

PLANNING STATEMENT

**PROPOSED FORMATION OF A GARDEN CENTRE AND RESTAURANT
WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS, PARKING AND LANDSCAPING**

SITE TO NORTH OF FAIRLIE BOWLING CLUB, MAIN ROAD, FAIRLIE

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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to accompany an application which seeks planning consent for the formation of a garden centre and restaurant with associated access, parking and landscaping on a site to the north of Fairlie Bowling Club, Main Road, Fairlie.

1.2 The site lies at the northern edge of the village of Fairlie on the western coast of North Ayrshire. The site lies to the north of Fairlie Bowling Club and to the west of Main Road. The Largs / Glasgow railway line is to the west of the site with an existing burn and landscaping to the north.

1.3 In terms of the enclosed application, the following is included in relation to the proposals :

- Completed planning application forms and land ownership certificates
- £5,213 for the statutory planning application fee will be paid directly by the applicant
- Design Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment (Mabbett)
- Landscape Appraisal (DWA Landscape Architects)
- Site Investigation Report (ATK Partnership)
- Transportation Statement (DBA)

1.4 In addition to the aforementioned reports, the following drawings are enclosed :

Drawing No.	Description	Scale
1934/P01C	Existing Site Plan	1:250@A1
1934/P02F	Proposed Site Plan	1:250@A1
1934/P03B	Location Plan	1:1250@A4
1934/P04B	Proposed Ground Floor Plan	1:100@A1
1934/P05B	Proposed Elevations and Views	1:100@A1
1934/P07B	External Lighting Layout	1:250@A1
09602-SK1	Proposed SUDS Strategy	1:200@A1

1.5 In all regards it is submitted that the aforementioned enclosed range of studies and supporting drawings provide justification for the proposal across a range of topic areas.

PLANNING HISTORY

- 1.6 As you will be aware this application follows on from a previous planning consent granted on the 25th March 2013 (Planning Ref. N/10/00813/PP) which promoted the formation of a garden centre and restaurant. The previous approval of this development on site should be viewed as a significant material consideration in the assessment of this planning application. In this regard and in comparison with the previous scheme the changes include :
- ❑ Site Access & Services - The position and geometry of the combined pedestrian, cycle path and vehicular access is informed by the design for the application noted above. This provides adequate sightlines for access to the A78.
 - ❑ All mains Utilities services are situated either in the road or adjacent footpath / service strips. Foul drainage is connected to an existing chamber to the south of the new access road.
 - ❑ Building - The form, scale and massing of the building is largely unchanged from the previous application. External materials have been reviewed and noted on the enclosed drawings.
 - ❑ The internal layout of public spaces remains as before with public toilet facilities now including enhanced unisex changing wc facilities to comply with expected updated disability legislation.
 - ❑ Car Parking / Turning - The hardstanding areas have been curtailed by design to be wholly accommodated within the site - i.e. no requirement to culvert over the existing watercourse. The same numbers of parking spaces are provided as before with the Plant Sales Area reduced in size to accommodate the suggested layout.
 - ❑ Cycle Path - The path is proposed to be re-aligned as indicated on the plans- all within land under the applicant's control. Suitable signage at the vehicular access point would be provided per Sustrans / LA requirements.
- 1.7 It is submitted that the approval of Planning Consent N/10/00813/PP demonstrates that the development proposals subject to this application have been found to be an acceptable form of development within the countryside location. This has been reinforced by the recent Local Development Plan Examination where in responding to the proposed residential use of the site, North Ayrshire Council stated that its view is that the commercial use of the site was more appropriate.
- 1.8 In this regard, the following is noted by the Council in their response to a representation proposing to designate the site for residential development :
- “Other planning history on the site includes a 2010 application where permission was granted for a Garden Centre and a restaurant. It is considered that this type of development is significantly different from housing and perhaps more appropriate to its location”*
- 1.9 Given the comments noted above from North Ayrshire Council and the fact that planning consent was previously approved for the formation of a garden centre and restaurant on the site, it is considered that the proposed use of the site for a garden centre and restaurant is appropriate to the location and is capable of positive consideration by the planning authority.

2 ECONOMIC BENEFIT

- 2.1 In terms of economic benefit it is submitted that in the case of this application significant weight should be attached to the ability of the proposals to provide employment opportunities and promote and provide general social and economic benefit to the area.
- 2.2 There can be no doubt that the garden centre development proposed would provide services / facilities which would be of significant benefit to the village of Fairlie and the surrounding area. At present the village lacks any real community facilities at all, with only a petrol station and public house in the area. The introduction of the proposed development will improve the range and choice of local amenities which are available to local residents and would provide a much needed boost to the social / economic wellbeing of the area with the creation of some 30 full time / part time jobs. In addition, some 30 North Ayrshire Construction jobs will be sustained during the construction period for around 12 months.
- 2.3 It is submitted that the proposed development has significant potential to assist North Ayrshire Council in their economic recovery from Covid - 19. In this regard it is worthy to note the content of North Ayrshire Council's new 'Local Green New Deal' initiative which focuses on building back the local economy, better, fairer and greener through their approach to economic recovery and renewal. The applicant is committed to delivering a development which will help to revitalise the local economy and create a destination for people to travel to encouraging access to the coast, local nature walks and the regional park. This would help to improve the coastal economy and would also encourage tourists to visit Fairlie which in turn will increase the overall economic activity within the area.
- 2.4 It should be noted that the applicant operates various successful businesses in North Ayrshire (Rowan Tree, Restaurant and Garden Centre, Ardrossan, Graze, Dalry and Haylie Stores, Largs.). They currently employ many local full and part-time people, who all have their own skills that have helped expand their business ambitions throughout North Ayrshire.
- 2.5 This project for a brand new purpose built facility will bring together the many skills that they have gained over the years (over 40 years' experience in the retail and hospitality sector). Some thirty new full time and part time local jobs shall be created to operate the new facility with a combination and choice of Café and Restaurant menus with locally sourced food as well as an outdoor facility for the passing cyclists and walkers served via the wall servery. The Garden Centre element will further expand on the success they have had with plant and gardening related sales from their other venues with the incorporation of locally sourced artisan products and produce which will also be available.
- 2.6 Given the current economic situation a development of this nature can provide a significant economic boost to Fairlie and the North Coast, helping to sustain existing construction jobs and creating 30 full time / part time jobs. The establishment of new jobs at this time of economic uncertainty is vital to ensuring local communities are supported and enhancing local wellbeing. In this regard the garden centre proposals will :

- ❑ Comprise of a group of linked buildings laid out to provide for a range of active commercial local business/tourist uses.
- ❑ Extend to circa 950m² of indoor space as well as some outdoor plant space and landscaping.
- ❑ Take around 12 months to build and will support and sustain around 30 full time jobs for locally employed trades people, apprentices and trainees.
- ❑ On completion this new and exciting local commercial facility and tourist attraction will provide for many full time and part time employment opportunities, both for local residents and also the wider North Ayrshire community.

2.7 The proposed business model is envisaged in three sectors as follows:

A: Garden Centre: This facility will offer an indoor facility with the usual attractions that venues such as Dobbies Garden Centre and others provide, including an outdoor plant sales area. Hours for operating would be from 8am to 8pm in the summer months. There will also be an opportunity for locally grown plants etc perhaps from the Fairlie community garden allotments to be sold at the regular local plant/produce Market day events. This facility will also provide for a range of employment opportunities for all ages for the young to learn and the more mature to share their wisdom and experience to many of the budding garden enthusiasts

B: Retail Zone: This zone will be to facilitate the retailing of locally produced products from here in Ayrshire, which will benefit local business suppliers with direct retailing to locals and tourist alike. It is expected that this facility would operate similar hours to the Café Restaurant as well as support many other producers of fine Ayrshire Produce.

C: The Café Restaurant: This will cater for good old Scottish menu themed breakfast, lunch and tea time dinners, operating between the hours of 8am to 10pm. These hours may of course vary during the autumn and winter months. Job opportunities on offer will be from Head Chef, Sous (deputy) Chef, Commis (junior) Chef, Kitchen Porters, Dishwashers, Waitress/Waiter staff and Bar persons. Domestic staff will also be required. The Training and Development of staff is at the forefront and this would continue throughout the employment opportunities that this facility would create.

2.8 **In summary and on the jobs front some 30 North Ayrshire Construction jobs will be sustained during the construction period for around 12 months and around 30 new full time / part time jobs shall be created within the provision of this new commercial facility.**

2.9 **Given the lack of existing local facilities this local business opportunity will provide for much needed local economic activity in Fairlie thus providing a valuable facility for locals and tourists alike, whilst sustaining valuable employment and training opportunities for all here in North Ayrshire.**

2.10 The creation of the aforementioned job opportunities are targeted at the local community in the North Coast and will generate a financial contribution to the local economy and generate significant additional local rates for North Ayrshire Council. This is in addition to the significant numbers of people and spend that will be attracted to the area to visit the facility. In addition the garden centre and shop would provide an outlet for local farmers and other producers.

- 2.11 It is considered significant to note that all job opportunities would be aimed at the local workforce within North Ayrshire.
- 2.12 **In all regards the provision of much required facilities for Fairlie, the associated jobs created, the people and spend attracted into the area are all considered very significant especially given the current economic climate. In this regard the opportunity that exists for the garden centre facility in question to be a much required economic generator for the Fairlie area should not be under – estimated and significant weight should be attached to this aspect in processing the submitted planning application.**

3 PLANNING POLICY

SCOTTISH PLANNING POLICY (SPP) (2014)

- 3.1 Scottish Planning Policy confirms that one of the key outcomes for the Scottish Government is to create “A successful, sustainable place – supporting sustainable economic growth and regeneration, and the creation of well-designed, sustainable places.”
- 3.2 The guidance also states that :
- “Planning should take a positive approach to enabling high-quality development and making efficient use of land to deliver long-term benefits for the public while protecting and enhancing natural and cultural resources.”***
- 3.3 In terms of economic development the SPP goes on to clearly state that :
- “Planning should address the development requirements of businesses and enable key opportunities for investment to be realised. It can support sustainable economic growth by providing a positive policy context for development that delivers economic benefits.”***

NORTH AYRSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2 (2019)

- 3.4 Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) states that "where, in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan" and that "the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise". In this instance and in planning terms the proposals for the formation of a garden centre/ restaurant with associated access, parking and landscaping at a site to the north of Fairlie Bowling Club, Main Road, Fairlie fall to be considered against the local development plan for the area - the North Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 (2019).
- 3.5 Relevant policies / guidance contained within the local development plan can be outlined as follows :
- Strategic Policy 1 : Spatial Strategy Towns and Villages Objective
 - Strategic Policy 1 : Spatial Strategy The Countryside Objective
 - Strategic Policy 2 : Placemaking
 - Policy 6 : Supporting Sustainable Tourism
 - Policy 13 : Non-designated Archaeological Sites and Monuments
 - Policy 14 : Green and Blue Infrastructure
 - Policy 15 : Landscape and Seascape
 - Policy 17 : Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park
 - Policy 18 : Forestry, Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows
 - Policy 22 : Water Environment Quality

- ❑ Policy 23: Flood Risk Management
- ❑ Policy 27 : Sustainable Transport and Active Travel

Strategic Policy 1 : Spatial Strategy Towns and Villages Objective

In principle, we will support development proposals within our towns and villages that:

- a) Support the social and economic functions of our town centres by adopting a town centre first principle that directs major new development and investment to town centre locations as a priority including supporting town centre living.
- b) Provide the right new homes in the right places by working alongside the Local Housing Strategy to deliver choice and variety in the housing stock, protecting land for housing development to ensure we address housing need and demand within North Ayrshire and by supporting innovative approaches to improving the volume and speed of housing delivery.
- c) Generate new employment opportunities by identifying a flexible range of business, commercial and industrial areas to meet market demands including those that would support key sector development at Hunterston and i3, Irvine.
- d) Recognise the value of our built and natural environment by embedding placemaking into our decision-making.
- e) Prioritise the re-use of brownfield land over greenfield land by supporting a range of strategic developments that will deliver:
 - regeneration of vacant and derelict land through its sustainable and productive re-use, particularly at Ardrossan North Shore, harbour and marina areas, Montgomerie Park (Irvine) and Lochshore (Kilbirnie).
 - regeneration and conservation benefits, including securing the productive re-use of Stoneyholm Mill (Kilbirnie) and supporting the Millport Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme.
- f) Support the delivery of regional partnerships such as the Ayrshire Growth Deal in unlocking the economic potential of the Ayrshire region.

3.6 In response to the above it is submitted that the proposed garden centre and restaurant will generate new employment opportunities by providing commercial interest within the village of Fairlie and the surrounding area (as outlined in Chapter 2 of this Planning Statement). The proposals will benefit local residents and improve their access to a wider range of services and amenities whilst also encouraging tourists to visit the area establishing a visitor destination on the Coast.

3.7 The development of the garden centre / restaurant would provide a much needed boost to the social and economic wellbeing of the Fairlie area with the creation of more than 30 jobs (not including 30 construction jobs). In addition to these direct jobs where people are employed on site there would also be other indirect and induced jobs which include suppliers of materials and services. The proposals will generate new and diverse employment opportunities requiring a range of skillsets whilst also helping to sustain existing construction related jobs within the area throughout the construction period. This would help to support the economic function of the settlement and it is submitted that this economic boost would be very important to the local economy given the current global economic situation.

- 3.8 Furthermore, and as outlined previously within this Planning Statement, this application follows on from a previous planning consent granted on 25th March 2013 (Planning Ref. N/10/00813/PP) which promoted the formation of a garden centre and restaurant. The previous approval of this development on site should be viewed as a significant material consideration in the assessment of this planning application as it demonstrates that the proposal was found to be acceptable from a commercial perspective by North Ayrshire Council.
- 3.9 The development proposals have considered the value of the natural and built environment as evidenced within the drawings and Landscape Appraisal enclosed within this application package. They have also embedded placemaking within their design detail as outlined in our response to Strategy Policy 2 : Placemaking.
- 3.10 In all regards as is demonstrated throughout this statement the opportunity exists via the proposed development of a garden centre / restaurant to provide social, community and economic benefits for Fairlie and the surrounding area while providing an improved defensible edge to the settlement.
- 3.11 It is therefore submitted that the proposals are capable of positive consideration against Strategic Policy 1 : Spatial Strategy Towns and Villages Objective.

Strategic Policy 1 : Spatial Strategy The Countryside Objective

We also recognise that, in general, countryside areas are less well suited to unplanned residential and other developments because of their lack of access to services, employment and established communities. We will seek to protect our prime and locally important agricultural land from development except where proposals align with this spatial strategy.

In principle, we will support proposals outwith our identified towns and villages for:

- a) expansions to existing rural businesses and uses such as expansions to the brewery and distillery based enterprises in the area.
- b) ancillary development for existing rural businesses and uses, including housing for workers engaged in agriculture or forestry.
- c) developments with a demonstrable specific locational need including developments for renewable energy production i.e. wind turbines, hydroelectric schemes and solar farms.
- d) tourism and leisure uses, where they would promote economic activity, diversification and sustainable development, particularly where they develop our coastal tourism offer/infrastructure.
- e) developments which result in the reuse or rehabilitation of derelict land or buildings (as recognised by the Vacant and Derelict Land Survey) for uses which contribute to the Green and Blue Network such as habitat creation, new forestry, paths and cycle networks.
- f) sensitive infilling of gap sites consolidating existing developments where it would define/provide a defensible boundary for further expansion.
- g) small-scale expansion of settlements on Arran and Cumbrae for community led proposals for housing for people employed on the island, where a delivery plan is included and infrastructure capacity is sufficient or can be addressed by the development and where the proposal meets an identified deficiency in the housing stock and is required at that location. All proposals will be expected to

demonstrate the identified housing need cannot be met from the existing housing land supply.

- h) new housing in the countryside where it is a replacement or converted building or it is a house of exceptional design quality.
- i) sympathetic additions to existing well-defined nucleated groups of four or more houses (including conversions) in close proximity to one another and visually identifiable as a group with some common feature e.g. shared access. Additions will be limited to 50% of dwellings existing in that group as of January 2005 up to a maximum of four new housing units (rounded down where applicable).

3.12 The Landscape Appraisal enclosed as part of this application package explains that as a consequence of its assumed agricultural use the site is designated within the adopted Local Development Plan as Countryside. However, it is of significance to note that the site is not utilised for agricultural purposes and the Landscape Assessment confirms that no significant impact would be experienced upon productive agricultural land as defined by the MacCauley Institute by the development proposals, Notwithstanding this, however and given its current designation the enclosed Landscape Appraisal details how the landscape can be enhanced through the development of the site.

3.13 In response to the above policy it is submitted that the proposed development is capable of positive consideration by the Council as it will deliver (as outlined under point (d)) a tourism and leisure use that would promote economic activity, diversification and sustainable development within Fairlie. It is also of significance to note that North Ayrshire Council have previously outlined the suitability of the site for the use proposed (in their response to the Examination of the proposed North Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2) as outlined below:

3.14 *“Other planning history on the site includes a 2010 application where permission was granted for a Garden Centre and a restaurant. It is considered that this type of development is significantly different from housing and perhaps more appropriate to its location”*

3.15 With regard to the settlement boundary, it is also of importance to highlight that the village of Fairlie extends further north on the east side of the A78 and the settlement boundary is established by dense woodland belt. The Landscape Appraisal notes the following (in response to point (f) noted above) :

“Development in Countryside areas could be considered if located in infill sites where a logical defensible settlement boundary can be established. This would be the case with the proposed site with the watercourse forming a natural boundary which is mirrored on the eastern side of the A78 along with the woodland belt. The built development lies on the southern side of this natural boundary and the line of the building extends to a point similar to that on the eastern side too.”

3.16 The Appraisal also notes :

“There is in fact a strong argument for extending the settlement boundary towards the north to match the strong boundary of the woodland belt to the east of A78. By restricting the built portion of the development to the south of the watercourse would set a defensible settlement boundary on the north west of Fairlie.”

3.17 In this regard it is submitted that the proposed development will sensitively infill a gap site within the village of Fairlie, establishing a robust and defensible settlement boundary. The proposed development will also create an entrance to the village,

providing an urban fringe use to merge with the surrounding countryside and is located opposite and aligns with existing development.

- 3.18 In line with the reasons outlined above, it is submitted that the proposed development is capable of positive consideration against Strategic Policy 1 : Spatial Strategy The Countryside Objective.

Strategic Policy 2 : Placemaking

Six qualities of a successful place:

- Distinctive
- Welcoming
- Safe and Pleasant
- Adaptable
- Resource Efficient
- Easy to Move Around and Beyond

- 3.19 In response to the above it is submitted that the development proposals can be considered to reflect the six qualities of a successful place. The development proposals are distinctive and have drawn upon the characteristics of the surrounding area, including landscape and topography (as evidenced within the Landscape Appraisal submitted as part of this application package). The Landscape Appraisal highlights that the site is well screened and will not have a significant visual impact on the existing townscape. The proposals can be considered to be safe and pleasant, creating a sense of security and encouraging footfall and increasing natural surveillance within the area. The garden centre / restaurant will encourage social and economic interaction and activity. The proposals are welcoming and adaptable. They consider the future users of the site and have been designed in a way to respond to the needs of users. The drawings and Design and Access Statement submitted also illustrate that the proposals will be easy to move around and will result in improvements to the existing footpath / cycleway encouraging people to access local footpaths and coastal areas. In line with this, it is submitted that the development proposals can be positively considered against Strategic Policy 2 : Placemaking.

Policy 6 : Supporting Sustainable Tourism

We will, in principle support the creation and enhancement of tourism and related activities that are in accordance with the Tourism Framework for Scotland and with the Council's current Tourism Strategy, including development and expansion of:

- Chalets, static and touring caravan, and other camping sites.
- Hotels, boarding houses, hostels, bed and breakfast facilities and guesthouses.
- Destination clusters (for example cafes, visitor shops, views, starts of walks and so on).
- Associated staff and seasonal accommodation.

Development should be sited to take into account the details contained with the flood risk management policy, in particular for uses described as being most vulnerable by SEPA.

- 3.20 The development proposals subject to this application will help to support the creation and enhancement of tourism and related activities within the local area through the delivery of a garden centre / restaurant which will attract visitors from both the surrounding area and beyond. The proposed development will establish a 'destination' attracting people to the coast, regional park and local walking routes. This will in turn have a positive impact on the local economy and the proposals can therefore be considered to be compliant with Policy 6 : Supporting Sustainable Tourism.

Policy 13 : Non-designated Archaeological Sites and Monuments

We will only support development where it respects the integrity of our archaeological landscape. Archaeological sites and monuments should be preserved in situ wherever possible. Development proposals that do not preserve archaeological sites and monuments in situ will not be supported unless there is an overwhelming social, economic or environmental reason. In such situations, developers will be required to undertake appropriate excavation, recording, analysis, publication and archiving of the finds before and/or during development.

- 3.21 The Landscape Appraisal submitted as part of the planning application package does not identify the presence of any archaeological sites or monuments that would be impacted by the proposed development. It is therefore submitted that the development proposals subject to this application can be considered to be compliant with Policy 13 : Non-designated Archaeological Sites and Monuments.

Policy 14 : Green and Blue Infrastructure

All proposals should seek to protect, create, enhance and/or enlarge our natural features and habitats which make up our green and blue infrastructure (including open space), ensuring no unacceptable adverse environmental impacts occur.

Green and blue infrastructure should be multi-functional, accessible and integral to its local circumstances. For example, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) have the potential to play a key role in the delivery of meaningful blue and green infrastructure, providing amenity and improving biodiversity as well as providing a sustainable flood risk solution. We will require details of the proposed arrangements for the long-term management and maintenance of green infrastructure, and associated water features, to form a key part of any proposal.

Our Open Space Strategy (2016-2026) highlights the need for an audit which identifies valued and functional green and blue infrastructure or open space capable of being brought into use to meet local needs. We will support the temporary use of unused or underused land as green infrastructure including where it consists of advanced structure planting to create landscape frameworks for future development. Support will be given to proposals which seek to enhance biodiversity from new development where possible, including the restoration of degraded habitats and the avoidance of further fragmentation or isolation of habitats. We will also support proposals that are in accordance with the vision and outcomes of the Central Scotland Green Network as well as those of the Garnock Connections Project.

- 3.22 In response to the above it is submitted that the development proposals have sought to protect, create and enhance the natural features and habitats within the site ensuring no unacceptable adverse environmental impacts occur. The Flood Risk Assessment enclosed within this planning application package confirms that :

“The land proposed for development does not form part of a functional floodplain. The development may therefore proceed without risk of flooding and will not increase the probability of flooding elsewhere. It is therefore considered to be compliant with the recommendations of SPP(1), PPI 8(2) and TFRGS(3).”

Furthermore, a proposed SUDs strategy is enclosed which outlines the acceptability of the proposed drainage solution for the site. It is therefore submitted that the development proposals are capable of positive consideration against Policy 14 : Green and Blue Infrastructure.

Policy 15 : Landscape and Seascape

We will support development that protects and/or enhances our landscape/seascape character, avoiding unacceptable adverse impacts on our designated and non-designated landscape areas and features. In particular, we will consider the following:

a) National Scenic Areas

Development that affects the North Arran National Scenic Area including the need to protect existing sport and recreation interests, will only be supported where:

- i) the objectives of the designation and the overall integrity of the area will not be compromised; or
- ii) any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.

b) Special Landscape Areas

We will only support development which affects Special Landscape Areas where it would not have an unacceptable impact on their special character, qualities and setting.

c) Wild Land

We will only support development within Wild Land areas where any significant effects on the qualities of these areas can be substantially overcome by siting, design or other mitigation.

d) Local Landscape Features

Where appropriate, development should take into consideration its individual and cumulative impacts on landscape features, including:

- i) patterns of woodlands, fields, hedgerows and trees;
- ii) lochs, ponds, watercourses, wetlands, the coast and wider seascape;
- iii) settlement setting, including approaches to settlements;
- iv) the setting of green network corridors, such as important transport routes and the cycle and footpath network;
- v) historic, natural and recreational features of interest, skylines and hill features, including important views to, from and within them.

For all development with the potential to have an impact on either Landscape Character or Landscape features (including their setting), appropriate mitigation measures should be considered as part of any planning application. Where there is

potential for development to result in significant adverse landscape/visual impact, a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) will be required. The Ayrshire Landscape Character Assessment (SNH, 1998) and North Ayrshire Settlement Development Strategy (Entec, 2008) provide further information on designations such as Local Landscape Character Areas and the Potential Limit of Development Expansion areas as shown on the map on page 81 and on our online proposals map. These landscape assessment documents, and any new or updated landscape assessments, will be key considerations in determining whether development proposals would be acceptable within the landscape.

- 3.23 In response to the above, it is submitted that the Landscape Appraisal submitted as part of this application has demonstrated that the proposed development will avoid unacceptable adverse impacts on designated and non-designated landscape areas and features. The Appraisal notes that screen planting on the northern boundary of the site and watercourse will help to mitigate any impacts and that there will be no significant impacts from Kelburn estate due to the estate wall and mature tree cover, beyond a brief view from the southern entry gate. It is therefore submitted that the proposals are capable of positive consideration against Policy 15 : Landscape and Seascape.

Policy 17 : Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

Proposals that affect Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park must have regard to the Park's statutory purpose of providing recreational access to the countryside.

Proposals should also take account of wider objectives as set out in relevant management plans and strategies, namely to:

- Provide visitors of all ages and abilities the opportunity for quality recreation. Using its unique assets the Park will facilitate a high quality programme of leisure activities which contribute to the health agenda
- Ensure the Park is an increasingly popular and productive venue for formal and informal education and outdoor learning. More people will participate in learning opportunities and will develop a better appreciation of the area's natural and cultural heritage
- Ensure the Park is an attractive and ecologically important visitor destination with increased biodiversity value. The Park embraces opportunities for positive environmental change

- 3.24 The Landscape Appraisal confirms that only a very small northern section of the site falls within the boundary of the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. The appraisal also confirms that the impacts upon the designated area would be negligible and that a more logical boundary to the park would be the watercourse on the northern boundary rather than across the field on no obvious marker, The introduction of the proposed development at this location would help to encourage locals to visit the park by establishing a destination, encouraging footfall in the area and supporting increased access to the park. It is therefore considered that the proposed development is compliant with Policy 17 : Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park.

Policy 18 : Forestry, Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows

Development proposals will only be supported when it would not result in the loss or deterioration of an ancient or long established plantation or semi-natural

woodland unless there are overriding public benefits from the development that outweigh the loss of the woodland habitat.

Where development includes the removal of woodland, the Scottish Government's Control of Woodland Policy and the current Ayrshire and Arran Woodland Strategy including relevant compensatory planting requirements will be taken into account.

Where the loss of trees, hedgerows or woodlands of merit is unavoidable and compensatory planting is required, replacement trees should be of a similar scale and massing to the loss or if smaller there should be additional tree planting committed to ensure a net gain is achieved. We will also expect developers to engage with Forestry Commission Scotland.

We recognise that trees and woodlands are an important yet dynamic part of our landscape. In recognition of this where a tree (or group of trees) is of significant value to public amenity or where they strongly contribute to the character of a Conservation Area we may consider promoting a formal Tree Preservation Order (TPO). We will normally only do this when there is a clear, pressing and immediate threat to a valuable tree (or group of trees) – not as a matter of course and not in conflict with good arboricultural practice and management. In the case of works to trees covered by a tree preservation order we will support management schemes and maintenance works that adhere to good arboricultural practice.

Generally, we will support proposals for dedicated timber export facilities as well as timber export developments that are combined with other marine based activities on Arran where there are no unacceptable adverse environmental impacts and align with our Placemaking policy. Proposals should also align with Policy 28: Transport as an Economic Driver.

Supplementary Guidance: Trees and Development provides guidance on information required to be submitted as part of planning applications involving tree works as well as matters to consider when designing and constructing development to minimise impacts on trees.

- 3.25 In response to the above the supporting information submitted as part of this application package demonstrates that the proposals will not result in the loss or deterioration of an ancient or long established plantation or semi-natural woodland. The Landscape Appraisal notes that one Poplar tree would be lost as a consequence of the development however the three sycamores would be retained. This is not considered to be of a significant impact and therefore the proposals can be considered compliant with Policy 18 : Forestry, Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows.

Policy 22 : Water Environment Quality

We will support development that helps achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan for Scotland. Generally, development which would lead to the deterioration of the water environment will be resisted unless it would deliver significant social, environmental or economic benefits.

Development will be required to ensure no unacceptable adverse impact on the water environment by:

- a) Protecting and enhancing the ecological status and riparian habitat, natural heritage, landscape values and physical characteristics of water bodies (including biodiversity and geodiversity);
- b) Protecting and enhancing existing flood plains; protecting opportunities for public access to and recreation and enjoyment on and around lochs, rivers, burns, wetlands and the coastal marine area; and
- c) Having regard to any designated Bathing Waters. Where engineering works are required in or near water bodies, there will be a presumption in favour of soft engineering techniques and against the culverting of watercourses, unless there is no suitable alternative. Proposals for culverting of watercourses for land gain may only be justified if the applicant can demonstrate that:
 - No other practical option exists that would allow the watercourse to remain open; and
 - The proposed development is of overriding public interest.

We support connection to public sewerage systems in the first instance but recognise that wastewater solutions must be affordable and delivered at the most appropriate scale and that in many cases septic tank systems can be the most sensible solution for a household or small community (this also might be bespoke for our island communities). We will consider the cumulative impact of such solutions and support a preference for community solutions.

Development should ensure that appropriately sized buffer strips are maintained between the built and water environments.

Indicative Width of watercourse (top of bank)	Indicative Width of buffer strip (either side)
Less than 1m	6m
1-5m	6-12m
15-15m	12-20m
15m+	20m+

- 3.26 In response to the above it is submitted that the development proposals will not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment. The development will not impact the ecological status and riparian habitat, natural heritage, landscape values and physical characteristics of any water body. The development will not adversely impact opportunity for public access to recreation and enjoyment around the coastal marine area and will not impact bathing waters. The development can therefore be positively considered against Policy 22 : Water Environment Quality.

Policy 23: Flood Risk Management

We will support development that demonstrates accordance with the Flood Risk Framework as defined in Scottish Planning Policy and shown in schedule 7, relevant flood risk management strategies and local flood risk management plans. We will also support schemes to manage flood risk, for instance through natural flood management, managed coastal realignment, wetland or green infrastructure creation.

Generally development should avoid locations of flood risk and should not lead to a significant increase in the flood risk elsewhere. Land raising and elevated buildings will only be supported in exceptional circumstances, where it is shown to have a neutral or better impact on flood risk outside the raised area.

Development proposals should:

- Clearly set out measures to protect against, and manage, flood risk.
- Include sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) where surface water is proposed to be discharged to the water environment, in accordance with the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 as amended.
- Include provision of temporary/construction phase SuDS.
- include appropriate long-term maintenance arrangements.
- Be supported by an appropriate flood risk assessment where at risk of flooding from any source in medium to high risk areas and for developments in low to medium risk areas identified in the risk framework (schedule 7).
- Take account of SEPA's flood risk and land use vulnerability guidance (2018) and any relevant updates to, or replacements of this guidance.

- 3.27 The Flood Risk Assessment enclosed within this application package demonstrates that acceptability of the proposals in terms of flood risk. The Assessment concludes:

“The conclusion of this FRA is that the land proposed for development does not form part of a functional floodplain. The development may therefore proceed without risk of flooding and will not increase the probability of flooding elsewhere. It is therefore considered to be compliant with the recommendations of SPP(1), PPI 8(2) and TFRGS(3).”

- 3.28 It is therefore submitted that the proposed development can be positively considered against Policy 23 : Flood Risk Management.

Policy 27 : Sustainable Transport and Active Travel

We will support development that:

- contributes to an integrated transport network that supports long term sustainability
- reduces inequality by improving the accessibility and connectivity of employment opportunities and local amenities
- provides safe and convenient sustainable transport options and supports modal shift to sustainable transport and active travel.

- reduces the need to travel or appropriately mitigates adverse impacts of significant traffic generation, road safety and air quality, including taking into account the cumulative impact.
- takes a design-led, collaborative approach to street design to provide safe and convenient opportunities for integrated sustainable travel in the following order of priority: pedestrians, people on cycles, people using collective transport (buses, trains etc.) and people using private transport.
- considers the potential requirements of other infrastructure providers, including designing for the potential development of district heat networks by for example incorporating access points into the transport network to allow for future pipe development or creating channels underneath the road/infrastructure to enable pipe development with minimal disruption to the networks.
- enables the integration of transport modes and facilitates movement of freight by rail or water (in preference to road). This would include, for example, the provision of infrastructure necessary to support positive change in transport technologies, such as charging points for electric vehicles and the safeguarding of disused railway lines with the reasonable prospect of being used as rail, tram, bus rapid transit or active travel routes.
- considers the impact on, and seeks to reduce risk to level crossings, including those located within Ardrossan, Stevenston and Gables.

Proposals are expected to include an indication of how new infrastructure or services are to be delivered and phased, and how and by whom any developer contributions will be made.

We will take account of:

- the implications of development proposals on traffic, patterns of travel and road safety.
- Significant traffic generating uses should be sited at locations that are well served by public transport, subject to parking restraint policies, and supported by measures to promote the availability of high-quality public transport services. Where this is not achievable, we may seek the provision of subsidised services until a sustainable service is achievable.
- the potential vehicle speeds and level of infrastructure provided for the expected numbers of trips by all modes.
- the relationship between land use and transport and particularly the capacity of the existing transport network, environmental and operational constraints, and proposed or committed transport projects.
- committed and proposed projects for the enhancement of North Ayrshire's transport infrastructure, including improved park and ride provision.
- specific locational needs of rural communities. We recognise that in rural areas we need to be realistic about the likely viability of public transport services and innovative solutions such as demand-responsive public transport and small scale park and ride facilities at nodes on rural bus corridors will be considered.
- The Council's adopted Local Transport Strategy, Core Paths Plan, Town Centre Parking Strategy and parking requirements.

- The need to mitigate and adapt to climate change with regard to the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.
- The provision of new and improved links to existing and proposed active travel routes which are integrated with the wider strategic network, including the National Walking and Cycling Network, core paths and the Ayrshire Coastal Path.

Developments likely to generate significant additional journeys will be required to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment, Air Quality Assessment and a Travel Plan. A Transport Statement will be required for smaller scale developments that will not have a major impact on the transport network, but are still likely to have an impact at a local level on the immediate transport network.

3.29 In response to the above it is submitted that the proposed development is capable of integrating into the existing local transport network of footways which provide access to both existing public transport and other local services. It is of importance to note that there are ample public transport services within the area of the site, making the site highly accessible. It is also of significance that the existing access to the A78 would be improved in terms of its layout and alignment as part of the development proposals.. The Transport Statement provided by DBA and included within this application concludes that *“The impact of the proposed development on traffic flows on the A78 is expected to be modest, and would not have a noticeable effect on the operation of the A78.”* It is therefore considered that the development proposals are considered compliant with Policy 27 : Sustainable Transport and Active Travel.

3.30 **Given all of the aforementioned it is submitted that the enclosed planning application for the formation of a garden centre and restaurant with associated access, parking and landscaping on a site to the north of Fairlie Bowling Club, Main Road, Fairlie is capable of positive consideration (subject to appropriate conditions) against the terms of the adopted North Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 (2019). Given this and in line with Section 25 of the 1997 Town and Country Planning Act (as amended) planning consent should be granted for the proposals submitted.**

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Having fully considered the development proposals seeking planning consent for the formation of a garden centre and restaurant with associated access, parking and landscaping on a site to the north of Fairlie Bowling Club, Main Road, Fairlie, it is submitted that :
- ❑ The proposed application is capable of positive consideration against the terms of all applicable policies detailed in the North Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 (2019)
 - ❑ There can be no doubt that the development proposed would result in significant economic benefit. The proposals would provide services / facilities which would be of significant benefit to the village of Fairlie and the surrounding area. The introduction of the proposed development will improve the range and choice of local amenities which are available to local residents and visitors and would provide a much needed boost to the social / economic wellbeing of the Fairlie area with the creation of more than **30 new full time / part time jobs. In addition, some 30 North Ayrshire Construction jobs will be sustained during the construction period for around 12 months.**
 - ❑ In all regards the provision of much required facilities for Fairlie, the associated jobs created, and the people and spend attracted into the area are all considered very significant especially given the current economic climate. In this regard the opportunity that exists for the garden centre facility in question to be a much required economic generator for the Fairlie area should not be underestimated and significant weight should be attached to this aspect in processing the submitted planning application.
 - ❑ This Planning Statement has also demonstrated that the development proposals subject to this planning application are capable of positive consideration against the following policies as outlined in the North Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 (2019) :
 - Strategic Policy 1 : Spatial Strategy
 - Strategic Policy 1 : Spatial Strategy Towns and Villages Objective
 - Strategic Policy 1 : Spatial Strategy The Countryside Objective
 - Strategic Policy 2 : Placemaking
 - Policy 6 : Supporting Sustainable Tourism
 - Policy 13 : Non-designated Archaeological Sites and Monuments
 - Policy 14 : Green and Blue Infrastructure
 - Policy 15 : Landscape and Seascape
 - Policy 17 : Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park
 - Policy 18 : Forestry, Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows
 - Policy 22 : Water Environment Quality
 - Policy 23: Flood Risk Management
 - Policy 27 : Sustainable Transport and Active Travel
 - ❑ This Planning Statement, in conjunction with the studies submitted in support of this planning application have demonstrated the acceptability of the development proposals in relation to their impact on landscape, transport, site investigation and flood risk.

- 4.2 **Given the above and specifically the content of the enclosed plans / reports it is submitted that the development proposals subject to the enclosed planning application can be considered to be capable of positive consideration (subject to appropriate conditions) against the terms of the adopted North Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 (2019). Given this and in line with Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) planning consent should be granted for the proposals submitted.**