

I would like to contribute a few comments in response to the consultation draft to the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan 2025. I am in agreement with the vision and general approach of the plan and intend to comment on a few selective issues I feel to be of particular importance.

1. Yes
2. There should be an attempt to stabilise the population and this can only be done if the vision statement is realistic, particularly in terms of job opportunities and ensuring that the quality of life currently enjoyed by many in Ayrshire is extended to those that currently miss out.
3. Yes
4. I would have thought an upgraded A77 will act as a Gateway from Glasgow, central Scotland and the South.
5. I can see the advantages of an urban grouping and there are examples of where Ayrshire working together is stronger than when various parts are in competition. However it would still remain important that complementary opportunities did not result in areas missing out to the advantages of others. Concrete aims should be agreed on a small number of key achievable objectives which can be jointly pursued on an Ayrshire wide basis. I welcome the recognition of Glasgow Prestwick Airport at the centre of the core investment area.
6. Yes
- 7.
8. Yes
9. I can see some potential of extending the opportunity for people to live and/or work in the countryside as part of an overall strategy which helps to sustain farming by enabling appropriate diversification and also encourages people to stay in Ayrshire. However this should be properly planned and monitored and not be a free for all. Some relaxation of the current rules may be appropriate, the need for infrastructure such as access to education and transport need to be considered in any case but are part of ensuring people who live in the countryside are in a position to support economic development as there is an assumption in the plan that most development will take place in the core urban area.
10. Yes but on a low impact basis.

11. A rail link to Edinburgh and direct non-stop trains to Glasgow Prestwick Airport. An assessment should also be done in consultation with the aerospace businesses surrounding the area concerning utilizing the sites to meet today's needs, while not jeopardising protection of potential expansion of the airport in future years.

I believe the current parking facilities in some areas may encourage people to shop out with Ayrshire and this may be assisted by Park and Ride. While it is inevitable with the A77 upgrade that more people will shop in Glasgow and Lanarkshire areas, consideration should also be given to a local park and ride facility to Ayr if the emphasis on retaining town centre retail shopping continues. There is not enough emphasis on public transport in rural areas given that a third of people do not have a car.

12. Priority should be given for employment opportunities and housing initiatives, including social rented housing and low cost home ownership as part of regeneration. I welcome the recognition of the need for public sector investment in the coalfield communities.

13. While I recognise the role of the new house building in securing a stable population, I am concerned that it is a very narrow target and lacking in ambition in terms of representing an economic driver for Ayrshire. Major development in SE Ayrshire would only be sustainable if accompanied by major infrastructure investment. This should be a condition of any development.

14. Housing development should take in to account the relation of common identity in small towns and villages. Investment in social rented housing must be addressed in areas with high waiting lists and lack of availability of Council and Housing Association housing. I support South Ayrshire Council's recent efforts to include social housing in the new build developments with the private sector.

16. Out of town shopping is now a feature of retail consumption throughout Scotland but notably not in Ayrshire. Whilst I appreciate that the town centre in Ayr has benefited from this I worry that future trends will move to an increase in out of town activity. It is not the case that facilities are necessarily better in town centers. Many of these out of town developments encompass leisure and shopping facilities, have excellent disabled and child friendly facilities, doorstep parking and a weather proof environment. I believe they will be increasingly utilized by consumers by choice over the coming years and I worry that Ayrshire may be left behind.

There must therefore be a balance between protection of the town centre and meeting consumer needs with a constant review of the situation.

19. I agree with the thrust of the document that wind farms must be developed with the effect of the environment in mind. Community benefit is a factor but should not be allowed to cloud the issue if a site is inappropriate. Each case should be considered on its merits even on a small scale basis.

20. Biomass is a new concept which must be fully explained to the public and proper consultation should take place before any decision is taken.

21. The asset of Burns has never been properly addressed on either an Ayrshire or Scottish basis. It is imperative that priority is given to this by involving all of the agencies concerned and by the investment of public resources.