

**AYRSHIRE JOINT STRUCTURE PLAN AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
7 JUNE 2002**

**Meeting the Needs... Priorities, Actions and Targets for Sustainable Development in
Scotland**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To advise the Committee of the publication “Meeting the Needs.. Priorities, Actions and Targets for sustainable development. The document seeks to establish a set of indicators to measure progress toward sustainable development in the spheres of Resource Use, Energy, Travel and Social Justice within Scotland.

BACKGROUND

- 2 The Committee will recall that in September 2001 it made comment on the “Checking for Change” initiative undertaken by the Scottish Executive. This sought views on ways which the governments commitment to sustainable development could be integrated into government policy by the use of a set of indicators and targets. In commenting on the document the Joint Committee welcomed the initiative but sought from the Executive the publication of a limited set of indicators accompanied by specific targets and commentary on the action necessary to achieve the objectives. It also sought the Executive to recognise the role that the planning system, at a regional level, has in delivery of sustainable development policy and the need therefore to ensure the local applicability of national indicators. The Committee also sought the Scottish Executive to publish an annual review of progress.

COMMENT

- 3 It is encouraging that the comments made by the Committee have largely been reflected in the document. The Scottish Executive has adopted 17 indicators covering resource use, energy and travel. A further 7 reflect social justice issues, to reflect the programmes the government have toward health, education, and crime. Eleven of the indicators have targets associated with them. The document recognises that that the indicators published are an initial list and will be kept under review. The Scottish Executive propose to publish fuller information on each indicator later in the year and also as part of this process to look at differences across Scotland. A commitment to report regularly on progress, within the

context of issues addressed in the document, and to establish a forum which can contribute to the longer term development of a strategy for sustainable development within Scotland is also given.

- 4 The current indicators only cover resource use, energy, travel and social justice. This falls short of a need for a comprehensive set of indicators for Scotland. Which would encompass matters such as the economy, land use and the management of environmental and natural resources (for example there are no indicators covering the re-use of land, forestry, minerals, agricultural practices or soil quality). In addition there a number of policy areas which have no targets for policy set, for example bio-diversity, recycling of waste (although this is likely with the publication of a national waste strategy). In addition while the concept of indicators and targets is to be commended the significance of the document will be judged on future action taken and the willingness of the Executive to reflect the proposed targets (and future ones) within an overall framework and strategy for sustainable development within Scotland.

CONCLUSION

- 5 While the document falls short of a comprehensive strategy for sustainability in Scotland it is an important first step in setting an integrated approach within which policy in a number of areas within Scotland can be developed. It also sets a framework for future actions and recognises that the planning system, has an important role in promoting and delivering the integration of economic, social, environmental issues. This is welcomed. It is also hoped that the current series of reviews of the planning system within Scotland will, when complete, stress the important role regional planning, such as is undertaken in Ayrshire, has in the future delivery of sustainable development policy within Scotland.

RECOMMENDATION

- 6 It is recommended that Committee note the contents of this report and welcome the publication of this initial statement on sustainable development and accompanying indicators for Scotland.

Ian Johnson
 Manager
 Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Committee

Person to Contact: John Esslemont – (01292) 673766