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Subject: Consultation on SP 2005

Attached is a document highlighting the Key Issues as identified by Park Authority staff

Regards

Charlie Woodward

Consultation on key Issues for consideration by the new Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan.

Response by Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority.

The Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park is set up under the Wildlife and Countryside (Scotland) Act 1981 as an area “available for informal countryside recreation”. The Regional Park is an IUCN category V site, designated for its landscape and conservation value. Policies should seek to protect and enhance this area through sustainable development. From a Regional Park perspective the key issues for the new Structure Plan would appear to be: -

Access legislation.

The implementation of the new Access legislation and the development of core path networks may lead to the growth of tourism businesses in the countryside.

Large scale wind farms.

If, as seems likely, the Governments renewable energy generation targets are unlikely to be met there will be greater pressure on protected areas for the siting of windfarms. The Structure Plan must have robust policies to protect valuable landscape, species, habitats and tourism businesses. The same policies must encourage renewable energy developments at appropriate locations and smaller scale developments (in this case probably through the Local Plan process).

Biodiversity Action Plan and European conservation legislation.

Species and habitats do not recognise political boundaries. The principal habitats within the Regional Park - heather moorland and blanket bog - are in fragile upland ecosystems. These require consideration at Structure Plan and Local Plan. The National and Local Biodiversity Action Plans as well as European conservation and environmental legislation should be considered by the Structure Plan

Housing.

There should be a presumption against new communities being established in the Park. The Park has established design guidelines with Local Authorities and these are used to ensure appropriateness and quality of individual developments and restorations within the Park boundary

Landscape.

Woodland and forest development. We welcome the renewed recognition of the economic, social, recreational and environmental value of forests and woods cf. Current public consultation exercise by the Forestry Commission. Guidance in the Structure Plan on landscape should encourage tree planting in urban and rural locations. The Structure Plan’s own Woodland Strategy is important here

Boundary issues. The SP should consider existing neighbouring SP's and work with the staff who prepare them in order to harmonise guidance and policy across boundaries where possible.

Response prepared by Charles Woodward, Regional Park Manager.