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4th March 2008

Freepost RRHE-GBSA-BJLR
National Planning Framework Team
Scottish Government Planning Directorate
Area 2-H, Victoria Quay,
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Dear Sir/Madam

Draft NPF 2: Implications for North Ayrshire

I refer to the above and in particular the omission of Hunterston as one of the National Developments. I should make it clear that I refer to the deep water potential of Hunterston as a future container port serving Scotland and the UK generally, as opposed to any future nuclear power station development.

It is well recognised that, in general, North Ayrshire has fared somewhat badly in terms of economic regeneration. This is, in part, due to its relatively isolated location to the west of the Central Belt. There are some signs that this is changing, but the long term success of this will not be assured unless there is considerable diversification in its economic base and improvements to its transport infrastructure. Hunterston is a good case in point. The potential to create a nationally important shipping port exists, but there seems to be limited drive to make it a reality.

At Government level, the failure to identify Hunterston as a national development over similar schemes such as Scapa Flow will have significant implications for resource allocation to 2030. In particular, the under-developed road and rail connections between Hunterston and the Central Belt are less likely to receive resources for improvement in the future unless there is a strategic national policy that recognises the potential of Hunterston in the first place.

Perhaps Hunterston is a fading economic dream when viewed from Edinburgh. However, no amount of golf courses and flatted retirement developments along the Ayrshire coast will tackle the under lying problems of a stagnant economic base and sub-standard transport connections. Unless the Government (and North Ayrshire) wakes up to this soon, it will become increasingly difficult to make such progress since any attempt to major establish new infrastructure will be opposed by the ever increasing number of incoming retirees. This group may have little or no wish to embrace such developments if it would affect their sea views and residential property values. However, with proper design and careful planning, many of these concerns could be mitigated. But it does require strategic direction to give focus and justify the need in the first place.

I would, therefore, urge you to reconsider the potential of Hunterston in NPF 2, before it becomes too late.

Yours faithfully


Anthony Hume MRTPI