

**THE THREE AYRSHIRE COUNCILS AND
THE JOINT STRUCTURE PLAN TEAM**

**AYRSHIRE JOINT STRUCTURE PLAN 2025
SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL GROUP**

INTERIM REPORT, NOVEMBER 2004

Introduction

1. In order that the replacement structure plan accords with good practice and to ensure policies are developed in a robust manner, a Sustainability Appraisal is being undertaken in tandem with the plan preparation. This is an iterative process designed to assess if the plan adequately addresses sustainable development. A Group has been set up with members from a wide range of bodies and with an independent facilitator and adviser to carry out this work. The current membership of this Group is set out at Annex A.

Progress made

2. The Group's initial meetings in December 2003 and January 2004 clarified views on the new Structure Plan and its relationship to sustainable development, and enabled initial criteria for assessing the plan and its policies to be devised.

3. As set out in the Report of its Initial Meetings, the Group recognise that the Structure Plan:
"will need to meet the needs and demands for development: for homes, jobs, transport and other infrastructure. This has to be achieved whilst securing a balance between economic, environmental and social matters. In particular the plan must ensure that it balances the imperative for economic regeneration with the impact on the environment."

4. The priorities for achieving this were that development should:
(a) encourage proximity and accessibility – i.e. jobs, housing, shopping and services should either be near one another or readily accessible; and
(b) safeguard the environment and secure the wise use of resources; including reducing emissions; the protection of designated sites and species; consideration of capacity and of cumulative effects; and design, greenspace and landscape – the principle of good design for communities.

5. The Group agreed with the agenda of six key issues identified in the public consultation leaflet issued by the Joint Committee: a Future for Communities; Economic Prosperity; Housing Land Investment; Transport and Public Sector Infrastructure Support; A Green Future; and Rural Ayrshire. They also identified as key features of the planning process: the opportunity for the co-ordination of policy; the need for the co-ordination of investment; and the involvement of the public and politicians in consultation and participation.

6. The appraisal criteria devised by the Group are set out at Annex B. While these criteria remain provisional and to an extent untested, they were set out at an

early stage as a way of forming a consensus in the Group of the factors they would wish to take into account in appraising the plan and its constituent policies. It should also be noted that they were devised before the Group had sight of the Consultation Draft.

7. The Group's further meetings in March and May 2004 took into account, and adjusted to, the new strategic preference to centre the new plan on the retention of existing population levels. At the May 2004 meeting the Group expressed some unease with the policy format of the emerging Consultation Draft (relative to the existing plan), with the reduction to a very limited number of strategic policy statements: this is discussed further in paragraph 11 below. A further consequence was that it was not immediately obvious how to assess the new draft plan in terms of sustainable development or how to apply the appraisal criteria. The Group faced difficulties in assessing the implications of a potentially large land release for housing development, the areas and locations of which are yet to be quantified or specified.

8. Before the Group met again in October 2004, some further assessment was carried out. The Group was then briefed on the overall responses to the Consultation Draft received through the public consultation over the summer (a summary of the points raised in relation to sustainable development is at Annex C). This report has been compiled taking this into account, together with the Group's own deliberations at the October meeting.

Purpose of this Interim Report

9. This report provides the response of the Sustainability Appraisal Group to the Consultation Draft, and does so in a way which seeks to continue to influence the evolution of the draft plan. At this stage, it is much more of a perspective on the plan from a sustainable development viewpoint than a 'sustainability appraisal' per se. Once the draft plan is being finalised, it is intended that the Group's activity will shift more towards appraisal.

Response to the Approach of the Consultation Draft

10. The Group note that many of their concerns are also reflected in the public consultation responses.

11. The Group has two main concerns about the approach that the Consultation Draft adopts:

- In line with comments expressed in other responses, while the group found the Draft clear, the extent of policy guidance is limited. On the one hand, the Group is aware of the Scottish Executive's advice on moving away from having a raft of specific policies, and that the Consultation Draft necessarily focussed on a strategic vision. On the other hand, members commended the clarity of the existing Joint Structure Plan; and concluded there was scope for reflecting on whether the Consultation Draft was the right way to present policies. The Group also recognised that the Consultation Draft was designed to raise questions, and that the finalised Draft Plan will be different. However this is resolved, it will be important for the Structure Plan to give clear guidance on the matters to be set out in Local Plans. There is an important opportunity here to give guidance on sustainable development.

- Second, and of particular concern to this Group, is that although there are many appropriate references in the Consultation Draft, neither sustainable development overall, nor the environment in particular, come across as pervasive themes influencing all aspects of the plan. The plan appears dominated by the issues of population retention and the implications of this for housing land. There is a need to ensure that economic wellbeing, social inclusion, and protection and enhancement of both built and natural environment, are considered alongside one another throughout the plan.

Response to the issue of Population Retention

12. A strategic decision to base the new plan on the retention of existing population levels (rather than planning for a decline in line with RG forecasts) has the most important and wide-ranging impact on the new plan. It therefore warrants being evaluated from a sustainable development perspective, though the Group consider that this topic should not displace treatment in the plan (and the sustainability appraisal) of the full agenda of key issues.

13. An initial reaction was that this strategy would generate far more development than would otherwise be the case. In particular, when allied to the need for new housing in any event (arising primarily from the decline in household size), the outcome would be a substantial increase in housebuilding, and therefore a substantial release of land for housing. If the same population level gave rise to significant extra infrastructure requirements and associated resource use, then this would seem to be moving away from, rather than towards, more sustainable development.

14. However, on reflection the picture is much more complex than this:
- The position advocated by the Consultation Draft moves away from 'predict and provide', normally criticised by advocates of sustainable development (especially with respect to air and road transport), even though the consequence in this case is more, rather than less, development.
 - Retaining population at or near current levels is consistent with maintaining current provision of social and community facilities, and with current retail and services demand. Conversely, loss of population would lead to loss of at least some facilities, almost certainly with some geographic concentration, and potentially adversely affecting disadvantaged communities more than others.
 - If population is not retained in Ayrshire, it will be because it has moved elsewhere. This will either be to other parts of Scotland (likely to be to those areas already experiencing population and growth pressures - the belt from Stirling to East Lothian), or outwith Scotland (contrary to national policy objectives). Therefore in assessing the impact in terms of sustainable development, the implications for development elsewhere have also to be considered.

15. It is not easy to provide a quantitative assessment of the structure plan scenarios. The following table tries to suggest possible implications of the two main alternatives: planning for the GRO projection of population loss, and planning for retaining current population levels (over the longer term).

Table 1: Potential implications of alternative Population Scenarios

Population Scenario	1. GRO(S) Projections	3. Stable Population by 2017+
Population	362,495 ? 331,000	362,495 ? 362,495
Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of demand & skills ? some 'export' of jobs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of demand (including for housing & infrastructure). More need to retain/create job opportunities.
Industrial land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less requirement for industrial land than scenario 3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing requirement for portfolio of employment sites
Housing (but see also Table 3 in Annex D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modest overall growth of housing demand (but still significant development because of radical change in household structure). More of the less attractive housing falling out of use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially large growth in number of households, with radical change in household structure. More development and land release in Ayrshire than scenario 1.
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some reduction of public transport viability (especially more dispersed areas). Some reduction of overall vehicle mileage and congestion. More difficult to justify infrastructure investment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain public demand for transport (potential increase if more commuting). If population more dispersed (because of new housing locations), more travel, and more difficult to serve by public transport.
Shopping & Town Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of declining viability and choice with falling catchment. Less viable to secure town centre investment and renewal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain demand, but may redistribute its location.
Impact on the Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in waste arising Less land take Reduced resources for environmental renewal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More development pressure and risk of loss of habits and landscape quality. More infrastructure demands.
Services & Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some loss of catchments, e.g. for schools: likely to impact most on disadvantaged communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New service requirements, especially if new housing dispersed. More opportunity to secure additional community facilities.
Impact on other parts of Scotland (especially eastern Central Belt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant additional development pressure to accommodate people moving to areas already under development stress (congestion, car commuting, loss of Green Belt). Less likely population can be accommodated in town centres or existing settlement boundaries Additional infrastructure requirements (schools, social facilities) to replace underused capacity in Ayrshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less development pressure for housing land, and new infrastructure, most probably in areas already under development stress. Reduced incentive for renewal in Greater Glasgow if the alternative is more commuting from Ayrshire.

16. Table 1 is purely indicative: it is not a quantitative appraisal and is clearly debatable. However, what it does suggest is (a) that considered within Ayrshire,

there are arguments either way, but (b) when external impact is taken into account, the balance is likely to be that the 'alternative' of seeking to retain population is the more sustainable option.

17. Therefore, the Group's judgement is that looking wider than Ayrshire alone, population retention is likely to be more sustainable than planning for a population decline. The main reason is simply that planning for the existing population, even though it may require significant land release and housebuilding in Ayrshire, will make use of existing infrastructure, social and commercial facilities. To plan for population to be displaced, would undermine current economic and social activity and require not only new houses but also significant extra infrastructure to be built elsewhere, most likely in those parts of Scotland already under development pressure.

Implications for Housing and Housing Land Release

18. This view is based on the information available to the Group, and is necessarily a matter of judgement and therefore provisional. If the land release were excessive; at low densities with high infrastructure and resource use costs; remote from community facilities, local shops, leisure and recreation; and led to a large scale increase in car based commuting, then it would be difficult to argue that what is proposed would be sustainable development. To argue otherwise, it would have to be shown that the only alternatives would have similar characteristics elsewhere.

19. The Group considers that the way in which development is carried out – its location, form, transport provision – and the extent to which it contributes to environmental quality and social justice, are all material to whether it moves towards, or away from, more sustainable development. The new housing that is provided should be where there are existing community facilities and other infrastructure and services, or new housing releases should be of sufficient scale to enable facilities and services (including public transport) to be provided with the housing development.

20. On housing, the Group notes that the Consultation Draft sets out the forecasts of population and overall household numbers, then derives the housing numbers which cannot be met through existing housing land allocations. The draft plan has yet to explicitly consider the implications of household change (where the increase is predominantly in one and two people households) or to assess the area of land required (for example by considering the types and location of houses, and the associated issue of density).

21. An assessment of the household change forecasts for the alternative population scenarios has been carried out and is at Annex D. The main conclusions in terms of housing requirements (and not just the structure plan issue of housing land requirements) are that:

- the 'down-sizing' of households and changing household structure are more significant than the decision whether to retain existing population levels;
- there is a significant decline in the requirement for family housing in all scenarios; and
- by far the greatest requirement in all scenarios is for more single household accommodation.

22. As noted in the Annex, clearly housing need will not be met through the provision of family homes alone, but this does not mean that there will be no role for larger or family houses. But neither does it mean provision solely through flatted accommodation on brownfield town centre sites either. What it does suggest is that a mix of housing, providing choice in size, type and price – including provision of affordable homes – will be the requirement, and this should take into account local housing strategies.

23. A further aspect to be taken into account, both in the overall strategy, and more specifically in terms of housing, is meeting the needs of those over retirement age. Ayrshire already has a proportion of those over 60 above the Scottish average, with the proportion in South Ayrshire (at 25%) second only to Dumfries and Galloway amongst Scottish mainland councils. The growth of this group over the plan period is significant, and can be predicted with even more confidence than forecasts about further family fragmentation. For retired and elderly people, consideration of accessibility, security and affordability can be especially important.

24. The Group's view is that where and how housing is developed will be crucial to how much the plan contributes to sustainable development:

- While in general brownfield sites are likely to be preferable to greenfield, the Group do not want to see adoption of a simplistic approach. They recognise there may be situations where brownfield land has developed valuable biodiversity or can be improved at low cost for open space requirements or recreational uses; and situations where the upgrading or replacement of existing services or land treatment would require a disproportionate level of resources (and therefore be less sustainable) than greenfield development.
- The Group also recognises that opportunities for infill and small scale development, changes of use, conversions and subdivision may be less in Ayrshire than in Scotland's larger cities. Nevertheless it remains very important that such development opportunities play their part, restoring life to Ayrshire's main towns, and providing housing opportunities ranging from sheltered and retirement homes to up-market 'loft living'.
- More generally, housing land release should:
 - Be located so that new houses are close to, or accessible to, community and social facilities, and to public transport;
 - Be identified through Housing Capacity Studies aimed at avoiding sensitive environments and landscapes;
 - Be phased, to accord with demand and infrastructure provision (including community facilities and public transport and well as main services);
 - Ensure that regeneration and renewal priorities are supported; and that land release in high demand areas does not undermine regeneration elsewhere; and
 - Encourage development to be energy efficient through the orientation, massing and location of buildings; encourage the use and availability of public transport; the use of sustainable materials; the retention of natural features; and landscaping to benefit biodiversity.
- Major developments should be subject to master plans, to be prepared jointly by developers and the planning authority where possible, and approved by the planning authority.

Spatial Strategy and Major Development

25. The Group supports the spatial strategy proposed in the Consultation Draft. As part of this the Group also supports retail development being subject to the sequential test, and emphasises the role of town centres as the main focus for all types of development and transport provision.

26. The potential for also providing a new focus for development has been discussed. However, on reflection, ideas for a new public transport network linking the three main towns or a 'University of Ayrshire' – neither of which form part of the investment plans of the relevant agencies – appear unlikely to be realistic.

27. However, the Group also concludes that new forms or types of development may well arise during the plan period. Rather than leave this to be dealt with on an ad hoc basis, it would be useful to set down criteria by which any such proposals might be assessed. For example, the current Consultation Draft indicates the potential, and implies potential support, for a major tourism development on the Ayrshire Coast. There will be a number of different types of potential development for which the plan could give both encouragement and guidance. One such type of development which would be particularly welcome would be to find a site for a sustainable development industrial park.

Sustainable Development

28. In line with its comments of the overall approach of the Consultation Draft (set out at paragraph 11 above), there is scope for giving better expression to the plan's Spatial Development Strategy aims to secure "economic wellbeing, social inclusion and environmental stewardship", i.e. sustainable development. One way would be the integration in the Spatial Development Strategy of key aspects of Chapters 3.0 and 4.0 on Investing in Communities and Protecting the Environment. This would make clear that within the spatial strategy, the priorities for investment take account of the identified social justice and regeneration priorities of the community planning partnerships. It would also make clear that safeguarding and enhancing the quality of the environment is integral to the overall strategy too. At present there is a risk that environmental issues – such as biodiversity and landscape – could be seen as second order and not given sufficient weight, rather than an expression of the quality which is a key asset in people's decisions not just to visit, but to live and work in Ayrshire.

29. Another way is to set out a more radical vision of making progress on what have been the Scottish Executive's early action priorities of waste, energy and travel. Over the time frame of the plan, all three of these topics will have gone through radical transformation, and the plan could and should provide more of a framework for this. The Group's recommendations seek to add more emphasis to public transport; develop further what is proposed on energy; and add in consideration of waste. The following paragraphs make specific suggestions on all of these, after commenting on the difficulty – for sustainable development - posed by Prestwick.

Transport

30. From a sustainable development perspective, there is a continuing problem with the commitment to expand Prestwick Airport. The UK Sustainable Development Commission and House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee have both

reported that UK policy for the growth of air travel, which sets the future for Prestwick, will render it impossible to meet the Government's own greenhouse gas reduction targets. However, setting aside debate about whether local economic benefits and requirements on airports to address sustainable development off-set the contribution to global climate destabilisation, this is a topic where the Structure Plan is constrained by – and has to comply with – Government Policy.

31. Therefore, while the Group has reservations about whether continued growth of air traffic from Prestwick is compatible with sustainable development, they nevertheless recognise that this is a matter governed by national policy. It is better that such air travel that does take place does so where it causes least local environmental damage. From an Ayrshire perspective, it is important to ensure that Prestwick airport is readily accessible by public transport, does not subject Ayrshire to local pollution, and that, where possible, economic development benefits accrue locally.

32. The Group would like to see the Plan give higher priority to public transport, and include commitment to public transport improvements. For example, unlike several other strategic plans in Central Scotland, the Consultation Draft appears to contain no explicit commitment to new public transport investment (i.e. Ayrshire equivalents of the Bathgate-Airdrie, Stirling-Alloa, or Borders rail lines; busways, tramways or light rail). However, after briefly considering more radical options, the Group concluded that commitment to proposals that are realistic in terms of resources, and already under consideration in the programmes of the relevant agencies, would be preferable to a wish-list of projects for which resources might not be forthcoming.

33. Given the long time horizon of the plan, it should be possible to include at least firm commitment to enhancing the track capacities of the rail connections between Kilmarnock and Glasgow, and also between Ayr and Glasgow (given the rail freight usage and potential of this route). A sound start would be for the draft plan to endorse:

- An early commitment to the proposed 'dynamic loop' to enable a half-hour interval service on the Glasgow-Kilmarnock line; and
- The Quality Bus Corridor being developed from Ardrossan through Irvine to Kilmarnock, and encouraging links between these services and those connecting North Ayrshire to Ayr.

Energy

34. The Group sees Ayrshire as well endowed with renewable resources and notes its potential contribution to renewable energy. The Group considered that the development of wind energy, and renewable energy more generally, would benefit from a more strategic approach including assessment of cumulative impact.

35. There is a strong case too for raising awareness of the potential of both renewable energy and energy efficiency. Both can bring local benefits, as well as enabling Ayrshire to contribute to the wider, ultimately global, environment. Encouragement should be given to mainstreaming higher standards into all development, but there is also a special role for demonstration projects. The Group would therefore welcome the Structure Plan:

- Exploring the potential for a site for an alternative energy park (perhaps as an alternative for a site for biomass alone); experience elsewhere is that such

- facilities can have a role in tourism as well development of the energy industry – the Centre for Alternative Technology in mid-Wales was cited.
- Making provision for at least one major housing site being a practical example of best practice (in terms of energy, waste management, SUDs, low impact housing, accessible public transport, sustainable materials, and diverse landscaping).

Waste

36. The Group understands that the Structure Plan team had not been a position to put forward policies on waste in the Consultation Draft. The Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway Area Waste Plan provides the framework for sustainable waste management within the area. The role of the Structure Plan should be to set the strategic spatial implications for the area which allow the framework to be realised through Local Plans. The Structure Plan should identify areas of search, and the Local Plans identify sites.

37. The Group sees potential in providing a waste reprocessing centre, to provide jobs to the area and reinforce the role of recycling facilities, which should be provided locally. The type of facility selected must be able to contribute to delivering the Area Waste Strategy, and might also contribute to a wider area. The potential to link such a development to the sustainable development industrial park mentioned above should be explored. The Scottish Executive is currently appraising funding bids under the Strategic Waste Fund and this will have a bearing on the type of facility required.

Further work

38. Continuing work is underway on how to guide and measure progress towards sustainable development. The Group's own initial criteria (set out in Annex 2), the Joint Structure Plan's monitoring reports, and the Scottish Executive's indicators provide key building blocks. Further, South Ayrshire Council has offered to provide expertise to enable to potential role of ecological footprinting to be explored.

39. There is a need to consider in greater depth the likely changes in the rural economy and the need for policy to be responsive to secure a viable rural society. This may well mean more diversity and development in the countryside, where this can be made relatively autonomous, and contribute to - and not damage - landscape, habitat and wildlife.

40. As noted earlier, there is a role for the Structure Plan to say much more about how Local Plans should to interpret and give guidance towards sustainable development. There is scope for the Committee to examine the possible mechanisms for attaching requirements for good environmental practice in the design and building of new housing. Another way of reinforcing sustainable development would be to incorporate general policy and criteria to be used to guide any departure from the plan (as in the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Structure Plan) or to be developed as supplementary planning guidance for all significant development (as in the Highland Structure Plan).

Tim Birley for Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan 2025, Sustainability Appraisal Group
23rd November 2004

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GROUP MEMBERS

Ian Anderson	SNH
Sandra Bale	North Ayrshire Council
Scott Cameron	Communities Scotland
Zoe Clelland	RSPB
Robin Cole	Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire
June Dawson	SEPA
Carol Gilbert	SPT
Bob Leitch	Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce
Iain Matheson	SEERAD
Nan McFarlane	South Ayrshire Association of Community Councils
Alan McGonigle	Energy Agency
Blair Melville	Homes for Scotland
Adrian Shaw	South Ayrshire Council
Helen Sinclair	East Ayrshire Council
Tim Birley	Facilitator, and adviser on Sustainable Development

In addition to its membership, the Group benefits from participation by the Joint Structure Plan Team, and by observer (and corresponding) members from the three Ayrshire Councils:

Ian Johnson	Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan Team
John Esslemont	Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan Team
Toby Wilson	Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan Team
Karl Doroszenko	East Ayrshire Council
Richard Henry	North Ayrshire Council
Fiona Campbell	South Ayrshire Council

[Membership and Observers as at October 2004]

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APPRAISAL CRITERIA

The report of the Initial Meetings of the Group set out the following list of criteria, stating that they are clearly provisional, and likely to be further revised in the light of reactions from the Group, and the Group's consideration of the draft structure plan. In particular, some of the criteria may well overlap or duplicate one another; if so, this will become apparent when they start to be used to appraise policies.

Economic Criteria:

- The creation of opportunities for access to jobs
- Development to encourage people to live and work in Ayrshire
- Provision of new or improved infrastructure to support the Development Strategy [*subject to the strategy reflecting sustainable development and being set out in the draft plan*]
- Development in strategic clusters / locations [*subject to these being set out in the draft plan*]

Social Justice Criteria:

- Assisting local communities, particularly disadvantaged communities and renewal priorities [*subject to the latter being set out in the draft plan*]
- Promoting greater accessibility to services and facilities, and the sequential approach to development decisions
- Supporting or enhancing community facilities
- Meeting all housing needs including affordable housing

Environmental Impact Criteria:

- Promotion of resource use efficiency, including:
 - Energy efficiency; SUDS; waste minimisation
 - Re-use of existing infrastructure, services and transport provision
 - Promoting brownfield site development [*Note: the rationale for this is to reinforce renewal priorities, accessibility, and wise use of existing transport and services*]*
- Enhancement, renewal and protection of environmental resources (including the precautionary principle; and the polluter pays principle) [*subject to the structure plan specifying the range of environmental resources, which should include biodiversity, designated areas & sites, non renewable resources, and cultural heritage*]
- Restoration or improvement of air, water and land quality
- Capacity of the environment to absorb development (including cumulative capacity and townscape/landscape assessment)

[*It should be noted that subsequent discussion on promotion of brownfield site development has emphasised the note in italics – see paragraph 24 of the Interim Report]

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**Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan – overview of comments for Sustainability
Appraisal**

Introduction

This is a brief overview of the key issues relating to sustainable development, raised in responses in the public consultation on the Consultation Draft of the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan 2025. This was provided as briefing to the Sustainability Appraisal Group Meeting on 13 October 2004

Key Issues:

- General support for the Plan's Vision Statement and Principle Aims.
1. Population and housing:
- Acceptance of need to address population loss.
 - Some concern that too much weight is put on the ability to increase housing provision to address population loss. Economic growth was felt to be the key to stabilising the population.
 - General welcoming or acceptance of new housing provision.
 - Mixed response to proposals for new housing in the countryside [/greenfield housing].
 - Emphasis needs to be given to regenerating old housing stock.
 - Housebuilders able to respond to need for new housing provision.
 - General support for the concept of Gateway Locations and Core Investment Areas.
2. Transport:
- General welcoming of the transport provisions in the Structure Plan.
 - Support for increase in public transport.
 - Support for increase in transport infrastructure, particularly rail infrastructure and increased linkage to ports.
 - General support for the status of Prestwick International Airport as an important economic asset and a need to allow for the future expansion of it.

3. Energy:

- General support for increase in wind energy provision, but with landscape and biodiversity considerations.
- Support for renewable energy [+ energy efficiency].
- Biomass generally not seen as viable.

4. Retail:

- General support for focussing retail development in town centres but some flexibility is needed.

5. Environment:

- [Noted not integrated throughout plan; and the general environmental aims of the plan need to be “up front” as well as integrated into the document.]
- Need to strengthen the landscape and biodiversity sections of the plan.
- Need to integrate Ayrshire Biodiversity Action Plan into other policies.
- General support for the removal of ‘second tier’ landscape designations as long as this doesn’t lead to the overall protection of the landscape being weakened.
- Need for greater acknowledgement of the assets of the coast.

6. Tourism:

- Need for greater emphasis on the attractiveness [quality] of Ayrshire’s environmental assets.
- Need to promote tourism in Ayrshire.

7. Waste:

- Need for a strategic waste plan.

8. Minerals:

- Support safeguarding of mineral sites.

9. Woodlands:

- Support for the woodland strategy.

Toby Wilson
Environmental Policy Officer
Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan Team
1/10/04

Note: items shown [thus] added after presentation at meeting, 13 October 2004.

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INTERIM REPORT

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD SCENARIOS

D1. In response to comments received from Group members to an earlier briefing paper, the household change forecasts for the alternative population scenarios have been examined further.

D2. The key references are the Consultation Draft, and the accompanying technical report on “Strategic Assessment of Housing Land Requirements.” Table 2, taken directly from these documents, sets the scene:

Table 2: Population and Household Scenarios

Scenario:	2005	2025		
		1. GRO(S) Projections	2. National Household Growth Rate (7%)	3. Stable Population by 2017+
Population	362,495	331,000	334,457 – 352,000	362,495
Households	160,040	165,500 - 174,210	176,030	181,247 - 190,787
Household growth		5,460 - 14,170	16,000	21,207 - 30,747
Household growth p.a.		273-709	800	1060-1537

Sources:

- Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan 2025: Consultation Draft June 2004
- Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan 2025: Report of Survey: Technical Report 1: Strategic Assessment of Housing Land Requirements

D3. These figures set out the options, but do not tell the whole story. The Consultation Draft plan methodology for Housing Land Requirements is based on two elements. It sets out the forecasts of population and overall household numbers, and then derives the housing *numbers* which cannot be met through existing housing land allocations. There are two key omissions here. It has yet to explicitly consider the implications of household change (though these are set out in an Appendix to the Technical Report); and to assess the *area* of land required (for example by considering the types and location of housing, and the associated issue of density).

D4. To get a better assessment of the first of these, Table 3, set out below, aims to estimate future sizes of households in Ayrshire. The figures are derived from the Scottish Executive’s Household Change projections, and are comparable to those in

publications by Communities Scotland and both East and North Ayrshire Councils. The figures are based on the assumption that the rate of change of household size structure from 2002-2016 continues throughout the period to 2025. However, as a check that the analysis is robust, the figures given in brackets are on the basis that there is no further change in family structure after 2016. It is also assumed that the pattern of household change is not affected by the choice of scenario (whereas, as discussed later, the option of population retention could set out to attract or retain specific types of household).

**Table 3. Estimated and projected Households by Type
 (NB: these are derived estimates, giving indicative figures only)**

Scenario:	2005	2025		
		1. GRO(S) Projections	2. National Household Growth Rate (7%)	3. Stable Population by 2017+
Population	362,495	331,000	334,457 – 352,000	362,495
Households	160,040	165,500 - 174,210	176,030	181,247 - 190,787
Household Type:				
Two or more adults with children	33,600	16,000 – 18,000 (24,700)	17,000 – 18,000 (25,600)	17,000 – 20,000 (27,000)
One adult with children	10,890	16,000 – 13,000 (12,600)	17,000 – 14,000 (13,000)	18,000 – 14,000 (13,800)
One person household	50,720	68,000 (62,800)	71,000 (65,000)	75,000 (68,700)
Two or more adults	64,540	69,000 – 70,000 (69,900)	73,000 (72,400)	77,000 (76,500)

Sources:

- Scottish Executive Household Projections for Scotland: 2002 Based (2002 - 2016)
- Communities Scotland Housing Market Context Statement: Ayrshire, Dumfries & Galloway April 2002
- East Ayrshire Council Information Archives (projections for 2004 - 2009)
- North Ayrshire Council Projections (2000 – 2012)
- Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan 2025: Report of Survey: Technical Report 1: Strategic Assessment of Housing Land Requirements

D5. What can be said with some certainty about these projections is set out in the considered language of a Government agency:

“The number of households is projected to rise. This growth is likely to have implications for the demand for housing. The main household types will increasingly be either single person or two or more adult households with no dependent children. There will be a reduction in the number of households with children. Average household size is projected to decrease.” (Communities Scotland, 2002)

D6. It may be possible to go further. The figures in Table 3 suggest that considering housing requirements (and not just the structure plan issue of housing *land* requirements):

- The ‘down-sizing’ of households and changing household structure are *more* significant than the decision whether to retain existing population levels.
- There is a significant decline in the requirement for family housing in *all* scenarios (and irrespective of whether the projected continuation of marriage break-up is correct or not).
- By far the greatest requirement in all scenarios is for more single household accommodation.

D7. The purpose of this analysis is to underpin the points made in paragraphs 18 and 19 of the Interim Report about some of the key choices, if housing development is to contribute to more sustainable development. Clearly housing need will not be met through the provision of large family homes alone. But this need not mean provision solely through flatted accommodation on brownfield town centres sites either. What it does suggest is that if the plan is to be housing-led, then there is a need for quite sophisticated policy to guide development to provide the right kinds of housing in the locations where it is wanted and where it can be most easily accommodated (i.e. making the best use of existing resources).

D8. It is not unreasonable that if the plan is challenging the assumption of planning for decline on the basis of GRO forecasts (a position this paper supports), it can also challenge other assumptions. These include the assumptions that we should plan for the inevitable further fragmentation of society, and that planners can only zone land for housing and not guide what kinds of housing should be developed there.

D9. On this basis, the plan could set a framework for assessing what sections of population it seeks or needs to retain. There will be places where it will be right to provide larger houses to retain and attract families (North Kilmarnock for example?), providing there are alternatives to car commuting and all social facilities and infrastructure requirements are provided. It will also be right to provide homes large enough to enable working from home and to meet other social aspirations. At the same time, other people may welcome opportunities for more compact homes, easy to run and maintain, and near shops, transport and other facilities. The requirements here may range from barrier-free retirement homes (is a key role for the coast to provide attractive opportunities for retirement?) through to up-market flats in the centres of towns.

D10. To address these questions, and their downstream implications (such as service provision), requires developing a close working relationship between the structure plan, and not only the local plans for which it provides the framework, but also the 3 Council’s community and corporate plans, including their housing strategies. Again, the kind of issue to address is exemplified in the Communities Scotland report:

“Across ADG [Ayrshire, Dumfries & Galloway] there are supply and demand mismatches at some locations in the social rented sector, particularly within the local authority sector. Demand is now mainly from smaller sized households while supply is weighted towards the larger sized properties, resulting in increasing voids and tenancy turnover problems in some areas.”

End of Annex D; End of Interim Report