

**AYRSHIRE JOINT PLANNING STEERING GROUP
12 JANUARY 2012**

Annual Review

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To agree the form and content of the annual review. This will report on the work undertaken on behalf of the Joint Planning Steering Group during the period 2010/11.

BACKGROUND

2. At its November 2010 meeting the Steering Group agreed that it would publish online an annual review of activity undertaken in the current year and demonstrates how this work has contributed toward planning outcomes. The review (attached) is set out within the following structure.

- Modern Planning System
- Ayrshire Joint Planning Steering Group
- Priorities
- Partnership Working
- Supporting National Initiatives
- Regeneration
- Specialist Support

The report is intended to raise awareness of the joint planning activity that has been undertaken and will be supported by appropriate images and presented in a leaflet format.

RECOMMENDATION

3. It is recommended that the Steering Group approve the text content of the attached report and authorize the Acting Manager, in conjunction with the TMT, to prepare and distribute online a published version to promote the work of the Steering Group.

John Esslemont
Acting Manager
Ayrshire Joint Planning Unit

Person to Contact: John Esslemont - 01292 673767 john.esslemont@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Ayrshire Joint Planning Service Annual Review Ayrshire Joint Planning Steering Group 2011

MODERN PLANNING SYSTEM

In recent years the planning system has undergone substantial change and reform. The changes which have been brought have been necessary to ensure the service provided is efficient, inclusive, fit for purpose and sustainable and is able to meet the challenges posed by a modern economy. By promoting certainty and confidence for investment and tackling crucial issues such as climate change, the Ayrshire planning authorities recognized that spatial planning will have an important role to play in supporting a future economic recovery whilst ensuring development is also of good quality and sustainable.

The Joint Planning Service which is being developed in Ayrshire is one of the first of its type within Scotland and has a key role in supporting these reforms. In the current economic times shared services are seen as making an important contribution toward collaborative working, delivering common objectives and ensuring opportunities to share skills, expertise and resources are maximized.

AYRSHIRE JOINT PLANNING STEERING GROUP.



Councillor J Buchanan
Councillor R McDill
(Chair 2010/11)



Councillor T Barr
Councillor E McLardy



Councillor M Toner
(Chair 2011/12)
Councillor I Fitzsimmons

The Steering Group acknowledge that without the strong support from a range of key agencies, partners, non government organisations, and communities the scale and scope of work undertaken in the last year would not have been possible. The Steering Group warmly welcome this support and the contribution it has made to tackling shared priorities.

PRIORITIES

- supporting national and regional initiatives which offer significant benefit to the Ayrshire economy;
- developing and strengthening partnerships which address and mitigate the impacts of climate change; and
- Strengthening the specialist support and capacity available to the planning service in Ayrshire and introduce a range of improvements to the management of spatial data within the Councils.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Proposed Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere

Following extensive consultation and strong support from local communities and public agencies plans are well advanced to create a world class place for people and nature in Galloway & Southern Ayrshire. It is hoped that approval by UNESCO of a new style Biosphere Reserve, centred at Cairnmore of Fleet and Silver Flow/Merrick Kells, will in 2012, provide the area with an international accolade which can demonstrate how nature conservation and sustainable development can go hand in hand. Continued investment through tourism marketing, environmental improvement and business support offers significant benefit to the local economy estimated to be up to £80 million.

SUPPORTING NATIONAL INITIATIVES

Central Scotland Green Network

There is good evidence that investment in green space has direct and positive impacts on the local economy and on the regeneration of an area. It is also recognized that good quality accessible green space can provide multiple benefits to physical health and well being, which is particularly effective when targeted toward areas of greatest need. The significance of promoting improvements to green infrastructure has also been given greater significance in recent years with the move towards a reduction of carbon use within the economy and in developing resilience to the impacts of climate change. Working closely with the national agencies and with the Central Scotland Green Network Board improvements are being made to the green infrastructure within Ayrshire. During the year the Central Scotland Green Network Development Funding and key agencies has stimulated and supported a number of training initiatives and projects addressing vacant and derelict land issues, habitat enhancement, and footpath improvements. The CSGN Community fund, administered by the Joint Planning Unit, has also benefitted a number of small community projects.

With financial assistance from the CSGN support unit Forest Research were commissioned to map habitat networks within Ayrshire. This work is supporting the delivery of a national ecological network across Scotland. It is hoped this research, when used alongside other commonly held data, will highlight the opportunities to improve the “connectivity” provided by existing habitats for species and encourage the development of a more integrated habitat network. This project has helped inform the emerging woodland strategy and local biodiversity priorities and will help influence future land management practices.

Through the re-establishment of the Ayrshire and Arran woodland partnership the Joint Planning Steering Group has sought to support the delivery of the Scottish Forestry Strategy. This partnership which involves key national agencies, representations from the forestry sector and non government organisations is supporting the delivery of a revised forestry and woodland strategy. The woodland strategy is an important component in developing and maintaining the future green infrastructure within Ayrshire. It is recognized that the management of existing woodlands and the development of new woodlands and their associated infrastructure can help deliver a number of significant outcomes related to health and well being, supporting tourism, tackling climate change and improvements to environmental quality.

REGENERATION

In the last year significant funds from East Ayrshire Council, the Scottish Government's Town Centre Regeneration Fund, the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme and the Heritage Lottery Fund has enabled £40 million to be invested in Kilmarnock town centre.

An Integrated Urban Development Plan for Kilmarnock Town Centre is also being developed by East Ayrshire Council and Scottish Enterprise. This will be incorporated within the emerging new Local Development Plan.

In Irvine, work is progressing in the regeneration of the town centre. A Town Regeneration Plan produced by Irvine Bay Regeneration Company is in place and approval was given in the spring for the refurbishment of Bridgegate House. Earlier this year, Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) funding was received from Historic Scotland to refurbish the Trinity Church in Irvine.

In November 2010 Ayr Renaissance appointed a manager to run the Townscape Heritage Initiative and take forward the next phase of improvement works. South Ayrshire Council has also been awarded Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme funding towards the Townscape Heritage Initiative.

Cumnock town centre master plan is being implemented by East Ayrshire Council in partnership with a developer.

SPECIALIST SUPPORT

During the year the specialist support and capacity available to the planning service in Ayrshire was strengthened by introducing a range of improvements in the management of spatial data. This has involved a consolidation of existing web sites and a review and update of the spatial and electronic information held by the Joint Planning Unit. The unit maintains a number of web sites which support pan Ayrshire initiatives and updates over 1000 spatial data sets on a six monthly cycle.

The Joint Planning Service has provided direct support to the Ayrshire LBAP partnership through the development of an online Ayrshire Biological Records Centre search engine, this can display and select information from over a quarter of a million biological recordings.

During the year the Steering Group has also sought to maintain awareness of the social, economic and environmental challenges faced by Ayrshire by the publication early in the year of its bi-annual monitoring series.

Ayrshire Joint Planning Service

Ayrshire Joint Planning Steering Group

Technical Management Team

Joint Planning
Unit Manager

Joint Planning
Unit

Inter Council
Working/Topic
Groups

Financial
/Legal/IT
support