

**AYRSHIRE JOINT STRUCTURE PLAN AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE  
2 JUNE 2006**

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**Glasgow and Clyde Valley Structure Plan –Third Alteration 2006**

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To advise the Committee that the eight local authorities in Glasgow and the Clyde Valley have submitted a third alteration to the approved Structure Plan of 2000 for the Glasgow and Clyde Valley and that representations and objections require to be made formally to the Scottish Ministers before Friday 9 June 2006.

BACKGROUND

- 2 The Committee will recall that comments on the consultation draft were made in June 2005. As was reported in June 2005 the Structure Plan manager, in the preparation of the Structure Plan for Ayrshire, has undertaken a number of discussions with surrounding authorities to ensure compatibility between planning processes. This has included meetings with the manager of the Glasgow & Clyde Valley Structure Plan where the need to set a common framework for the West of Scotland against a background set by the National Planning Framework was established. Whilst it was recognised during these meetings that this would be without prejudice to the respective interests of each Structure Plan area it was recognised that it was vital for the economy and regeneration of the West of Scotland that the Conurbation and Ayrshire function to their full potential. The last decade has seen more positive signs of investment and whilst unemployment remains above the national average maintaining this momentum through future investment and improvements to the transport system and the physical environment remain essential. Within this context there is therefore general support for the “Agenda for Sustained Growth” outlined in the 2006 alteration prepared by the Glasgow & Clyde Valley authorities.

THE MOMENTUM FOR CHANGE

- 3 The 2006 Plan Alteration reaffirms the scale of change envisaged in the draft plan and assumes that the economy of the area will grow at a higher rate than the UK average and as a consequence net migration will stabilise and reverse previous historic demographic trends. It is anticipated this will result in faster rates of development than in the past and the potential to create 70,000 more jobs and 109,000 additional households in the period to 2018

is envisaged. Given the close integration of the West of Scotland economy this growth scenario will be beneficial to the Ayrshire economy and is therefore supported. The scale of housing allocations, relative to existing population and housing, in both plans is very similar. In the Glasgow & Clyde Valley allocations for 123,000 private homes are being planned for, the figure for Ayrshire is 22,500.

#### COMMENTS ON THE THIRD ALTERATION

- 4 The following specific comments are made on the proposed alteration.

As outlined above the scale of growth envisaged in the conurbation area and outlined above is supported. If resourced fully the agenda for sustained growth proposed by the eight conurbation authorities would support a major shift in the economic competitive position of the Glasgow & Clyde Valley Structure Plan area and would complement the work undertaken by this Committee in advocating complementary action to transform the West of Scotland as a place in which to invest, work and live in.

#### Transport

- 5 The Alteration recognises that there is a need to ensure compatibility in cross boundary transport links and the need to address gaps in transport infrastructure, and links to the port of Hunterston is specifically quoted (paragraph 2.21). However the subsequent alteration to policy, corresponding changes to schedules and diagrams (refer Diagram 12) within the alteration do not incorporate the required improvements to the transport facilities necessary to support this national integration. It is therefore requested that the final plan is altered through additions to text and diagrams, to reflect the priorities currently within the Ayrshire Structure Plan which has sought to reflect this national integration of the port of Hunterston through improvements to the A737 corridor. Likewise an improved east-west link to the M74 through Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire are also of relevance in supporting and attracting future investment to the national port facility at Hunterston but are again not recognised in either the schedules, text or policy which accompany the alteration.

#### Urban Expansion

- 6 Whilst the majority of urban expansion being proposed is in the eastern and central conurbation two specific “community growth areas” in the western conurbation are identified. These are Johnstone South-West (500 homes) and Bishopton (2,500 homes). These proposals would complement the expansion proposed in the Garnock valley (1100 homes) and strengthen the financial viability and justification for capacity improvements on the Inverclyde/Ayr rail services, particularly east of Paisley.

#### Retail

- 7 A key feature of retail expansion in the conurbation in recent years has been the extent of sub-regional/leisure complexes and their impact on smaller traditional town centres. During

the consultation period concern was raised by this Committee of the scale of expansion in “local centres” such as Pollok and the implication further significant expansion could have on shopping patterns and retail facilities in Ayrshire. The submitted alteration has sought to confirm the importance of sustaining a network of town centres and the relationship these centres have to other shopping and leisure centres and has sought to quantify where the future floorspace opportunities might lie. The retail capacity undertaken by the Conurbation authorities follows closely the methodology adopted by this Committee and there is significant consistency on most key variables. In conclusion, the review has sought to confirm the importance of sustaining a network of centres and clarifies timescale of future retail expansion in the period to 2011. These were issues requested during the consultations stages of the alteration.

### Windfarms

- 8 In the alteration submitted the “preferred areas” which were included in the 2000 Plan have now been identified as only “potential areas”. This change in status follows from the appropriate assessment of SPA’s & SAC’s undertaken by the Glasgow & Clyde Valley Structure Plan Committee. The need to ensure compatibility across boundaries for windfarm development is important. As the Committee will be aware concerns have been expressed previously that the scale and cumulative impact of current proposals will have an adverse impact on landscape, natural environment and aviation interests. In this regard concern still remains that the “potential areas of search” which are identified in the Alteration may through their cumulative impact put economic and environmental resources within Ayrshire at risk. The Ayrshire authorities have previously raised the concerns on the inclusion of the “potential area of search” adjoining the Muirkirk- Lowther Hills and would request that this particular search area be removed from Diagram 22.

### CONCLUSIONS

- 9 There is considerable degree of convergence emerging between the two Joint Structure Plan Committees which is illustrated by the content of Structure Plans for both the Ayrshire and Clyde Valley Structure Plan areas. It is however recommended that the Joint Committee formally object to the inclusion of the potential area of search for windfarms in adjoining the Muirkirk Lowther Uplands, pending further advice from SPP6 which will be issued later this year, and request ministers to incorporate a number of changes to text and policy within the alteration to better reflect the national priority to integrate the port of Hunterston with the wider west of Scotland/Scottish transport network.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10 The Committee are:

- (a) asked to approve this report as a basis for submitting formal comments to the Scottish Ministers on the third alteration to the Glasgow & Clyde Valley Joint Structure Plan 2006; and
- (b) to formally object for the reasons outlined in this report to the inclusion of the “Potential area of Search for Windfarms” adjoining the Muirkirk/Lowther SPA.

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