

**SUBMISSION IN RELATION TO  
JOINT AYRSHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN**

**August 2004**

## **Introduction**

- 1.1 This submission relates to the review of the Joint Ayrshire Structure Plan. The Consultation Draft Plan acknowledges at para. 3.28 that in the medium term, non-food retail expenditure is expected to grow between 30-40% and that associated employment will grow by 2000 jobs. It is also the case however that expenditure will also grow for food retail over the plan period but not at the same level. This submission should be taken in the context of Question 16 as set out in the draft Structure Plan.

## **Retail Expenditure**

- 1.2 The growth of retail expenditure for convenience goods is modest compared to comparison retail goods. Nevertheless the last predicted growth rate as set out in the Data Consultancy Information Brief 99/2 of 0.1% per annum has recently been superseded. The recently published MapInfo Brief 04/02 estimates convenience retail growth at 0.9% per annum. Whilst this growth rate is still modest, it is significantly more than previously estimated figure and this will have the effect of increasing available expenditure for convenience goods over the plan period.
- 1.3 It is also the case that most retail foodstores now carry a large range of comparison goods and this can amount to as much as 50% of the net retail floorspace. Unlike convenience goods expenditure, comparison goods expenditure is estimated to be growing at a rate of 5.2% per annum. This will have the effect of generating significant surplus expenditure for comparison goods over the plan period.
- 1.4 When the above growth rates are considered in the context of the Structure Plan's Strategy to stem population decline by encouraging additional housing in the area, this all points to a significant increase in expenditure within the area due to additional population and will require additional retail floorspace to be provided to service these additional residents and surplus expenditure.
- 1.5 On the basis of the above it is our opinion that there will be significant surplus expenditure during the plan period to justify additional retail development for both convenience and comparison goods within the Structure Plan area and in particular

within the East Ayrshire catchment area, which is presently not well served in terms of convenience retail provision.

### **Policy Considerations**

- 1.6 It is accepted that planning policy dictates that town centres should be the first choice for new retail development and note that the emerging structure plan aims to maintain this policy. It is our position that we do not object to this broad policy aim and agree that town centres should remain the principle focus for new retail development.
- 1.7 However at the same time the necessity for appropriate out of centre development should also be recognised in the Structure Plan. It is accepted in the draft Structure Plan that retail expenditure for non-food retail will increase significantly over the Structure Plan period and it is our opinion the expenditure for food retail will also grow.
- 1.8 It is also acknowledge that there is a place for certain out of centre retail development providing that the location of this development is acceptable and its scale will not undermine the vitality and viability of any existing town centres.
- 1.9 On this basis, it is our opinion that it is legitimate for the Structure Plan to plan for this land use demand and make specific allocations for such development in the same way land is allocated for housing and industry.
- 1.10 Whilst the Strategy will be to direct new retail development to town centres, it is accepted that not all retail development is appropriate to the town centre and that some out of centre retail development can be considered to be acceptable, subject to specific criteria. It should also be recognised, given the level the likely level of surplus retail expenditure that it would be impractical for the town centres to absorb all of this surplus available expenditure. Simply, an allocation of some of the available surplus expenditure to appropriate out of centre locations would not prejudice the growth of town centres or would undermine them.
- 1.11 In this regard it is our opinion that the Structure Plan, whilst maintaining a policy in favour of town centres should also recognise the role and presence of out of centre

retail development and allow for the expansion of these retail facilities at a scale appropriate to the catchment.