

AYRSHIRE JOINT STRUCTURE PLAN AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

Minutes of meeting in Municipal Chambers, Links Road, Prestwick
on 22nd June 2001 at 1.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Gordon McKenzie (Chair) (South Ayrshire Council); Robert McDill and George Smith (East Ayrshire Council); and Thomas Barr and Samuel Gooding (North Ayrshire Council).

Apology: Councillor Margaret Toner.

Attending: Alan Neish, Head of Planning and Building Control and Jim Kane, Head of Roads and Transportation (East Ayrshire Council); Brian MacDonald, Assistant Chief Executive and Bob Forrest, Principal Planning Officer (North Ayrshire Council); Keith Murray, Head of Infrastructure Services; Ian M. Johnson, Policy, Projects and Research Manager and A. Gibson Committee Administrative Officer (South Ayrshire Council); Ian Johnson, Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Manager; and John Esslemont, Senior Policy Officer (Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Team).

1. Chair's Remarks.

The Chair intimated his pleasure in chairing this Committee for the next twelve months.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The Minutes of the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Committee of 23rd March 2001 (issued) were submitted and approved.

3. Matter arising.

With reference to item 3 of the Minute and having heard the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager, the Committee noted that the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan: Monitor 2000 report had also been short listed for a Royal Town Planning Institute award.

4. Natural Heritage Zones Programme: Consultation.

There was submitted a report (issued) of June 2001 by the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager

(1) advising

- (a) that there had been a recent consultation by Scottish National Heritage on the National Natural Heritage Zone Programme;
- (b) that the National Natural Heritage Zone Programme formed part of a wider exercise, to investigate the natural heritage of Scotland at both the strategic and local contexts;

- (c) that this comprehensive review incorporated a two tier approach that included a national Overview, which was then developed through six strategic prospectuses and that these prospectuses formed twenty-one distinctive local zones covering the whole of Scotland with Ayrshire falling within Zones 14, 17 and 19;
 - (d) that the national programme aimed to develop long term goals for the natural heritage, based on an overarching strategic vision and did not aim to develop a vision for sustainable development but was intended to facilitate consensus between stakeholders on how the natural heritage resource was related and used; and
 - (e) that the national context was set within an Overview detailing national social, economic and environmental considerations and would then be developed into a series of National Prospectuses that review common themes at the strategic level, focusing on national and international issues;
- (2) detailing comments by the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager, following an assessment of the Overview and the National Prospectuses; and
- (3) concluding
- (a) that the publication of this programme was a timely reminder to all stakeholders of the importance of delivering a balanced approach to sustainable development;
 - (b) that the success of such a strategy would be a reflection of the ability to unite differing organisations to accept a common vision;
 - (c) that the documents in their current form would make this objective difficult to achieve through the structure and layout of the document combined with failures in research and the practicality of implementation;
 - (d) that it had been suggested that a more coherent approach be adopted, with a concise visionary statement setting the scope of the strategy and implemented through a set of agreed objectives and outcomes;
 - (e) that further clarification and dialogue was necessary with Scottish National Heritage to explore the issues raised by the consultative documents.

After consideration and having heard the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager, the Committee

- (i) noted the contents of this report; and
- (ii) agreed
 - (A) to endorse this report as the basis of comment to Scottish Natural Heritage on the Consultative National Heritage Zones Programme; and
 - (B) to authorise the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager to liaise further with Scottish Natural Heritage on the issues and concerns raised within the report.

- (C) to write to Scottish Natural Heritage expressing concern about the relationship between the Natural Heritage Zone Programme and the Statutory Planning Process.

5. Woodland Grant Scheme/Farm Woodland Premium Scheme – Consultation.

There was submitted a report (issued) of June 2001 by the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager

- (1) advising
 - (a) that the Woodland Grant Scheme and Farm Woodland Premium Scheme consultation had been launched in May 2001 and was open for comment until 30th September 2001;
 - (b) that the review formed part of a revised approach to forestry policy in Scotland and that following devolution, the Scottish Executive was now responsible for all aspects of the nation's woodlands, including policy formulation and woodland investment which offered considerable scope to develop policy to reflect the needs of Scotland and its people, whilst also incorporating sustainable development principles and adhering to agreed European Union policy;
 - (c) that the consultation paper integrated issues relating to general woodland planting (the Woodland Grant Scheme) and farm woodlands (the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme) and was divided into three sections; and
 - (d) that responsibility for the running and implementation of the schemes had been devolved from the Executive to the Forestry Commission (Woodland Grant Scheme) and the Rural Affairs Department (Farm Woodland Premium Scheme);
- (2) detailing a number of strategic messages that could be drawn from the consultation paper, namely:-
 - (a) Integration of National Policy Objectives;
 - (b) the Role of Local Authorities in Delivering Sustainable Forestry; and
 - (c) Possible Form and Structure of Grant Aid; and
- (3) concluding
 - (a) that, following devolution, forestry policy was being converged with other aspects of national rural land use policy to provide a coherent framework reflecting Scottish needs;
 - (b) that the revision of forestry funding mechanisms was the last remaining strand of forestry policy to undergo this change and that it was implicit within the consultation document that, in the future, a more targeted set of funding mechanisms would be implemented around a strategic development strategy; and

- (c) that the role and influence of local authorities to direct the future location and form of woodlands would intensify, if the importance of Indicative Forestry Strategies increased.

After consideration and having heard the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager, the Committee

- (i) noted the contents of this report; and
- (ii) agreed to forward a copy of this report to the Forestry Commission as a formal consultation response.

In the discussion the issue of timber transport was raised as a significant concern for Councils in Ayrshire. The Structure Plan Manager noted that a Scottish Executive Report on the subject was expected shortly and it was hoped to report on this issue at the September Committee.

6. Safeguarding of Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosive Storage Areas.

There was submitted a report (issued) of June 2001 by the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager

- (1) advising
 - (a) that a consultation paper entitled "Safeguarding of Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosives Storage Areas" had been issued by the Scottish Executive in conjunction with the DETR;
 - (b) that the consultation paper had reviewed procedures for dealing with planning applications for development around aerodromes, technical sites and military explosive storage areas;
 - (c) that within Ayrshire, Prestwick Airport was an officially safeguarded airport and there were a number of civil technical sites which included Turnberry DVOR, Brown Carrick Radio and Dundonald Radio;
 - (d) that under current arrangements, the CAA had issued safeguarding maps relating to each aerodrome and technical sites to the relevant planning authorities and that these authorities must consult with the CAA about development proposals arising within safeguarded areas;
 - (e) that the key change under the new arrangements was that the planning authority would consult the relevant safeguarded airport or National Air Traffic Services Ltd (NATS) who own "technical sites", such as navigational beacons or radio transmitters which emerged due to changes in the regulatory relationship between the CAA aerodrome licence holders and NATS and that the CAA would continue to have a role where a planning authority proposed not to act on objections, or not to attach conditions which the aerodrome or NATS had requested; and
 - (f) that subject to a proper consideration of the views expressed during the consultation, it had been proposed that the Scottish Executive would bring the new arrangements into effect as soon as possible after 30th June 2001; and

- (2) detailing the effect wind turbines had on navigation systems.

Having heard the Senior policy officer, the Committee

- (i) noted the contents of this report and the possible implications on the future location of Wind Turbines within Ayrshire; and
- (ii) agreed that a further joint report with Glasgow Prestwick International Airport on this matter would be presented to the next meeting of this Committee.

7. Climate Change: Review of Levels of Protection Offered by Flood Prevention Schemes.

There was submitted a report (issued) of June 2001 by the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager

- (1) advising of the implications of the recently published report entitled "Climate Change: Review of Levels of Protection Offered by Flood Prevention Schemes" and how it informed the exploration into potential polices on flooding for the Structure Plan;
- (2) detailing the review of levels of protection offered by flood prevention schemes and the implications for strategic planning in Ayrshire; and
- (3) concluding that the report be welcomed in providing more resolute information for strategic planning on which to frame sound and robust policies but however, to fully assess flooding as an impact of climate change, in Ayrshire, further detailed information would be required at a local level through research particularly at the coast and coastal margin.

Having heard the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager the Committee agreed that a further report on the financial implications of any research topic would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

8. The State of the Environment – Soil Quality Report.

There was submitted and noted a report (issued) of June 2001 by the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager

- (1) advising
 - (a) that as a result of the increased recognition of the importance soil played in the environment, the British Government in response to a forthcoming European Directives had given a commitment to produce a national strategy for the protection of soil; and
 - (b) that the principle aims of the document were to identify the main pressures affecting soil quality, increase awareness to the issue and examine methods to increase protection through the existing legislative framework;
- (2) detailing comments from the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager on the document; and

- (3) concluding
 - (a) that the recognition of the need to protect soil quality had arisen over recent years following greater research into the linkage between air, water and soil and that agricultural practices, acid deposition and the application of organic wastes to land threatened the current long-term sustainable use of soils; and
 - (b) that the lack of an established monitoring system to inform and regulate these practices had further hindered the sustainable use of this resource and therefore, the decision by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency to introduce a comprehensive monitoring system integrated within a national soil strategy and regulated through the stricter application of existing legislation was to be welcomed and commended.

9. 15-Year Transport Framework for Scotland: The Weakest Links.

There was submitted and noted a report (issued) of June 2001 by the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager

- (1) advising
 - (a) that as part of the input by local government to the Scottish Executive's forthcoming 15-Year Transport Framework for Scotland, COSLA had recently invited Councils to identify the 'weakest links' in their transport networks and also the deficiencies in their capacity to deliver integrated transport; and
 - (b) that, rather than a 'shopping list' of local roads schemes, Councils had been requested to focus on the resources necessary for the provision of integrated transport measures and initiatives to meet local transport needs;
- (2) outlining the responses from the Ayrshire authorities to this consultation; and
- (3) concluding
 - (a) that a number of major consultation exercises and studies were currently underway for the provision of an integrated transport network within Scotland;
 - (b) that Local government had recently been involved in the Scottish Executive consultation process for delivery of the 15-Year Transport Framework, expected in the Autumn;
 - (c) that responses to this weakest links exercise had been sent to COSLA by the Ayrshire authorities and would form a foundation for the case for investment in integrated transport provision; and
 - (d) that Ayrshire's response was consistent with existing Structure Plan objectives and should, if met with appropriate resources, contribute towards the provision of a balanced and integrated transport policy.

10. Potential Strategic Rail Schemes in Glasgow.

There was submitted a report (issued) of June 2001 by the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager

- (1) advising
 - (a) that Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT) had identified a number of future objectives in terms of the strategic development of the rail network in West Central Scotland; and
 - (b) that, at present, various studies were being undertaken on schemes in Glasgow, including Crossrail and links to Glasgow Airport, that could have strategic implications for Ayrshire to identify their feasibility, viability and contribution towards existing transport strategies;
- (2) detailing
 - (a) progress to date on a cross-city link to connect north and south rail corridors in Glasgow, a rail link to Glasgow Airport and a Joint Running Study using light rail technology; and
 - (b) various comments and the implications for Ayrshire; and
- (3) concluding
 - (a) that a number of new and innovative rail projects were currently being explored within Glasgow and that consideration was being given to various options for cross-river links to provide better connections between the public transport networks to the north and south of the city and to provide a fast and efficient journey to Glasgow International Airport;
 - (b) that initial reports illustrated that some of the existing options may prove to be economically unfeasible although there may be potential for improving links using light rail technology or different variations of the Crossrail project; and
 - (c) that the results of the various studies were expected shortly and that WESTRANS, the Ayrshire authorities and other such interested bodies would be consulted thereafter.

After consideration and having heard the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager the Committee

- (i) noted the contents of the report; and
- (ii) agreed that the SPT be advised in writing that potential strategic rail schemes be looked at in a Scotland context and not just Glasgow.

11. WESTRANS – Regional Transport Strategy Update.

Having heard the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager, the Committee noted

- (1) that the progress of the four context papers relating to WESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy had been particularly slow; and
- (2) that a report had been prepared without officer discussion for the next WESTRANS Partnership meeting on a possible constitution for the organisation. This could have implications for the Review of Strategic Planning.

12. Review of Strategic Planning in Scotland.

There was submitted a report (issued) of June 2001 by the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager

- (1) advising
 - (a) that strongly worded representation had been made to the to the Scottish Executive regarding their request for comments on a proposed review of strategic planning instigated by the Minister for Environment, Sports and Culture;
 - (b) that the results of all comments received by the Scottish Executive had now been used to prepare a formal consultation document issued on 15th June and that whilst the consultation process would run until 31st October 2001, the importance of the conclusions in the paper required an early consideration and discussion on the way forward;
 - (c) that the Consultation Paper had set out the Executive's conclusions after a series of discussions and seminars and a view on the way forward for strategic planning in Scotland; and
 - (d) that the proposals extended beyond structure plans and had significant implications for planning at the national level and for local plans and that the proposals outlined a general direction for the planning system and did not set out processes and procedures in detail with a number of the proposals requiring changes in primary and secondary legislation;
- (2) detailing the key elements and the comments of the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager; and

(3) concluding

- (a) that the Scottish Executive had prepared a review of strategic planning in Scotland that proposed a fundamental change to the entire planning system, not just structure planning;
- (b) that if agreed, the new system would entail some form of national spatial overview, the end of structure plans except for the four cities, and a loss of the need for a joint structure plan in Ayrshire; and
- (c) that the Executive had recognised the fundamental nature of the change and had indicated a willingness to engage in dialogue throughout the consultation period.

After consideration and having heard the Structure Plan and Transportation Manager, the Committee

- (i) noted the contents of the report, together with the Scottish Executives consultation paper and a speech by the Deputy Minister for Transport and Planning regarding the subject (tabled); and
- (ii) agreed
 - (A) to invite the Scottish Executive to give a presentation of their proposals to the next meeting of the Joint Committee; and
 - (B) to authorise the Technical Management Team to submit a report on the future of strategic planning in Ayrshire for discussion.

13. Area Waste Strategy – Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway.

Having heard the Head of Planning and Building Control (East Ayrshire Council) advise of his concern that the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) had not adequately involved the three Ayrshire authorities in its preparation of an Area Waste Strategy for Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway, the Committee agreed that a special meeting of this Committee be arranged with representatives from SEPA and Dumfries and Galloway Council to discuss this matter further.

The meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.