

PRESTWICK, 13 September 2002 – At a meeting of the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Committee in the Municipal Chambers, 15 Links Road, Prestwick at 2.00 pm.

Present

Councillors Thomas Barr (North Ayrshire Council); Robert McDill, Jim Raymond and George Smith (East Ayrshire Council); and Gordon McKenzie and Ian Stewart (South Ayrshire Council).

In Attendance

I Johnson, Structure Plan Manager, J Esslemont, Senior Policy Advisor, A Edgar, Policy Officer and C Walsh, Transport Policy Officer (Area Joint Structure Plan); S Gillatt, Chief Engineer (Roads and Transport) and K Dvoszenko, Policy and Projects Manager (Planning and Building Control) (East Ayrshire Council); G Peterkin, Director, Development Safety and Regulation; I McLarty, Head of Planning (Building Control and Licensing); and R McHugh (Strategy and Design Services) (South Ayrshire Council); and R Forrest, Principal Planning Officer (Development and Promotion); J Mason, Principal Engineer (Roads) (Property Services); and A Sobieraj, Corporate and Democratic Support Officer (Chief Executive's) (North Ayrshire Council).

Chair

Councillor Barr (North Ayrshire Council) in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Councillors Samuel Gooding, David Munn and Robert Reilly (North Ayrshire Council); Eric Ross (East Ayrshire Council); and Margaret Toner and Paul Torrance (South Ayrshire Council).

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 June and 3 July 2002 respectively were confirmed.

2. Review of Strategic Planning: Conclusions and Next Steps

Submitted report by the Structure Plan Manager on the Scottish Executive's conclusion to the Review of Strategic Planning and exploring the implications of the new arrangements for Ayrshire.

The review's implications are far reaching and will have an impact on the future development of the planning system in Ayrshire. In particular, there will be an immediate impact on the impending review of the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan.

The proposals remove the requirement for the preparation of Structure Plans outwith the four main city regions. Councils not located in cities will be required to produce a concise explanation of their Strategy in a single tier Development Plan for their area. The proposals will be implemented over several years and involve primary and secondary legislation.

The Scottish Executive is keen to maintain recent momentum in joint strategy development within the legislation and in the review of Joint Structure Plans. The Executive sees no impediment to the preparation of the concise strategic context for the single development plan developed on a joint basis, if considered appropriate.

Legislative reform would be accompanied by a coherent planning system which focuses more sharply on what can be achieved, improves the management of planned preparation and approval, provides better justification for land allocation, policies and priorities and places greater emphasis on delivery and outcomes.

The Ayrshire Councils recognised the significant advantages of joint working in spatial planning development, recognising economic and social circumstances through urgent and co-ordinated actions, the important role of Structure Plan staff in the development of broadly based joint planning and transport work, and as a basic search resource and development work by the Ayrshire Economic Forum.

Joint planning in Ayrshire is imperative for a variety of reasons including:-

- the need for updated housing policies as the current Structure Plan projections are being challenged at appeal, and possibly revised policies on retail development, woodlands strategy, wind farm location and a new policy on flooding will be a continuing requirement to provide a strategic context for development now and in the future;
- the need to review the current Structure Plan to maintain the up to date planning process as legislation is expected by 2004 at the earliest and merits of preparation on a joint basis for the Structure Plan review to reflect the new agenda post 2002; and
- the potential for joint planning work currently undertaken indirectly should continue e.g. Strategic Flood Appraisal Group and the Woodland Strategy Steering Group.

A process has been devised which is likely to build on the strength of the current joint working arrangements as well as to prepare for future changes. This involves a limited number of topics and a replacement Structure Plan to be prepared in the context of projected changes to the planning system and in line with emerging actions of the Ayrshire Economic Forum.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the report as a basis for proceeding with the joint planning arrangements in Ayrshire; and (b) to submit the report to the Ayrshire Councils for approval.

3. Ayrshire Woodland Strategy

Submitted report by the Structure Plan Manager enclosing a table of individual responses to the Ayrshire Woodland Strategy consultation exercise and enclosing the final document for approval.

The draft Woodland Strategy was issued to 285 organisations and individuals. 20 written responses were received from a wide variety of sources, including government organisations, the private forestry industry, voluntary organisations organised around environmental and access issues and the general public which raised approximately 60 separate issues.

The Woodland Strategy reflects current thinking on multi-benefit forest and woodland planting, promises to deliver more integrated and sustainable woodland planting in Ayrshire, reflects the direction of national policy and is one of the most up to date documents of its type in Scotland.

The publication coincides with the imminent launch of the revised scheme of grant assistance for forest and woodland planting, known as the Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme. This places Ayrshire in a strong position to benefit from funding for forms of planting and management, which will be prioritised under the new grant scheme.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the Ayrshire Woodland Strategy; (b) that the Structure Plan Manager make final adjustments to the text of the document, figures and diagrams as required prior to publication; and (c) to submit the Strategy document to the Ayrshire Councils for approval.

4. Household Shopping Survey

Submitted report by the Structure Plan Manager on steps being taken to commission a survey on retail shopping patterns within Ayrshire.

A survey of Ayrshire household shopping patterns had previously been undertaken in 1998 at Structure Plan preparation. Major changes have taken place since that time including the building of retail outlets within and outwith Ayrshire such as the Braehead shopping complex. These developments are likely to have influenced shopping patterns.

The validity of an assessment of future retail proposals and the likely impact on existing retail businesses will depend on the quality, comprehensiveness and accuracy of data on shopping patterns. The commissioning of a household shopping survey would review strategic policy in terms of retailing. This survey would investigate household shopping patterns for various goods, modes of

transport to shops, average expenditure per visit, household composition, car ownership, and extent which other centres such as Glasgow City centre and Braehead draw expenditure from Ayrshire.

The survey should be compatible with other retail surveys, for example, surveys undertaken by the Joint Committee in 1998 and in 1987 and 1991 by Strathclyde Regional Council's. Output would be in the form of a report by local authority area and be GIS compatible. Discussions have been held with a number of market research/telephone interview agencies. While final costs would depend on the length of the telephone interview and the sample taken, costs are estimated at approximately £15,000, which require to be met equally by the three local authorities.

The Committee agreed (a) that a survey of retail patterns would be beneficial to Ayrshire; (b) that further discussion take place between representatives of the Ayrshire Councils and the Structure Plan Committee to explore options for the most appropriate survey to be undertaken; and (c) to submit the report to the Ayrshire Councils for further discussion on options for funding the survey.

5. The Future Development of Air Transport in the UK: National Consultation

Submitted report by the Structure Plan Manager on the consultation document "The Development of Air Transport in the United Kingdom: Scotland" examining key implications for air services and airport development in Scotland.

The Government made a commitment to develop new policies on civil aviation and to prepare a 30 year, fully integrated airport strategy in a White Paper in 1998 entitled "A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone". The current consultation document builds on these proposals and invites comments by 30 November 2002. This consultation document recognises the importance of the aviation industry to Scotland and indicates the demand for air travel has grown rapidly in recent years. Passenger travel in Scotland almost doubled from 8.7 million passengers in 1991 to 16.1 million passengers in 2000.

There is acknowledgement of the current role of the industry and the utilisation of existing capacity at Scotland's airports. This includes forecasting future air passenger and freight travel flows under a range of different growth and policy scenarios and analyses the amount of airport and air space infrastructure required to meet demand. The economic, environmental, social and safety implications of any new infrastructure and the preferred location for any new airport capacity are assessed and whether growth should be concentrated at one or two key airports or be spread across all Scottish airports.

A detailed analysis is made on the number of options for new runway capacity for Glasgow and Edinburgh airports and the expense of building new capacity at Glasgow airport as opposed to Edinburgh, possibly due to the constrained nature

of the site at Glasgow and the costs of addressing the resulting congestion on the M8, estimated to be in the region of £300 million.

In terms of Prestwick Airport:-

- over the last decade the airport has been growing well above the United Kingdom average, at around 40% per annum. Latest figures suggest that traffic has increased to 1.3 million passengers per year;
- there is development of an important freight hub for both Scotland and the United Kingdom which has attracted major aircraft maintenance activity to Ayrshire;
- whilst Prestwick could not accommodate the full range of services currently offered at Glasgow and Edinburgh airports it is capable of catering for overspill demand from some of the central belt catchment areas; and
- Prestwick Airport is a major asset to the Ayrshire economy and must be recognised as fundamental to future policy development. The ability of communities in Ayrshire to access a wide range of air services at both local airports and larger “hub” airports, is also an important issue.

The Committee agreed to approve further discussions with representatives of the Ayrshire Councils and other stakeholders to prepare a joint response to this consultation.

6. Rail Links to Glasgow and Edinburgh Airports: Information Document

Submitted report by the Structure Plan Manager on a recent study commissioned by the Scottish Executive to assess the viability of linking Glasgow and Edinburgh airports to the rail network.

The provision of rail facilities at Glasgow and Edinburgh airports have been subject to considerable discussion for a number of years, including the analysis by Strathclyde Passenger Transport on a rail connection to Glasgow airport in connection with the provision of a cross-city rail link.

The Scottish Executive’s delivery report entitled “Scotland’s Transport: Delivering Improvements” produced in March 2002 identified the provision of rail links to Glasgow and Edinburgh airports as key priorities. Consultants carried out a detailed economic and engineering study of the viability of such links. A progress report on this study has been published alongside the Government’s consultation on “The Future Development of Air Transport in the UK”.

The aims of this study include:-

- reviewing previous work on rail access to the two airports to link these together and to develop new options to fill any gaps in previous work;

- estimating the costs of provision, taking the interface with the existing railway into account;
- forecasting patronage and revenue levels and comparing these with the costs; and
- advising on the viability of rail links to the two airports and recommending how to take forward the favoured options.

The Executive has defined certain planning criteria for each identified option which are the operating costs to be covered by revenues of third party contributions and that any public centre contributions should be matched by benefits to non public transport users. Options should be compatible with long term development strategies at each airport. Current public transport patronage at both airports is low, with Glasgow at 8%, including leisure travellers and travellers away from home.

A rail link is more likely to prosper in cases where a large proportion of passengers trip starts or in the city centre, where the services are direct and where roads are congested. Edinburgh airport is easier to link to the wider rail network than Glasgow, where a cross-city rail link would be required for some service options as well as a rail link between the airport and central Glasgow.

Following a preliminary appraisal of the different infrastructure options, it was concluded that the following options for Glasgow would be taken forward for further analysis by the consultants. These were:-

- a link from the airport to Paisley St James rail station at surface level and an underground variant to avoid St James park with capacity enhancements between Paisley Gilmour Street and Shields Junction;
- the St John's link to provide access to Queen Street low level and stations further west; and
- various infrastructure option to enable longer distance connections, either via Queen Street high level or bypassing the centre of Glasgow altogether. Consultants are currently unclear about whether there is sufficient capacity at Central Station for both airport and other services to be accommodated.

Phase 2 involved a number of service options to make best use of the infrastructure options identified above. In Glasgow there were three packages identified. Forecasts for patronage and revenue of each of the options and operating costs was assessed. This will be undertaken in consultation with transport authorities, including BAA, Scottish Enterprise and Strathclyde Passenger Transport as well as with a wider stakeholder group consisting of authorities including Glasgow City and Renfrewshire Councils. The consultant's final report is expected in Autumn 2002.

The implications for Ayrshire are that whilst a rail link to Glasgow Airport is supported there is no direct route option in the report which allows a direct rail link from Ayrshire. An interchange point for Ayrshire at Paisley Gilmour Street station is fundamental to avoid the need to change trains in Glasgow City centre. The provision of a rail link to Glasgow Airport should not be to the detriment of existing or enhanced Ayrshire passenger or rail freight services.

It is recognised that there will be major implications from the study on the future of air travel in Scotland as well as many social, economic and environmental impacts. Should Edinburgh Airport contain the rail link this may have a detrimental impact on Glasgow Airport and the economy of West Central Scotland.

The Committee agreed to submit comments on this document following more detailed discussions with the Ayrshire Councils and Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire.

7. Glasgow Prestwick International Airport Controlled Airspace Proposal

Submitted report by the Structure Plan Manager on the proposals for the establishment of Controlled Airspace at Glasgow Prestwick International Airport. In recent years the airport has seen a dramatic increase in the level of freight and passenger movement. This has resulted in a continuing number of incident reports involving passenger carrying aircraft and unknown aircraft operating in the Prestwick area. It is considered necessary that such flights are afforded additional protection.

Specifically the establishment of Controlled Airspace (CAS) around the airport would eliminate the need to take short notice avoiding action in the critical stages of the approach to and the departure from the airfield.

A report was considered by the Joint Committee in September 2001 on initiatives to reinstate Controlled Airspace around Glasgow Prestwick Airport. It was reported that airport management would appoint a consultant to take forward their application with the Directorate of Airspace Policy (DAP) for the establishment of Controlled Airspace (CAS). The CAS had been withdrawn at the airport due to the lack of commercial traffic following its sale to the British Airports Authority in 1993. The paper then recommended that the Committee support the airport management within this application.

A report has now been finalised by consultants and this is being circulated to 140 consultees as part of the application procedures. Local authorities, the Airport Consultative Committee and aviation stakeholders are being informed to identify any local aviation and environmental concerns at an early stage. Airport management will also undertake an environmental assessment and produce an environmental statement. The application will therefore be submitted to the DAP for formal consultation.

The consultant's technical report states that the design is considered to be the minimal amount of controlled airspace necessary to meet operational requirements

at the airport as required by the DAP. A number of zones are located within the vicinity. Entry to the airport is restricted. The Structure Plan supports the general principle of controlled airspace in providing a safer operating environment for all airspace users. The Joint Committee should however be aware of any environmental implications of these proposals in the environmental assessment also being undertaken.

The Committee agreed to submit a response to Glasgow Prestwick International Airport in support of the proposals, subject to consultation on any environmental implications following completion of an environmental assessment.

8. WESTRANS/SPT Joint Transport Strategy Update

Submitted report by the Structure Plan Manager on progress with the preparation of the Joint Transport Strategy for West Central Scotland.

Reports were submitted to previous meetings on the development of a Joint Strategy for West Central Scotland. This Strategy would be managed through a Steering Group comprising officers from Argyll and Bute, East Ayrshire, Glasgow, Renfrewshire, and South Lanarkshire Councils and representatives from Strathclyde Passenger Transport and the three Structure Plan Committees.

A context report entitled "Moving in Partnership and Connecting Strategies" detailing the joint working commitments of the Partnership were subsequently produced by the Steering Group. This paper outlines progress made following the implication of these documents and identifies the next stages in the production of final strategy. The Group's progress on production of these strategies is categorised into three main areas. A draft work programme contains relevant dates, personnel and budgets for the production of a strategy, with a draft report being submitted to the WESTRANS/SPT Committee by September 2003, public consultation in October/November 2003 and a final report completed by the end of December 2003.

Following official confirmation of matchfunding by the Scottish Executive for production of the strategy, the WESTRANS authorities and Strathclyde Passenger Transport have a budget of £200,000 over 2 years to commission a number of appropriate studies. Work package briefs on accessibility, straight and rural issues were subsequently agreed by the Steering Group as areas of priority research funding.

The Strategy Steering Group has made considerable progress on the development of a strategy since the Joint Committee considered the establishment of the Group in December 2001.

Noted.