

Discussion Session 2 – Preferred Sites

The aim of this session was for the Groups to consider what type of development they would like to see and where this development should be located within South Ayrshire. The following issues were identified by each group.

Group 1- Housing

- The group felt that new housing sites should be easily accessible by a range of transport methods. New developments should: not generate additional road congestion; reduce journey times and distances; and provide new residents with good alternatives to car-based travel.
- The overarching theme was that previously used (Brownfield) sites should be used before new Greenfield sites. This was important to members as it would minimise the amount of virgin countryside lost to new housing, and would mean that sites in towns and villages are developed first which would help achieve the other priorities such as being accessible and close to amenities.
- Town Centres were seen as an ideal location for new housing, mainly as a means of regenerating these centres. Housing was seen as a good way of restoring and occupying vacant buildings in parts of these centres, particularly in Ayr, and helping to generate more local activity and expenditure. People were keen to see “families return to centres” as a more sustainable location rather than to expanding suburbs.
- Ayr and the north of the area were seen by many as a preferred area for new housing, due to the amenities and transport links already present, its proximity to Glasgow for commuting, and also because this is where demand for new housing is greatest.

Group 2- Retail

- It was considered important for the planning system to protect town centres as retail centres. This is because town centres also function as social centres where amenities are collected together, and are traditionally located centrally, to serve a wider catchment. To enhance the role of town centres as retail centres, a range of social factors need to be considered, such as increasing housing in town centres, improving access, improving the built environment, and allowing other uses in town centres (bars/restaurants/offices). Independent shops should be encouraged.
- Out of centre shopping was considered appropriate for certain shop types (such as DIY stores/ supermarkets). This should not undermine the role of town centres, as the main retail centre.
- The group also considered that shops in rural settlements, local centres and small town centres should be protected and encouraged for their community value.
- Overall, the group considered that good accessibility was key to supporting the various locations for retail.

Group 3- Town Centres

The preferred uses identified by the group for town centres included:

- Residential – primarily above shops. Members felt it important that people returned to live in town centres which could help to reuse buildings left vacant as retail uses have ceased and restore local economic activity.
- Heritage/ Built Environment- the group wished to see the restoration of historic and attractive town centre buildings, as well as improved public realm and open spaces.
- Retail/ Commerce- people felt smaller, specialist and independent shops should be encouraged, plus more cafes, restaurants and tourist facilities and accommodation.
- Culture – the groups were keen to see theatres, cinemas and arts centres within town centres
- It was recognised that land ownership issues were a major impediment to regenerating town centres and restoring and maintaining individual buildings.

Group 4- Business Development

The main types and locations for business development highlighted by the group included:

- Tourism, including more and better accommodation;
- Brownfield sites were preferred for development in preference to Greenfield sites;
- Prestwick Airport and Aerospace Park;
- Ports (Ayr, Troon, Girvan, Maidens) – with improved access, more diverse uses encouraged especially leisure/tourism uses such as yachting;
- Rural tourism – more flexible and diverse uses promoted to boost rural employment
- Forestry Areas - with more diverse uses to capitalise on tourism potential
- Ayr Town Centre- regeneration and jobs creation based around the Ayr Renaissance strategy
- Extension and promotion of existing industrial areas

Group 5- Rural Development (including Housing)

- The group identified a number of key planning policy areas in which the new Local Development Plan may deliver appropriate rural development. These include developing coastal areas; encouraging development within existing small scale hamlets; increase access to rural areas through improvements to public transport; regeneration; promote rural housing within existing villages (infill development and development of land adjacent to villages); continued re-use of rural buildings/steadings; and re-use of derelict Council property.
- Group 5 also identified potential areas for development at:
 - South Girvan regeneration
 - Cassillis/ Pinwherry/ Daily
 - Barrhill – Freight Transfer Terminal
 - Loans
 - Greenan
 - South East Ayr and Vicinity of Ayr Hospital
- The group also identified that design was important to protecting the character of rural areas; and that well-designed sustainable/eco homes should be encouraged.

Next Local Planning Forum Meeting

The next meeting of the Local Planning Forum will be held on

Thursday 22nd October 2009
at
Girvan Academy

This will be a smaller meeting than the first, for around 30 Forum members; invitations will be issued shortly.

Members invited will be chosen on a random basis and will include a cross section from professional bodies, community council members and members of the general public.

An agenda and information regarding the meeting will be issued to all Forum members and the opportunity will be given for everyone to make comments and have their views heard.

Selective Comments

“very interesting”

“Subjects not specific enough”

“interesting to have views of the rural residents”

“...not a lot of time to discuss in depth”

“I found the whole topic very interesting and look forward to future meetings”

“All had chance to contribute”

“...very well organised”