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**AYRSHIRE JOINT STRUCTURE PLAN AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE  
22 JUNE 2001**

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**Review of Strategic Planning in Scotland**

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To advise the Committee of the publication of the formal consultation stage to the Review of Strategic Planning announced by Sam Galbraith in November 2000.

BACKGROUND

- 2 The Committee will be aware that at the last meeting a report was approved as an initial response to a request for comments on a proposed review of strategic planning instigated by the Minister for Environment, Sports and Culture in November 2000. As a result a strongly worded representation was made to the Scottish Executive and, on advice from Committee the paper was circulated to the area MSPs. This resulted in cross-party support being expressed to the new Minister, Lewis Macdonald, by several MSPs to the continuation of structure planning in Ayrshire. The paper was further endorsed through individual Ayrshire Council comment.
- 3 The results of all comments received by the Scottish Executive have now been used to prepare a formal consultation document issued on 15 June, after the circulation of the Committee Papers. Whilst the consultation process runs until 31 October, the importance of the conclusions in the paper requires an early consideration and discussion on the way forward. However, given the major implications of the consultation to the whole planning system, not just strategic planning, this paper will not be a definitive Ayrshire response. This will be prepared for the next Committee after time for discussions between the Ayrshire Councils.

REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

- 4 The Consultation Paper sets out the Executive's conclusions after a series of discussions and seminars and a view on the way forward for strategic planning in Scotland. The proposals extend beyond structure plans and have significant implications for planning at the national level and for local plans. The proposals outline a general direction for the planning system and do not set out processes and procedures in detail. A number of the proposals will require changes in primary and secondary legislation.

5 The key elements are:

- a national spatial overview document concentrating on a limited number of subjects identified as:
  - settlement pattern, land resources and infrastructure capacity;
  - population and household change, including the spatial dimension of social justice;
  - economic prospects and the implications for planning;
  - environmental challenges and the role of the planning system; and
  - strategic priorities for transport and other infrastructure investment.
- this document to be drawn up with “stakeholder involvement”; although non-statutory, subject to review and to “some form of scrutiny by MSPs”;
- the possible drafting by the Scottish Executive of model development control policies for many basic and common planning policies;
- a return to strategic planning as a means of guiding only large scale population growth and economic expansion, and consequential priorities for investment in infrastructure;
- an end to the requirement to prepare structure plans except for the 4 cities and their hinterlands;
- a possible redefinition of the most appropriate areas (hinterlands) for strategic development planning after the publication of the results of the 2001 Census;
- the opportunity for other areas to present a “convincing” case of the need for a strategic development plan to Ministers;
- a requirement for a more focused, action oriented strategic development plan with a stronger spatial component for the identification of priorities and site specific strategic land releases;
- a statutory requirement to establish Joint Committees to oversee the preparation of a strategic development plan, a compulsory Examination in Public (EIP) and a “certificate of conformity” from Ministers;
- the replacement of local plans for most of Scotland by a single plan to be known as the development plan;
- the option to prepare a strategic view in areas experiencing significant population or employment growth.

- the requirement to prepare “a scheme for development planning” for an area, including a timetable, and for a development plan to have a similar process to strategic development plans (i.e. EIPs, certificate of conformity, action areas etc); and
  - greater use of supplementary guidance in local planning policy.
- 6 In addition the review also seeks to differentiate waste and minerals on issues which are controversial but not necessarily strategic. The Scottish Executive conclusions are that Waste Subject Plans should be separate from development plans and aligned to current Area Waste Plan boundaries to address those issues such as the location of waste management facilities which are the primary concern of the land use planning system. The paper further suggests that Minerals can be categorised into Opencast Coal and Aggregates. Whilst Opencast Coal is seen as needing a period of stability research on aggregate working will inform on possible new strategic approaches.

### COMMENTS

- 7 At this stage, and within the limits imposed by Committee Paper circulation, it is possible only to give an indication of the scope of the Executives review of the planning system – it is not just a review of the structure plan or even strategic planning system as a whole – and some of the issues raised.
- 8 Initially, these might be identified as:
- (i) the lack of clarity in a consultation paper proposing such a fundamental review of the planning system;
  - (ii) whether the planning system is best served by the loss of a two tier approach to planning throughout Scotland;
  - (iii) the potential loss of a joint approach to strategic planning in Ayrshire;
  - (iv) the vagueness in the content of the proposed national spatial overview;
  - (v) the definition of the most appropriate areas for strategic development planning for Glasgow;
  - (vi) whether the links between policymaking and implementation are weakened rather than strengthened by the proposals; and
  - (vii) whether the delivery of the planning system is actually speeded up by the changes.

## CONCLUSION

- 9 The Scottish Executive have prepared a review of strategic planning in Scotland that proposes a fundamental change to the entire planning system, not just structure planning. If agreed the new system will mean 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. The Executive recognise the fundamental nature of the change and have indicated a willingness to engage in dialogue throughout the consultation period.

## RECOMMENDATION

- 10 The Committee are asked to note the contents of the report and to agree to:
- (i) invite the Scottish Executive to give a presentation of their proposals to the next meeting of the Joint Committee; and
  - (ii) authorise the Technical Management Team to bring forward a paper on the future of strategic planning in Ayrshire for discussion.

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