectives.’*

SAC did not take on board this option as it was considered that, ‘underpinned’, conveys the driver of growth as the environment and social factors i.e. economic growth through the potential of the Central Scotland Green Network, the Biosphere, and development of renewable energy sources and the integration of transport links for the benefit of communities. This seeks to protect and enhance the environment

to create a more attractive place for people to live and work whilst offsetting the current economic instability by realising the potential for growth through the environment.

South Ayrshire Council provided a modified preferred vision option for inclusion within the MIR:

‘Growing Our Economy in an Outstanding Natural Environment.’

The description of the final preferred vision is similar to that of the previous however; it was thought to provide a greater commitment to consideration of the natural and built environment, highlighting that South Ayrshire’s natural environment and cultural heritage are key economic assets.

A re-assessment of the preferred vision, taking into consideration the alterations made, found that there would be additional compatibility with the cultural heritage, climatic factors and material assets SEA objectives. Details of this assessment can be found in Appendix D of this report.

Alternative Option 1

Option 1 relates to prioritising the growth of South Ayrshire’s economy. This alternative option looks to maximise development as an economic asset with social and environmental concerns being a secondary consideration.

It was anticipated that, by primarily focusing on economic aspects, sites proposed could have a damaging effect on the environment. It was therefore incompatible or potentially incompatible with the majority of the SEA objectives, seemingly only benefiting population objective 3, which relates to the promotion of economic growth to encourage the retention of the working age population in South Ayrshire.

Alternative Option 2

The second alternative option for the vision is focused on social aspects. This was envisaged to have benefits to the population through improvements to the quality of life and community environment within settlements of South Ayrshire and ensuring access to services and amenities. Noise effects were also thought to be limited and therefore the option was anticipated to be potentially compatible with the noise objectives.

As there is no commitment within this option to safeguard the natural environment, it was anticipated that there could be incompatibility with the biodiversity, soils and geology, landscape, water and air quality objectives as well as potential incompatibility with the cultural heritage objective. This was therefore not considered to be the preferred environmental option. A recommendation to enhance the social aspects of this option was put forward for inclusion within the vision option description:

‘.....This approach would seek improved public transport links, predominately to serve access for communities in and around South Ayrshire to improve access to amenities...’

The adaptation of option 2’s description ensures of a commitment to improving public transport links for communities thereby potentially resulting in fewer vehicles

on the roads in South Ayrshire and so leading to possible improvements to air quality and assists with reduction of CO₂ emissions.

Alternative Option 3

Vision option 3 relates to the conservation of natural heritage in South Ayrshire. It would see the Central Scotland Green Network being developed as an LDP priority with the objective of enhancing rural areas.

Although the initial compatibility assessment of this option revealed compatibility or potential compatibility with all SEA objectives, it was thought that the option could be enhanced. The following vision option statement was therefore proposed:

*‘Conserve the **built and** natural heritage of South Ayrshire and establish environmentally sustainable growth patterns.’*

This was recommended to ensure of a commitment to the conservation of not only the natural but also the built heritage of South Ayrshire. The re-assessment of option 3 led to compatibility with the cultural heritage objective and landscape objective 1, both of which were previously assessed as only being potentially compatible.

6.2.2 Land Assessment Framework Compatibility Assessment

The LAF components were subject to a compatibility assessment against the SEA environmental objectives (see Chapter 5, Section 5.4.2). The framework considered a wide range of potential constraints and detailed below are the findings of the compatibility assessment conducted on these.

In terms of landscape and settlement issues, it was determined that the most compatible options were those relating to the preservation of the landscape setting whilst ensuring that the development fits in well with its surroundings without causing any coalescence issues.

The main benefits of these options were envisaged to be on the local landscape and townscapes as well as the setting of any cultural heritage features present. It was further anticipated that the community environment would benefit from ensuring that the existing settlements were maintained or enhanced as a result of new development.

Sites with no access issues were considered most compatible as minimal additional infrastructure would likely be required, thereby potentially benefiting the local landscape whilst making most efficient use of existing resources. Furthermore, sites with good public transport links with the potential for improvements were thought to benefit numerous SEA parameters including air quality, climatic factors, human health and the population.

The ability of the existing road network to absorb any additional traffic was considered important in terms of ensuring that air quality did not deteriorate and congestion issues did not arise which could lead to noise effects with indirect impacts to human health and people’s quality of life.

The LAF further contains criteria relating to the distance of any development to public transport nodes and local amenities e.g. town centres, local shops, GP services etc. Ideally, it was considered that the closer the development was to

these facilities, the more compatible the option was with the SEA environmental objectives. For example, locating close to local amenities was envisaged to reduce the need for private car use and encourage people to walk to shops etc thereby potentially benefiting their health whilst reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

The risk of flooding at any site was considered next within the LAF. Inevitably, those sites considered at little or no risk to medium risk were considered the best options. This option was compatible with water objective 2, which details that areas of flood risk should be avoided in the first instance and was found to be potentially compatible with human health objective 1. This was because flooding can cause mental (stress etc) as well as physical health issues.

The next technical issue covered was the capacity of sewerage and water infrastructure serving any proposed site. The option stipulating that there would be no sewerage or water infrastructure issues was the most compatible with the SEA objectives. Plants with the ability to take on extra connections were considered to minimise the risk of pollution into nearby waterbodies whilst also being compatible with material assets objective 4 through ensuring connections can be made.

Options for development on, or in close proximity to, prime agricultural land were put forward next. Avoiding any impacts on prime agricultural land was compatible with the soils objective 2 and therefore the preferred environmental option.

Following on from this, constraints to development such as biodiversity sites, cultural heritage, air quality, climate change and material assets, were laid out. In relation to this, the most compatible options with the SEA objectives related to the avoidance of any designated and un-designated biodiversity and cultural heritage features such as Natura 2000 sites, SSSIs, Scheduled Monuments, archaeology and Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes. Avoidance of the latter also considered compatible with landscape objective 1.

Development located close to open space and Core Paths, so as to assist in the promotion of healthy lifestyles was thought to be the most compatible option in the health section. In terms of air quality and climatic factors, the assurance that development did not present a risk of breaching air quality objectives or contribute to greenhouse gas emissions were considered the most environmentally preferred options.

6.3 Land Assessment Framework Results

Leading on from the SEA compatibility assessment of the LAF components, South Ayrshire Council completed the land assessment through a RAG analysis, as detailed in Chapter 5, Section 5.4.3.

The resultant constraints maps included in the MIR illustrate that the significantly constrained land within South Ayrshire is generally Greenfield surrounding the urban areas of Ayr, Prestwick and Troon. This result ties in with the MIR strategy which does not propose to develop in this area and, moreover, seeks to protect part of it. The Council concludes that many of the rural towns and villages in the North and South of South Ayrshire would appear to offer the potential for growth in that they are comparatively less constrained than areas around Ayr, Prestwick and Troon.

6.4 Environmental Assessment – Policy Options

An environmental assessment was undertaken of the MIR preferred policy options and their reasonable alternatives. The following sections summarise the results of the assessment with further details set out in the environmental assessment matrix, found in Appendix E of this Report.

6.4.1 Glasgow Prestwick International Airport

The preferred policy option relating to GPIA details that an Action Plan will be prepared for the Airport and surrounding area to link future Airport and non- Airport development, promoting its expansion and runway facilities. It was considered that this option could have a range of effects on the environment due to the measures proposed. Uncertain adverse effects were thought likely to occur to local biodiversity, landscape character, air quality and noise as a result of Airport expansion. These effects should be considered in more detail at project-level to establish the exact extent of any effect. Project-level mitigation is identified as important to avoid or minimise uncertain adverse effects, but this is a detailed design matter that cannot be recommended by the SEA.

Mixed effects to climatic factors and also to soils and geology were anticipated. Whilst the expansion of airports is thought to increase greenhouse gas emissions, the option also states that renewable energy industries will be promoted thereby leading to both adverse and beneficial effects. In addition, although brownfield land development in the form of the second runway is promoted, other new development in and around the Airport could utilise agricultural land thereby leading to potential adverse effects.

There are three alternatives to the preferred option proposed. Alternative 1 discusses meeting the Airport and housing needs within and around the Airport and Monkton separately. This was anticipated to have several adverse effects including those to biodiversity, soil and the landscape although the extent of these effects was uncertain. Uncertainty arose due to insufficient detail on the location of development at this stage to assess the exact effects.

Adverse effects were also thought possible to cultural heritage as Monkton is partly designated as a Conservation Area. It was therefore thought that the LDP would benefit from policy which stipulates for the protection of the integrity and setting of the Monkton Conservation Area. Project-level mitigation is identified as important to avoid or minimise uncertain adverse effects, but this is a detailed design matter that cannot be recommended by the SEA.

Alternative 2 would require future development within the business areas surrounding the airport to be airport-related. The option is stated to potentially increase pressure on existing industrial areas with the potential for greater utilisation of Greenfield land. It was therefore considered that this would lead to minor adverse effects in relation to soils and geology as well as the landscape with further potential adverse effects to material assets. Other effects were more uncertain such as those on biodiversity, cultural heritage and the water environment as it is dependant on the exact location of the new development.

Finally, alternative 3 states that the release of the second runway for non-airport related development is not favoured. This was thought to have potential adverse effects with regards to flooding as it is recognised that land in and around the Airport is identified as of at risk of flooding according to the SEPA flood map. This area is

however, brownfield land so it was considered that there may be some benefit to soils and geology and material assets. Effects with regards to the population were more uncertain as it would be dependant on how the land would be utilised in the future.

6.4.2 Housing

Meeting Housing Needs

The preferred option proposes the utilisation of the higher threshold target contained within the Housing Needs and Demands Assessment which was thought to direct housing development to areas most at need and therefore was envisaged to have minor benefits in the long term to the population of South Ayrshire. No other effects were considered likely through this option.

Its alternatives relate to using the middle or lower threshold target as a guide to meeting identified overall housing needs. These were considered to have mixed effects to the region’s population as it was thought to lead to possible uncertainties within the housing market so requiring lower build rates to avoid surplus housing land.

Addressing Lower Build Rates

A reduction in build rate to 2014 of 50% compared to Housing Land Audit (HLA) figures, assuming an annual build rate at the 2009 level of 200 units pa. This preferred option was considered to affect only the population, providing minor benefits on a regional scale. The option allows for the current economic situation and a slower rise in housing completions over the short term, with a higher build rate in the longer term and so was thought to provide short to long term benefits.

Alternatively, it was proposed that only the 2009 forecast of effective land supply was used as a basis for calculating the shortfall in housing requirements. This was again anticipated to only affect the population however, this time, leading to minor adverse effects as housing requirements may not be met.

Housing Growth Strategy (North / South of Area)

Locating Housing Growth

It was considered that the initial preferred policy option associated with guiding growth to smaller settlements that are satellite to Ayr, Prestwick and Troon including Maybole would lead to uncertain effects on biodiversity, cultural heritage, the water environment, soils and geology, landscape and noise.

Mitigation was proposed to protect, and where possible, enhance biodiversity, water quality, cultural heritage, soils and geology and the local landscape character when developing housing around existing settlements. The proposed mitigation measure is detailed in Table 6-1. As a result of mitigation, the policy option was amended and it was then considered that overall there would be moderate long term benefits to the natural and built environment as a result.

Three different alternatives are proposed for this option. The first relates to concentrating new housing land releases to Ayr, Prestwick and Troon. Again, it was thought that this would have uncertain effects to the same SEA topics as with the preferred option. It was considered however that there could be moderate benefits to the population due to the proximity to existing towns.

The second alternative also provided several uncertain effects due to the potential for development to affect various environmental parameters. This alternative relates to the dispersal of housing land releases to smaller existing settlements in the north of South Ayrshire to retain accessibility. It was thought however to place a significant burden on smaller settlements to accommodate the volume of housing required. Overall uncertain effects on the environment were thought possible as it was largely dependant on the exact location of development.

The final alternative considers meeting the need for housing by locating new housing land primarily within existing settlements in the south of South Ayrshire. This was thought to have adverse effects to the population and material assets due to the lack of existing infrastructure in these areas to accommodate additional housing and the remoteness from employment opportunities and other amenities.

Supporting housing development within Girvan as well as exploring the housing issues for each village in the southern area was thought to lead to potential minor long term local and regional benefits to the population. Furthermore, the policy option considers the protection of the landscape setting thereby allowing for minor landscape benefits.

The initial SEA assessment proposed mitigation to this option (see Table 6-1, overarching mitigation) to protect and, where possible, enhance several of the environmental parameters. As a result, a new preferred housing policy option was proposed, taking on board the SEA recommendations made. This option was considered to have overall moderate benefits to the environment however enhancements were still thought possible and, to increase the certainty of long-term benefits, it was thought that the LDP should include a policy setting out a requirement to obtain a contribution from developers towards biodiversity, cultural heritage, water environment and landscape enhancements.

Two alternatives to the preferred option are outlined. The first includes restricting housing development to Girvan and infill sites within existing village boundaries. This is thought to have minor local to regional adverse effects on the population through limiting housing in these locations. The second alternative considers future housing sites on a case-by-case basis which was envisaged to lead to some uncertain adverse effects to biodiversity, soils and the landscape due to the potential for piecemeal development. Further adverse effects were thought possible with regards the population as it is not considered to allow for growth in these locations.

Affordable Housing

The preferred options were deemed to provide minor benefits to the population through the provision of affordable housing so potentially enhancing the quality of life for those in need of housing. The alternative option to maintain the current policy approach, potentially constraining development of marginal sites in the southern towns and villages, was thought to lead to potential adverse effects to the population who require affordable housing in marginal areas.

The preferred option was thought to have minor local and regional benefits to the population through the varied allocation of affordable housing contribution. It was anticipated that this would benefit the quality of life for those in need of housing and direct housing to where it is needed the most. The alternative was to maintain the current policy measure of 25% developer contribution target however; this was thought to have uncertain effects to the population as although it was considered to

potentially still benefit people, it may affect future housing provision and economic development.

Rural Housing

Settlement Strategy

The initial preferred option was considered to have uncertain effects overall, as it was deemed to be dependant on whether existing rural policies were to be applied across South Ayrshire. Mitigation was proposed for the re-wording of the policy option as stated in Table 6-1 and this was taken on board by SAC and the preferred option was amended. As a result of this, minor long term regional benefits were thought achievable as the policy would likely benefit the whole population of South Ayrshire with benefits to the rural economy and natural resources.

Housing Clusters

Limiting extensions to existing clusters or groups of houses outwith settlement boundaries which have access to amenities and infrastructure, as specified in the preferred policy option was thought to have minor long term local benefits to the population. Furthermore, landscape benefits were envisaged due to the assurance that extensions would not damage the landscape value or character of the area.

Two alternatives to this policy option are included in the MIR. One is for housing to only be permitted within identified settlement boundaries, or where it supports the needs of agriculture and rural businesses. This was thought to have minor benefits to several SEA parameters including soils and geology, landscape, population and material assets.

The second alternative was for individual houses in the countryside to be viewed favourably where they meet Council guidelines on setting and design. This was seen to have overall uncertain adverse effects as development was considered to potentially require new infrastructure and access to amenities and services may be limited.

Conversion, Replacement and Extensions to Houses in the Countryside

The first initial preferred option was considered to have uncertain effects to cultural heritage features as measures specified to support proposals for the conversion of redundant buildings could affect historic features in a beneficial or adverse manner. Mitigation was therefore proposed (as laid out in Table 6-1) for the policy option to clarify the potential for Listed Building restoration. The preferred option was duly amended to allow for the consideration of support for proposals for the conversion of traditional buildings that are genuinely redundant, in particular facilitating the restoration of Listed Buildings. Overall, it was therefore considered that minor long term local benefits would be achieved through this option.

The alternative is that the LDP would not include policies for the conversion of buildings. This was anticipated to lead to uncertain effects as buildings could then lay vacant and potentially deteriorate the landscape character whilst also affecting cultural heritage.

The second preferred option in this category is associated with the acceptability of proposals for housing extensions and replacements. Effects were considered uncertain as there was thought to be the potential for effects on cultural heritage assets. The alternative would be to resist proposals for housing extensions and

replacements in the countryside. This was assumed to have no significant effects on the environment.

Housing to support Agriculture and Rural Businesses

The first preferred option relates to the LDP containing policies that are supportive of housing to support the needs of agriculture and other businesses. Minor long term benefits were envisaged overall as the policy encourages housing for farming and rural businesses which was thought to promote the rural economy of South Ayrshire. The second preferred option looks at securing the delivery of rural business residences and this was thought to have minor population benefits through the potential to enhance rural economic growth.

Two alternatives have also been proposed. The first relates to viewing proposals for housing associated with agriculture and rural businesses in the same way as other housing in the countryside. This was deemed to have potential minor adverse effects on the local economy of rural communities. The second alternative would be not to require a business plan for such housing which may permit housing not strictly required for business purposes. This was not considered to have any significant effects on the environment.

6.4.3 Ayr and Troon Ports

Preferred options relating to Ayr and Troon ports were on the whole thought to have benefits to the local and regional economy, thereby leading to population benefits. Some uncertainty was present with regards potential effects on biodiversity, cultural heritage, the water environment, landscape character and soils and geology however a commitment to protecting and, where possible, enhancing these factors was thought to lead to potential benefits.

The preferred option to identify a traffic management plan for Ayr port was considered to have uncertain effects to cultural heritage due to Ayr Harbour categorised as a B Listed building as well as the presence of other historic assets in the area. Protecting these features was thought to lead to minor cultural heritage benefits. It was thought that traffic flow could be improved in this location and so localised air quality improvements were envisaged and overall minor benefits deemed possible.

An alternative to the first preferred option states that the Council will continue to operate a hands-off approach to managing these land use aspects of port operations. Effects on the environment were thought more uncertain in this instance dependant on the ability to efficiently deliver the port aspirations without Council support.

6.4.4 Craigie Estate

Preferred options relating to the Craigie Estate were anticipated to have long-term benefits to the population locally and in the wider region due to the protection of land for educational, recreational and community facilities. This was also expected to benefit health indirectly, as physical activity levels may increase. The development of a Masterplan detailing further educational and accommodation facilities and traffic management on campus was also envisaged to have population benefits.

Development of the Craigie Estate was thought to lead to flooding issues as the River Ayr runs within its grounds. Mitigation was proposed for the Craigie Estate

options (see Table 6-1) and the preferred option relating to the development of a Masterplan was altered to take on board these recommendations.

The alternative to a Masterplan is a piecemeal approach to development. Uncertain effects on many SEA topics were likely to occur through this alternative option, as exact effects would depend on the positioning of new development.

6.4.5 Creating an Effective Transport Network

A77 Corridor Study

The A77 Corridor Study preferred option details many potential interventions to improve the A77 corridor as well as further improvements required to handle future housing development such as park and ride facilities and feeder bus services into these. It was considered that the numerous measures proposed would have uncertain benefits to the natural and built environment. Uncertainty lay with potential effects on biodiversity, cultural heritage and the landscape. Although the option specifies that care will be taken to protect and, where possible, enhance these parameters, the extent of measures proposed may make it difficult to avoid such impacts.

Mixed effects were deemed possible with regards air quality and climatic factors as improving the A77 could increase air pollution whereas, conversely, measures encouraging modal shift could reduce emissions. Benefits to the region’s population were likely to be achieved through improved access to services, amenities and employment with further benefits to material assets due to efficient use of existing resources. Mitigation was proposed (detailed in Table 6-1) to introduce a requirement for biodiversity, cultural heritage, water environment and/or landscape benefits, which would have to be demonstrated through project-level Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The first alternative to this option to not utilise the existing transport network efficiently was considered to potentially take up larger areas of Greenfield and lead to significant infrastructure requirements for new development. This was overall thought to provide moderate adverse effects to the natural and built environment.

The second alternative to improve rail services including the provision of new stations at St Quivox, Heathfield and Mossblown was thought to have several uncertain effects to biodiversity, cultural heritage, soils and the landscape as the exact location of development was unknown. It was anticipated however that there would be benefits to the population, material assets, air quality and climatic factors through improved accessibility, utilisation of existing resources and the potential for modal shift onto public transport.

6.4.6 Green and Rural Economy

Central Scotland Green Networks

Moderate long term regional benefits to the natural and built environment were thought achievable through the preferred policy option relating to the Central Scotland Green Networks (CSGN). The CSGN can provide an accessible, high quality environmental setting which in turn can enhance the existing tourism asset and attract new businesses to the area. This was thought to benefit the region’s population. Further benefits were anticipated to biodiversity and the landscape due to the environmental improvements specified, particularly along key transport routes which could facilitate the movement of species between habitats.

Alternatively, it is proposed that environmental and economic development objectives will be promoted independently of the CSGN framework. This was considered to lead to minor regional benefits, however as key sites of economic, social and environmental importance may be overlooked, it was not considered to be as beneficial as the preferred option.

Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere

Biospheres aim to conserve areas of excellence and protection of the broadleaf forests and woodland ecosystems which was considered to be of moderate benefit to biodiversity and the local landscape. The preferred option states that the Council will support the Biosphere initiative which was thought to lead to further benefits to the population due to the potential for increased tourism and so enhanced economic growth.

The alternative is to wait until a decision is made on whether the Biosphere Reserve status is confirmed. It may mean however that the Council would not capitalise on the opportunities offered by the Biosphere and the wider range of options in the ‘Transition’ area. This was thought to have minor benefits to biodiversity as it also specifies that existing statutory habitat and wildlife designations would be upheld. It was anticipated that there would be no other significant effects resulting from this alternative.

Dark Skies

Minor long term local and regional benefits were thought to result from the preferred option. This was due to the potential benefits to biodiversity within the Forest Park, climatic factors due to the commitment to energy conservation and population as the project encourages tourism and sustainable development. The alternative option was not to support or recognise the Dark Skies Project objectives and this was considered to have no significant effects on the environment.

Access

The preferred option aims to protect rights of way, core paths and long distance routes from any adverse effects of development. It was expected that this would lead to minor health benefits to the population of South Ayrshire through maintaining opportunities for walking and cycling. Furthermore, sustainable access to amenities and services was thought to have minor population benefits. The Council considers there to be no reasonable alternative to this option.

Coast

Promoting the protection and enhancement of coastal assets, optimising opportunities for sustainable development was considered to have the potential for a number of minor benefits to the environment. Several designated biodiversity sites such as Turnberry Dunes SSSI are located along the coastline as well as European Protected and Priority species including the Great-crested newt and Oyster plant amongst others. The preferred option was considered to have mixed effects to South Ayrshire’s biodiversity as whilst benefits were envisaged, there was the potential for adverse effects resulting from potential new development in these locations.

It was thought that adverse effects could be possible to the water environment as much of the coastal area of South Ayrshire is at risk of flooding from the sea. The Water Framework Directive has introduced objectives relating to restoring natural

coastal geomorphology. Sea level rise combined with new coastal development can generate pressure to increasingly modify the coastline with flood and/or erosion defences. Coastal development should be sited appropriately to avoid effects associated with the management of current and projected flood and erosion risk. Water quality of coastal areas could also be affected depending on the type of development proposed/location of development.

Benefits were envisaged to human health through linkages to the CSGN and to the population by supporting sustainable coastal development thereby potentially enhancing economic growth. The alternative is for the Council to retain the existing strategy. This was anticipated to provide similar benefits to the natural and built environment through specification of their protection and facilitation of opportunities for economic regeneration.

The second preferred option relates to the consideration of the draft Firth of Clyde Marine Spatial Plan which sets out a clearer direction for managing coastal development. Minor long term regional benefits were predicted through this option overall however it was considered that there could be the potential for adverse effects to some parameters similar to those detailed in the previous paragraphs. No alternative was considered to be appropriate for this option.

Identifying coastal areas where potential exists to improve and develop coastal access paths are measures considered in the final preferred option in this section. In addition, it is stated coastal development proposals should incorporate design layouts to accommodate coastal access. This was thought to lead to potential adverse effects with regards soil erosion and damage to designated biodiversity and geological sites through improved access. Mitigation was proposed (detailed in Table 6-1) to ensure that potential adverse effects on biodiversity and soils and geology would be eliminated. Minor benefits were however thought achievable to health as the option promotes access to paths along the coast thereby potentially increasing physical activity. No alternative was put forward for this option.

Tourism

The preferred option relating to tourism states that the LDP will seek to promote opportunities for tourism development that will protect, enhance and optimise the environmental assets of South Ayrshire. This was therefore deemed to have minor regional benefits to biodiversity, cultural heritage, the water environment, soils and geology and the landscape. Furthermore, it was thought that human health and population could benefit as a result of tourism development which is promoted in line with the CSGN.

The alternative is that tourism proposals are judged on the basis of their economic credentials, with limited consideration of the environment. This was therefore thought to have adverse effects to many of the environmental parameters, with the exception of the population which was envisaged to benefit through the promotion of tourism which could bring additional employment opportunities and enhanced economic growth.

Greenbelt

The preferred options in relation to the greenbelt designations in South Ayrshire were thought to have uncertain benefits to the natural and built environment overall. Potential benefits were deemed achievable the population due to the potential for increased availability of land for housing with regards the greenbelt boundary review. Effects on other environmental aspects were more uncertain, in particular

with regards the landscape and soils and geology. The effects on these parameters were considered dependant on how the greenbelt boundary would be altered.

Alternative options ranged from not adopting a greenbelt policy to retaining existing greenbelt boundaries without review. Not adopting a greenbelt policy within the LDP was considered to have potential adverse effects particularly with regards the landscape character and potential effects on Scenic Areas in South Ayrshire. Furthermore, it was envisaged that the population could be detrimentally affected due to inefficient management of settlement growth. Conversely, retaining existing greenbelt boundaries was thought to benefit the landscape and soils although effects on the population were thought to be adverse in nature.

6.4.7 Climate Change

Flooding

The preferred policy option in relation to flooding states that a LDP policy will be developed stipulating that a flood risk assessment will be prepared to accompany any planning application in areas within or adjoining areas of unacceptable risk. Directing development away from areas of flood risk was expected to be of benefit to the water environment as well as climatic factors through the promotion of development resilient to the effects of climate change. In addition, indirect benefits to human health were thought possible as flooding can result in both mental and physical illness.

The alternative to this policy is to allow development to take place in areas of flood risk. Evidently, this would likely lead to adverse effects on the water environment as well as potential indirect effects to human health due to the increased flood risk. It was also expected that this policy option would have detrimental effects to the population as quality of life could deteriorate.

Sustainable Construction

Promoting a reduction in carbon emissions for new developments could contribute to national targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. It was therefore considered that the preferred policy option could have minor long-term national benefits to climatic factors. This option may also lead to more energy efficient development through efforts to reduce carbon emissions thereby further benefiting climatic factors. There was no reasonable alternative to this policy option.

Waste Management

The preferred waste management option relates to ascertaining the most appropriate location for an Ayrshire wide Residual Waste facility through the findings of the Ayrshire Joint Strategic Waste Management Project Group. It was expected that this would lead to mainly uncertain effects on the SEA topics due to the strategic nature of the policy. Uncertain benefits were envisaged to occur to air quality and climatic factors due to the reduced dependence on landfill. Benefits to material assets were also predicted as it would likely contribute to regional and national waste targets in relation to sustainable waste management.

The alternative option was to allocate a site within South Ayrshire without having regard to the findings of the Ayrshire Joint Strategic Waste Management Project Group. It was thought that this could lead to much more uncertainty as to the potential effects on the natural and built environment. It may be that issues such as the distance that waste is transported to the facility and the surrounding

infrastructure capacity could occur, thereby putting additional pressure on the environment.

Air Quality

The preferred policy option in this category relates to the requirement of proposals potentially affecting air quality to be assessed against the National Air Quality Objectives. It was thought that this would lead to moderate benefits to the regional and national air quality, ensuring that air quality standards are not breached in South Ayrshire. Indirect benefits were thought possible also as improving air quality can lead to human health improvements however this effect was deemed more uncertain. No feasible alternative was identified for this policy option.

6.4.8 Meeting Infrastructure Needs

The measures outlined in the preferred policy option relate to developer requirements to provide infrastructure for new development. This is considered to lead to minor long term regional benefits to the natural and built environment due to the commitment to providing new infrastructure to serve development. Effects on the landscape, biodiversity and human health were considered to be uncertain dependant on developers meeting all the infrastructure requirements.

There are several alternatives proposed for the preferred option. Not differentiating between infrastructure types was considered to still provide minor benefits. Allowing viability to affect the level of payment required for Type 1 infrastructure was not considered by the Council to be a feasible alternative. It was also deemed to have uncertain adverse effects through the environmental assessment. The final alternative relates to seeking contributions from non-residential commercial developments for Type 2 infrastructure. This was also thought to have adverse effects on the environment due to the potential deterioration of this infrastructure type without adequate funding.

Contributions towards the A77

The preferred policy option and its alternative were not considered to have any significant effects on the natural or built environment.

Education Contributions

Statutory supplementary guidance adopted alongside the LDP relating to the funding of new or upgraded educational facilities, as stated in the preferred policy option, was considered to be of benefit to South Ayrshire’s population. Its alternative was anticipated to lead to a lack of funding for upgraded educational facilities and therefore potential adverse effects to the population were envisaged.

Affordable Housing Contributions

The preferred option with regards affordable housing contributions was considered to have uncertain benefits to the population through the potential for improved provision of housing for people in need, thereby having possible benefits to their quality of life. Its alternatives, allowing for no flexibility for deferring or phasing financial payments in lieu on site affordable housing, was thought to have uncertain adverse effects as the option may hinder affordable housing provision.

Retail Impact

The preferred option was thought to have minor local benefits to the population through the use of developer contributions to assist in improving town centres where

a proposed development in an out of centre location is projected to have a detrimental impact on the viability and vitality of a town centre. In addition, developer contributions were also thought to potentially improve access to town centres.

The alternative to this was to maintain the current system which was deemed to have minor adverse effects to the population as the viability and vitality of town centres could deteriorate.

6.4.9 Ayr Renaissance

Defining Ayr Town Centre Boundaries

Options for altering existing town centre boundaries for Ayr have been identified in accordance with Scottish Planning Policy, in terms of maintaining the role and uses of town centres. There are four options proposed, two of which are preferred options, one partially preferred option and a final alternative option.

Option A relates to changing the northern boundary to King Street which was not thought to have any significant environmental effects. Option B considers a small extension to include Ayr Academy and some surrounding associated uses. This was thought to have some uncertain effects to biodiversity, cultural heritage and the water environment depending on if funding was secured for environmental improvements. Minor benefits were also thought achievable to the local population due to the potential for improved economic growth.

Option C is considered to be a partially preferred option. It details an extension along South Harbour Street to the Esplanade. It was thought that this could have uncertain effects to biodiversity and the water environment and so mitigation was proposed for their protection and enhancement where possible. Minor benefits were deemed likely to the population due to the potential for regeneration in the area, promoting economic growth.

Option D is the alternative option. This is to include the office area based around Wellington Square, Barns Street, Miller Road and Dalblair Road. This was anticipated to only be of benefit to the population due to possible employment opportunities. A further alternative is to retain the current town centre boundaries. This was considered to have no significant effects on the natural or built environment.

South Ayrshire’s Network of Town Centres

Retaining the existing network of centres identified in the current South Ayrshire Local Plan, guiding large scale retail development to Ayr, Prestwick, Troon, Maybole and Girvan was thought to provide benefits solely to the regional population due to the potential for increased employment opportunities and access to amenities. The alternative was to define networks in the form of a hierarchy. This was thought to have minor benefits only to the local and regional population through the promotion of economic growth, providing potential additional employment. There may be a minor disadvantage to this alternative over the preferred, but the degree/scale of difference cannot be adequately detected by the SEA.

Sequential Approach

Applying the sequential approach only to large scale retail development proposals was considered to have minor long term benefits to the natural and built

environment of South Ayrshire. This was considered particularly with regards potential effects to the population through easy access to amenities and the promotion of walking and cycling opportunities thereby benefiting health. It was also thought that there could be improvements to air quality and climatic factors as locating retail development to areas accessible by foot and bike could encourage modal shift thereby reducing emissions. Mitigation was proposed to incorporate a commitment to use of vacant and derelict land (as detailed in Table 6-1).

The alternative was for a sequential approach for a wide range of development which could lead to minor benefits overall with moderate benefits envisaged to the population due to the promotion of accessible locations for development and encouraging economic growth of towns. Furthermore, there would likely be a reduced need to travel to amenities, services and employment which could reduce emissions as well as improve opportunities to walk and cycle thereby benefiting health.

Town Centre Opportunities

The preferred option is associated with the development of Supplementary Guidance for Ayr Town Centre, in consultation with Ayr Renaissance LLP, to identify under utilised and vacant listed buildings, vacant and derelict sites as potential development opportunities. This was envisaged to lead to benefits to historic assets within Ayr as well as minor benefits associated with the use of vacant and derelict sites. Mixed effects to the water environment were predicted as long-term brownfield sites may be essentially ‘greenfield’, having a permeable surface. Their development could increase surface runoff, with potential effects on water pollution and flood risk. However conversely, their development with appropriate mitigation could reduce contamination of watercourses.

The option further directs development to locations easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport which has the potential to reduce air pollution and enhance human health. Moderate benefits to the population were thought possible due to the regeneration potential, encouraging economic growth and leading to potential job creation. Furthermore, ensuring development is located in areas easily accessible to sustainable transport options were envisaged to lead to additional benefits.

The alternative is that the Council will consider development proposals on an individual basis which could undermine the viability and vitality of Ayr. It was anticipated that this could lead to minor adverse effects. This alternative would likely have adverse effects on soils (indirectly via inefficient land use patterns), air quality, climate change and population. Furthermore, it could lead to out-of-centre development, which, in turn, may encourage greater use of private vehicles with potential effects on air quality and greenhouse gases. In addition, it may have effects on a number of natural environmental parameters as it may encourage development in areas that effect biodiversity, cultural heritage, water and landscape.

6.4.10 Girvan Town Centre

Town Centre Boundary

The preferred option for changes to the town centre boundary of Girvan was expected to lead to moderate long term benefits to the natural and built environment. The population was thought to significantly benefit as a result of the potential for increased employment opportunities and an improved community environment. Furthermore, leisure facilities are promoted which may increase

physical activity. Uncertainty was deemed possible with some environmental parameters including cultural heritage and the landscape until more information would be available.

The alternative to the preferred policy option is to retain the existing town centre boundary. This was considered to have no significant effects to the natural or built environment.

Managing Uses

Retaining the policy to guide new retail and commercial development to the existing centre in line with SPP8 sequential approach was considered to lead to minor long term local to regional benefits to the natural and built environment. Particularly, it was assumed that moderate benefits would be achieved for the population because of the preference to locate retail and commercial development to the centre, promoting accessible locations and economic growth. It was also considered that promoting accessible locations could encourage physical activity thereby leading to potential health benefits.

The alternative was thought to have overall uncertain adverse effects on the environment as maintaining core and peripheral retail zones within Girvan Town Centre could restrict uses within certain locations. It does however encourage development of brownfield sites which was thought to have minor benefits to soils and geology.

6.4.11 Maybole

Retaining the existing town centre boundaries and highlighting development opportunities within this core area to stimulate regeneration were thought to have minor benefits overall to the environment. It was anticipated that this would be achieved through benefits to soils as a result of potential vacant and derelict land use as well as to the population due to the promotion of regeneration.

The alternative is to reduce the town centre area to focus uses into a smaller area. It was thought that this could limit economic opportunities in Maybole thereby leading to potential minor adverse effects to the local population.

The second preferred option for Maybole is that Supplementary Guidance for Maybole will be developed which will highlight development opportunities for different land uses within the town, protect certain land uses within the town, protect the line of the by-pass from other development and determine the appropriate settlement boundary.

This was considered to have several uncertain effects on the environment, dependent on how the settlement boundaries would alter. Implementation of the bypass was considered to have the potential for adverse effects in relation to biodiversity and the landscape with mixed effects to air quality and climatic factors. It was however noted that the bypass has been assessed within South Ayrshire Council’s Local Transport Strategy and so its effects have not been emphasised through this assessment.

The alternative is to have a set settlement boundary with designated areas for certain land uses within the town which could have potentially stifled redevelopment and limited opportunities for growth. This was thought to have overall uncertain adverse effects due to the potential to limit economic opportunities within Maybole through designating certain areas for certain land uses. This may limit opportunities

for new business. In addition there may be effects on the natural environment and cultural heritage depending on changes to the existing settlement boundary.

6.5 Mitigation and Recommendations

Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the Environmental Report to provide information on measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the Plan.

Table 6-1 highlights the preferred policy options that have associated mitigation measures proposed to either alleviate as far as possible, adverse effects or enhance environmental benefits. The full assessment of these options can be found in Appendix E. Within the table, the policy option is detailed, along with the initial assessment weighting, proposed mitigation / recommendations and the response provided by the Council as to the acceptance, acceptance in part or rejection of mitigation as appropriate.

Table 6-1: Mitigation and Recommendations to South Ayrshire Council

Policy Option	Initial Assessment Weighting	Mitigation / Recommendation	SAC Response	Re-assessed Weighting	Reassessment with Mitigation
Housing					
Over-arching mitigation for several housing options as detailed in Appendix E.	n/a	Care should be taken to protect and, where possible, enhance biodiversity, water quality, cultural heritage, soils and geology and the local landscape character when developing housing around existing settlements. Areas of flood risk, prime agricultural sites should be avoided and areas of vacant and derelict sites promoted.	New preferred policy option added: <i>The Guidance should aim to protect and where possible enhance biodiversity interest, cultural heritage, the water environment, and landscape character. The Guidance should aim to utilise vacant and derelict land, safeguard prime agricultural land and avoid development within close proximity to noise sensitive receptors.</i>	n/a	Those policy options potentially benefiting from this new housing policy option have been re-assessed as to their effects and the results are detailed in Appendix E.
Preferred Option: The Guidance should aim to protect and where possible enhance biodiversity interest, cultural heritage, the water environment, and landscape character. The Guidance should aim to utilise vacant and derelict land, safeguard prime agricultural land and avoid development within close proximity to noise sensitive receptors.	++	In order to increase the certainty of long-term benefits, the LDP should include policy setting out a requirement to obtain a contribution from developers towards biodiversity, cultural heritage, water environment and landscape enhancements. Where feasible, this should form part of other developing policies, existing initiatives and programmes in order to maximise the benefit of such contributions.	This recommendation is not accepted. The positive statements to protect environmental assets have been incorporated throughout the MIR, and this should ensure development does not impact adversely on, and where possible enhances these assets. However a key aspect of the vision is minimising the level of contributions required from developers, to essential contributions. This is not considered as such, as set out above, and may prohibit development.	++	Although the overall assessment weighting would remain as moderate beneficial, uncertainty as to the extent of effects to several parameters would be addressed through acceptance of the recommendation.
Preferred Option: To distribute new residential development around Ayr, Prestwick and Troon; but also to other existing settlements (such as Dundonald, Symington, Monkton, Tarbolton, Mossblown, Annbank and Coylton) in the north of South Ayrshire, that benefit from access to South Ayrshire's transport network.	?	Care should be taken to protect and, where possible, enhance biodiversity, water quality, cultural heritage, soils and geology and the local landscape character when developing housing around existing settlements. Areas of flood risk, prime agricultural sites should be avoided and areas of vacant and derelict sites promoted.	Key preferred options added to MIR to state that greenfield housing development to be guided in accordance with housing growth strategy; and that this will seek to protect and, where possible, enhance biodiversity, water quality, cultural heritage, soils and geology and the local landscape character when developing housing around existing settlements. Also sets out those areas of flood risk and prime agricultural sites which should be avoided and areas of vacant and derelict sites promoted. This is partially also covered by the Land Assessment Framework.	++	Moderate, regional, long term direct beneficial effects are likely after mitigation as uncertain effects on the environment such as biodiversity, cultural heritage and the water environment are anticipated to be largely avoided.
Preferred Option: The preferred option is for the LDP to remove the RPA and RDA distinctions and for rural development policies to apply across South Ayrshire. This would align more closely with national policy and guidance and would allow for a more flexible approach to support rural communities. While this may place the north of the area under slightly greater pressure for development of houses in the countryside, this is not expected to undermine the strategic direction of the LDP.	?	Preferred Option: The preferred option is for the LDP to remove the RPA and RDA distinctions and for existing rural development policies to apply across South Ayrshire. This would align more closely with national policy and guidance and would allow for a more flexible approach to support rural communities. While this may place the north of the area under slightly greater pressure for development of houses in the countryside, this is not expected to undermine the strategic direction of the LDP.	Accepted. Preferred option amended to: <i>The preferred option is for the LDP to remove the RPA and RDA distinctions and for existing rural development policies to apply across South Ayrshire. This would align more closely with national policy and guidance and would allow for a more flexible approach to support rural communities. While this may place the north of the area under slightly greater pressure for development of houses in the countryside, this is not expected to undermine the strategic direction of the LDP.</i>	+	Minor regional, long term benefits after mitigation: This policy is likely to benefit the whole of the rural population of South Ayrshire as existing RPA and RDA distinctions are to be removed and the existing policies to apply across the rural area. This is likely to benefit the rural economy and population over a wider area than the previous policies and safeguard the environment and natural resources.
Preferred Option: The LDP will set out policies that are supportive of proposals for the conversion of redundant buildings, with key consideration being given to whether the buildings are of traditional design and capable of repair or restoration.	+	The LDP will set out policies that are supportive of proposals for the conversion of redundant buildings, with key consideration being given to whether the buildings are of traditional design and capable of repair or restoration. In particular facilitating the restoration of Listed buildings.	Accepted. The preferred policy option was amended to: <i>The LDP will set out policies that are supportive of proposals for the conversion of traditional buildings that are genuinely redundant, in particular facilitating the restoration of Listed buildings. Key consideration will be given to whether the buildings are of traditional design and capable of repair or restoration and the impact of the proposal on the overall character of the building.</i>	+	With mitigation, it is envisaged that there will be minor benefits to cultural heritage however it is not considered that the overall assessment weighting will alter significantly.
Ayr and Troon Ports					
Preferred Option: The Council will seek to ensure the retention and continued development of existing sea port facilities at Ayr, Troon and Girvan.	+	Care should be taken to protect and, where possible, enhance biodiversity, marine water quality, cultural heritage assets and the local landscape character when developing in and around the ports. Development should also be sited appropriately to avoid the risk of flooding.	Accepted and incorporated all recommendations. This has been incorporated to cover all port options, so as not to duplicate text.	+	With mitigation, the overall assessment weighting is not thought to alter however uncertain effects are envisaged to change to minor beneficial.

Policy Option	Initial Assessment Weighting	Mitigation / Recommendation	SAC Response	Re-assessed Weighting	Reassessment with Mitigation
Preferred Option: The LDP shall recognise the intention of ABP to develop Masterplans for the development and future management of Ayr and Troon Ports; and will work in consultation with ABP in the preparation of the Masterplan. An Action Plan/Supplementary Guidance will be developed following the completion of a Masterplan to deliver aspirations of the Masterplan, where they meet Council objectives. Through the Action Plan, the LDP will adopt a flexible approach to encourage a wide range of appropriate uses within the port boundaries (particularly to encourage tourism and leisure uses).	+	Care should be taken to protect and, where possible, enhance biodiversity, marine water quality, cultural heritage assets and the local landscape character when developing in and around the ports whilst avoiding areas of high to moderate flood risk.		+	With mitigation it is considered that there will be benefits to cultural heritage, the water environment and biodiversity however these benefits are not thought to change the overall rating of minor long term beneficial effects.
Alternative: The Council may continue to operate a hands-off approach to managing the land use aspects of the port operations. This is not preferred, as Associated British Ports has identified, through consultation, its intention to Masterplan for management of Ayr and Troon ports. Therefore, where possible, the Council will seek to work with, and to assist in the delivery of the growth aspirations the ports have, in a flexible manner.	? / +	Care should be taken to protect and, where possible, enhance biodiversity, marine water quality, cultural heritage assets and the local landscape character when developing in and around the ports whilst avoiding areas of high to moderate flood risk.		+	Mitigation is envisaged to change the overall rating from uncertain beneficial to minor long term regional benefits. This is through the likely benefits to biodiversity, the water environment and cultural heritage assets that the mitigation would bring.
Preferred Option: In relation to Ayr Port, the LDP, Port Masterplan, and Action Plan will identify a traffic management plan to allow vehicles to enter and leave the port in the most efficient manner, while minimising the potential impact on residential properties in the Newton area.	+	Protection should be given to cultural heritage features when developing a traffic management plan at Ayr port.		+	Mitigation proposed should alter the assessment of effects on cultural heritage to minor beneficial however the overall assessment weighting remains minor beneficial.
Preferred Option: In relation to Ayr Port, the LDP, Port Masterplan, and Action Plan will identify a landscape buffer/edge to the eastern side of the port, along the boundary with Newton.	+	The preferred option could include a commitment to creating a landscape buffer which would also act as a wildlife corridor for local biodiversity.		+	With mitigation there could be additional benefits to biodiversity through the development of a wildlife corridor however the overall score remains minor beneficial.
Preferred Option: In relation to Ayr Port, the LDP, Port Masterplan, and Action Plan will identify opportunities for a port extension to the east of Saltpans Road, Ayr (opposite Scottish Water depot).	? / +	Development in this location should avoid adverse effects on those historic features in close proximity.	Not accepted – there are no such features.	? / +	Overall score remains uncertain beneficial.
Craigie Estate					
Preferred Option: The Council will safeguard land at Craigie Estate for education, recreational and community purposes to reflect the current and future active uses within the estate.	+	Development on the Craigie Estate should ensure the protection of local biodiversity, cultural heritage assets and the avoidance of flooding from the River Ayr.	Accepted.	+	With mitigation, it is envisaged that there may be uncertain benefits to local biodiversity, the water environment and cultural heritage assets. It is not thought however that these benefits would be significant enough to alter the overall rating occurring through this policy option.
Preferred Option: The Council will develop a Master plan for the Craigie / Dam Park area in partnership with University of the West of Scotland, Ayr College, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and Craigie Caravan Park. In particular the Masterplan will focus on: Future education and residential accommodation for Ayr College and University of the West of Scotland; Traffic management and car parking facilities; Future use of Craigie Caravan Park; and, Potential siting of Ayr Academy within Craigie Estate. – This will only be in MIR subject to the agreement of education services.	?	Development arising from the Masterplan should avoid adverse effects on local biodiversity and ensure that cultural heritage assets are not adversely affected. In addition, development should avoid flood risk areas.	Accepted. The preferred option was amended to: <i>The Council will develop a master plan for the Craigie/ Dam Park area in partnership with University of the West of Scotland, Ayr College, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Craigie Caravan Park and Craigie Community Council. In particular the master plan will focus on: -</i> <i>Future education and residential accommodation for Ayr College and University of the West of Scotland;</i> <i>Traffic management and car parking facilities (Plan of new Estate road layout included);</i> <i>Future use of Craigie Caravan Park; and,</i> <i>Potential siting of Ayr Academy within Craigie Estate.</i> <i>Sharing and enhancement of recreational facilities</i> <i>Protection and enhancement of cultural heritage</i> <i>Protecting and enhancing biodiversity as an integral part of the South Ayrshire's green network</i> <i>Ensuring that Flood considerations are taken into account in any development proposals.</i>	? / +	With mitigation there are thought to be some benefits to the natural and built environment through the potential for benefits to biodiversity, cultural heritage and the water environment. These effects however are considered uncertain at present and so the overall assessment weighting alters only to uncertain beneficial.

Policy Option	Initial Assessment Weighting	Mitigation / Recommendation	SAC Response	Re-assessed Weighting	Reassessment with Mitigation
<p>Alternative: A piecemeal approach to the development of Craigie Campus which could potentially raise infrastructure issues and timescales conflicts which will have an environmental, social and economic impact and lead to a less well integrated further education campus.</p>	?	<p>Development arising from the Masterplan should avoid adverse effects on local biodiversity and ensure that cultural heritage assets are not adversely affected. In addition, development should avoid flood risk areas.</p>	<p>Not accepted. It is considered that part of the implications of a piecemeal approach is that it would be difficult to ensure avoidance of adverse effects on local biodiversity and ensure that cultural heritage assets; or that development on flood risk areas may occur. Additionally, some development has already been permitted; while this site has been identified as a preference for the future development of Ayr Academy by SAC.</p>	?	<p>Mitigation not accepted so there is no change to assessment weighting.</p>
Creating an Effective Transport Network					
<p>Preferred Option: South Ayrshire Council will adopt Supplementary Guidance to provide detailed guidance on the improvement required to cater for the housing growth expected within the lifetime of the Plan. In particular, the road interventions required to improve the A77 corridor are: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signalisation of Monktonhill Roundabout; - Signalisation of Dutch House Roundabout and creation of filter lane; - Widening and signalisation of Bankfield Roundabout and creation of filter lane; and, - Dual Whitletts to Holmston including River Ayr crossing, grade separation of Whitletts Roundabout and compact grade separation of Holmston Roundabout. <p>The Council seek to establish, through supplementary guidance, a mechanism for delivery of these improvements to the A77. The total cost of the road improvements is estimated at £50-£80 million. As discussed under the Main Issues Topic "Meeting Infrastructure Needs" the Supplementary Guidance will explore funding the improvements; however the Guidance will address the management of funds for these improvements and establish who will implement the road improvements. This will require consultation with Transport Scotland, as the responsible authority for trunk roads.</p> <p>In addition to the road measures, the wider transport network would require further interventions to support the road improvements to handle future housing development. The A77 corridor study indicates that further improvement required would involve: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of a rail halt with Park-&-Ride facilities at SE Ayr; - Park-&-Ride facilities near Dutch House Roundabout and at Monkton, with connection to the rail network at Monkton if feasible; and - Provision of feeder bus services from the development sites linking into the strategic public transport network at the Park-&-Ride sites. <p>In developing an effective transport network, the Council will exercise care to protect and, where possible, enhance biodiversity, water quality, cultural heritage features, soils and geology and the local landscape character when siting development. Development shall seek to minimise impacts on areas of greenbelt and proximity to noise sensitive receptors.</p>	? / +	<p>Benefits could be ensured and increased by introducing a requirement for net biodiversity, cultural heritage, water environment and/or landscape benefits, which would have to be demonstrated through project-level environmental impact assessment.</p>	<p>Not accepted. The transport section commits to protect and, where possible, enhance biodiversity, water quality, cultural heritage features, soils and geology and the local landscape character when siting development. Development shall seek to minimise impacts on areas of greenbelt and proximity to noise sensitive receptors. Details of delivery will appear in the Supplementary Guidance and it is considered that at this stage, committing to net improvements as recommendations may undermine the corridor study recommendations, which are vital to the vision.</p>	? / +	<p>The overall assessment weighting is anticipated to remain the same.</p>
Green and Rural Economy					
<p>Preferred Option: The LDP will identify coastal areas where potential exists to improve and develop coastal access paths; and ensure that coastal development proposals incorporate design layouts to accommodate coastal access.</p>	? / -	<p>Care should be taken to protect and, where possible, enhance biodiversity and soils and geology.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and text included in MIR.</p>	+	<p>Minor regional long term benefits with mitigation: With mitigation, care will be taken to protect and, where possible, enhance coastal biodiversity and soils and geology alongside providing benefits to human health.</p>

Policy Option	Initial Assessment Weighting	Mitigation / Recommendation	SAC Response	Re-assessed Weighting	Reassessment with Mitigation
Climate Change					
Preferred Option: Develop an LDP policy when aware of the findings of the Ayrshire Joint Strategic Waste Management Project Group, in order to ascertain the preferred location for an Ayrshire wide Residual Waste facility.	+	Care should be taken when assessing the location of a new waste facility to ensure that where possible biodiversity, water quality, cultural heritage, soils and geology and the local landscape character are protected and where possible enhanced. Areas of flood risk, prime agricultural sites should be avoided and areas of vacant and derelict sites promoted.	This Group is not operated directly by the planning service and involves other Ayrshire Councils. The preferred option cannot, therefore commit to being able to meet the recommendations. This point has been raised with the Ayrshire Joint Planning Unit, who operates the Group, in order to give consideration to the recommendations in the development of the Project.	+	No change to overall assessment weighting.
Ayr Renaissance					
Option C: Extend along South Harbour Street to the Esplanade to include the Citadel Leisure Centre and development sites on the Esplanade. This could help to promote greater use and regeneration of the riverside area, potentially help to secure future funding for improvements and would incorporate a significant development site, currently being progressed for office development, within the town centre.	+	Care should be taken to protect and, where possible, enhance biodiversity and water quality when developing in and around the development area whilst avoiding areas of high to moderate flood risk.	Accepted and incorporated into text.	+	With mitigation, although the overall significance rating is not altered, it is thought that there would be further benefits to biodiversity and the water environment.
The sequential approach would apply only to large scale retail development proposals. This, as is currently the case, directs larger retail firstly to town centres, then to edge of town centres, then to local centres (e.g. Heathfield Retail Park) before considering the acceptability of out-of-centre locations for such proposals. Non-retail commercial development would not require to demonstrate that it could not locate within a town centre. This approach may still allow movement of these uses to locations outwith town centre, due to cheaper land and development costs, which may affect the viability of the town centres and could discriminate against non-car users.	+	Preferred Option: Maintain the current sequential approach to retail development, directing larger retail firstly to town centres, then to edge of town centres, promoting the use of vacant and derelict land , then to Heathfield Retail Park before considering out-of-centre locations against criteria for acceptability. Include 'softer' policies which prioritise development of office, leisure and cultural development in certain locations. This approach may still allow movement of these land uses to locations outwith town centre, due to cheaper land and development costs, which may affect the viability of the town centres and could discriminate against non-car users.	Recommended text added.	+	With mitigation accepted, there would be benefits to soils and geology however; the overall assessment weighting is thought to remain the same.
Preferred Option: Supplementary Guidance will be developed for Ayr Town Centre, in consultation with Ayr Renaissance LLP, to identify under utilised and vacant listed buildings, vacant and derelict sites as potential development opportunities. The Supplementary Guidance will identify potential future uses of those sites/buildings, and prepare design briefs for the development of opportunity sites, to ensure long term townscape preservation and enhancement, in accordance with the Conservation Area Management Plan and the Council's existing policies on protection of the built environment. The Council will support residential development within the town centre, and will consider the potential of opportunity sites for residential purposes, whether in whole, or as part of a mixed-use development. In consultation with Ayr Renaissance LLP, development opportunities have been identified for Ayr town centre.	++	Care should be taken to ensure planning policy facilitates an appropriate level of ecological survey and assessment of brownfield / derelict sites and associated development proposals prior to planning applications. Planning policy should ensure that brownfield / derelict sites are given an appropriate analysis for drainage requirements, using the existing land use as a baseline (greenfield vs. brownfield / permeable vs. impermeable).	Recommendation accepted and incorporated into MIR text.	++	The overall assessment weighting remains unaltered.