

**AYRSHIRE JOINT PLANNING STEERING GROUP**  
**26 MAY 2011**

---

**National Land Use Strategy**

---

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To advise the Steering Group of the publication of the Scottish Government's National Land Use Strategy and to note the Chief Planner's recommendation to planning authorities that the range of planning decision making processes which affect land use, and the natural environment generally, take more account of the health of ecosystems and the services they provide.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

2. Scotland's first National land use strategy ("Getting The Best From Our Land – A Land Use Strategy for Scotland") was published in March 2011. Members will recall that the Steering Group considered the draft strategy at the November 2010 meeting and comments were subsequently submitted to the Government.
3. The land use strategy is a requirement under Section 57 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and sets out the Government's objectives in relation to adaptation to climate change and sustainable development. The Act requires that the land use strategy must set out proposals and policies for meeting these objectives and the timescale over which these will take effect.
4. The Strategy states the Government's vision for sustainable land use, broad objectives, principles for sustainable development and proposals for action. A separate "Action Plan" will be published "*shortly*" which will contain a timetable for implementation of key proposals.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING

5. The foreword to the document emphasises that the Land Use Strategy (LUS) is a high level document which sets out the national policy agenda for land use in its widest sense. The Government recognise that detailed policies for the use of land at the local level must be developed at the local level and the LUS deliberately does not propose detailed policies for different parts of the country.
6. The LUS is seeking to engage the planning system in a wider process of sustainable land use management involving all those sectors whose activities have significant

impacts on the way land is used and which impact upon the quality of the natural environment. In time, this broader approach should influence the form and content of development plans and other strategies.

### ECO-SYSTEM SERVICES APPROACH TO LAND USE PLANNING

7. Accompanying the publication of the LUS is a letter from the Chief Planner which draws attention to a new Scottish Government Information Note “Applying an Ecosystems Approach to Land Use”. The Scottish Government wishes to see the range of planning and decision making processes which affect land use and the natural environment generally, take more account of the health of eco-systems and the services they provide.
8. The Ecosystems approach can be summarised as understanding and valuing the goods and services provided by the environment. Incorporation of this approach can take place at a variety of scales from the master planning of new housing development through to planning at regional, national and international scales.
9. The approach being advocated is already being developed within Ayrshire as illustrated by the work being undertaken for the Ayrshire Green Network and the Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere. The “Ayrshire Green Network Study” has developed a model which describes eco-system services and which identifies the natural and manmade features which provide these services (see separate report). This is a significant step towards applying an ecosystems approach which will be developed further as a Green Network Partnership and eventual strategy emerge.
10. The Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere is aiming to be an exemplar of ecosystem services thinking and delivery. Members of the Biosphere Partnership Board will be drawn from a wide range of public, ngo, private and community sector organisations who are signed up to a common sustainable development charter.

### RECOMMENDATION

11. It is recommended that the Steering Group note the publication of the Land Use Strategy and the Scottish Government’s advice in relation to Ecosystem approach to land use planning and the work that is currently being undertaken in Ayrshire to develop this concept.

John Esslemont  
Acting Manager  
Ayrshire Joint Planning Unit

Person to contact: Alan Edgar - 01292 673764 [alan.edgar@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:alan.edgar@south-ayrshire.gov.uk)