

Alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan

Finalised Draft : December 2007



Sustainability Appraisal
**A Strategic Environmental
and Socio-Economic
Assessment of the Plan**



East Ayrshire
COUNCIL

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**EXECUTIVE AND NON
TECHNICAL SUMMARY
OF ENVIRONMENTAL
REPORT**

INTRODUCTION

The Environmental Report documents the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the East Ayrshire Local Plan Alteration. The SEA is an important, but separate, part of a wider Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan Alteration which allows any environmental impacts of the plan to be assessed alongside any social and economic impacts.

CONTEXT OF THE EAST AYRSHIRE LOCAL PLAN ALTERATION

The East Ayrshire Local Plan Alteration has been prepared in line with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and provides a framework for development and the use of land throughout East Ayrshire.

Throughout the production of the document, the Council has respected the Government's commitment to sustainable development, all existing European planning and environmental legislation and objectives, Scotland's sustainable development strategy and all national planning advice and guidance. The Local Plan Alteration has also been placed firmly in the context of the Scottish Executive's National Planning Framework, the replacement Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan, the East Ayrshire Community Plan and other approved Council strategies, plans and programmes.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

It is a requirement of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004 and the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that a Strategic Environmental Assessment should be undertaken if a plan or programme

- is likely to have a significant effect on the environment;
- is required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions and;
- is prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, tourism, telecommunications, town and country planning and which sets a framework for future development consent of projects.

Strategic Environmental Assessment is a process for identifying and assessing the environmental impacts of a qualifying plan or programme so that the effects may be assessed and taken into account before the plan or programme is adopted. The process involves a thorough assessment of the

aims, strategies, policies, proposals, recommendations and potential development sites contained within the plan or programme concerned. The Environmental Report itself provides a written commentary on the SEA process that has been employed by the Council in its assessment of the East Ayrshire Local Plan Alteration.

PRE-ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

(i) Collation of Baseline Data

The collation of pertinent baseline data is seen as an essential pre-requisite in facilitating a thorough assessment of the impacts of any plan or programme on the environment. In this regard, a comprehensive set of baseline data has therefore been collected by East Ayrshire Council from various sources, this information providing an up-to-date environmental audit of East Ayrshire.

(ii) Current State of the Environment

The collation of the baseline environmental data has enabled the Council to establish a snapshot of the current state of the environment in East Ayrshire and has provided a base against which any significant changes brought about as a result of implementing the provisions of the local plan can be identified and assessed.

The description of the current state of the environment illustrates East Ayrshire's key environmental assets and has enabled the Council to formulate a number of objectives to protect and enhance those assets. This, in turn, has provided a base against which the impact of the East Ayrshire Local Plan Alteration on biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape, and the interrelationship between the above factors, can be assessed.

(iii) Scoping the Environmental Report

As a preliminary step in the SEA preparation process, the Council prepared a Scoping Report, detailing the scope and level of detail to be provided in the final Environmental Report to be produced. The Scoping Report also identified and described the various environmental effects and alternatives to be considered in the SEA process, the assessment methods to be used and the structure and content of the Environmental Report itself.

A draft Scoping Report was prepared by the Council and was distributed for consultation between 15 August 2005 and 16 September 2005, consultation being carried out with the public, the Consultation Authorities, Council Departments, neighbouring authorities and selected external environmental

organisations. Taking due regard of representations received, a finalised version of the Scoping Report was produced and submitted to the Consultation Authorities on 9 March 2006. Comments on the finalised Scoping Report were received from the Consultation Authorities on 24 April 2006 with all comments received being given full and due consideration in the preparation of the Environmental Report.

(iv) SEA Objectives and Criteria

In accord with the advice contained in the Interim Planning Advice Note: Environmental Assessment of Development Plans, and in order to facilitate the comprehensive appraisal of the East Ayrshire Local Plan Alteration, a range of environmental objectives and criteria were developed, against which the provisions of the plan have been assessed. The objectives and criteria were based upon the environmental baseline information collected as part of the SEA preparation process, the objectives reflecting international, national and local environmental requirements and the criteria being couched in the form of questions which are used in the assessment process to ascertain whether or not any of the individual aims, strategies policies or proposals contained within the Local Plan Alteration will have any significant negative impact on the environment. The various objectives and criteria that were devised were, themselves, subjected to early public consultation through the Council's Spatial Developments Option Paper, prepared as a discussion document prior to the production of both the draft local plan alteration and the draft Scoping Report.

ASSESSMENT OF THE PLAN

(i) Assessment of Trans-Boundary Effects

The Environmental Report has concluded that there will be no trans-boundary environmental effects as a result of the implementation of the Local Plan Alteration. Consequently it has not been considered necessary to carry out any consultation with neighbouring member states as part of the assessment process and procedures.

(ii) Assessment of the Plans Aims and Visions

It is considered that the principal aim of the East Ayrshire Local Plan Alteration will have a significant positive impact on the environment. The other nine associated aims of the Local Plan alteration have been assessed as having an uncertain or unknown impact on the environment while others are recognised as having a neutral impact.

(iii) Assessment of Alternative Policy Frameworks and Locational Strategies

Policy Framework

The alternatives to the policy framework that were considered in the assessment of the Local Plan Alteration were:

- to conform to the replacement Structure Plan and all relevant national planning advice and guidance; or
- to prepare the local plan without reference or conformity to those documents.

The Local Plan Alteration is required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 to conform to the approved Structure Plan, taking due account of all appropriate national advice and guidance. For this reason, it is considered that preparation of the Local Plan Alteration, without any regard being paid to these requirements, is not a realistic option as the resulting local plan would be in direct violation of planning legislation and would not meet the requirements of the Scottish Executive. This would, in turn, leave the local plan open to legal challenge. Consequently, it was considered that the only realistic option available to the Council was to conform to the replacement Structure Plan, and the modifications made to it by the Scottish Ministers, and to reflect the relevant provisions of all pertinent national planning advice and guidance.

Locational Strategy

The locational strategy of the East Ayrshire Local Plan Alteration relates specifically to the main settlement of Kilmarnock. As detailed in the Spatial Development Options Paper, produced by the Council for discussion purposes at an early stage in the plan preparation process, three alternative ways in which housing land release could be achieved within Kilmarnock were identified. These were considered as reasonable alternatives for future residential development in the Local Plan Alteration and related to the release of:

- a single large area of land to meet all the housing needs in the area;
- a single larger site, together with several smaller areas of land; or
- a series of appropriately located smaller areas.

The Environmental Report has concluded that the designation of any single large area for housing purposes would have an overall significant environmental impact on the particular area within which it would be located. The release of one larger area of land as part of the second option detailed above is also likely to have significant environmental impacts. The locational strategy of the Local Plan Alteration has therefore focussed on the provision of a series of environmentally acceptable, smaller scale areas of land within a series of strategic

expansion areas, as identified in the replacement structure plan, comprising:

- North West, West and South Kilmarnock;
- Stewarton;
- Mauchline
- Cumnock/Auchinleck

(iv) Assessment of the Local Plan Strategies

The East Ayrshire Local Plan Alteration contains a series of eight overarching strategic development strategies, together with a series of general strategies for each particular topic addressed in the document. None of the strategic development strategies are considered to have any significant adverse environmental impacts. The general development strategies generally have positive or neutral impacts and any negative impacts that have been identified are considered either not to be significant in nature or capable of effective mitigation.

(v) Assessment of the Policy Range of the Plan

In order to carry out this element of the assessment procedure, the Council prepared a list of all potentially relevant policy topics to be addressed in the plan, these being derived from the policy advice provided in all current SPP's and NPPG's. These policy topics were then checked to ensure they were fully and adequately covered by an appropriate policy or range of policies. As a result of this exercise, it was determined that there were no gaps in the policy range or coverage of the Local Plan Alteration.

(vi) Assessment of the Local Plan Policies

The East Ayrshire Local Plan Alteration contains eight broad strategic development policies and the SEA assessment process has indicated that none of these policies have any significant negative environmental impacts. The strategic development policies generally have positive, neutral or unknown impacts on the environment.

A set of strategic and general policies has been identified in the local plan relating to individual topics and these policies are also generally considered to have positive, neutral or unknown environmental impacts. Where a strategic or general policy has a negative impact, the impact can be either satisfactorily mitigated or is not considered to be significant in nature. The negative impacts that have been identified mainly relate to increases in energy consumption, waste production and numbers of car journeys generated, all of which are generally applicable to all new developments, no matter where they are located.

Notwithstanding the above, the assessment has concluded that the single user site to the North of Kilmarnock, considered for inclusion in the local plan

alteration, has an overall adverse impact on the environment both individually and cumulatively, because of its size and scale. However, bearing in mind the significant positive socio-economic benefits that would accrue to East Ayrshire as a result of the development of the single user site at north Kilmarnock, the site has been retained in the Local Plan Alteration.

Only one housing site identified in the plan, at Caprington, Kilmarnock, has also been identified as having a potentially significant adverse environmental impact.

(vii) Assessment of the Local Plan Opportunity Sites and Proposals

Assessment of Suggested Opportunity Sites

Of the 319 potential development sites assessed, some 166 (52.0%) were considered to generate significant adverse environmental effects. 76 sites (23.8%) were considered to have no adverse or minimal adverse impact with 77 sites (24.2%) having a limited environmental effect capable of appropriate mitigation. This particular part of the assessment exercise has proved an extremely useful tool in the site selection process for the Local Plan Alteration, with those sites considered to have significant adverse environmental impacts being not being given further consideration.

The Local Plan Alteration also identifies a wide range of specific Housing, Business and Industry, and other Miscellaneous Development Opportunity Sites located within settlement boundaries which are considered suitable and appropriate for future development. Many of the development opportunity sites in the local plan alteration have been identified because they have a valid, current planning consent for the development proposed or are already included in the current adopted version of the East Ayrshire Local Plan. The Local Plan Alteration cannot influence the development of such sites and these sites have not been assessed as part of the SEA process.

Assessment of the Local Plan's Proposals

The Local Plan Alteration contains a total of 28 general, area wide proposals and some 37 site specific and other proposals which have all been assessed in the SEA. A further 14 recommendations are also contained in the local plan alteration and these too have been fully assessed. A summary of the assessment of both the proposals and recommendations assessed is provided in Appendices 15 and 16 respectively.

(viii) Mitigation Measures

The Environmental Report has concluded that some provisions of the Local Plan Alteration contain

certain elements which may have a negative impact or impacts on the environment. However, those negative environmental impacts that have been identified can, in many cases, be ameliorated or satisfactorily overcome through the implementation of mitigation measures. These mitigation measures have been highlighted in the individual assessment matrices forming part of the Background Information relating to the Environmental Report. Furthermore, the policies contained within the Alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan can also, in themselves, help to mitigate any negative impacts experienced.

(ix) Scrutiny of the Assessment

A dedicated scrutiny group was formed to assess the Environmental Report prior to the Consultative Draft Local Plan Alteration being finalised. The group comprised representatives from appropriate Council Departments and interested external environmental bodies, thus bringing a range of resources and specialised expertise, not otherwise available to the Planning and Economic Development Division, to the assessment process. The whole scrutiny process was directed and overseen by an independent consultant engaged by the Council. Officers from the Planning Division's Policy and Projects Section were also attached to the scrutiny group in a purely advisory capacity, but did not form part of the group itself.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE PLAN

Preliminary arrangements for monitoring the local plan alteration have been established in the Environmental Report and the Council recognises that the plan must be closely monitored in order to measure and clearly understand any potentially adverse effects of the plan on the East Ayrshire environment.

The Environmental Report proposes that the baseline data which was collected during the SEA preparation process should be used to monitor any environmental changes that may take place in East Ayrshire as a result of the implementation of the Local Plan Alteration. It is intended that a series of indicators will be developed from the baseline information that has been collected in order:

- to assist in the monitoring of the plan and the formulation of a defensible monitoring framework;
- to assist in assessing the impact of the Local Plan Alteration on the environment; and
- to identify where specific targets are being met or missed, this helping to identify environmental change within the area.

A series of preliminary indicators and targets have been developed and will be used to monitor the impact of the Local Plan Alteration on the environment.

The Environmental Report also proposes that the baseline data will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis to ensure that the data is relevant and up-to-date. This will allow any unforeseen adverse effects that the Local Plan Alteration may have on the environment to be identified and mitigated against, as considered appropriate, in light of the most up to date information available.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The SEA process has, to date, helped the Council to ensure that the aims, strategies, policies, proposals, recommendations and development sites contained within the Local Plan Alteration are acceptable in environmental terms and that the provisions of the plan will not have any significant negative environmental impact.

A draft version of the Environmental Report accompanied and supported the consultative draft version of the East Ayrshire Local Plan Alteration and representations on both documents were invited during an agreed ten week consultation period. All comments received in respect of the draft Environmental Report have been considered by the Council when finalising the Environmental Report for deposit with the finalised version of the local plan alteration.

Once the deposit period has ended, the Council will consider all objections received in respect of the finalised version of the Local Plan Alteration and any comments or representations made in relation to the Environmental Report. Modifications to the Local Plan Alteration and any amendments to the Environmental Report (which are considered to be significant and have not been previously assessed) will then be made as considered appropriate. Formal objections to the modifications and representations on any changes to the revised Environmental Report will then invited. If requested by the objector, any unresolved objections will then be considered at a Public Local Inquiry. Any modifications to the Local Plan Alteration made by the Reporter, following the Public Local Inquiry will then be put back on deposit for objection along with a revised Environmental Report if necessary. The Council will then proceed to adopt the Local Plan Alteration once any outstanding objections have been satisfactorily addressed.

Once the Local Plan Alteration has been adopted, the Council will produce the Post Adoption Statement as required by Regulation 20(3) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004.

ALTERATION TO THE EAST AYRSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

INTRODUCTION

In May 2004, East Ayrshire Council advertised its intention to commence the preparation of a formal alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan which had been formally adopted by the Council in April 2003. A finalised version of the alteration to the Local Plan has now been produced and, as an integral part of the plan preparation process, a Sustainability Appraisal of the plan has been carried out. The Sustainability Appraisal itself comprises a full Strategic Environmental Assessment of the plan, as required by the provisions of Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and Council, commonly referred to as the 'Strategic Environmental Assessment' or 'SEA Directive', and also a socio-economic appraisal of the document.

The SEA Directive which informs the assessment process was transposed into Scottish law on 20 July 2004 through the introduction and implementation of the 'Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004' (hereafter referred to as the Regulations), these Regulations taking precedence over the Interim Planning Advice on the environmental assessment of development plans produced by the Scottish Executive Development Department in August 2003. This advice, along with the Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Devolved Governments in the UK) has been particularly instrumental in the preparation of the Strategic Environmental Assessment element of the local plan alteration Sustainability Appraisal.

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, which came into force on 20 February 2006 has now revoked the Regulations, but the Scottish Executive has directed that those plans and programmes which started before 19 February 2006, which includes the Alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan, can continue to be prepared under the provisions of the Regulations. Work on the SEA of the Local Plan Alteration has continued accordingly.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a process for identifying and assessing the environmental effects of a development plan so that they may be taken into account before the plan is approved or adopted. The assessment process requires that the aims, strategies, policies and proposals of the plan concerned are examined in relation to broader environmental objectives, in order to identify their likely consequences and, through an iterative process of assessment and

adjustment, to prevent or reduce the likely significant effects of the plan on the environment. The Strategic Environmental Assessment carried out in respect of the Alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan fully respects, and has been designed specifically to achieve, this particular prime objective.

It is, however, recognised by the Council that development planning has significant social and economic impacts as well as environmental impacts and that an assessment of a plan or programme only in terms of its environmental impact may be limiting and possibly present a rather unbalanced view of its potential overall effects. While the Regulations and the Interim Planning Advice require only an environmental assessment of a development plan to be undertaken, the local plan alteration has, consequently, also been assessed in social and economic terms.

The socio-economic assessment of the local plan alteration has been carried out as a separate exercise from the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the document. However, the two distinct assessments together form the full Sustainability Appraisal of the alteration and can be treated accordingly.

The Sustainability Appraisal has been prepared in two distinct parts, with Part 1 dealing with the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the local plan alteration in terms of the Regulations, the Interim Planning Advice and the Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. Part 2 deals with the Socio-Economic Assessment of the local plan alteration.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment forms the major part of the overall Sustainability Appraisal and has been formatted to meet all the various requirements of the Regulations, following the assessment process and methodology detailed in Sections 2, 3 and 4 of this Environmental Report. The Regulations require the SEA process to be fully integrated with the development plan preparation process, with both processes running in parallel and being clearly defined. It is recognised that the Environmental Report will influence the detailed provisions of the local plan alteration and vice versa. However, it should be noted that the Environmental Report is also a tool used to aid the decision making process and will be used as such to determine the final content of policies, proposals and development sites to be contained within the local plan alteration itself. Appendix 1 identifies the key stages involved in the local plan alteration and SEA preparation processes and indicates where their respective individual processes overlap.

**STRATEGIC
ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT**

1 THE EAST AYRSHIRE LOCAL PLAN ALTERATION

The Purpose of the Local Plan Alteration

1.1 The Alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan sets out the approach that East Ayrshire Council proposes to adopt regarding its consideration of planning matters and puts forward a series of policies, proposals and recommendations designed to achieve the stated aims and strategies of the Plan and to promote appropriate development and use of land throughout the Authority Area. The Plan, in particular, stimulates and encourages sympathetic development in appropriate locations and provides a sound and comprehensive planning policy framework against which development proposals can be assessed. The plan also provides an essential development plan base for the production of detailed design guidance, development management advice documents and action plans for certain areas considered to have significant development potential.

1.2 Together with the Approved Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and the adopted East Ayrshire Opencast Coal Subject Plan, the East Ayrshire Local Plan provides the policy framework for future development in East Ayrshire, in accordance with the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The Local Plan Alteration has been designed to meet future development requirements and needs to the year 2017 and indicates broad strategic growth areas for a further period to 2025.

The Strategic Context for the Local Plan Alteration

1.3 The strategic approach adopted by the Council in the preparation of the local plan alteration is to help achieve the Council's vision for East Ayrshire as expressed in the East Ayrshire Community Plan, whereby:

'East Ayrshire will be a place with strong, vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people's needs'

1.4 The plan has been prepared to reflect the strategic objectives and other provisions of all international environmental obligations such as the Rio Declaration and the Kyoto Protocol that have been incorporated into European and national legislation as well as those spatial perspectives that relate directly to Ayrshire and rural Scotland, as detailed in the Scottish Executive's National Planning Framework for Scotland, published in April

2004. The plan also reflects the strategic approach already adopted by the Council, either under its own initiative or through partnership with other appropriate bodies, particularly in the East Ayrshire Community Plan and the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan. However, many other documents at the national level, such as the productions People and Place: Regeneration and Policy Statement and Choosing Our Future: Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy, have also been considered in the preparation of the local plan and these have been influential in shaping the local plan's development strategy.

(i) The East Ayrshire Community Plan

1.5 The principal objective of the Local Plan Alteration is to help achieve, in land use terms, the aspirations and aims of the East Ayrshire Community Plan. The community plan was formally endorsed by its constituent partners in March 2003 and sets out in a structured way to plan, provide for and to promote services in the community and to improve all aspects of life in East Ayrshire. The plan has been produced jointly by a wide range of public, private and voluntary organisations including East Ayrshire Council, Ayrshire and Arran Health Board, Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire, Strathclyde Police, the Fire Service and various educational institutions. A review of the Community Plan and its related thematic Action Plans has recently been carried out, to cover the period 2007 to 2011. Various themes identified in the updated Community Plan are of particular relevance to the Local Plan Alteration, especially those themes with land use implications relating to improving opportunities and improving the environment. Other Council plans and strategies have also informed the plan preparation process.

(ii) The Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan

1.6 The Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan, approved by the Scottish Ministers in January 2000, has been given due consideration by the Council in the preparation of the local plan and the various strategic and local development policies it contains. However, the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan is currently under review and the strategic approach advocated and promoted in the emerging replacement structure plan has been adopted as the principle driver in the formulation of the document. The replacement plan has yet to receive formal approval from the Scottish Ministers.

(iii) Other Council Plans and Programmes

1.7 In addition to the Council's Community Plan, there is a series of plans and programmes dealing with other Council functions, for example, the Local Housing Strategy, the Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway Area Waste Plan, the Local Transport

Strategy and the Contaminated Land Strategy. Where appropriate, the provisions of these local strategies and the national targets they contain are reflected in the provisions of the local plan alteration. At a more local level, a range of other plans, programmes and strategies, such as town centre strategies, environmental improvement action plans and design guidance have been prepared by the Council and recognition of these documents has also been made in the production of the Local Plan Alteration. A detailed list of those plans, programmes and strategies that have been taken into account and that have influenced the preparation of the Local Plan Alteration are provided in Appendix 2 of this Environmental Report, together with a summary of the main purposes of the documents concerned. Figure 1 below also illustrates the relationship between the local plan alteration and the Environmental Report in the context of the hierarchy of the various plans, programmes and strategies that have informed the production of the document.

The Strategic Aims of the Local Plan Alteration

1.8 The Council's Community Plan, the approved and replacement Ayrshire Joint Structure Plans and the other Council plans and programmes detailed above, together encapsulate the Council's aspirations with regard to the overall development and growth of East Ayrshire. It is recognised that many of the aspirations of these documents have significant land use implications and the strategic aims of the local plan have been specifically formulated to enable these aspirations to be achieved within the context of the existing national and strategic planning policy framework. To this end, the local plan has adopted a single primary strategic aim, encompassing and encapsulating all of the aspirations expressed in the Community Plan etc. which is:

'to promote sustainable development, to maximise the potential of East Ayrshire and to improve the quality of life of its residents.'

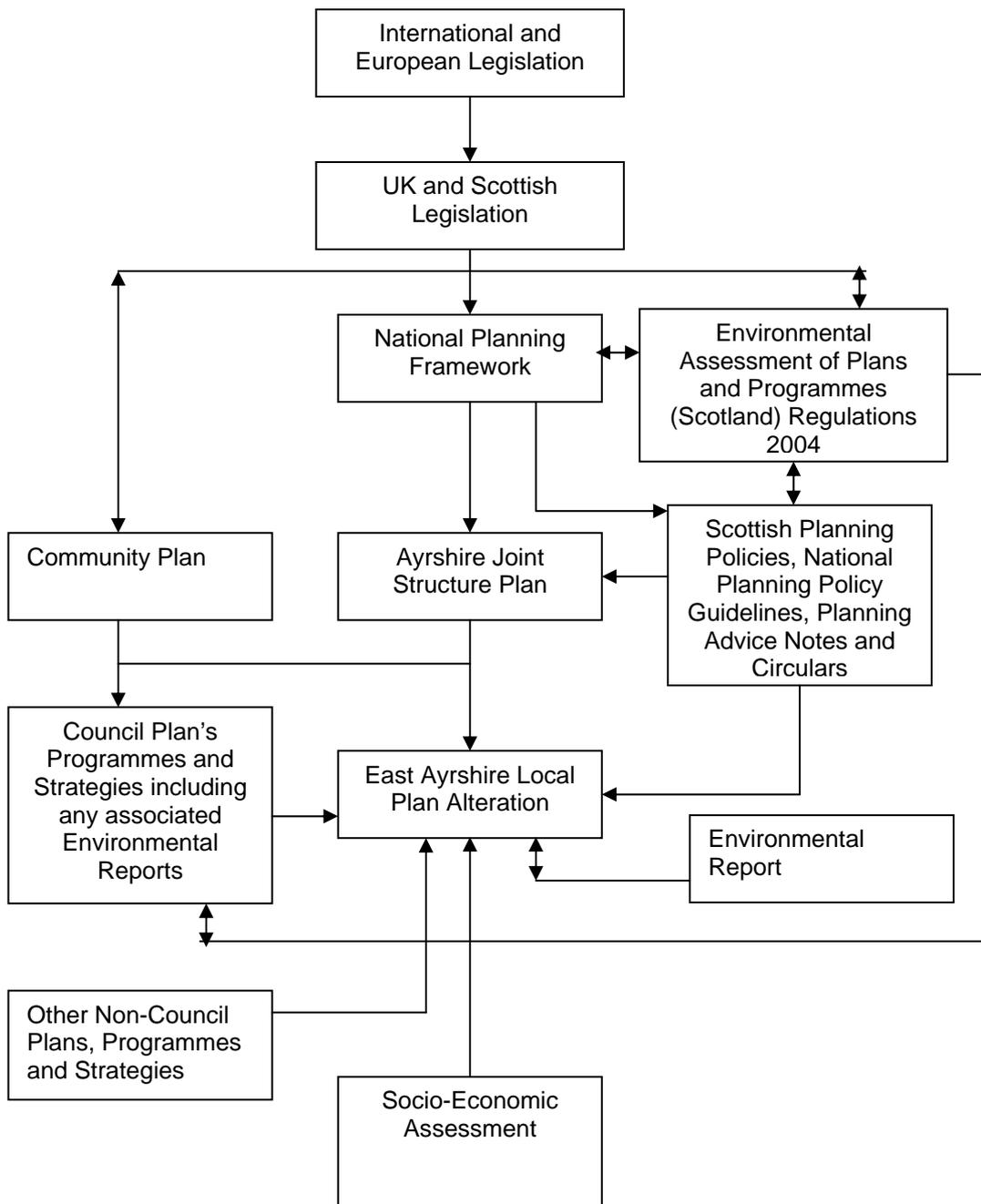
1.9 This primary aim is, in turn, supported by a series of more specific, related aims which endeavour to balance the need for development against the need to conserve the unique character of the area, viz;

- to stem out migration and maintain resident populations at, or about, current levels;

- to maintain and improve the integrity, vitality and viability of the area settlements and their rural settings;
- to facilitate the expansion and diversification of the East Ayrshire economy and to maximise the economic potential of the area for industrial, business, commercial and tourism development;
- to protect, conserve and enhance the character, appearance and amenity of East Ayrshire, especially as regard to its landscape quality, the built and natural environment and areas of natural heritage and built heritage importance;
- to maximise benefits to the area by providing an improved and integrated transportation infrastructure and promoting the development of stronger communication links with the national strategic road and rail networks;
- to provide an adequate supply of effective housing land and associated leisure, recreational, community and other facilities and services to meet anticipated demand;
- to strengthen and improve the viability and vitality of the strategic retail and office base of East Ayrshire;
- to promote appropriate development in rural areas; and
- to address the threat posed by climate change, to encourage the more efficient use of resources, to reduce energy consumption and CO₂ emissions and to facilitate the development of renewable sources of energy.

1.10 All of the strategies, policies and proposals contained in the local plan alteration are specifically geared towards achieving these strategic aims and it is considered that that many of these will have some direct or indirect impact on the East Ayrshire environment. Part 1 of the Sustainability Appraisal, which deals with the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Local Plan Alteration, specifically addresses this particular issue.

Figure 1: Hierarchy of Plans, Programmes and Strategies that influence the EALPA



2 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is now fully enshrined in national legislation, having evolved following the production of a series of European Directives, Interim Planning Advice statements, National Regulations and Government Circulars, the provisions of which are summarised below:

(i) Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and Council

2.2 The principal driver in the preparation of Strategic Environmental Assessments is Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and Council on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, whose principal objective is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development. The Directive stipulates that a Strategic Environmental Assessment must be carried out during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption and sets out the scope of information to be included within the Environmental Report to be prepared in association with the assessment. The detailed requirements of the Directive have, however, now been subsumed into the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (See Paragraphs 2.4 to 2.9 below).

(ii) Environmental Assessment of Development Plans: Interim Planning Advice

2.3 In August 2003, the Scottish Executive produced Interim Planning Advice on the Environmental Assessment of Development Plans which provides an overview of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process and describes how such an assessment should be undertaken. In particular, the advice explains the origins of environmental assessment, describes the benefits of assessment and outlines the environmental policy context of the assessment process. The Advice also introduces the main requirements of the Environmental Directive 2001/42/EC and addresses the main issues to be considered in approaching the assessment process.

2.4 In addition to the above, the Interim Planning Advice also outlines the key stages in the assessment process and sets them within the development plan process. It also provides detailed advice on each stage of the assessment process, drawing on case studies and examples of studies

already carried out. Additional advice is also provided regarding the extending the assessment process to cover social and economic aspects of the plan being appraised.

(iii) Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004

2.5 The Regulations came into force on 20 July 2004 and apply to all plans and programmes whose formal preparation begins after 21 July 2004, and others whose preparation began before this date but which will not be formally adopted until after 21 July 2006. The Regulations also apply to alterations to development plans, such as that proposed by the Council in respect of the East Ayrshire Local Plan.

2.6 The Regulations require that an SEA be undertaken if a plan or programme:

- is likely to have a significant effect on the environment;
- is required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions and;
- is prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, tourism, telecommunications, town and country planning and which sets a framework for future development consent of projects.

2.7 In order to determine if an SEA of a particular plan or programme is required, it is necessary under the provisions of the Regulations for the plan or programme making authority to prepare a report on whether or not the authority considers the plan or programme is likely to have any significant environmental effects and to send a copy of the report to the relevant consultation authorities (the Scottish Executive, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency) for consideration.

2.8 If the consultation authorities agree that the plan or programme will have significant environmental effects, an environmental assessment will be required, the assessment to be prepared along the lines described in the 2004 Regulations. In this regard, the plan or programme making authority requires:

- to prepare an Environmental Report which identifies, describes and evaluates any significant environmental effects of implementing the plan, programme or alteration and any alternative which might reasonably be proposed;
- to consult with the necessary consultation authorities (the Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland), Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency), at the scoping stage prior to preparing the

Environmental Report, in order to allow them to form a view on the matters to be addressed in the Report; and

- to consult once again with the consultation authorities, and with the general public, once the Environmental Report has been prepared.

2.9 Following consultation, the plan or programme making authority is obliged, in terms of the Regulations, to take account of the Environmental Report, the representations made in response to the consultation process and the views of the consultation authorities in the preparation of the plan or programme being assessed.

(iv) Circular 2/2004: Strategic Environmental Assessment for Development Planning: The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004

2.10 Circular 2/2004 gives guidance on the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004 and, in particular, on the implementation of SEA in the context of development planning. The Circular also takes precedence over advice previously provided in the Interim Planning Advice on the Environmental Assessment of Development plans but advises that the Interim Planning Advice should still be read in conjunction with the Circular and alongside the Regulations themselves.

2.11 The Circular gives general advice on such issues as the procedures for determining whether environmental assessment is required, procedures for carrying out assessments, procedures in respect of the adoption and approval of plans and post adoption procedures. All of the advice provided in the Circular has been given due consideration in the SEA of the local plan alteration.

(v) A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2005)

2.12 The Practical Guide provides information and guidance on how to comply with the European Directive as transposed into UK legislation and has been jointly developed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland.

2.13 The Practical Guide indicates that it is considered good practice to provide a quality assurance checklist alongside the Environmental Report to enable the public to easily understand the procedural steps of the SEA process. To this end, the Council has produced an SEA compliance checklist, reproduced in Appendix 18 to the Environmental Report. The checklist provides the

precise location of the information that is required to be contained in an Environmental Report as detailed in Schedule 2 of the Regulations and Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. This will enable readers of the document to easily find the information that they are particularly interested in and to demonstrate to the public that the SEA process has fully complied with legislation.

(vi) The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005

2.14 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act came into force on 20 February 2006 revoking the Regulations and expanding the remit of SEA in Scotland beyond the provisions stipulated in the European Directive. Plans, Programmes and Strategies, prepared after 19 February 2006 will require an SEA if they are likely to have significant environmental effects, regardless as to whether or not they are required by legislation.

2.15 Those Plans and Programmes started before the 19 February 2006 can continue to be prepared under the provisions of the Regulations.

(vii) The Strategic Environmental Assessment Tool Kit

2.16 The Strategic Environmental Assessment Tool Kit was launched in September 2006 and provides guidance and best practice advice on how to comply with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The Tool Kit was developed by the Scottish Ministers in consultation with Historic Scotland, SEPA, SNH and the SEA Gateway.

3 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND PRE-ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

(i) Assessment Methodology Synopsis

3.1 The assessment methodology adopted for use in the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Local Plan Alteration is based on the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004 and the methodology and procedures detailed in the Scottish Executive's Interim Planning Advice on the Environmental Assessment of Development Plans. The entire assessment process advocated in the Interim Planning Advice involves 14 key stages, as follows:

- Screening alterations of plans potentially subject to assessment;
- Collating and forecasting baseline environmental information;
- Scoping the environmental report and the likely significant environmental effects;
- Adopting environmental objectives and criteria for use in assessment;
- Assessing the plan's aims and visions;
- Consultations and consideration of trans-boundary effects;
- Assessing alternative policy frameworks and locational strategies;
- Checking the policy range of the plan;
- Assessing the plan's policies and proposals;
- Preparing and publishing the environmental report with the consultative draft plan;
- Modifying the draft plan and revising the environmental report;
- Depositing the environmental report with the finalised local plan;
- Carrying out procedures in respect of adoption of the plan; and
- Monitoring and Review of the Plan.

3.2 Of the 14 separate stages detailed above, the first 12 of these are directly relevant to the assessment of the consultative draft and finalised versions of the Local Plan Alteration. The final 2 stages relate specifically to subsequent stages of the production of the plan at the adopted and monitoring stages. Each of the first 12 stages is discussed separately below.

(ii) Pre - Assessment Procedures

Screening alterations of plans potentially subject to assessment

3.3 In line with the provisions of Sections 13, 14 and 15 of the Regulations, the Council prepared a report on whether or not it considered the Alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan would be likely to

have significant environmental effects. A copy of that report was then sent to the three designated consultation authorities and a response was received via the SEA Gateway, agreeing with the Council's own views that this was, indeed, likely to be the case. Having come to such a conclusion, a copy of the determination was placed on the Council's web site for information purposes. A copy of the determination was sent to each of the consultation authorities via the SEA Gateway and, on 4 February 2005, advertisement of the determination was placed in the local press.

Collating and Forecasting Baseline Environmental Information

Baseline Information

3.4 A considerable amount of baseline information and statistical information on a wide range of subjects is held by the Planning and Economic Development Division of the Council, as well as by other relevant Council departments and divisions. Other valuable baseline information is also held by such organisations as the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Committee in the form of technical working papers produced in association with the replacement Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan. Outside bodies and organisations such as SNH, SEPA, the Forestry Authority, Scottish Partnership for Transport (SPT), Scottish Water etc also hold a substantial amount of information of value to the environmental assessment process.

3.5 The broad range of the baseline information held by the Council has been used in the preparation of the Environmental Report includes the following, although this list is not considered to be exhaustive:

- Information on sites of nature conservation interest;
- Information on those elements of the built environment considered worthy of protection;
- Information on important landscape features;
- Information on the quality of agricultural land;
- Information on land considered to be liable to flooding;
- Information on environmentally sensitive areas;
- Geological Information;
- Information on landscape types and quality, sensitive landscape character areas etc;
- Information on rights of way and cycle routes; and
- Information on air quality and water catchment areas.

3.6 Although a vast amount of environmental data has been collected from multiple sources, not all of this data was available in an electronic format and had to be collated from hard copies. Inevitably there are gaps or limitations in the information that has been collected and where these exist, they have been highlighted. It is intended that any gaps in the baseline information collated will be filled by the Council seeking the requisite information from the particular relevant bodies or organisations concerned. The filling of those gaps that have been identified will be addressed in future versions of the Environmental Report and collected through the monitoring process. However, bearing in mind that the collection and collation of information is often the responsibility of external organisations not under the direct control of the Council, the timeframes for the infilling of the identified information gaps may be unknown.

3.7 A comprehensive list of all baseline information held by the Council and other authorities, bodies and organisations used in the local plan alteration assessment process is provided in Appendix 3 of this report. Much of this baseline information is pertinent to a number of the environmental objective headings adopted in the environmental assessment process. The detailed baseline information is contained within Appendix 4.

Current State of the Environment

3.8 The collation of baseline environmental data has enabled the Council to establish a snapshot of the current state of the environment in East Ayrshire and has provided a base against which any significant changes brought about as a result of implementing the provisions of the local plan alteration can be identified and assessed. No new environmental information has been specifically gathered for the purpose of assessing the current state of the environment as the intention of this exercise has been to assess the present state of the environment against environmental data that is currently available.

3.9 The baseline data that has been collected has enabled the Council to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations to assess “the likely significant effects on the environment, including issues such as, biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape, and the interrelationship between the above factors.” For reasons of conformity, the Council has arranged its assessment of the current state of the environment within East Ayrshire under the same broad headings. A synopsis of the current state of the environment is produced in Appendix 5 to the Environmental Report.

Key Environmental Issues Facing East Ayrshire

3.10 A synopsis of the key environmental issues and problems facing East Ayrshire is also provided, by topic, with the particular local plan policies designed to address those matters also being identified, as appropriate. This synopsis is detailed in Appendix 6 attached to the report.

Evolution of East Ayrshire without the Local Plan

3.11 Similarly, and again in line with the provisions of the Regulations, this section of the Strategic Environmental Assessment seeks to determine how the environment is likely to evolve without the adoption and implementation of the local plan alteration. In general terms, it is considered that, in the absence of any overall development strategy, development in East Ayrshire would still take place but would be less well attuned to environmental and other strategic objectives and priorities. In particular:

- any concentration of new development in areas where there is the highest demand would undoubtedly lead to the further decline of remoter, more peripheral communities.
- increased levels of sporadic and isolated development would occur in areas of attractive open countryside, to the detriment of the landscape and the environment;
- development would most likely take place primarily on greenfield land which is easier and less problematic to develop than previously developed, brownfield land;
- development could take place in inappropriate or highly sensitive areas, possibly resulting in an unacceptable loss of greenfield land and areas of significant environmental quality;
- brownfield sites, including gap and infill sites, within existing communities would be less likely to be developed, thereby perpetuating and exacerbating ongoing problems of urban dereliction;
- full integration of unplanned development with existing development, local facilities and services would be difficult to achieve;
- new development would be less well related to existing public transport infrastructure, thus increasing dependency on the private car and the erosion of sustainable transport patterns;
- any unrestricted development in areas of high development demand could well lead to the physical and visual coalescence of neighbouring communities with corresponding loss of individual community identities;

- uncontrolled development from existing settlement boundaries in areas of significant development demand could lead to severe reduction in landscape quality and the setting for the communities concerned;
- unrestricted development could well lead to the loss of areas of importance for nature conservation and good quality agricultural land; and
- demand for services such as retail and commercial leisure may emerge at edge or out of town centre locations to the detriment of the vitality and viability of existing town centres.

Scoping the Environmental Report and the likely Significant Environmental Effects

Scoping the Environmental Report

3.12 In line with Section 17 of the 2004 Regulations and in line with the Interim Planning Advice, a draft Scoping Report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment was prepared by the Council, the Report setting out the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the assessment process and the level of detail to be included in the Environmental Report itself. The draft Scoping Report was approved by the Council on 28 June 2005 and, following consideration by the Committee, the document was advertised for public information and comment the week beginning 15 August 2005. Consultation on the document was also carried with the Consultation Authorities, other Council Departments, neighbouring authorities and selected external environmental organisations, the consultation period running from 15 August to 16 September 2005.

3.13 A total of 11 responses to the draft Scoping Report were received by the Council during the consultation period, including comments from the Consultation Authorities. Following the consultation process, the draft Scoping Report was then scrutinised for compliance with the Regulations by an independent consultant, Environ UK Ltd, specifically commissioned by the Council for this purpose. The draft Scoping Report was subsequently amended to incorporate any pertinent and appropriate comments received and also to reflect specific changes recommended by the appointed independent consultant. The finalised version of the Scoping Report contained the Council's responses to the comments made on the draft Scoping Report.

3.14 The Scoping Report was then formally submitted to the Consultation Authorities, via the SEA Gateway, for formal consideration on 9 March 2006. Copies of the finalised report were also sent to those organisations and bodies that had

responded to the draft report and to neighbouring authorities for their information.

3.15 The Consultation Authorities submitted their formal comments on the finalised Scoping Report on 17 April 2006. The Environmental Report has subsequently been prepared as detailed in the Scoping Report, as agreed with the Consultation Authorities, and has taken on board the views expressed by the consultation bodies regarding its proposed scope and content. A copy of the finalised Scoping Report and the Consultation Authorities comments on the document is provided in Appendix 7.

3.16 The scope of the significant environmental issues which are likely to arise through the implementation of the policies and proposals contained in the local plan alteration was determined at an early stage in the plan preparation process. In particular, the scoping process was informed by;

- the East Ayrshire Local Plan Monitoring Development Activity Report;
- representations and suggested issues for consideration received as a result of the Council advertising its intention to prepare an Alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan;
- representations and comments received as a result of the Council advertising the preparation of the East Ayrshire Local Plan Spatial Development Options Paper;
- assessment of pertinent references to environmental matters in national planning policies, advice and guidance; and
- assessment of the emerging replacement Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and its accompanying Sustainability Appraisal.

Scoping the Likely Significant Environmental Effects

3.17 In addition to assessing the environmental protection objectives detailed in Table 2 (see table attached to paragraph 3.32 below), Schedule 2 of the Regulations also requires that the Environmental Report should identify short, medium and long term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects of the local plan. In addition and where considered appropriate and relevant, an assessment should also be made as to whether any such effects will be of local, community wide, authority wide or regional / national significance. Any wider environmental impacts of implementing the provisions of the Local Plan Alteration, including possible cross boundary impacts, should also be assessed. This may be particularly pertinent in relation to waste management, transportation and renewable energy development.

Short, Medium and Long Term Effects

3.18 Where considered feasible and appropriate, the Council has determined whether any of the significant environmental impacts resulting from the implementation of the various provisions of the local plan alteration are likely to be short, medium or long term in nature. For the purposes of this assessment, short term effects are defined as effects which are of limited duration such as those that may occur during the construction stage of a development, for example, the increased traffic going to and from the site during, say, a six month construction period. Medium term effects are effects that may last for a longer but still limited period, such as the effects of mineral workings with an operational life and a stipulated period of restoration and aftercare, extending over, possibly, a number of years. Long term effects tend to be persistent for an extended period of indeterminate or permanent duration.

3.19 An assessment as to whether the possible impacts of the aims, strategies, policies, proposals and recommendations of the local plan alteration are likely to be of short, medium and long term duration has been carried out, the results of this exercise being detailed in the Background Information papers relating to Appendices 8 to 12, 15 and 16. The Background Information papers have been designed to support the Strategic Environmental Assessment but do not, in themselves, form an integral part of the Environmental Report.

3.20 An assessment has also been carried out to determine whether the environmental impacts arising from the development of potential development opportunity sites are likely to be short, medium or long term in nature. In this regard, it is considered that many of the anticipated impacts of site development will be common to all new build developments. In addition, the exact nature, scale and extent of any short, medium and long term impacts will not become apparent until firm details of particular proposals have been produced. In the absence of such details, it has not therefore been considered necessary or appropriate to assess in detail each and every one of the many development sites considered for inclusion in the local plan alteration on an individual basis. However, commensurate with the level of information available at this stage of the local plan process, the main short, medium and long term environmental impacts of new site development can, however, be summarised as follows:

(i) It is considered that all types of new development will have negative short term impacts on the environment in terms of noise, dust, traffic and general disturbance caused during the construction phase of a development. Depending on the size and scale of development there may still be

negative impacts in the medium to long term, as a large site may take several years to develop.

(ii) Once completed, new developments generally result in long term or permanent change to the landscape and urban form of the settlements concerned. There may also be significant, positive medium to long term impacts in terms of increases in public open space provision, creation of new habitats, creation of new foot and cycle paths, etc.

(iii) New developments will generally attract new populations and result in long term environmental impacts through increased need for travel and journey length, energy consumption, waste production etc.

3.21 The direct short, medium and long term environmental impacts likely to arise as a result of new developments may also have direct, indirect or secondary impacts on a host of other environmental receptors, such as human health and air quality.

Permanent and Temporary Effects

3.22 Permanent effects are defined for the purpose of this exercise as effects which are unlikely to cease or significantly change over a prolonged period of time. The effects of most forms of built development, once completed, will normally be regarded as permanent but visual and landscape effects may reduce over time as screening and landscaping measures mature and become established. Temporary effects, on the other hand, are effects with a limited or finite duration, whether short, medium or long-term, irrespective of whether the likely date of cessation of the effects can be estimated. In the absence of any detailed information regarding the implementation of the various provisions of the local plan alteration, it has not been considered possible to accurately predict whether any impacts, either positive or negative, will be permanent or temporary in nature.

Positive and Negative Effects

3.23 One of the main strategic aims of the local plan alteration is to protect, conserve and enhance the character, appearance and amenity of East Ayrshire, especially with regard to its landscape quality, the built and natural environment and areas of natural heritage and built heritage importance. It is a prime function of the SEA process to ensure that the provisions of the local plan alteration have a positive effect on the environment and to identify any areas where negative impacts may be experienced. In order to keep the assessment process systematic, structured, transparent and manageable, an assessment of all the aims, strategies, policies and proposals detailed in the local plan alteration has been carried out using a simple assessment matrix, using a range of symbols to indicate the degree of environmental compatibility

of each aim, strategy, policy and proposal with each of the identified environmental objectives detailed in Table 2. The assessment matrix is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Local Plan Assessment Matrix

Symbol	Nature of Impact
+	The aim, strategy, policy, proposal has a positive environmental impact;
-	The aim, strategy, policy, proposal has a negative environmental impact;
+/-	The aim strategy, policy, proposal has both positive and negative environmental impacts
o	The aim, strategy, policy, proposal does not have any environmental impacts
?	The impact of the aim, strategy, policy, proposal on the environment is unknown or unclear

Source: East Ayrshire Council

Secondary Effects

3.24 Secondary effects are effects that are experienced, not as a direct result of the plan, but indirectly and separately from the original direct effects or via a complex pathway. Examples of such secondary effects could be;

(i) effects on the ecology of a nearby wetland caused by a development which brings about changes to a water table; or

(ii) increased disturbance to breeding birds in woodland adjacent to a high density residential development, resulting from increased noise, activity and access to that woodland, even though the development may not directly, physically impact on or affect the woodland itself.

3.25 Such effects could extend well beyond the confines of any particular development site and may have cross boundary implications. In the absence of any detailed information regarding the implementation, scale and precise nature of the various provisions of the local plan alteration, it has not been considered possible to accurately predict the degree to which any anticipated impacts, either positive or negative, will have any secondary effects on the environment.

Cumulative effects

3.26 Cumulative effects are effects that can be caused by a number of developments which,

individually, may have insignificant effects, but together combine to create a greater, significant effect. For example, an individual house in the countryside may have minimal environmental impact while a number of such developments in the same area can change and diminish the character of an open landscape. Cumulative effects can also be caused by the combination of several effects on the same feature or receptor, such as three developments near a housing area, with one causing a dust nuisance, the second causing smell nuisance and the third causing noise disturbance.

3.27 An assessment has been made in the SEA of the cumulative impact of both the aims and strategies of the Local Plan Alteration, the cumulative effect of the strategies being assessed on a topic by topic basis. It is considered that achievement of the aims of the Local Plan Alteration and the implementation of the strategies will not, collectively, have any adverse cumulative impact on the environment. Similarly, the policies of the Local Plan Alteration have also been assessed on a topic by topic basis to determine whether they would result in any adverse cumulative environmental impact. Again, no significant adverse cumulative impacts on the environment were identified as a result of this particular part of the assessment process.

3.28 The number of proposals and recommendations relating to any one particular community or area are limited and are considered unlikely to raise any issues relating to cumulative impact. It has, therefore, not been considered necessary to assess the potential impact of either the proposals or recommendations contained in the local plan, in cumulative terms.

3.29 It has also not been considered practical or appropriate to ascertain the cumulative environmental impact of all the various potential development opportunity sites suggested by interested parties for inclusion in the local plan. The sites suggested before and following the consultation period on the draft Local Plan Alteration far exceed, in terms of their numbers and potential capacity, anything that may be required to meet anticipated needs during the local plan alteration period and assessment of the sites has also indicated that the development of many of these will have significant adverse environmental impacts on an individual basis. Assessment of any adverse cumulative impact of potential development sites has therefore been restricted only to those particular sites that are acceptable in terms of their environmental impact and which have been identified in the local plan as effective development opportunity sites.

3.30 Many settlements have only one or two development opportunity sites identified within their boundaries and it is considered extremely unlikely

that there will be any significant cumulative impacts experienced in the settlements concerned. Significant cumulative impacts are more likely to be experienced in cases where three or more development opportunity sites have been identified within a particular community.

3.31 The exact nature, scale and extent of any cumulative environmental impacts are not likely to become apparent until firm details of particular development proposals have been produced. However, it is considered that many anticipated cumulative impacts of site development will be common to all settlements, for example:

(i) Concurrent development of three or more sites in a particular area could introduce a range of different significant negative short term cumulative impacts on the environment in terms of noise, dust, traffic disturbance etc especially during the construction phase of a development. Depending on the size and scale of the particular developments concerned, there may also be negative cumulative impacts in the medium to long term, as large sites may take several years to develop and complete.

(ii) Sequential development of individual sites in a particular settlement could introduce cumulative negative environmental impacts over an extended period of time.

(iii) Development of new sites can result in individual benefits, through, for example, the creation of new green space, cycle ways and footpaths. Positive cumulative impacts can be experienced if new green spaces, cycle ways and footpaths from a series of new development sites in a community can be linked and coordinated to create new green and footpath networks.

(iv) New developments, once complete, can have, on an individual basis, permanent, long term negative impacts on the environment through increased traffic generation, waste production and energy consumption. Significant cumulative impacts can be experienced with regard to these issues when a number of new developments are undertaken in a particular area, either concurrently or sequentially.

3.32 The positive and negative cumulative environmental impacts likely to arise as a result of new developments may also have direct, indirect or secondary cumulative impacts on a range of other environmental receptors, such as human health and air quality.

Synergistic Effects

3.33 Synergistic effects can be defined as effects which interact to produce a total effect greater than the sum of the individual effects. For example, synergistic effects on the environment can often

happen as habitats, resources or human communities get close to capacity, ie a wildlife habitat can become progressively fragmented with limited effects on a particular species until the last fragmentation makes the area too small to support the species at all.

3.34 An assessment of the likely synergistic impacts of the aims, strategies and policies of the local plan alteration has been carried out as part of the SEA process. Where three or more of the individual aims / strategies / policies relate to any one of the environmental receptors which are the basis of the 18 Environmental Objectives of the Environmental Report, it is considered that these could, together, have a potentially significant synergistic environmental impact. The particular aims / strategies / policies identified as having likely significant positive or negative synergistic impacts are identified in Appendix 17.

3.36 From the level of detail available, it is not considered possible or appropriate to adequately assess the synergistic impacts arising from the potential development opportunity sites identified in the plan, any synergistic impacts only becoming apparent at the detailed planning application stage. It is considered that an assessment of synergistic impacts at this stage in the development process would be unrealistic.

3.35 As with the synergistic assessment of the development opportunity sites, it is not considered necessary to assess the potential impact of either the proposals or recommendations contained in the local plan, in synergistic terms as the number of proposals and recommendations relating to any one particular community or area are limited and are considered unlikely to raise any issues relating to synergistic impact.

Adopting Environmental Objectives and Criteria for use in the Assessment

3.36 One of the principle requirements in the Strategic Environmental Assessment process is the identification of environmental protection objectives established at international, community or member state level, which are relevant to the plan and the way in which those objectives, and any environmental considerations, have been taken into account during the plan's preparation. These environmental protection objectives relate to, and cover, the particular issues listed in Schedule 2 of the 2004 Regulations, comprising the biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage), landscape and the interrelationship between all of the above factors.

3.37 In order to properly assess the local plan alteration, a total of 18 separate environmental objectives, as described in the Interim Planning Advice, have been adopted by the Council. A series of environmental criteria has also been devised against which each of these individual objectives have been assessed, as appropriate. Each criterion is couched in the form of a question which is used in the assessment process to ascertain whether the individual aims, policies or proposals etc of the plan will have any positive or negative impact on the environment. The environmental sustainability objectives and criteria used in the assessment are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Environmental Sustainability Objectives and Criteria

Ref	Environmental Objective	Environmental Criteria
1	To respect LANDFORM , natural processes and systems	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to respect existing landform and geology?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to involve significant development on land previously undermined or liable to subsidence?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to involve the removal or rehabilitation of significant areas of unstable land?</p>
2	To protect and use SOILS in a sustainable way	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to protect or avoid development on areas of prime quality or good quality, locally important agricultural land?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to improve, conserve, protect or upgrade the quality of soils?</p>
3	To protect and enhance the WATER environment including coastal and river systems	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to result in improvements to the water environment?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to involve the development of land which is liable to flooding?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to contribute to an increased risk of flooding elsewhere?</p>
4	To protect, enhance and where necessary restore (specified) SPECIES and Habitats	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly promote biodiversity and help protect and enhance species protected by law or species identified in national or local Biodiversity Action Plans?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly conserve or improve designated nature conservation sites and / or habitats which are of recognised national or local importance?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to contribute to the creation of new nature conservation sites and/ or habitats which are of importance to local flora and fauna?</p>
5	To protect, enhance and where necessary restore LANDSCAPE CHARACTER , local distinctiveness and scenic value	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly enhance landscape character, local distinctiveness or scenic value?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly promote the enjoyment of the landscape?</p>

6	To protect and enhance GREEN SPACES and areas of open space important for recreation and amenity	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly protect and enhance existing green spaces important for recreation and amenity?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to create additional green spaces?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to protect or positively enhance the use and enjoyment of green areas?</p>
7	To REGENERATE degraded ENVIRONMENTS	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to make a significant contribution to the regeneration or restoration of derelict, contaminated or otherwise degraded environments?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to increase the area or degree of degradation of derelict, contaminated or otherwise degraded land?</p>
8	To respect URBAN FORM , settlement pattern and identity	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to consolidate, enhance, or otherwise contribute significantly to the improvement of existing urban form, settlement pattern and identity?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to result in the coalescence of settlement either in visual or physical terms?</p>
9	To protect, enhance and where necessary, restore building character and TOWNSCAPE	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to contribute significantly to building character and townscape quality?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to promote the enjoyment and function of the built environment and townscape?</p>
10	To protect, enhance and where necessary restore the HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to promote the enjoyment and function of the historic environment?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to contribute significantly to the safeguarding, rehabilitation and restoration of listed buildings and unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to contribute significantly to the protection and conservation of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and archaeological locations?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to contribute significantly to the preservation and enhancement of the wider historic environment, including conservation areas and Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes?</p>
11	To improve DESIGN quality in new development	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly improve the quality of design in new development?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly respect and compliment the design of surrounding development?</p>

12	To reduce consumption ENERGY	Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to encourage the efficient use of energy and reduce energy consumption?
13	To facilitate RENEWABLE ENERGY	Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to contribute significantly to renewable energy production? Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to result in the increased use of renewable energy?
14	To reduce the need for TRAVEL and journey length	Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly reduce the need for travel? Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly reduce distances travelled?
15	To encourage walking, cycling and use of PUBLIC TRANSPORT	Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly promote, encourage or facilitate walking, cycling or the use of public transport? Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly reduce use of the private car for business, recreational and other purposes?
16	To reduce WASTE	Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly reduce the generation of waste? Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly promote or contribute to efficient waste management?
17	To protect the environment from POLLUTION	Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly improve air and water quality and reduce the risk of air, water, noise and light pollution? Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly reduce environmental damage or nuisance to sensitive locations and systems by limiting and decreasing pollution levels?
18	To respect ENVIRONMENTAL CAPACITY and the precautionary principle	Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy capable of being accommodated in the location proposed without damage or detriment to the area or without exceeding environmental capacity? Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to invoke the precautionary principle?

Source: Appendix B Environmental Assessment of Development Plans: Interim Planning Advice.

4 ASSESSMENT OF THE PLAN

4.1 An important part of the SEA process is the assessment of the plan's aims, strategies, policies, proposals, recommendations. These elements of the plan have been rigorously assessed against the 18 SEA environmental objectives and criteria detailed in Table 2 above and a summary of the conclusions reached with regard to the assessment of each element is detailed in the following sections of the report and in Appendices 8, 9, 12, 15 and 16 respectively. The summaries, in particular, identify if there are any negative cumulative impacts of the various local plan provisions assessed. The detailed assessment analysis of the various provisions of the local plan can be found in a series of background information papers underpinning the plan where comments and recommendations specifically relating to each particular aim, strategy and policy etc of the plan have been made. A detailed assessment of all of the various sites suggested for inclusion as housing development sites in the local plan has also been carried out and these are also available for inspection as background information material supporting and informing the Environmental Report. A summary of the assessment of each site, on a settlement by settlement basis, is provided in Appendix 13 of the Report.

(i) Assessment of trans-boundary effects

4.2 It is not considered that there will be any trans-boundary environmental effects of the local plan alteration. Consequently it has not been necessary to carry out any consultation with neighbouring member states as part of the assessment process and procedures.

(ii) Assessment of the plan's aims and visions

4.3 This part of the assessment process is designed to test the consistency of the strategic aims of the local plan alteration, detailed in Paragraph 1.8 above, against the adopted environmental objectives and criteria detailed in Table 2. In order to keep the assessment process systematic, structured, transparent and manageable, the assessment of the strategic aims of the plan has been carried out using the simple matrix detailed in Table 1 above.

4.4 It is considered that the principal aim of the Local Plan Alteration will have a strong positive impact on the environment. The local plan alteration has a further 9 associated aims

and a number of the aims have uncertain or unknown impacts on the environment while the impact of others is recognised as being neutral or uncertain. Looked at individually, none of the aims of the plan are considered to have any overriding or significant negative impact which would require any changes to be made to the local plan alteration. Similarly, it is not considered that achievement of the aims will have any cumulative adverse impact on the environment. A summary of the assessment of the strategic aims of the plan against the adopted environmental objectives and criteria is shown in Appendix 8.

(iii) Assessment of alternative policy frameworks and locational strategies

4.5 The identification, description and assessment of reasonable alternatives for the local plan alteration's policy framework, the plan's spatial strategy and the general locations recognised as having potential for future development, is considered to be an important element of the environmental assessment process.

4.6 In order to help inform this particular element of the environmental assessment process, the Council, in December 2004, approved the East Ayrshire Local Plan: Spatial Development Options Paper which set out a number of options relating to the broad direction of future development throughout East Ayrshire in spatial terms. The Options Paper was based on the spatial strategy as defined in the Consultation Draft of the Replacement to the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and was designed to place the broad strategic approach advocated in the Structure Plan into a specific East Ayrshire context. The Paper was made the subject of extensive consultation, having been circulated to a wide range of national and local organisations, stakeholders in the development process and other interested parties. Representations on the options detailed in the Options Paper were also invited through advertisement in the local press and the document was made available electronically on the Council's web pages. A total of 86 representations on the document were received.

4.7 The Options Paper itself comprised two separate but related sections, with Part 1 of the Paper identifying a series of possible options for the future direction of growth throughout the East Ayrshire communities, focusing on the main strategic issues and areas of change to be addressed in the agreed Alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan. These comprised the issues

of strategic housing development, business and industry and retailing / town centre activities. Part 2 of the Paper detailed the environmental objectives and criteria against which it was intended that those options would be assessed. The various representations received in respect of the Options Paper were given full consideration prior to an assessment process taking place and the options proposed were amended accordingly, as considered appropriate. Following assessment of the all the options identified (and as amended), preferred spatial development options for the various subjects addressed in the Options Paper were chosen as a basis for the development of the consultative draft version of the local plan alteration.

4.8 The provisions of the Spatial Development Options Paper and the various spatial development options discussed in the document have been superseded into the strategic approach for new development detailed in the replacement Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan. All the local plan alteration provisions, which are in accord with the strategic provisions of the Structure Plan, have been assessed as an integral part of the Environmental Report. The draft amendments which the Scottish Ministers have made to the Structure Plan have also been reflected in the Local Plan Alteration and assessed accordingly using the same environmental objectives and criteria used elsewhere throughout the assessment process.

Alternative Policy Frameworks

4.9 An integral part of the assessment process is the consideration of reasonable and realistic alternatives. With specific regard to the Alteration of the East Ayrshire Local Plan, the replacement Structure Plan gives the strategic direction which the Plan must follow and, bearing in mind the provisions of national planning advice and guidance, alternatives to the local plan alteration's strategic policy framework and spatial strategy are generally, therefore, somewhat constrained and limited. There are, however, two particular options which the Council could have followed in the preparation of the Local Plan Alteration in this regard, these being:

- to conform to the replacement Structure Plan and all relevant national planning advice and guidance; and
- to prepare the local plan without reference or conformity to those documents.

4.10 The local plan alteration is required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act

1997 to conform to the approved structure plan, taking due account of all appropriate national advice and guidance. For this reason, it is considered that preparation of the local plan alteration, without any regard being paid to these requirements, is not a realistic option as the alteration would be in direct violation of planning legislation and would not meet the requirements of the Scottish Executive. This would leave the local plan alteration open to legal challenge. Consequently, it is considered that the only realistic option available to the Council is to conform to the replacement structure plan and the modifications made to it by the Scottish Ministers and also to reflect the relevant provisions of all national policy advice and guidance.

Alternative Locational Strategies

4.11 The local plan alteration's alternative locational strategies have been considered in the context of both the Replacement Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and the Council's Spatial Development Options Paper. The replacement structure plan has identified a number of key strategic expansion areas in East Ayrshire, comprising:

- North West, West and South Kilmarnock;
- Stewarton;
- Mauchline
- Cumnock/Auchinleck

4.12 In relation to housing land release within these strategic expansion areas, the Spatial Development Options Paper considered three alternative ways in which such a release could be achieved. These have been considered as reasonable alternatives for future residential development in the Local Plan Alteration and comprise the release of:

- a single large area of land to meet all the housing needs in the area;
- a single larger site, together with several smaller areas of land; or
- a series of appropriately located smaller areas.

4.13 During the consultation on the Spatial Developments Option Paper, a number of representations were received from interested parties requesting that large areas of land be released for housing development purposes, these comprising five substantial areas in north west, west, east, south and south east Kilmarnock, to the north of Mauchline and to the north east of Auchinleck. All of these sites have been duly assessed as part of the Strategic

Environmental Assessment process and it has been concluded that the designation of any of these single large areas for housing purposes would have an overall significant environmental impact on the areas within which they are located. The assessment process has also concluded that the release of one larger area of land as part of the second option detailed above is also likely to have significant environmental impacts.

4.14 A considerable number of smaller sites were also suggested to the Council for consideration as potential housing sites during the local plan alteration preparation process and in response to the Strategic Development Options Paper. Strategic Environmental Assessment of these sites has indicated that while development of some sites would have a significant adverse impact on the environment, the development of many would have minimal environmental impact or environmental impacts that can be overcome through appropriate, achievable mitigation. Consequently, as a direct result of the SEA process, it has been agreed that the locational strategy of the local plan alteration will focus on the provision of a series of environmentally acceptable smaller scale areas of land within the Strategic Expansion Areas. It should be noted that, in many cases, these smaller sites may also constitute parts of the larger areas of land mentioned above, for which representations were also received.

The Site Selection Process

4.15 In addition to facilitating the Council's choice of locational strategy, the SEA process has also proved an invaluable tool in the selection of appropriate, potential housing sites in all of the area settlements, helping ensure that the sites chosen have minimal environmental impact. In this regard, all of the sites that were forwarded to the Council for consideration, before and during the consultation period for the draft local plan alteration, were assessed against the 18 SEA criteria detailed in Table 2 above, taking into account all known constraints that relate to the particular areas concerned. In addition to this, the Council has adopted an approach whereby sites are deemed not to be worthy of further consideration where they:

- (i) have no road frontage or any physical means of access to a public road;
- (ii) are physically remote and isolated from existing settlements;

- (iii) cannot be satisfactorily integrated with the particular settlement to which they relate;
- (iv) are considered, over their whole area, to be unsuitable for development in landscape terms;
- (v) comprise areas which cannot be adequately safeguarded against flood risk;
- (vi) are considered inappropriate for development as a result of topographical constraints; or
- (vii) do not meet the strategic provisions of the finalised version of the Replacement Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan.

4.16 Implementation of these procedures has allowed the Council to identify a series of reasonable alternative locations for possible future development. The reasonable alternatives for each community, which comprise sites with minimal adverse impact or sites with some adverse impact where some degree of mitigation is required, are detailed in Appendix 13.

4.17 For information purposes, and in the interests of clarity, those sites that have been identified as specific development opportunity sites in the finalised version of the local plan alteration have been cross referenced to and highlighted in the assessment matrices pertaining to the suggested 'reasonable alternative' sites considered for inclusion in the local plan. It is considered that this provision will allow easy and direct comparison of the assessment of the selected sites with the assessment of all of the other reasonable alternative sites considered for inclusion in the local plan alteration.

(iv) Assessment of the Local Plan Strategies

4.18 The local plan alteration's strategies have been specifically designed to achieve the various aims and visions of the local plan, previously assessed as part of the SEA as described in paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8 above. A summary of the assessment of the strategies is provided in Appendix 9, attached to this report and details of the assessments carried out on an individual site basis is provided as Background Information to the report itself. A summary of the conclusions of the assessment is provided below:

General Development Strategy

4.19 There are 8 general development strategies contained within the Local Plan Alteration and generally these have positive, neutral or unknown environmental impacts. It is considered that the general development strategy will not have any cumulative adverse impact on the environment.

Creating Successful Communities Development Strategies

4.20 The 3 creating successful communities strategies detailed in the Local Plan Alteration are considered to have exclusively unknown or neutral environmental impacts. No cumulative negative impacts have been identified.

Business and Industry Development Strategy

4.21 The 7 business and industry strategies detailed in the Local Plan Alteration are considered to have mainly unknown, neutral or positive environmental impacts. The only cumulative negative impacts identified in any of the strategies relate to increased energy consumption and increased waste production generated as a result of new developments. These are not considered to be significant in nature.

Tourism Development Strategy

4.22 The 6 tourism development strategies are considered to have mainly neutral environmental impacts. No cumulative negative impacts on the environment have been identified with regard to the tourism strategies.

Minerals Development Strategy

4.23 The 5 mineral development strategies are considered to have generally unknown, neutral or positive environmental impacts. No cumulative negative impacts have been identified with regard to the minerals strategies.

Housing Development Strategy

4.24 The 12 housing development strategies formulated in the Local Plan Alteration are considered to have unknown, positive or neutral environmental impacts. Some negative impacts have been identified in relation to individual housing strategies, mainly increased energy consumption, waste production and protection of the environment from pollution. However, these adverse impacts are not considered to be significant in nature. No cumulative adverse

environmental impacts have been identified through the assessment process.

Retail and Town Centre Activities Development Strategy

4.25 The 7 retail and town centre activities development strategies are considered to have general neutral or positive environmental impacts. No individual or cumulative negative impacts have been identified in relation to the retail and town centre activity strategies.

Community Facility and Service Infrastructure Development Strategy

4.26 The 5 community facility and service infrastructure development strategies are considered to have general neutral or positive environmental impacts. No cumulative negative impacts have been identified in relation to the community facilities and service infrastructure strategies

Waste Management Development Strategy

4.27 The 7 waste management development strategies are considered to have general neutral or positive environmental impacts. No cumulative negative impacts have been identified in relation to the waste management strategies.

Transport Development Strategy

4.28 The 8 transport development strategies are considered to have general neutral or positive environmental impacts. No cumulative negative impacts have been identified in relation to the transport strategies.

Environment Development Strategy

4.29 The 10 environmental development strategies are considered to have over-riding neutral or positive environmental impacts. No cumulative negative impacts have been identified in relation to the environmental strategies.

(v) Assessment of the policy range of the plan

4.30 As a pre-requisite to carrying out an environmental assessment of the individual policies contained in the Local Plan Alteration, it was considered important to check that all of the environmental issues and objectives identified in the plan are covered, and addressed, by appropriate policies. This exercise, in particular, has helped to ensure that the Local Plan

Alteration is consistent with higher tier policy frameworks such as SPP's, NPPG's, PAN's and the Replacement Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan. It has also helped to identify gaps in existing policy coverage and allowed these gaps to be filled through appropriate policy amendments being made or through the addition of new policies, as appropriate.

4.31 In order to carry out this procedure, a list of all potentially relevant policy topics was prepared, these being derived from SPP's and NPPG's, along the lines indicated in Appendix C of the Interim Planning Advice on the Environmental Assessment of Development Plans. All of the policies in the Local Plan Alteration were then checked to ensure that each topic identified is adequately covered. The results of carrying out these procedures are detailed in Appendix 10.

(vi) Assessment of the Local Plan Policies

4.32 The purpose of this particular element of the assessment process is to assess each policy contained in the Local Plan Alteration to see if they are likely to have any significant adverse effects on the environment. As well as assessing the likely significant effects on the particular issues listed in Schedule 2 of the 2004 Regulations, i.e. biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage), landscape and the interrelationship between all of the above factors, the assessment has attempted to assess whether any significant effects identified are likely to be positive or negative, whether they are likely to be short, medium or long term in nature and whether they are likely to be permanent or temporary. An assessment has also been made to assess the degree of any secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects of the policies and proposals identified in the Alteration, as considered appropriate.

4.33 Where a significant adverse environmental effect of a particular policy has been identified through the assessment process, the assessment also suggests appropriate measures to prevent, reduce and offset, in so far as is possible, the adverse effect concerned.

4.34 The Alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan contains a number of strategies, policies and proposals that remain unchanged from the adopted plan. Other strategies, policies and

proposals have been amended to reflect best practice and new policies and proposals have been included to reflect recent changes in Scottish planning policy, advice and guidance. The changes to the policies are detailed within Appendix 11 of the Environmental Report. The Local Plan Alteration contains a total of 152 detailed, authority-wide land use policies relating to 10 separate subject topics comprising Strategic Development, Business and Industry, Tourism, Minerals, Housing, Retail and Town Centre Uses, Community Facilities and Service Infrastructure, Waste Management, Transport and the Environment. In turn, these policies have been grouped into 25 sub-groupings relating to particular policy objectives. All of the policies contained in the Local Plan Alteration have been assessed in environmental terms, allowing each policy to be broadly appraised on its perceived ability to deliver the environmental aims of the Plan through implementation of the Plan's stated development strategy.

4.35 As with the assessment of the Local Plan Alteration's aims and visions described in Paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8 above, the assessment of the local plan alteration policies has been carried out using the same simple matrix detailed in Table 1. A summary of the assessment of the various policies considered for inclusion in the plan is shown in Appendix 12 and a synopsis of the assessment is detailed below.

Strategic Development Policies

4.36 The eight strategic development policies identified in the Local Plan Alteration have been split into the following three sub-groups.

- (i) Policies SD1 and SD2 relate to sustainable development and environmental quality and have general positive or neutral environmental impacts.
- (ii) Policies SD3 to SD6 relate to sustainable location of development and have general neutral or unknown environmental impacts.
- (iii) Policies SD7 and SD8 relate to the sustainable use of land and buildings and have general positive or neutral environmental impacts.

4.37 None of the individual strategic development policies of the plan are considered to have any overriding or significant negative impact which would require them to be readdressed as part of the plan preparation

process and no overriding adverse cumulative impacts have been identified.

Business and Industry Development Policies

4.38 The 12 business and industry policies have been divided into the following two sub groups.

- (i) Policies IND1 to IND4 promote strategic industrial and business development opportunities and have general negative environmental impacts.
- (ii) Policies IND5 to IND12 promote business and industrial growth in sustainable locations and have positive, negative or unknown impacts. Although some adverse impacts have been identified on an individual and cumulative basis, these are not considered to be significant in nature.

4.39 Policies IND1 to IND4 relate to the single user business site to the north of Kilmarnock and other strategic business and industry sites (Rowallan and Moorfield in Kilmarnock and the Top of the Town office development in Kilmarnock) which, because of their size, scale, nature and highly prominent and accessible locations, are considered to have an overall adverse impact on the environment both individually and cumulatively. The assessment process would indicate that the single user site at North Kilmarnock should be deleted from the plan as being environmentally unacceptable. However, bearing in mind the significant positive socio-economic benefits that would accrue to East Ayrshire as a result of the development of the single user site at North Kilmarnock, this particular site has been retained in the Local Plan Alteration.

Tourism Development Policies

4.40 There are six tourism development policies which have been divided into the following two sub groups:

- (i) Policies TOUR1 and TOUR2 relate to strategic sustainable tourism development in preferred locations. These policies have general positive and neutral environmental effects with no cumulative negative impacts being identified.
- (ii) Policies TOUR3 to TOUR6 are general policies relating to sustainable locations and types of tourism development and

have overall positive, negative and neutral environmental impacts. The negative impacts experienced, both individually and cumulatively, are not considered to be significant in nature.

Mineral Development Policies

4.41 Policies MIN1 to MIN8 are designed to facilitate environmentally sensitive mineral extraction and have a general positive or neutral impact. However, policies MIN1 and MIN2 do have, on an individual basis, some negative impacts but these are not considered to be significant in nature. No cumulative negative impacts have been identified.

Housing Development Policies

4.42 There are 30 housing development policies which have been divided into the following four sub groups.

- (i) Policies RES1 and RES2 promote strategic housing development opportunities and have general positive or unknown environmental impacts. Cumulative negative impacts are identified relating to these policies but these are not considered to be significant in nature.
- (ii) Policies RES3 to RES18 promote and meet housing needs in sustainable locations and these policies have positive or unknown environmental impacts. No cumulative negative impacts are identified relating to these policies.
- (iii) Policies RES19 to RES25 relate to residential amenity and these policies have general positive or unknown environmental impacts. No cumulative negative impacts are identified relating to these policies.
- (iv) Policies RES26 to RES30 provide for specialist residential needs and have general positive, neutral or unknown impacts. No policy has an overall negative impact and no cumulative negative impacts have been identified.

4.43 With regard to policies RES1 and RES2, some individual and cumulative negative impacts have been identified but these are not considered to be significant in nature and would not require the policies to be readdressed as part of the Plan preparation process.

4.44 None of the policies in the RES3 to RES18 group have any overall negative impact but some negative impacts have been identified over the policy range, both on an individual and cumulative basis. Although long term in their effect, the negative impacts identified are not considered to be significant in nature and would not require the policies to be readdressed as part of the local plan alteration preparation process.

Retail and Town Centre Development Policies

4.45 There are 21 Retail and Town Centre Development policies and these are divided into two sub groups, as detailed below.

- (i) Policies RTC1 to RTC3 relate to the promotion of strategic retail and town centre development opportunities and have general positive and neutral environmental impacts. There are no over-riding adverse impacts relating to the policies either on an individual or cumulative basis.
- (ii) Policies RTC4 to RTC21 are general policies enabling and promoting retail growth in sustainable locations. Generally these policies have overall positive or neutral environmental impacts.

4.46 With regard to policies RTC4 to RTC21, several individual policies have some negative or adverse environmental effects but these are not considered to have any overriding or significant negative impact which would require them to be readdressed as part of the plan preparation process. Some cumulative negative impacts have been identified regarding the policies but these are not considered to be significant in nature.

Community Facility and Service Infrastructure Development Policies

4.47 There are 16 Community Facility and Service Infrastructure Development Policies, divided into 4 sub groups.

- (i) Policies CS1 and CS2 promote strategic community facility and service infrastructure development opportunities and generally have positive or neutral environmental impacts. No overall individual or cumulative negative impacts are identified relating to these policies.
- (ii) Policies CS3 to CS6 are general policies enabling sensitive leisure and recreational development in sustainable

locations and have positive or neutral environmental impacts. No overall individual or cumulative negative impacts are identified relating to these policies.

- (iii) Policies CS7 to CS9 minimise the impact of telecommunications infrastructure and have positive, neutral or unknown environmental impacts. No overall individual or cumulative negative impacts are identified relating to these policies.
- (iv) Policies CS10 to CS16 are associated with developing and promoting renewable energy developments in sustainable locations. The policies generally have positive, unknown or neutral effects. No overall individual or cumulative negative impacts are identified relating to these policies.

Waste Management Development Policies

4.48 There are 14 Waste Management Development Policies and these are split into two sub groups.

- (i) Policies WM1 and WM2 relate to promoting strategic waste management development opportunities and have general positive, neutral or unknown environmental impacts. There are no negative cumulative impacts associated with the policies.
- (ii) Policies WM3 to WM14 support sensitive and sustainable waste management development opportunities and have general positive, neutral or unknown environmental impacts. No cumulative negative impacts have been identified relating to the policies.

Transport Development Policies

4.49 There are 9 Transport Development Policies and these are divided into two sub groups.

- (i) Policies T1 and T2 relate to promoting and developing a strategic transport system and have both positive and neutral environmental impacts. There are no overall individual or cumulative negative impacts associated with the policies.
- (ii) Policies T3 to T9 are designed to help develop a safe and efficient transport and communications network and have a general unknown or positive impact on

the environment. There are no negative cumulative impacts associated with the policies.

impacts. No individual or cumulative negative impacts have been identified relating to the policies.

Environment Development Policies

4.50 There are 26 Environment Development Policies and these are divided in six sub groups.

- (i) Policies ENV1 to ENV3 protect the environment at the strategic level and generally have positive or neutral environmental impacts. No individual or cumulative negative impacts have been identified relating to the policies.
- (ii) Policies ENV4 to ENV8 are designed to protect and enhance the built environment and have general positive or neutral environmental impacts. No individual or cumulative negative impacts have been identified relating to the policies.
- (iii) Policies ENV9 to ENV12 are designed to protect and enhance the quality of townscape and design and have general positive or neutral environmental impacts. No individual or cumulative negative impacts have been identified relating to the policies.
- (iv) Policies ENV13 and ENV14 are designed to protect and enhance the natural environment and have strong positive environmental impacts. No individual or cumulative negative impacts have been identified relating to the policies.
- (v) Policies ENV15 to ENV19 are designed to promote and enhance the quality of the landscape and the environment and have strong positive environmental

- (vi) Policies ENV20 to ENV26 are designed to protect the environment from damage and harm by inappropriate development and have positive or neutral environmental impacts. No individual or cumulative negative impacts have been identified relating to the policies.

(vii) Assessment of the Local Plan Proposals and Opportunities

Assessment of Suggested Housing Sites

4.51 As part of the Local Plan Alteration preparation process, some 322 separate areas of land throughout East Ayrshire were suggested to the Council for inclusion as potential housing sites in the Local Plan Alteration. All 322 sites were duly assessed as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the plan, against the environmental objectives and criteria detailed in Table 2 above and an appraisal made of their likely impact on the environment. A summary of the assessments carried out in respect of all of the suggested housing sites on an individual basis and grouped by settlement is detailed in Appendix 13. A synopsis of the results of this assessment is provided in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Summary of Housing Site Assessment

Location	No. of Sites Assessed	Degree of Environmental Impact		
		Minimal Impact	Some Impact / Mitigation Required	Significant Impact
Core Area				
Crookedholm	6	2	2	2
Crosshouse	13	5	3	5
Gatehead	1	1	0	0
Hurlford	5	0	4	1
Knockentiber	9	4	1	4
Kilmarnock	55	14	11	30
Sub Total	89	26	21	42
Glasgow Link				
Dunlop	5	5	0	0
Fenwick/Laigh Fenwick	16	7	4	5
Kilmaurs	22	7	5	10
Lugton	3	0	0	3
Moscow	2	0	0	2
Stewarton	24	4	3	17
Sub Total	72	23	12	37
Irvine Valley				
Darvel and Priestland	16	3	5	8
Galston	17	3	2	12
Newmilns	7	0	1	6
Waterside	1	0	0	1
Sub Total	41	6	8	27
Cumnock Link				
Auchinleck	10	2	2	6
Catrine	15	2	3	10
Coalhall	1	0	0	1
Cronberry	1	0	0	1
Cumnock	15	3	5	7
Drongan	8	2	3	3
Mauchline	13	4	6	3
Muirkirk	2	2	0	0
New Cumnock	8	1	4	3
Ochiltree	5	2	1	2
Rankinston	1	1	0	0
Sinclairston	5	0	0	5
Sorn	8	0	5	3
Sub Total	92	19	29	44
Doon Valley				
Dalmellington	4	0	2	2
Dalrymple	8	2	1	5
Hollybush	2	0	0	2
Patna	12	2	4	6
Waterside	2	0	0	2
Sub Total	28	4	7	17
TOTAL	322	78	77	167

Source: East Ayrshire Council

4.52 Of the 322 sites assessed, some 167 (52.0%) were considered to generate significant adverse environmental effects. 78 sites (24%) were considered to have no adverse or minimal adverse impact, with 77 sites (24%) having a limited environmental effect capable of appropriate mitigation. This particular part of the assessment exercise has proved an extremely useful tool in the local plan site selection process, with those sites considered to have significant adverse environmental impacts not being given further consideration. All but 2 of the sites selected in the local plan have been identified from those sites having minimal impact or small scale impact which is capable of mitigation.

4.53 The Local Plan Alteration also identifies a wide range of specific Housing, Business and Industry, and other Miscellaneous Development Opportunity Sites located within settlement boundaries which are considered suitable and appropriate for future development. Many of the development opportunity sites in the plan have been identified because they have a valid, current planning consent for the development proposed. The Local Plan Alteration cannot influence the development of such sites and these sites have not been assessed as part of the assessment process.

4.54 The local plan alteration contains a total of 28 general, area wide proposals and some 39 site specific proposals, all of which have been assessed in the Environmental Report. A further 14 recommendations are also contained in the local plan alteration and these too have been fully assessed. A summary of the assessment of both the proposals and recommendations assessed is provided in Appendices 15 and 16 respectively. Full details of these assessments are provided in the Background Information Papers produced to support the Appraisal.

(viii) Mitigation Measures

4.55 It is possible that some provisions of the local plan alteration could contain elements that may have a negative impact or impacts on the environment. However, it may well be the case that many of the negative environmental impacts identified could possibly be ameliorated or overcome if certain mitigation measures were to be implemented. This situation may occur, in particular, in the case of sites being assessed for consideration for future development. In such cases, appropriate mitigation measures have been identified as an integral part of the detailed site assessment process. It is considered, however, that the policies contained within the Alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan can

also, in themselves, help to mitigate any negative impacts experienced. Nevertheless, it is accepted that some environmental effects may be significant in nature and cannot be satisfactorily mitigated against. In such cases, and where there are no strong positive social and economic benefits which outweigh any negative environmental impacts, the particular aim, strategy, policy or proposal involved has been modified or deleted from the local plan alteration itself.

(ix) Scrutiny of the Assessment

4.56 In order to assist and inform the assessment process, it was agreed that, following a preliminary assessment of the strategies, aims, objectives, policies and proposals of the Local Plan Alteration by officers of the Council, a dedicated group should be convened to scrutinise the assessment processes, the methodologies utilised, any individual or cumulative negative environmental impacts identified and any conclusions reached.

4.57 In this regard, a dedicated scrutiny group was formed, the group comprising representatives from appropriate Council Departments and other interested external environmental bodies, thus bringing a range of resources and specialised expertise, not otherwise available to the Planning and Economic Development Division, to the assessment process. This approach has brought impartiality to the process, making the results of the assessment credible, transparent and robust. The scrutiny group that was convened comprised representatives from the Development Management Section of the Planning and Economic Development Division, as well as representatives from the Council's Roads and Transportation Division, the Education Department, and the Housing, Leisure Services and Protective Services Divisions of the Department of Neighbourhood Services. External environmental bodies such as the Forestry Commission, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the West of Scotland Archaeological Services, the Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scottish Water and any other environment bodies that added value and expertise to the assessment process were also co-opted onto the scrutiny group. The whole scrutiny process was directed and overseen by the same independent consultant engaged by the Council to scrutinise the Scoping Report. Officers from the Planning Division's Development Planning and Regeneration Section were attached to the scrutiny group, purely in an advisory capacity, but did not form part of the group itself.

5 POST ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Preparing and Publishing the Environmental Report with the Consultative Draft Plan

5.1 Having assessed the Local Plan Alteration in terms of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004, as described above, a full Sustainability Appraisal, of which the Environmental Report forms an integral part, was made available, alongside the Consultative Draft of the Local Plan Alteration itself, for consultation purposes. In this regard, both the consultative draft local plan and the draft Environmental Report were advertised in the local press, as required by the relevant local plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment regulations, inviting representation and comment on the documents. Copies of the documents were also sent to the three statutory consultation authorities as prescribed in Section 18 of the 2004 Environmental Regulations.

Modifying the Draft Plan and Revising the Environmental Report

5.2 Having carried out a comprehensive consultation exercise on the local plan alteration and the Sustainability Appraisal, as described in the preceding paragraph, all representations and comments received on both documents were given full consideration in the preparation of the finalised draft version of the Plan. Changes to the both the local plan alteration and the Strategic Environmental Assessment were made as appropriate, with any changes to the plan, in turn, being assessed against the environmental objectives and criteria contained in the Strategic Environmental Assessment part of the Sustainability Appraisal. A revised and updated environmental assessment report, relating to the assessment of these changes was then produced.

Depositing the Environmental Report with the finalised Local Plan Alteration

5.3 Having carried out all necessary changes to the local plan alteration, the Council has now finalised the plan in preparation for placing it on deposit. The revised Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal of the Plan will also be placed on deposit in support of the local plan alteration, itself. The Council will, thereafter, ensure that the Strategic Environmental Assessment is included in all

deposits and reference made to it in all subsequent publicity.

Carrying out procedures in respect of adoption of the Plan

5.4 Having carried out all necessary changes to the local plan alteration, the Council will advertise the finalised draft version of the document, inviting formal objections to the Plan from any interested parties or members of the public within a minimum objection period of six weeks. Modifications to the finalised local plan alteration will then be made as considered appropriate, in light of any formal objections received. These modifications will, in turn, also be advertised for public scrutiny and, again, due consideration will also be given to any formal objections to the modifications received during a stipulated objection period. As at the consultation stage of the Local Plan Alteration production process, any changes or subsequent modifications to the aims, policies, proposals etc of the Local Plan Alteration will be subjected to formal environmental assessment and the Environmental Report amended accordingly.

5.5 Once a final assessment of these changes and modifications to the local plan alteration have been made and agreed by Council, the Council will arrange for any unresolved objections to the plan to be heard at a Public Local Inquiry. Any changes to the plan as may be recommended by the Local Inquiry Reporter will also be made the subject of assessment. Through the adoption of these procedures, the Council will ensure that strategic assessment of the plan will be taken into full account when considering pre-inquiry modifications to the local plan alteration, during the Public Local Inquiry dealing with unresolved objections to the plan and when making any changes or post-inquiry recommendations made by the Reporter in the Public Local Inquiry Report.

5.6 Following the satisfactory completion of all of the above procedures, both the finalised draft local plan alteration (with modifications) and the finalised Environmental Report (if there are likely to be significant environmental impacts as a result of the modifications and only where they have not been previously assessed) will be submitted to the Scottish Ministers for consideration.

5.7 As part of the post-adoption procedures, the Council is required by Regulation 20(2)(b) of the 2004 Regulations, to prepare a statement

detailing how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Local Plan Alteration. Such a statement will be prepared in line with the Regulations and will contain information on:

- how the environmental report has been taken into account;
- how the opinions expressed during the consultation have been taken into account;
- how the results of any trans-boundary consultations (where appropriate) have been taken into account;
- the reasons for choosing the plan or alteration as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives looked at; and
- the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the plan.

5.8 The adopted Plan and its accompanying Environmental Report will, thereafter, be advertised and copies made available for inspection. Copies of the documents, as adopted, will also be sent to the Consultation Authorities as required by statute.

Monitoring and Review of the Plan

5.9 Regulation 21 requires the Council to monitor significant environmental effects of implementing the local plan alteration, once the plan has been adopted. The Regulations themselves do not specify any particular monitoring procedures to be followed although the procedures employed must allow the Council to identify any unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and to undertake appropriate action. However, the Interim Planning Advice on the Environmental Assessment of Development Plans and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's 'Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' provides further advice on implementing the required monitoring procedures as part of the development planning process. This advice will be strictly observed by the Council in carrying out the monitoring of the local plan alteration

5.10 The implementation of the local plan alteration must be closely monitored in order to clearly understand the potentially adverse effects of the plan on the East Ayrshire environment. The establishment of an effective monitoring system is also important to the preparation of future local plans, enabling a measured assessment to be made as to whether any predictions of negative environmental affects of the Local Plan Alteration were accurate and whether the plan has

contributed, in the manner expected of it, to the achievement of identified environmental objectives and targets. Similarly, an effective monitoring system can identify whether any mitigation measures identified have performed as well as expected and whether any adverse environmental effects experienced require remedial action to be taken.

5.11 It is proposed that the baseline data collected in the preparation of the SEA should be used to monitor any environmental changes that have taken place in East Ayrshire as a result of the implementation of the local plan alteration. To assist in the monitoring of the plan and the formulation of a defensible monitoring framework, it is intended that a series of indicators will be developed from the baseline information that has been collected. It is considered that indicators are a useful monitoring tool, assisting in assessing the impact of the Local Plan Alteration on the environment. Indicators also identify where specific targets are being met or missed, thus helping to identify environmental change within the area. A series of indicators and targets are contained in Appendix 14 of the Environmental Report and these will be used to monitor the implementation of the Local Plan Alteration by the Council. If any unpredicted environmental impacts occur during the implementation of the Local Plan Alteration, the Council will assess the environmental impacts and introduce appropriate mitigation measures to avoid any negative impacts on the environment.

5.12 In order to ensure that the baseline data is relevant and up to date, it is intended that the data itself will be updated on a biennial basis. This will allow any unforeseen adverse effects that the local plan alteration may have on the environment to be identified and mitigated against, as considered appropriate, in light of the most up to date information available

PART 2

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC
ASSESSMENT**

6 CONTEXT FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

(i) General Sustainability Appraisal Context

6.1 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004 requires only an environmental assessment of the East Ayrshire Local Plan Alteration to be undertaken and this assessment has been carried out as described in Part 1 of this Sustainability Appraisal Report. However, it is considered that a full Sustainability Appraisal of the local plan, comprising a full assessment of the aims, strategies, policies, proposals, recommendations and development opportunity sites identified in the plan, against social and economic criteria as well as the necessary SEA based environmental criteria, would be more appropriate in this particular case. It is recognised by the Council that development planning has significant social and economic impacts as well as environmental impacts. Consequently, it is considered that an assessment of the local plan alteration only in terms of its environmental impact would be limiting and possibly present a rather unbalanced view of the potential overall effects that implementation of the plan may have in general terms.

6.2 In the adopted East Ayrshire Local Plan, each of the policies contained in the document were assessed against a series of environmental sustainability criteria, as detailed in Appendix 1 of that document. No attempt was made, however, to formally assess these policies against socio-economic criteria, nor to assess the aims, strategies or specific development proposals and opportunities detailed in the document against socio-economic criteria. Although all possible impacts of the adopted policies and strategies were considered during the preparation of the adopted local plan, this analysis was carried out in the absence of any governmental approved methodology or procedures. The comprehensive Sustainability Appraisal process adopted with regard to the East Ayrshire Local Plan Alteration has, to a large extent, formalised previous appraisal procedures. In particular, the appraisal of the local plan alteration against socio-economic criteria has:

- (i) facilitated the assessment of the Local Plan Alteration in full environmental, social and economic terms;
- (ii) allowed for the early collection and analysis of baseline social and economic, as well as environmental, information;

- (iii) identified any potential significant adverse social and economic effects of the various local plan aims, strategies, policies, proposals and opportunities and allowed these to be addressed at the earliest possible stage;

- (iv) assisted in the identification, comparison and implementation of the various strategic development aims, strategies, policies, proposals and opportunities of the local plan alteration in socio-economic terms; and

- (v) enabled the socio-economic effects of the aims, strategies, policies, proposals and opportunities of the local plan alteration to be monitored during their implementation.

6.3 As with the Strategic Environmental Assessment element of the Sustainability Appraisal, comments and observations from public bodies and organisations, the general public and other key stakeholders has been invited on the contents and approach taken in the production of the socio-economic element of the document. Comments received on the social and economic assessment aspects of the aims, strategies, policies, proposals and opportunities of the local plan alteration has been invaluable in helping inform the production of the document at all stages of its preparation.

(ii) Strategic and Local Plan Context

6.4 The national, Ayrshire-wide and local strategic contexts for the local plan alteration are as described in Part 1 of the Sustainability Appraisal and comprise the National Planning Framework, the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and the East Ayrshire Community Plan. All of these strategy documents have played a key part in informing the content of the local plan alteration which is, in turn, specifically geared towards achieving the strategic aims and objectives promoted within them, in land use terms. Those aims and objectives specifically relating to socio-economic matters have been the focus for consideration in the preparation of this particular part of the Sustainability Appraisal. It should be noted, however, that unlike the environmental assessment process, there is no specific national legislation or advice which explicitly prescribes or directs that a full socio-economic assessment should be carried out in respect of the production of local plans or other plans and programmes prepared by the Council.

7 SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Assessment Methodology Synopsis

7.1 The assessment methodology adopted for the Socio-Economic Assessment of the local plan alteration has followed as closely as possible, and as considered appropriate, the methodology outlined for the environmental assessment of plans and programmes required under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004. The procedures and processes adopted for the socio-economic assessment has therefore been designed to mirror, as closely as possible, the methodology and procedures detailed in the Scottish Executives Interim Planning Advice on the Environmental Assessment of Development Plans pertaining to the environmental assessment of such documents. In particular, the socio-economic assessment process has followed the same basic stages of production advocated in the Interim Planning Advice, although a number of these stages were considered superfluous to the appraisal process. The stages followed comprised the following:

- (i) collating and forecasting baseline socio-economic information;
- (ii) adopting a set of socio-economic objectives and criteria for use in assessment;
- (iii) assessing the plan's aims and visions in socio-economic terms;
- (iv) assessing alternative policy frameworks and locational strategies;
- (v) checking the policy range of the plan;
- (vi) assessing the plan's policies and proposals;
- (vii) preparing and publishing a socio-economic report with the consultative draft plan;
- (viii) modifying the draft plan and revising the socio-economic report;
- (ix) depositing the socio-economic report with the finalised local plan;
- (x) carrying out procedures in respect of adoption of the plan; and
- (xi) monitoring and review of the plan.

7.2 Of the various stages detailed above, stages (i) to (vii) were directly relevant to the assessment of the Consultative Draft Version of the East Ayrshire Local Plan Alteration. The remaining stages relate specifically to the production of the plan at the finalised, adopted and monitoring stages. Each of the first 7 stages is discussed separately below.

(i) Collation of Baseline Socio-economic Information.

Baseline Information

7.3 Socio-economic baseline information is held by the Planning and Economic Development Division of the Council, as well as by other relevant Council Departments and Divisions. Other valuable baseline information is also held by such organisations as the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Committee in the form of technical working papers produced in association with the replacement Structure Plan. Outside bodies and organisations such as Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire, the Ayrshire Economic Forum etc also hold a substantial amount of information of value to the socio-economic assessment process.

7.4 A comprehensive list of all socio-economic baseline information held by the Council and other authorities, bodies and organisations and used to inform the Local Plan Alteration assessment process is provided in Appendix 19 below, with the baseline information being organised by topic, under the socio-economic objective headings adopted in the assessment process.

7.5 The broad range of baseline information held by the Council and used in the preparation of this Socio-Economic Assessment includes the following, although this list is not considered to be exhaustive:

- Information on the Economy of East Ayrshire
- Information on Employment
- Information on Health
- Information on Deprivation
- Information on Education
- Information on Crime and Safety
- Information on Local Facilities and Services
- Information on Access to Services
- Information on Housing

Current State of East Ayrshire in Economic and Social Terms

7.6 In the spirit of the Environmental Assessment Regulations, the baseline information has been used by the Council to prepare a synopsis of the current state of East Ayrshire in economic and social terms is detailed in Appendix 20 below.

Key Socio-economic Issues and Problems

7.7 A synopsis of the key socio-economic issues and problems facing East Ayrshire is also provided, by topic, with the particular local plan policies designed to address those matters also being identified, as appropriate. This synopsis is detailed in Appendix 21 below.

7.8 Similarly, and again in line with the spirit of the Regulations, this section of the Socio-Economic Assessment examines how the economy and social fabric of the area is likely to evolve without the adoption and implementation of the Local Plan Alteration. In general terms, it is considered that, in the absence of any overall development strategy, economic and social development in East Ayrshire would still take place but would be less well attuned to socio-economic and other strategic objectives and priorities.

(ii) Adopting Socio-Economic Objectives and Criteria for Use in Assessment

7.9 The Sustainability Appraisal has devised and adopted 8 separate socio-economic objectives. These objectives are accompanied by a series of socio-economic criteria against which each of these individual objectives has been assessed. As with the socio-economic assessment process, each criterion is couched in the form of a question which has been used in the assessment process to ascertain whether the individual aims, policies, proposals etc of the local plan alteration will have any positive or negative impact on the economy or social fabric of the area. The socio-economic sustainability objectives and criteria devised and used in the assessment are listed in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Socio – Economic Assessment Objectives and Criteria

Ref	Socio - Economic Objective	Socio - Economic Criteria
1	To encourage and facilitate ECONOMIC GROWTH	Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to contribute significantly to the establishment of a strong local economy? Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly facilitate the transportation of raw materials and finished goods and improve access to market destinations?
2	To provide an adequate supply of suitable EMPLOYMENT land in easily accessible locations	Is the option / aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly expand or improve the provision of an adequate range, type and scale of employment land? Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly improve access between employment sites and housing areas, or increase connectivity between these areas by a range of transport modes?
3	To contribute to, expand and promote WEALTH CREATION in the local economy.	Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly increase the attractiveness of the area for visitors and inward investors? Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly promote and develop local enterprises based on the particular strengths and qualities of the area. Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly create jobs, improve the economic health of the area or expand local employment opportunities?

4	To improve the QUALITY OF LIFE for local residents	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly improve resident satisfaction with the area and provide residents with an increased sense of belonging to the communities in which they live?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly improve living and / or working standards for local residents?</p>
5	To improve access to LOCAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES for local people	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly support or improve the provision of local facilities and services?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly improve access to all services and facilities serving local populations?</p>
6	To improve the SUPPLY AND AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING for local residents	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly contribute to the supply of housing for local residents?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly increase housing availability and tenure choice?</p>
7	To achieve INTEGRATION of the proposal within the local community	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to be easily integrated into the existing community to which it relates?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to involve, or relate to, the development of land which is physically remote and isolated from existing settlements?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to be adequately provided with the necessary service infrastructure at reasonable cost?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to involve, or relate to, the development of land which cannot be satisfactorily accessed or which has no road frontage or physical means of access to a public road?</p>
8	To improve HEALTH AND SAFETY	<p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly improve overall levels of health?</p> <p>Is the aim / policy / proposal / strategy likely to significantly reduce the fear of crime?</p>

Source: East Ayrshire Council

8 ASSESSMENT OF THE PLAN

(i) Assessing the Strategic Aims of the Local Plan

8.1 As stated in Paragraph 1.8 of this Sustainability Appraisal document, the Local Plan Alteration has adopted a single primary strategic aim which is, in turn, supported by a series of more specific, related aims which endeavour to balance the need for development against the need to conserve the unique character of the area. All of the provisions of the local plan alteration are specifically geared towards achieving these strategic aims and it is considered that that many of these will have some degree of impact on the East Ayrshire environment. The Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Local Plan Alteration, detailed in Part 1 of the Sustainability Appraisal, specifically addresses this particular issue. However, a number of the stated aims of the local plan alteration impact on the economy of East Ayrshire and the quality of life for local residents. The socio-economic assessment of the strategies, policies and proposals of the local plan alteration is designed to assess the nature and scale of these impacts.

8.2 The Strategic Environmental Assessment process has assessed the strategic aims of the local plan alteration against the adopted environmental objectives and criteria detailed in Table 2 of this appraisal document. In terms of consistency and completeness, the strategic aims of the local plan alteration have also been assessed against a series of socio-economic criteria as detailed in Table 4 above. In order to keep the assessment process systematic, structured, transparent and manageable, the socio-economic assessment of the strategic aims of the plan has, like the environmental assessment of those aims, been carried out using the same simple matrix detailed in Table 1 of the document. A summary of the assessment of the strategic aims of the plan against the adopted socio-economic objectives and criteria is shown in Appendix 22. Full details of this assessment are provided in the Background Information Papers produced to support the Sustainability Appraisal.

8.3 It is considered that the principal aim of the local plan alteration will have a strong positive socio-economic impact. The local plan alteration has a further 9 associated aims which are couched in the broadest terms and are not site specific. Generally these further aims have strong, general positive or neutral socio-economic effects.

(ii) Assessment of the Local Plan Strategies

8.4 The strategies of the local plan alteration have been specifically designed to achieve the various aims and visions of the local plan alteration. A summary of the detailed assessment of the strategies is provided in Appendix 23 attached to this report and full details of this assessment are provided in the Background Information Papers produced to support the Sustainability Appraisal. A synopsis of the conclusions of the assessment is provided below.

General Development Strategy

8.5 There are 8 general development strategies contained within the Local Plan Alteration and generally these have an overall positive socio-economic impact. A number of the strategies, however, are neutral and have no direct impact on the provisions of the local plan alteration.

Business and Industry Development Strategy

8.6 The 7 business and industry strategies detailed in the local plan are considered to have positive socio-economic impacts. A number of the strategies, however, are neutral and have no direct impact on the provisions of the local plan alteration.

Tourism Development Strategy

8.7 The 6 tourism development strategies are considered to have neutral socio-economic impacts. A number of the strategies, however, are considered to have positive socio-economic impacts on the provisions of the local plan alteration.

Minerals Development Strategy

8.8 The 5 mineral development strategies are considered to have neutral socio-economic impacts. Some of the strategies, however, are considered to have positive or positive / negative socio-economic impacts on the provisions of the local plan alteration.

Housing Development Strategy

8.9 The 12 housing development strategies formulated in the Local Plan Alteration are considered to have positive socio-economic impacts. A number of the strategies have positive or unknown socio-economic impacts. The level to which new major, large scale residential developments can be integrated within the local

community is unknown or unclear, the degree of integration being dependent on the precise location of the areas concerned within the community.

Retail and Town Centre Activities Development Strategy

8.10 The 7 retail and town centre activities development strategies are considered to have positive socio-economic impacts. A number of the impacts are, however, unknown and are dependent on the location of the areas concerned within the community and the nature and scale of the development proposed.

Community Facility and Service Infrastructure Development Strategy

8.11 The 5 community facility and service infrastructure development strategies are considered to have a neutral socio-economic impact. A number of the strategies do, however, have positive socio-economic impact on the provisions of the Local Plan Alteration.

Waste Management Development Strategy

8.12 The 7 waste management development strategies are considered to have neutral socio-economic impacts. A number of the strategies do, however, have positive socio-economic impacts on the provisions of the local plan alteration.

Transport Development Strategy

8.13 The 8 transport development strategies are considered to have neutral socio-economic impacts. A number of the strategies do, however, have positive socio-economic impacts on the provisions of the local plan alteration.

Environment Development Strategy

8.14 The 10 environmental development strategies are considered to have neutral socio-economic impact. A number of the strategies do, however, have positive socio-economic impacts on the provisions of the local plan alteration.

(iii) Assessment of the Policy Framework and Locational Strategy

8.15 The identification, description and assessment of reasonable alternatives for the local plan alteration's policy framework, the plan's spatial strategy and the general locations recognised as having potential for future development, is considered to be an important

element of the socio-economic assessment process. As stated in Paragraph 4.10 of the Sustainability Appraisal, the Council, in December 2004, approved the East Ayrshire Local Plan: Spatial Development Options Paper which set out a number of options relating to the broad direction of future development throughout East Ayrshire in spatial terms.

8.16 As part of the Environment Assessment process described in Part 1 of this Sustainability Appraisal, the various options identified in the Options Paper were appraised against the same environmental assessment objectives and criteria employed to assess the strategic aims of the plan, as detailed in Table 4 above. Again, in the interests of consistency and completeness, these options have been assessed separately against a set of agreed socio-economic criteria, these being the same as those used to assess the strategic aims of the plan, as detailed in Table 4.

The Site Selection Process

8.17 In addition to facilitating the Council's choice of locational strategy, the Socio-Economic Assessment process has also proved an invaluable tool in the selection of appropriate, potential housing sites in all of the area settlements, helping ensure that the sites chosen have a positive socio-economic impact. In this regard, all of the sites that were forwarded to the Council for consideration were assessed against the 8 Socio Economic Assessment criteria detailed in Table 4 above, taking into account all known constraints that relate to the particular areas concerned. In addition to this, the Council has adopted an approach whereby sites were deemed not to be worthy of further consideration where they:

- (i) have no road frontage or any physical means of access to a public road;
- (ii) are physically remote and isolated from existing settlements;
- (iii) cannot be satisfactorily integrated with the particular settlement to which they relate;
- (iv) are considered, over their whole area, to be unsuitable for development in landscape terms;
- (v) comprise areas which cannot be adequately safeguarded against flood risk;
- (vi) are considered inappropriate for development as a result of topographical constraints; or
- (vii) do not meet the strategic provisions of the finalised version of the Replacement Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan.

8.18 Implementation of these procedures has allowed the Council to identify a series of reasonable alternative locations for possible future development.

(iv) Assessment of the Plan's Policies and Proposals

8.21 The purpose of this particular element of the assessment process was to assess each of the policies and proposals contained in the local plan alteration to see if they were likely to have any significant effects on socio-economic factors throughout the authority area.

Assessment of the Local Plan Policies

8.22 As stated in Paragraph 4.38 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report, the Local Plan Alteration contains a total of 152 detailed, authority-wide land use policies relating to 10 separate subject topics. In turn, these policies have been grouped into 25 sub-groupings relating to particular policy objectives. All of the policies contained in the local plan alteration have been assessed in socio-economic terms, allowing each policy to be broadly appraised on its perceived ability to deliver the social and economic objectives of the local plan alteration.

8.23 As with the assessment of the local plan alteration's aims and visions, the socio-economic assessment of the local plan alteration policies has also been carried out using a simple matrix. The same assessment methodology has also been employed, using the same range of symbols to indicate the degree of compatibility of each policy with each of the identified socio-economic criteria. The socio-economic objectives and criteria used to assess the policies also remain unchanged from those used to assess the local plan alteration's aims and visions. A summary of the assessment of the policies identified in the local plan alteration is detailed in Appendix 24 and full details of this assessment are provided in the Background Information Papers produced to support the Sustainability Appraisal. A synopsis of the assessment carried out is provided below.

Strategic Development Policies

8.24 The eight strategic development policies identified in the local plan alteration have been split into the following three sub-groups.

- (i) Policies SD1 and SD2 relate to sustainable development and environmental quality and have general neutral or positive socio-economic impacts;
- (ii) Policies SD3 to SD6 relate to sustainable location of development and have general positive or neutral socio-economic impacts; and
- (iii) Policies SD7 and SD8 relate to the sustainable use of land and buildings and have general neutral socio-economic impacts.

Business and Industry Development Policies

8.25 The 12 business and industry policies have been divided into the following two sub groups.

- (i) Policies IND1 to IND4 promote strategic industrial and business development opportunities and have general positive and neutral socio economic impacts.
- (ii) Policies IND5 to IND12 promote business and industrial growth in sustainable locations and have neutral, positive or unknown socio-economic impacts.

Tourism Development Policies

8.26 There are six tourism development policies which have been divided into the following two sub groups:

- (i) Policies TOUR1 and TOUR2 relate to strategic sustainable tourism development in preferred locations. These policies have general positive and neutral socio-economic impacts.
- (ii) Policies TOUR3 to TOUR6 are general policies relating to sustainable locations and types of tourism development and have general neutral and positive socio-economic impacts.

Mineral Development Policies

8.27 Policies MIN 1 to MIN 8 are designed to facilitate environmentally sensitive mineral extraction and have general positive or neutral socio-economic impacts.

Housing Development Policies

8.28 There are 30 housing development policies which have been divided into the following four sub groups.

- (i) Policies RES1 and RES2 promote strategic housing development opportunities and have general positive and neutral socio-economic impacts.
- (ii) Policies RES3 to RES18 promote and meet housing needs in sustainable locations and these policies have positive and neutral socio-economic impacts.
- (iii) Policies RES19 to RES25 relate to residential amenity and these policies have general neutral or positive socio-economic impacts.
- (iv) Policies RES 26 to RES 30 provide for specialist residential needs and have general positive and neutral socio-economic impacts.

Retail and Town Centre Development Policies

8.29 There are 21 Retail and Town Centre Development policies and these are divided into two sub groups, as detailed below.

- (i) Policies RTC1 to RTC3 relate to the promotion of strategic retail and town centre development opportunities and have general neutral and positive socio-economic impacts. There are no overriding adverse impacts relating to the policies on a socio-economic basis.
- (ii) Policies RTC 4 to 21 are general policies enabling and promoting retail growth in sustainable locations. Generally these policies have overall neutral and positive socio-economic impacts.

Community Facility and Service Infrastructure Development Policies

8.30 There are 16 Community Facility and Service Infrastructure Development Policies, divided into 4 sub groups.

- (i) Policies CS1 and CS2 promote strategic community facility and service infrastructure development opportunities and generally have positive or neutral socio-economic impacts.

- (ii) Policies CS3 to CS6 are general policies enabling sensitive leisure and recreational development in sustainable locations and have positive neutral or unknown socio-economic impacts.

- (iii) Policies CS7 to CS9 minimise the impact of telecommunications infrastructure and have neutral socio-economic impacts.

- (iv) Policies CS10 to CS16 are associated with developing and promoting renewable energy developments in sustainable locations. The policies generally have neutral socio-economic impacts.

Waste Management Development Policies

8.31 There are 14 Waste Management Development Policies and these are split into two sub groups.

- (i) Policies WM1 and WM2 relate to promoting strategic waste management development opportunities and have general neutral socio-economic impacts.

- (ii) Policies WM3 to WM14 support sensitive and sustainable waste management development opportunities and have general neutral or positive socio-economic impacts.

Transport Development Policies

8.32 There are 9 Transport Development Policies, divided into two sub groups.

- (i) Policies T1 and T2 relate to promoting and developing a strategic transport system and have both positive and neutral socio-economic impacts.

- (ii) Policies T3 to T9 are designed to help develop a safe and efficient transport and communications network and have general neutral or positive socio-economic impacts.

Environment Development Policies

8.33 There are 26 Environment Development Policies and these are divided in six sub groups.

- (i) Policies ENV1 to ENV3 protect the environment at the strategic level and generally have neutral socio-economic impacts.

- (ii) Policies ENV4 to ENV8 are designed to protect and enhance the built environment and have neutral socio-economic impacts.
- (iii) Policies ENV9 to ENV12 are designed to protect and enhance the quality of townscape and design and have general neutral or positive socio-economic impacts.
- (iv) Policies ENV13 and ENV14 are designed to protect and enhance the natural environment and have neutral socio-economic impacts.
- (v) Policies ENV15 to ENV19 are designed to promote and enhance the quality of the landscape and the environment and have neutral socio-economic impacts.
- (vi) Policies ENV20 to ENV26 are designed to protect the environment from damage and harm by inappropriate development and have neutral socio-economic impacts.

Assessment of Local Plan Proposals and Opportunities

Assessment of Suggested Housing Sites

8.34 As part of the local plan alteration preparation process, some 322 separate areas of land throughout East Ayrshire were suggested to the Council for inclusion as potential housing sites in the local plan alteration. All 322 sites were duly assessed as part of the socio-economic assessment of the alteration, against the socio-economic criteria detailed in Table 4 above and an appraisal made of their likely socio-economic impact. The assessment of the potential housing development opportunity sites has been carried out on a settlement by settlement basis and a summary of this assessment is provided in Appendix 25. Full details of the site assessments carried out are provided in the Background Information Papers produced to support the Sustainability Appraisal. A synopsis of the results of this assessment is provided in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Summary of Housing Site Assessment

Location	Total No. of Sites Assessed	Degree of Socio-Economic Impact	
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Core Area			
Crookedholm	6	3	3
Crosshouse	13	9	4
Gatehead	1	1	0
Hurlford	5	2	3
Knockentiber	9	6	3
Kilmarnock	55	29	26
Sub Total	89	50	39
Glasgow Link			
Dunlop	5	4	1
Fenwick and Laigh Fenwick	16	14	2
Kilmaurs	22	18	4
Lugton	3	1	2
Moscow	2	1	1
Stewarton	24	14	10
Sub Total	72	52	20
Irvine Valley			
Darvel and Priestland	16	12	4
Galston	17	6	11
Newmilns	7	5	2
Waterside	1	1	0
Sub Total	41	24	17

M74 Link			
Auchinleck	10	3	7
Catrine	15	2	13
Coalhall	1	1	0
Cronberry	1	1	0
Cumnock	15	11	4
Drongan	8	5	3
Mauchline	13	8	5
Muirkirk	2	2	0
New Cumnock	8	5	3
Ochiltree	5	3	2
Rankinston	1	1	0
Sinclairston	5	4	1
Sorn	8	3	5
Sub Total	92	49	43
Doon Valley			
Dalmellington	4	3	1
Dalrymple	8	6	2
Hollybush	2	1	1
Patna	12	3	9
Waterside	2	2	0
Sub Total	28	15	13
TOTAL	322	190	132

Source: East Ayrshire Council

8.35 Of the 322 potential housing sites assessed, some 190 (59.0%) were considered to generate positive socio-economic impacts with 132 sites (41.0%) having a negative socio-economic impact. The impacts were assessed to have a positive impact if they could be adequately integrated into the existing settlements in line with the criteria contained within paragraph 8.17 above. If the potential housing site could not be satisfactorily integrated into the existing settlements then the site was assessed as having a negative impact. This particular part of the assessment exercise has proved an extremely useful tool in the local plan alteration site selection process.

8.36 The assessment of these opportunity sites has, again, been made against the standard socio-economic objectives and criteria used elsewhere in the assessment process, using the same assessment methodology. It should be noted that a number of the development opportunity sites in the plan have been identified because they have a valid, current planning consent for the development proposed. The local plan cannot influence the development of such sites and, while recorded in the assessment matrix, these sites are not assessed in detail.

8.37 The local plan alteration contains a total of 28 general, area wide proposals and some 39

site specific proposals, all of which have been assessed in terms of their socio-economic impact. A further 14 recommendations are also contained in the local plan alteration and these too have been fully assessed. A summary of the assessment of both the proposals and recommendations assessed is provided in Appendices 26 and 27 respectively. Full details of these assessments are provided in the Background Information Papers produced to support the Appraisal.

9 MONITORING

9.1 The implementation of the local plan alteration must be closely monitored in order to clearly understand the potential effects of the plan on East Ayrshire in socio-economic terms. The establishment of an effective monitoring system is also important to the preparation of future local plans, enabling a measured assessment to be made as to whether any predictions of negative socio-economic impacts of the local plan alteration were accurate and whether the alteration has contributed, in the manner expected of it, to the achievement of identified socio-economic objectives and targets. Similarly, an effective monitoring system can identify whether any mitigation measures identified have performed as well as expected and whether any adverse socio-economic effects experienced require remedial action to be taken.

9.2 It is proposed that the baseline data that has been collected in the preparation of the socio-economic part of the Sustainability Appraisal is used to monitor any socio-economic changes that have taken place in East Ayrshire as a result of the implementation of the Local Plan Alteration.

9.3 In order to ensure that the data is relevant and up to date, it is intended that the baseline data will be updated on a bi-annual basis. This will allow any unforeseen adverse socio-economic effects that the Local Plan Alteration to be identified and mitigated against, as considered appropriate, in light of the most up to date information available

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This glossary defines some of the technical and environmental related terms used in the text of the Environmental Report. For convenience, these terms are detailed alphabetically.

Terms	Definition
Archaeological Sites and Locations	Known sites and locations of archaeological interest.
Article 4 Directions	Directions made under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 restricting permitted development rights and giving planning authorities more control over future developments in conservation areas or other areas where the authority wishes to safeguard amenity. All Article 4 Directions are subject to full consultation and confirmation by the Scottish Ministers
Ayrshire and Arran Woodland Strategy	A strategic document, produced by a specially convened steering group, detailing how future investment in woodland planting can best be directed to secure the greatest economic, environmental and social benefit.
Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan	The strategic policy framework document for the development and use of land within Ayrshire, prepared jointly by the three Ayrshire Councils.
Consultation Authorities	Authorities which because of their environmental responsibilities are likely to be concerned by the effects of implementing the Local Plan Alteration and must be consulted at specific stages of the SEA. The Consultation Authorities are: The Scottish Ministers (who have delegated their

	responsibilities to Historic Scotland), Scottish Natural Heritage and The Scottish Environment Protection Agency
Circulars	Documents which provide statements of government policy and contain guidance on policy implementation through legislative or procedural change.
Conservation Areas	Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to enhance and which should be protected from insensitive or inappropriate development.
Conservation Area Appraisals	Management tools which help identify the special interest and changing needs of a conservation area and which provide the basis for a programme of action to improve and enhance the areas concerned.
Core Path Plan	A plan prepared by the Council to identify, develop, manage and maintain a series of core paths, routes, waterways etc to facilitate the exercise of access rights.
Cultural Heritage	The elements of the built and natural environment that together combine to create a sense of place for an individual.
Cumulative Impacts	Impacts that can be caused by a number of developments which, individually, may have insignificant effects, but together combine to create a greater, significant effect
Developer Contributions	Funds provided by developers through the use of planning agreements, to provide new facilities, amenities or community initiatives or to supplement those existing facilities or amenities, as identified by the Council, as being required to meet the needs of residents of the new

	developments proposed.
Development Opportunity Sites	A range of housing, business and industry or other miscellaneous sites identified in the local plan as being suitable for development.
East Ayrshire Community Plan	A plan produced jointly by a range of partners in the public and voluntary sectors working together to better plan, resource and deliver quality services that meet the needs of people who live and work in East Ayrshire.
East Ayrshire Local Plan	A site specific planning policy document prepared by East Ayrshire Council, providing guidance and advice pertaining to future development within East Ayrshire.
East Ayrshire Opencast Coal Subject Plan	A planning policy document prepared by East Ayrshire Council, providing specific guidance and advice pertaining to opencast coal extraction and related matters throughout the East Ayrshire coalfield area.
Environmental Assessment (Also see Strategic Environmental Assessment)	A systematic assessment of the provisions of the local plan against a standard set of environmental objectives and criteria, to evaluate their impact on the environment.
Environment Improvement Plans	Plans prepared by the Council, in consultation with local communities, to identify issues to be addressed and potential environmental improvements projects to be implemented in the communities concerned.
Environmental Audit	An annual assessment provided by minerals operators of the degree of compliance of their mineral operation with all environmental conditions and obligations attached to issued planning consent, detailing any remedial measures which are required to be undertaken

	to rectify any identified shortfalls or deficiencies.
Environmental Report	A document required by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004 as part of an environmental assessment which identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Local Plan Alteration and its reasonable alternatives.
Long-term Impacts	Impacts which tend to be persistent for an extended period of indeterminate or permanent duration.
Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes	Areas of specific parkland and woodland generally centred on a large house or castle, which have been laid out for artistic effect and have been identified in the 'Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland'.
Kilmarnock Town Centre Strategy	A strategy produced by East Ayrshire Council to identify priorities for co-ordinated action within Kilmarnock Town Centre and to improve and enhance all of the various functions that the town centre provides.
Listed Buildings	Buildings which appear in the Scottish Executive's List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest as being of national of considerable local importance and worthy of protection.
Local Biodiversity Action Plans	A mechanism that seeks to ensure that nationally and locally important species and habitats are conserved and enhanced in a given area through focussed local action.
Local Housing Strategies	Comprehensive documents produced by local authorities to assess all housing needs and conditions and to produce strategies to tackle the housing problems identified in the areas concerned over a

	five year period.
Local Nature Reserves	Sites designated by local authorities usually for their high natural heritage interest and their particular value for education and informal enjoyment of nature by the public.
Mitigation	Action taken to prevent, reduce or offset, as fully as possible, adverse impacts of a development on the environment. (Mitigation in terms of an SEA also includes enhancement and compensating measures).
Medium Term Impacts	Impacts which last for an extended but finite period, such as the effects of mineral workings with an operational life and a stipulated period of restoration and aftercare, extending over, possibly, a number of years.
National Planning Framework	A framework produced by the Scottish Executive which sets out a strategy to guide the spatial development of Scotland to 2025, providing a national context for development plans and planning decisions and informing the ongoing programmes of the Scottish Executive, public agencies and local authorities.
National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPG's)	Statements of government policy on nationally important land use and other planning matters (pre November 2002)
Natura 2000 Sites	A network of marine and terrestrial SPA and SAC areas designed to conserve natural habitats and species of plants or animals that are rare, endangered or vulnerable in the European Community.
Open Space Audit	An audit, carried out by the local authority, to record the type, size, condition, location and maintenance requirements etc of all areas of open space within the

	authority area.
Open Space Strategy	A strategy, prepared by the local authority, to assess the current and future open space requirements of the Council and to compile a clear set of priorities and actions to improve and enhance the area's open space resources.
Outdoor Access Strategy	A strategy prepared by the Council to facilitate increased access to the countryside for recreational purposes and to develop routes for walking, cycling and horse riding.
Outstanding Conservation Area	Conservation Areas which have been classified by Historic Scotland as outstanding for grant aid purposes.
Permanent Effects	Effects which are unlikely ever to cease or significantly change. (Many of the effects of most forms of built development, once completed, will be regarded as permanent but visual and landscape effects may be reduced over time by landscaping).
Planning Advice Notes	Documents issued by the Scottish Executive which provide advice on good planning practice and other relevant information on a topic basis.
Preferred Areas of Search	Broad areas identified in the Replacement Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan as preferred locations to which certain stated types of development should be directed.
Responsible Authority	In terms of the SEA, the body preparing the document being assessed is termed the 'Responsible Authority'.
Rural Diversification	The expansion of the rural economy through the establishment of appropriate new enterprises and the introduction of sensitive new uses of land in rural locations.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments	Ancient monuments of national importance that have been given legal protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.	
Scoping	The stage in the assessment process which seeks to define the scope and level of detail of the information to be contained in the environmental report.	
Scottish Planning Policies (SPP's)	Statements of government policy, produced by the Scottish Executive, on nationally important land use and other planning matters (post November 2002)	
Screening	The stage in the assessment process which determines whether a particular plan, programme or strategy, should be subject to the assessment process.	
Secondary Impacts	These are impacts that are experienced, not as a direct result of the plan, but indirectly and separately from the original direct effects or via a complex pathway	
Section 75 Agreements / Planning Agreements	Agreements under Section 75 of the Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, entered into by the Council and a prospective developer to address those elements of a development proposal which cannot adequately be addressed by the use of planning conditions.	
Sensitive Landscape Character Areas	Areas identified from the Ayrshire Landscape Assessment as being particularly sensitive to change and within which the protection and enhancement of the landscape should be given priority.	
Short-term Impacts	Impacts of a temporary, strictly limited duration which occur, for example during the	

	construction stage of a development .
Significant Environmental Impacts	Impacts which arise where a plan, programme or strategy materially impacts on several environmental receptors in an area and would lead to a long term and irreversible material change in their status.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's)	Sites which are designated by Scottish Natural Heritage as containing particular species, geology or geomorphology considered worthy of statutory protection from damage or deterioration.
Special Areas for Conservation (SAC's)	Strictly protected sites of European Importance designated under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and the Wild Flora and Fauna Directive (92/43/EEC).
Special Protection Areas (SPA's)	Strictly protected sites of European Importance designated under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds, classified for the purpose of protecting the habitats of rare, threatened or migratory bird species.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (Also see Environmental Assessment)	A systematic assessment of the provisions of the local plan against a standard set of environmental objectives and criteria, to evaluate their impact on the environment.
Sustainability Appraisal	A systematic assessment of the provisions of the local plan against a standard set of environmental and socio-economic criteria, to evaluate their impact on sustainability.
Sustainable Development	Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Supplementary Planning Guidance	Detailed, non-statutory planning advice and guidance, produced by the Council, relating to specific types of development and

	supplementing the general planning advice and guidance provided by the East Ayrshire Local Plan Alteration.
Synergistic Impacts	A series of impacts which interact together to produce a total effect greater than the sum of their individual effects.
Temporary Impacts	Impacts which are limited or finite in duration, whether short, medium or long-term and irrespective of whether the likely date of the cessation of effects can be estimated.
Trans-Boundary Effects	Effects which could impact on other member states of the EU and their respective environment.
Tree Preservation Orders	Orders made by the local authority under the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation Order and Trees in Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Regulations 1975, preventing the cutting down, lopping and topping of trees covered by the order, without the express consent of the planning authority.
Waste Management	Processes for the handling, treating and disposal of waste including recycling and reuse of materials and the handling of liquid and solid waste by-products of water and sewage treatment.
Water Framework Directive	The EC Directive (2000/60/EC), implemented into Scottish law through the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003.
Wind Farm	A wind energy installation which comprises more than two wind turbines. (Large scale windfarms comprise wind farm developments of more than 20MW generating capacity).



Sustainability Appraisal

Alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan FINALISED VERSION : December 2007

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