

## **SOUTH AYRSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROJECT BOARD**

Meeting 8 – 19<sup>th</sup> August 2011 at 12.00 in Dundonald Committee Room

### Agenda

1. Presentation and discussion on main paper and appendices, including: -
  2. Update on Progress to Date
  3. Site Assessment/Selection Process (including SEA process)
  4. Identifying Housing Needs/Demands for Settlements
  5. Proposals for Large Scale Housing Development, not Favoured in the Site Selection Process
  6. Plan for the Proposed LDP & Future LDP Board Meetings

## SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

### PAPER TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROJECT BOARD MEETING OF 19<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2011

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**SUBJECT: SELECTION OF HOUSING SITES FOR INCLUSION IN THE SOUTH AYRSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

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#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Project Board Members of the Council's progress on preparing South Ayrshire's Local Development Plan [LDP].
- 1.2 The meeting of the Board will be accompanied by a presentation of the issues outlined in this paper.

#### **2. Update on Progress to Date**

- 2.1 Following the last LDP Project Board meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2010, at which the general form and structure of the LDP were agreed, a significant amount of progress has been made towards completing the Proposed LDP.
- 2.2 The Council's current Development Plan Scheme [DPS] estimates that the Proposed LDP would be completed by February 2011, and, in accordance with previous LDP Project Board papers, it had been intended to publish the Proposed LDP in May 2011.
- 2.3 The slippage in the DPS timetable has resulted from the extensive technical work involved in the various work strands that require to be completed to produce the Proposed LDP. While this paper focuses on site selection process, Members are advised that the main areas of work involved in preparing the Proposed LDP include: -

- Preparation of LDP policies;
- Site selection;
- Strategic environmental assessment;
- Greenbelt review;
- Production of industrial land supply;
- Review of housing needs/demands;
- Planning structure, form and content of Proposed LDP as well as associated supplementary guidance;
- Preparation of an action programme;
- Reviewing representations made in response to the LDP, and addressing key arguments (particularly relating to overarching LDP strategy);
- Habitats Regulation Appraisal and appropriate assessment;
- Strategic flood risk assessment; and,
- Equalities Impact Assessment.

- 2.4 The above list is not exhaustive of the all tasks involved in preparation of the LDP, nor does it identify the many other non-LDP functions of the Development Planning & Customers Team, which also occupy officer time, at any given time.
- 2.5 As stated, this paper focuses on the site selection process, including its relationship with strategic environmental assessment. It is intended to hold a further LDP Project Board meeting, in future, to discuss over-arching LDP strategy and policy development.

#### **3. Site Assessment/Selection Process (including SEA process)**

- 3.1 An evidence based, technical process of site visits, reporting and modelling scenarios for the distribution of housing land for all sites (approximately 180) promoted via a call for sites has been completed. This work comprised the following main aspects: -

- Site Visits
  - Approximately 200 sites were visited, with site notes taken so that officers within the team were familiar with specific site issues, including landscape setting, topography,

access, existing and adjacent uses, urban form and boundary treatment. Site notes were taken for each site so that unique site features could be recorded for consideration during the site assessments.

- Site Reports

- 174 site reports were completed to report on over 200 sites. As set out in previous Board papers, the site reports contain a summary of MIR representations relating to the site, an assessment of the site's compliance with the LDP strategy, an assessment of the site specific factors relating to the site, a detailed appraisal of constraints identified in the land assessment framework, together with environmental recommendations, and a recommendation on whether the site should be considered further (based on compliance with strategy).
- A sample of one of the reports is attached to this paper as **APPENDIX A**, for information.

- Site Filtering – Strategy

- All sites reports were then filtered in accordance with the ability of the site to comply with LDP strategy. This process removed all sites that did not comply with the LDP strategy, as being non-reasonable alternative sites. A small number of non-strategy compliant sites progressed to the next stage because there was a material factor that justified the site being given further consideration (e.g. regeneration of brownfield sites). As such, after filtering, remaining sites were seen to be sites that could assist in delivering the LDP strategy.

- Site Filtering – Environmental Constraints

- Sites in accordance with strategy were subsequently further assessed to give an indication of severity of environmental constraints affecting the site. This resulted in a further 122 site reports being amended to include an environmental recommendation on whether the site should be considered further, and whether, if a site was suitable for further consideration, that site should reflect particular environmental recommendations within the design stage of the development to mitigate/avoid adverse environmental impacts. It is important to note that this filtering exercise was not carried out on the basis of attaching a greater weight to any given constraints, but on the basis of whether it was deemed possible to mitigate against any adverse environmental impact. Therefore sites that would result in coalescence were generally excluded because it is not possible to mitigate against development that coalesces urban areas, whereas sites with technical constraints, such as quality of access, and surrounding road network, were more difficult to outright exclude at this stage, because understanding whether appropriate mitigation could be achieved requires technical input, through consultation.
- Mitigation and avoidance of environmentally harmful aspects of any given site will be explored further when the final selection of sites is made, with a preference given to sites that have least adverse impact on environmental features.

- Calculating Densities/Site Capacity

- Standard density figures were calculated, providing an average density of greenfield and brownfield sites that have been developed in South Ayrshire in the last 10 years. The standard density was then applied to the sites that remained in consideration following site filtering. This gave an indication of the potential capacity of sites. It is recognised that the standard average densities don't account for locational variances in densities, or the impact of environmental constraints affecting sites, however this was considered to be the simplest and most consistent model for estimating site capacities to model release scenarios.
- The capacity of each site remaining after filtering has been set out in a table, as **APPENDIX B** to this report.
- Maps of all settlements have also been produced and attached to this table, to show the sites that remain in consideration after site filtering exercises, and the capacity of each site. The maps are appended as **APPENDIX C**.

- It should be noted that the total predicted capacity significantly exceeds the estimated housing need/demand that the plans requires to cater for. As such, site modelling and site reports will assist to identify the most appropriate housing dispersal scenario, which, in turn, will indicate which potential housing sites can contribute to meeting housing needs/demands, as set out in section 4.1, below.
- Site Modelling
  - Based on sites that have not been excluded by reason of non-compliance with strategy, or environmental grounds, a supply of sites that can assist to meet housing needs/demands is available. Understanding the availability of units per settlement, and by defining the characteristics of settlements, each settlement was categorised according to an estimated range of numbers of housing units that could be allocated to that settlement. The MIR strategy proposed a dispersal of a higher volume of housing land (as set out in the Housing Needs and Demands Assessment) to the settlements satellite to Ayr, Prestwick and Troon, with settlements in the southern parts of South Ayrshire being allocated growth where there was an identified need, to assist population retention and the sustainability of rural communities. The categories and capacities are set out and explained, below: -
    - Category 1: Estimated Capacity of 175-350 Housing Units
      - This category indicates that the settlements have a larger availability of land that is potentially suitable for housing. Category 1 settlements are located in the northern part of South Ayrshire, and therefore well served by a good quality transport network and the urban core of Ayrshire (particularly Ayr, Prestwick and Troon). Each of these settlements has a range of local amenities, given their existing size, and have better infrastructure to be able to accommodate a higher number of housing units. It should be noted that, while Monkton is constrained by infrastructure and environmental features, it is well served by the existing transport network, the urban core of Ayrshire, and has a range of local amenities. As such, it was seen as strategically worthwhile including it as a category 1 settlement, although the release of any land at this location would require careful consideration of ability to mitigate against adverse environmental impacts (through consultation with key agencies).
    - Category 2: Estimated Capacity of 50-174 Housing Units
      - This category indicates that the settlements have a moderate level of availability of land that is potentially suitable for housing, commensurate with the identified range. Category 2 settlements are generally located in the northern part of South Ayrshire, and therefore well served by the urban core of Ayrshire, and a good quality transport network. The settlements are smaller in size and may have a smaller range of amenities than category 1 settlements.
    - Category 3: 0-49 Estimated Capacity of Housing Units
      - These settlements are generally in the southern part of South Ayrshire and/or have a limited availability of land that is potentially suitable for housing. Category 3 settlements may have a limited range of local amenities. Land for housing at these settlements in the southern part of South Ayrshire may be allocated to meet a level of demand for housing, to sustain local population and communities.
  - **APPENDIX D** contains a map highlighting the categories of settlements.
  - Ayr, Prestwick and Troon have not been allocated a category. This is reflective of LDP strategy, which proposes to direct growth away from these settlements. While there may be some land allocated within these settlements, this may be because the sites are brownfield, vacant sites that require planning intervention (in the form of re-allocation of

use) to secure environmental improvements. Housing will not be directed to these settlements, in volume, to meet housing demand.

- o Some settlements are not categorised. This is because these settlements are deemed to have no potential housing sites (either because no sites were submitted for Council consideration or sites that have been submitted are strategically or environmentally unacceptable).

3.2 **LDP Board Members are asked to consider the categorisation of settlements as a basis for guiding the level of growth to be attributed to each settlement and the use of environmental filtering maps as a basis for identifying specific sites within settlements to accommodate that level of growth.**

**4. Identifying Housing Needs/Demands for Settlements**

4.1 In accordance with Scottish Planning Policy the Council’s Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA) provides the evidence base for establishing the level of housing provision across South Ayrshire that will be require to be allocated in the LDP. The HNDA sets out 5 different scenarios for market housing and affordable housing shortfalls. The higher shortfall scenario was selected for market housing as this aligns most closely with the Structure Plan aspiration for higher growth and the requirement in Scottish Planning Policy to allocate a “generous” supply of housing.

4.2 In terms of affordable housing need, it was considered that even the lowest scenario in the HNDA (of 290 units per year) would be unachievable given historic levels of annual completions and the impact of current funding restrictions, and would inflate the overall level of housing need, without any realistic prospect of delivering more affordable housing. Instead, a figure of 200 houses per year is used, as this has been adopted by the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) and is also used as the annual Council SOA target for affordable housing delivery. **LDP Board Members are asked to note the housing shortfall identified in the table, below, as a guide to the amount of housing units to allocate in the LDP.**

	<b>7 Year Period 2011/12 to 2017/18</b> (5 year effective period + 2 year roll-on to adoption of LDP)	<b>Medium Term Period 2018/19-2022/23</b> (to 10 years from Plan adoption)	<b>Whole Period 2011-2023</b>
Housing requirement, based on HNDA (Highest scenario for market housing shortfall, plus LHS target for affordable housing- 200 units per annum)	4298	3070	7368
<b>Total Housing Requirement</b>	<b>4298</b>	<b>3070</b>	<b>7368</b>
Housing Land Supply (from Draft Land Audit 2011)	2200	1297	3497
Greenan and NE Troon	480	550	1030
South East Ayr	450	750	1200
<b>TOTAL SUPPLY</b>	<b>3130</b>	<b>2597</b>	<b>5727</b>
<b>Total Shortfall to be met by LDP</b>	<b>1168</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>1641</b>

4.3 Whilst the HNDA assesses housing needs and demand for South Ayrshire as a whole, it does not provide any data at a settlement or sub-area level. However this level of information is important to inform the distribution of new housing allocations, in order to provide deliverable and proportionate housing growth that meets local needs and demand.

4.4 **APPENDIX E** contains a table of settlements together with a variety of indicators that attempt to gauge the level of need and demand for housing in that settlement, over the past 10 years. The table includes a column that provides a summary assessment of the indicators. This table will be used to help model the level of housing that is appropriate for different settlements.

## **5. Proposals for Large Scale Housing Development, not Favoured in the Site Selection Process**

5.1 Of the sites that were excluded from further consideration by reason of non-compliance or environmental impact, LDP Project Board Members are asked to note that a limited number of sites were rejected from further consideration (because they do not comply with the LDP spatial strategy) that are of such a scale that if they were released within the LDP under preparation, would have strategic implications, environmentally and economically. The relevant sites are noted below, together with a summary of the argument for non-inclusion in the LDP.

### **5.1.1 Glasgow Prestwick Airport and East Sanquhar Farm**

The representations in support of the site indicate a housing capacity of in excess of 3000 units. This is approximately twice the capacity of the housing need/demand figures for the entirety of South Ayrshire for the 10 year period of the LDP (taken from Housing Needs and Demands Assessment).

Housing land supply data demonstrates that no site in excess of 200 units has been completed within South Ayrshire, while evidence from existing strategic release sites at North East Troon, Greenan and South East Ayr also indicates that development of this scale is not delivering in short term because of the current economic circumstances, and infrastructure commitments associated with these sites. While some of the strategic release sites are in the current 5-year housing land supply, only a minimal figure is allocated against these sites, as a result of the current economy and the infrastructure required to be provided by the developers to service the sites. These sites are estimated, in the housing land supply, to be delivering larger numbers of housing units over a longer period.

There is no financial information to demonstrate that this site can deliver in the short term and provide necessary financial contributions to support infrastructure, while current housing land supply evidence confirms there are no other instances of sites of this scale being able to deliver housing units as well as supporting infrastructure (particularly transport infrastructure). As such, to allocate this site, or part thereof, for housing could compromise the housing land supply requirement for the Council to maintain an effective 5 year supply of housing land, as set out in Scottish Planning Policy, if the site fails to deliver a supply of housing over the short-medium term – i.e. the site would not be effective within the LDP period.

Additionally, the LDP Project Board agreed (on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2009) that the second runway should be retained as a long-term land asset for the local community/economy. This was on the basis that, although arguments for the release of the site focus on the facility not being required to expand current airport operations, the second runway is a valuable land asset for the economy of Ayrshire, as it provides diversity in future opportunities available to the airport (for example, in aviation and renewable energy). No justification for the release of the runway seeks to quantify the long-term value of the second runway as an asset to the airport and the local economy, and the fact that once lost, the land asset that is the second runway is irreplaceable.

In addition, the site is highly visually prominent and provides an important landscape setting for the edge of Prestwick and Ayr. Development would substantially change the character of the locality from a rural settlement edge to the core urban area. Mitigation in the form of landscaping would not entirely offset adverse landscape impact, but would, in itself, change the open aspect views from the east, towards the site, to a landscaped screen, which would significantly change the landscape setting and character. The site is also affected by flooding and would incur the loss of prime quality agricultural land.

### **5.1.2 High Greenan**

Given the location and scale of the site, and indicators from the housing land supply, to allocate this site, or part thereof, for housing could compromise the housing land supply requirement for the Council to maintain an effective 5 year supply of housing land, as set out in Scottish Planning Policy, for the reasons explained, above. The site is also highly prominent and provides a valuable landscape setting, as well as prime quality agricultural land, and contains scheduled monuments, archaeology, listed buildings and a wildlife site. Therefore, development of this site would be environmentally harmful.

### 5.1.3 Braston/Burnton Farm

Given the location and scale of the site, and indicators from the housing land supply, to allocate this site, or part thereof, for housing could compromise the housing land supply requirement for the Council to maintain an effective 5 year supply of housing land, as set out in Scottish Planning Policy, for the reasons explained, above. The site is adjacent to the A77, and would have a significant impact on the trunk road network, and there has been no justification submitted to indicate that the site is capable of funding its impact on the trunk road, while delivering units at an early date. As such, the site could represent another development similar to south east Ayr, which is heavily committed to providing significant levels of infrastructure prior to delivery of housing units.

## **6. Plan for the Proposed LDP & Future LDP Board Meetings**

- 6.1 As stated in section 2.5 of this paper, it is intended that a future LDP Project Board meeting will take place to present LDP strategy and policy development work to LDP Board Members. Essentially, a finalised draft of the Proposed LDP will be presented to the next LDP Project Board.
- 6.2 A date has yet to be arranged for the next LDP Board meeting; however it is intended to be held within 2 months of the date of this LDP Project Board meeting on site selection. Arrangements for the next LDP Project Board meeting will be made with Group Secretaries, imminently.
- 6.3 Following the next LDP Project Board meeting, the Proposed LDP will be finalised, edited and presented to a meeting of South Ayrshire Council for consideration and approval, alongside completed environmental and equalities impact assessments, an action programme and an updated DPS, which will set out an amended timescale for the remainder of the production of the LDP, up to, and including, adoption, implementation and monitoring.
- 6.4 A programme for publication and consultation on the Proposed LDP will also be presented to the meeting of South Ayrshire Council, for its consideration.

### **Background Papers**

Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006; The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008; Circular 1/09 – Development Planning; Scottish Planning Policy; South Ayrshire Local Plan; Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan; Report to Leadership Panel on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2008 “Service Impacts arising from Planning, etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and Current Work Pressures”; Previous LDP Project Board Papers; Report to Leadership Panel on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2010 “Proposed Local Development Plan & Review of Existing Supplementary Guidance”; South Ayrshire Council Main Issues Report (2010).