

Our Ref: IS/LM

27 August 2004

The Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan Committee  
15 Links Road  
PRESTWICK  
KA9 1QG

**For the attention of Ian Johnson**

Dear Sirs

**GROWING AYRSHIRE – DRAFT AJSP 2025**  
**AWG RESIDENTIAL LIMITED AND JAMES CRAIG LIMITED**

We are instructed by AWG Residential Limited and James Craig (Auctioneers Ltd) to make representations to the AJSP 2025 Consultation Draft. This follows our previous response to the Issues stage on 17 December 2003 in relation to landholdings at Holmston, Ayr.

Question 1 – Vision Statement

In general, our clients welcome the proposed change in direction for strategic policies in Ayrshire. It is noted that the region's employment levels are showing little sign of recovery which, allied to a declining and ageing population, will compromise the ability of Ayrshire to realise its full economic potential. In this respect, we support the fact that the new Structure Plan will have at its foundation, a strategy for population recovery and prosperity through new housing opportunities as well as through economic activity.

Question 2 – Future Population Strategy

In terms of the spatial development strategy, AWG Residential Limited and James Craig Ltd support the draft Plan's objective to minimise population loss in the first place and then to provide the basis for population growth, in doing so, contributing to national planning objectives. Referring to the population options at Table 1, our clients strongly advocate that the upper target of stabilising Ayrshire population by 2017 should be pursued. A less aspirational target runs the risk of failing to address declining population levels in the future if current trends become accelerated. It must be preferable, and in Ayrshire's interests, to foster population and settlement growth.

Question 5 – Core Investment Area

The spatial development strategy is correct to direct future physical development to the core settlements of Ayr, Irvine and Kilmarnock, based on existing population, activity and services in these towns. This combined catchment is important to maximising opportunities for investment and development, thereby increasing choice and supporting existing communities within the core area.

Our clients support the approach that most of the additional housing provision should be concentrated in and adjacent to the core towns.

### Question 13 - Future Housing Provision

Our clients support the view at Para. 3.11 of the draft Plan that a development strategy based on current GRO based population projections is not a viable option for Ayrshire. A strategy which seeks to stem out migration and offer improved housing choice in order to stabilise population levels is the only positive choice for the region.

As such, the scale of housing requirements for South Ayrshire, as set out at Table 2, on the basis of a stable population scenario, is appropriate and reflective of the development potential and attractiveness of that district.

It is agreed that this level of growth needs to be managed and the general principles to guide future housing release are important in this respect. However, taking Ayr itself, there needs to be specific recognition in the new Structure Plan of the current physical and other constraints to future long term growth of the settlement.

This is achieved in part in Schedule 3 where the proposed allocations to 2025 are directed to "South and East Ayr." This locational guidance is considered relevant to Ayr's circumstances and our clients support the terms of Schedule 3. However, the text under "Current Opportunities" should clarify the sound reasoning for directing 80% of the 20 year housing provision to South and East Ayr. Indeed, the Finalised Structure Plan could go further and identify sustainable growth corridors to the east and south of Ayr.

### Question 24 – Urban Edge

Related to the issue of the planned expansion of Ayr is the issue of management of the urban edge from Troon to Ayr. Our clients welcome the question which the draft AJSP has raised about the whole principle of a Greenbelt around Ayr. This is a matter which is also due to be considered at the South Ayrshire Local Plan Inquiry where the Council is endeavouring to delineate a robust Greenbelt boundary for the first time, having regard to the emerging strategic context. What is apparent is that South Ayrshire Council has undertaken a Greenbelt review outwith the strategic context of the new Structure Plan. Yet, Circular 24/85 advises that the stability of Greenbelts should be established at Structure Plan level related to a long term settlement strategy.

The Council's own study has revealed a disparate quality of Greenbelt about Ayr reflected in the proposal for detached Greenbelt wedges. We therefore encourage the Structure Plan team to give full consideration to dispensing with the Ayr Greenbelt in preference to an "Urban Edge" designation that provides the appropriate local landscape protection and strategic management of urban growth promoted in the draft AJSP.

We trust you welcome our clients' representations to the Draft Structure Plan and look forward to your acknowledgement and responses in due course. Should you require any further information in support of this submission, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

**Ian Stanger, MRTPI**

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