

Venue: Prestwick Committee Room, County Buildings
Date & Time: 2pm Wednesday 5th March 2008

MINUTES

Present:

Forum members

Cllr Peter Convery	South Ayrshire Council Sustainability & Environment Portfolio
Mr Ken Gibb	South Ayrshire Council (Sustainable Dev.)
Mrs Fiona Ross	South Ayrshire Council (Sustainable Dev.)
Cllr John McDowall	Chair, Sustainability & Environment Scrutiny Panel
Mr George Connell	Stagecoach
Mr Tommy Loudon	FWAG
Mr Gordon Lauder	South Ayrshire Council (Environmental Health)
Mrs Annabel Beattie	South Ayrshire Council (Sustainable Dev.)

Apologies:

Mr Stuart Reid	Energy Agency
Mrs Eleanor Pate	Energy Agency
Mrs Liz Marquis	Energy Agency
Mr Stuart Lindsay	Horizons
Mrs. Yvonne Irvine	SEPA
Mr Roddy MacDonald	South Ayrshire Council (PPP Team)
Mr John Collie	SNH

Item	Minute	Action
1	<u>Apologies</u> Apologies given as previous.	Noted
2	<u>Minutes of previous meeting</u> Minutes of previous meeting approved and adopted.	Noted
3	<u>Matters arising</u> None.	
4	<u>Climate Change Bill Consultation</u> KG outlined the consultation, and informed the Forum of his intention to draw together responses on behalf of the Council. FR asked whether, given that aviation and shipping were major (and increasing) influences in South Ayrshire, the impact of these modes on climate change could be considered at the planning stage of any proposed development? KG: given the macro-economic aspect, potential influence is limited, however it can be discussed with Planning. FR hoped that the Bill would be flexible enough to incorporate any future recommendations arising from the UNFCCC talks in Bali. KG considered that the Bill would require to be flexible as a matter of course to adapt to changing science, technology and legislation. FR: noted that climate change is already included in the SEA process, but expressed concerns regarding incorporating further emphasis of climate change, which may put a different focus on the aims of an SEA. There is also an issue with regards to baseline	KG

	<p>data, which an SEA will review as part of any process. Good quality data is required here, which may not be available when referring to climate change aspect.</p> <p>Cllr Convery agreed that there were great challenges ahead, including resource implications, noting the irony of the next 5 – 10 years' targets to increase Prestwick Airport's passenger throughput, even allowing for the possible discounting of "international aviation" emissions.</p> <p>A general discussion ensued about oil depletion and impending peak oil production, and high fuel and organic chemicals costs impacting on food growing and transport costs, particularly for Arranachs, whose costs are up to 20% higher.</p> <p>KG asked if FWAG would be making a direct response to the consultation. TL confirmed.</p>	
5	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA)</u></p> <p>FR outlined the legal requirement for policies, plans, and programmes (ppps) to be subject to an SEA, under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The law applies to organisations such as non-government organisations and Local Authorities, and was put in place to protect the environment, in situations where normal considerations would be mainly economic. Generally, an SEA will be required if a ppp sets targets. Any plan will be assessed on 11 areas, for example biodiversity, climate change, waste, as well as cumulative and synergistic effects. Some of the plans so far SEA'd by Sustainable Development are: the Local Housing Strategy, the review of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, and the Local Transport Strategy. FR can provide more information on examples of screening, scoping and environmental reports, if required and requested.</p> <p>Cllr Convery asked if all South Ayrshire Council Heads of Service have been made aware of the need for SEA, in a clear and unambiguous fashion.</p> <p>FR confirmed that a paper had gone to CMT but perhaps a reminder of the progress in South Ayrshire should be circulated. Some local authorities have employed consultants to conduct SEAs however FR pointed out that this may be a false economy: with SEA being a legal requirement, organisations and departments will need to learn to conduct SEAs in house, otherwise costs will mount.</p> <p>KG asked how a plan not subjected to SEA, and not requiring Scottish Government ratification would be monitored?</p> <p>FR confirmed that there is no form of policing at present to ensure SEAs for plans are done, however if an SEA is not conducted then a plan is vulnerable if it is required to undergo a judicial review by objectors.</p> <p>GL asked where the screening reports go. FR: to the SEA Gateway, which logs the assessment and sends out to Consultation Authorities.</p>	FR
6	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Review of the Ayrshire Biodiversity Action Plan</u></p> <p>FR: the initial document was published in 2001/02. With a number of changes to the status of flora and fauna, and laws, a review was required. A company called Biodiversity Solutions conducted the review to determine the habitats and species that should be prioritised. The habitat priority will be coastal and lowland raised bogs. Six key species of birds have been identified, along with water voles (one of the most endangered species). The review is out to consultation at present (after undergoing an SEA) and the final launch is expected to be around May 2008.</p> <p>Cllr Convery: does the review include any of the elements of the north of the potential Biosphere reserve site?</p> <p>FR: the review covers the whole of Ayrshire, but is specific about species and habitats. Possibly the lowland raised bogs priority may cover the Biosphere reserve site, and also the hen harrier.</p> <p>Cllr Convery requested that he be given a paper copy of the review.</p>	FR
7	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>AOCB</u></p> <p>KG outlined the position with the current review of the Community Plan Structure and hopes to bring a paper on the final approved structure to the next Forum . A community conference will take place some time in June 2008, and there should be a Forum input into this. Activities of the CPP should be aligned to the Single Outcome Agreement.</p> <p>Cllr Convery: it's uncertain what this means in terms of local authority resources, and also</p>	

	<p>the role of Community Councils. If any initiatives arise from the CPP forum, will they require an SEA? FR: this would depend on whether there existed a more over-arching document, which had already been assessed.</p> <p>Cllr Convery referred to the latest consultation from the Scottish Government on Permitted Development Rights for Domestic Microgeneration Equipment and asked if any of the Forum members had seen it. AB will circulate the document to the Forum.</p> <p>FR: The current development applications for Auchincruive, Craigie Estate, Racecourse and South East Ayr will be reviewed individually, but there seems to be no scope for determining how they will all together impact on the environment (not just flora and fauna, but transport etc). Does the Forum have any insight into the best way to appraise the cumulative impact of more than one planning application?</p> <p>Cllr Convery queried whether there was capacity to comment within the new Planning Act and asked FR whether any representation had been made to Local Plans.</p> <p>KG: Sustainable Development has been invited to become involved in the restructure of the Planning Service to meet the demands on the new Planning Act – this might be a good opportunity to address this kind of issue.</p> <p>Cllr McDowall: there is a similar problem with the cumulative effect of wind farms, especially in the South Carrick area. Does the 2006 Planning Act account for this?</p> <p>Cllr Convery: In the National Planning Framework, there are plans for a substantial 275kV power line through the SW Scotland. This, together with details of potential wind farm applications which have not yet been submitted for planning application, are causing genuine concerns about the cumulative impact on the environment, and the future viability of Prestwick airport.</p>	AB
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>Meeting dates confirmed for 2008 are:</p> <p>Wednesday, 29th April, 2pm</p> <p>Wednesday 25th June, 2pm</p> <p>Wednesday 30th July, 2pm</p> <p>Wednesday 24th September, 2pm</p> <p>Wednesday 3rd December, 2pm</p> <p>Venues to be arranged.</p>	