

Comments on Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan Consultation

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We offer the following comments on the consultation draft.

Question 2

Yes I agree that Ayrshire should adopt strategies to stabilise and grow our population. If Ayrshire is to have something that can be seen as its own distinct economy (albeit that it functions as an integrated part of the larger economy), it must have local targets that both lie within its powers, and will influence local prosperity. Strategic planning is one of very few mechanisms available to Ayrshire to influence its relative position within the wider economy, and so I fully support the adoption of 'population support' as one strand of a strategy for economic wellbeing.

Question 4 – Gateway Locations

The proposed gateway locations within Ayrshire are supported, and we understand the reasons for the references to Stranraer/Cairnryan and Glasgow Airport.

However, I believe that in addition to those listed, a landward facility located on the M77, by far the main access route between Ayrshire and the rest of Scotland, warrants recognition, and I suggest that the Kingswell Facility would be appropriate. Its strategic location at the northern boundary of Ayrshire, served by and servicing the primary artery between Ayrshire and the rest of Scotland, means that the facility will be the first point of call for many visitors coming to Ayrshire, and its strategic potential should be recognised.

We acknowledge that the facilities listed (Prestwick airport, the ports, etc) are of national rather than just local significance, and should perhaps be described as *Scottish* Gateway Facilities. Kingswell may not be as important at the national level, but I argue that it is very important at the *local* level, and as such, in a plan that seeks to promote the *Ayrshire* economy, Kingswell should be recognised as an *Ayrshire* Gateway Facility.

The gateway facilities are more than just entry points. We must compete to survive and grow, and we need to communicate a positive business image and message with everyone whether they live here or visit for business, leisure or pleasure. They have the potential to promote the benefits Ayrshire has to offer, and encourage spending in Ayrshire, at all levels. The Ayrshire Economic Forum supported the development at Kingswell some time ago, and recently reiterated their full support.

If the structure plan committee decide to recognise national and other gateway facilities in more than one tier, I would not object to that approach. The list should

not be closed, but should recognise special potential when and where it occurs. It may be that other facilities, such as a railway station after rail investment, could come forward as a candidate for gateway status in the future.

Question 6 – Investment Corridors

I support the principle and its validity. A holistic approach to the management of each of the corridors, with a recognition of the specific purpose, opportunities and challenges arising will be more effective than an attempt to find ‘one size fits all’ solutions.

Question 14 – Re Targets and mechanisms for affordable housing.

The structure plan should set appropriate targets for delivery of affordable housing, but should perhaps not define the mechanism to be used. It is clear that communities faced with significant expansion are concerned that a preponderance of high value housing may challenge the current community rather than enhance it, and in my view clear support should be given for the principle of ‘shared gain’ between the developers of significant sites and the existing community. However, to provide flexibility the mechanisms for delivery of such a strategy might be best left to local plans and consultation with the communities involved.

Question 20 – Tourism – Other Opportunities.

1. We suggest that Ayrshire could make more of its local history, and in particular, The Covenanters. As a subject, The Covenanters could provide a basis for an Ayrshire-wide trail and network, ranging from Maybole to Darvel, with appropriate links to other parts of Scotland, including Edinburgh, to set it in a wider context.

2. Kingswell should be recognised as a potential strategic tourism development location due to:-

- Its strategic location
- Its rural character and ability to promote the rural product
- Its potential as the strategic link with Whitelee, The Covenanters, etc.

ENDS

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