

IJM/fw/SV5643/16

27 August 2004

The Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan
15 Links Road
Prestwick
KA9 1QG

Dear Sirs

**AYRSHIRE JOINT STRUCTURE PLAN 2025
CONSULTATIVE DRAFT
RESPONSE ON BEHALF OF COUNTY PROPERTIES (NORTHERN) LTD**

We act for County Properties (Northern) Ltd who own the Western Road Shopping Centre in Kilmarnock. We write to provide you with our comments on the Consultative Draft Structure Plan, particularly in respect of the designation of retail centres.

Western Road Shopping Centre is a long established retail location comprising a foodstore, unit shops, public house, hotel and petrol filling station. The centre is well located to serve the needs of residents in north Kilmarnock. There is a resolution to grant planning consent to extend the shopping centre, subject to a Section 75 Agreement which will be concluded in early course. The proposed extension is for a modest increase in the size of the foodstore together with qualitative improvements in a revised layout of the shopping centre and additional leisure facilities.

Our clients have invested significantly in the centre during the 20 years of their ownership and the proposals for an extension reflects the need to sustain the vitality and viability of the centre. This approach is consistent with National Planning Guidance on Town Centres and Retailing which states that investment in refurbishment's and a positive and practical approach by planning authorities is essential to sustain existing town centres, which include district centres which provide a broad range of facilities and services and which fulfil a function as a focus for both the community and public transport. It is submitted that Western Road Shopping Centre should be identified as a district centre in accordance with the National Guidance.

The Consultative Draft Structure Plan recognises that town centres play an important role in communities and are characterised by a range of commercial, residential and community services. It is noted that the Consultative Draft Structure Plan Policy will promote town centres, identified in Schedule 1A and 1B, as the preferred locations for retail investment. The Schedules however do not recognise the importance of district centres, such as Western Road Shopping Centre, as part of the retail

hierarchy in Ayrshire. It is submitted that the structure plan should support retail investment in existing district centres and a requirement that district centres are identified in local plans. This would ensure that the National Guidance on Town Centres and Retailing is extended to include retail centres which have a key role in contributing to the quality of life in urban areas, providing both competition and choice, and promoting development in locations which support more sustainable transport choices and reduce the need to travel.

In response to the question 16 in the Consultative Draft, we would agree that it is appropriate to recognise town centres as the main focus for retail development, this however should be extended to include district centres, outwith the Schedule 1A and Schedule 1B list, which should then be defined and allocated in local plans.

We trust the above will be taken into account in your review of the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan 2025.

Yours faithfully

MONTAGU EVANS