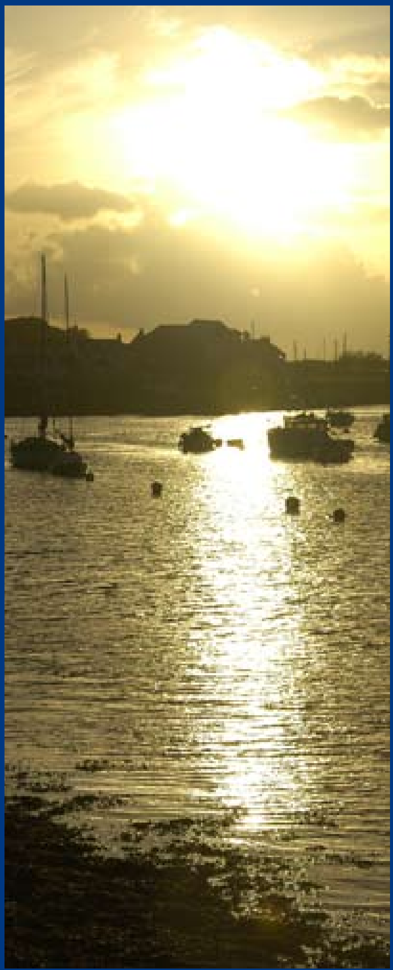



IRVINE BAY: The Power of Five

Draft Report by ...

URBED (Urbanism, Environment Design)

with...
King Sturge, TPP
together with...
Peter Hunter and
Stuart Gulliver
(University of Glasgow)

January 2007

iBay^5

urbed
urbanism environment design

King Sturge

UNIVERSITY
of
GLASGOW

VIA VERITAS VITA

TPP
Transportation
Planning
Partnership

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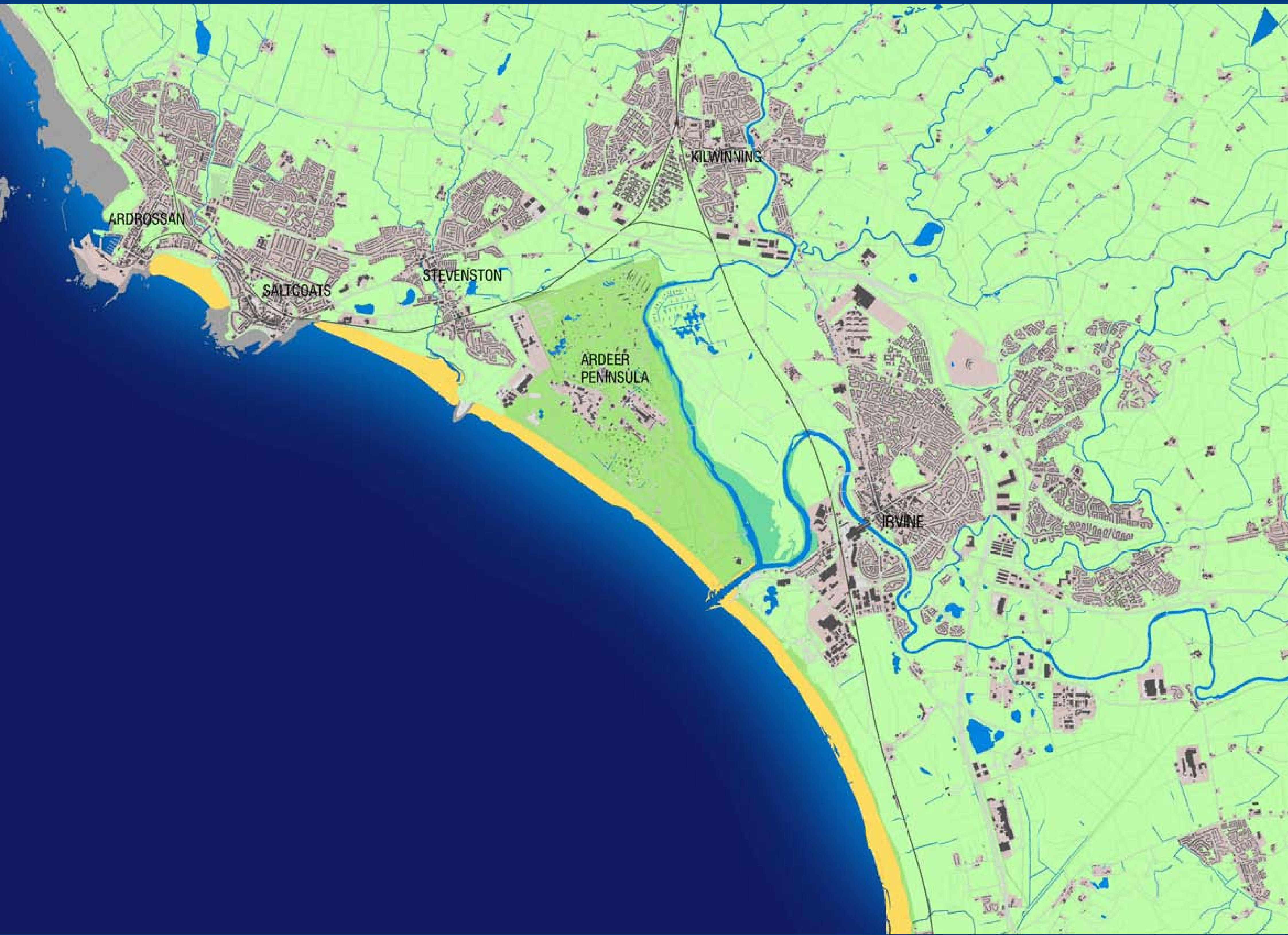

ARDROSSAN
SALTCOATS
STEVENSTON
KILWINNING
ARDEER
PENINSULA
IRVINE

Introduction

URBED together with King Sturge, TPP, Peter Hunter and Stuart Gulliver from the University of Glasgow have been working in Irvine Bay since late summer 2006. Our job has been to prepare a masterplan for the new Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company as part of a strategy to regenerate the Irvine Bay area including the five towns of Kilwinning, Saltcoats, Ardrossan, Stevenston and Irvine.

This draft report sets out a masterplan for the area based on a review of previous research by Rydens and Tribal, our own research together with a consultation workshop attended by 100 people at the Big Idea on 2nd November and a consultation exhibition of draft proposals in early December. The document starts by drawing conclusions from this research before developing a strategy for the area based on five themes and masterplans for each of the five towns - The power of five. Accompanying this document are appendices that describe in greater detail the work completed by the team that informs the conclusions of this report.

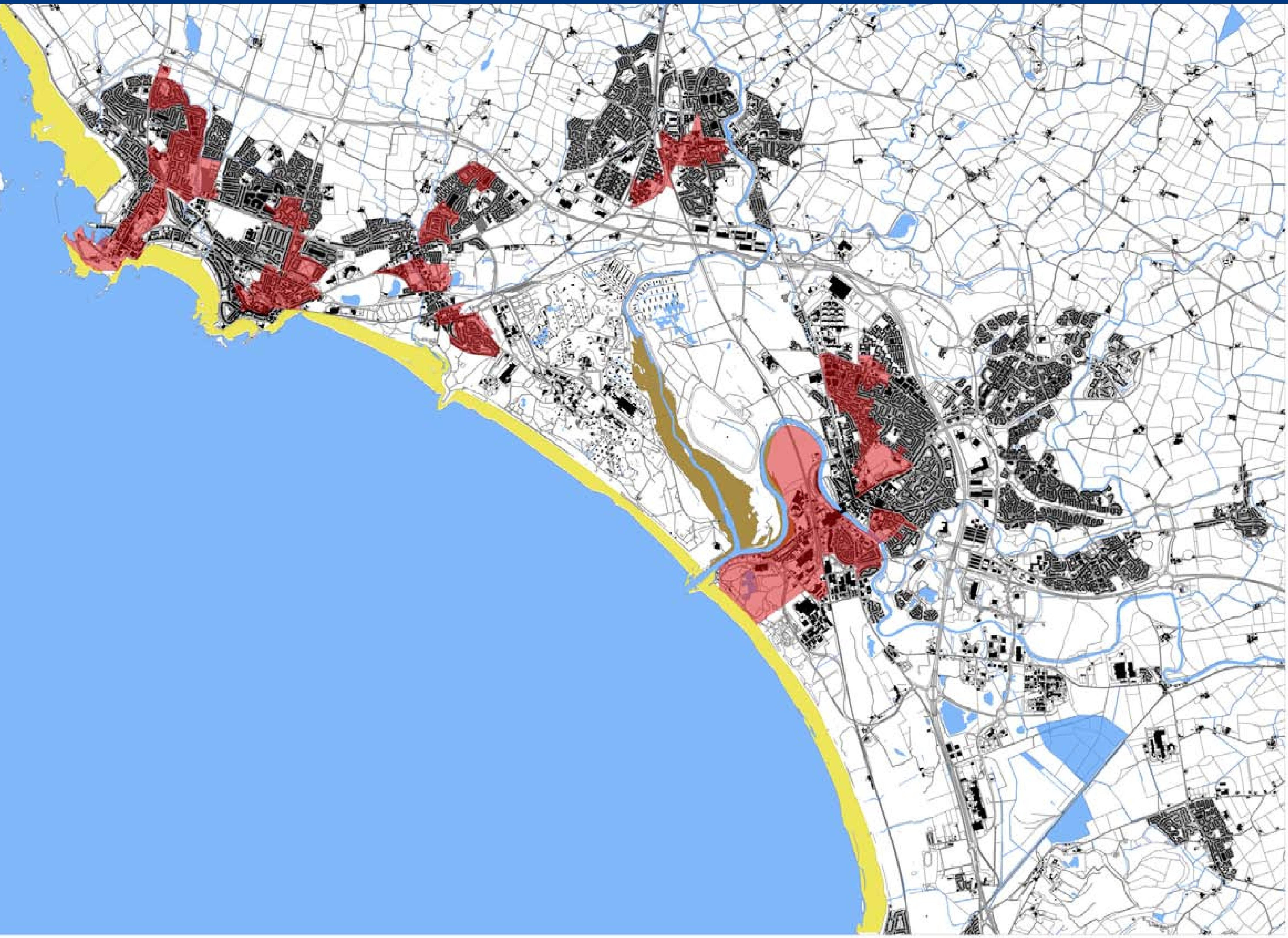
- **The Study:** The team led by URBED were appointed in August 2006 to prepare a masterplan for the Irvine Bay area. The purpose of the study is to develop the previous work that has been done into a series of projects that can be implemented by the Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company and can form part of their business plan.

- **Timetable:** The study started in August 2006 and included a public workshop on 2nd November 2006 attended by over 100 people and followed that with a public exhibition in December 2006 which was attended by over 300 people.

- **The purpose of this document:** Is to present the conclusions and ideas of the team. It is supported by Appendices that deal with certain elements in greater detail but this report is the overall framework into which all other work feeds.

Baseline Study

iBay5



People

Irvine still has a 'new town' population in terms of age profile, skills and manufacturing employment. This existing population is potentially being left stranded by economic change, unable to compete for the new jobs and without the means to travel. There is a danger that they fall back on the fact that Irvine Bay is a 'comfy place to be unemployed' (Tribal Report). There could potentially be tension between the indigenous community and more wealthy newcomers.

- **The population:** North Ayrshire has a population of 136,000 of whom two thirds live in Irvine Bay. Around half of these people (42,000) live in Irvine town which makes it a significant place (Ayr - 47,900, Kilmarnock - 44,300). The other four towns are about a quarter of the size of Irvine; Kilwinning (13,000), Ardrossan (12,000), Saltcoats (10,500), Stevenston (8,000). These are similar in size to Largs (11,314) and twice the size of Troon (5,231) and West Kilbride (4,903) . Ardrossan, Saltcoats and Stevenston operate, to an extent, as one town with facilities spread between them.

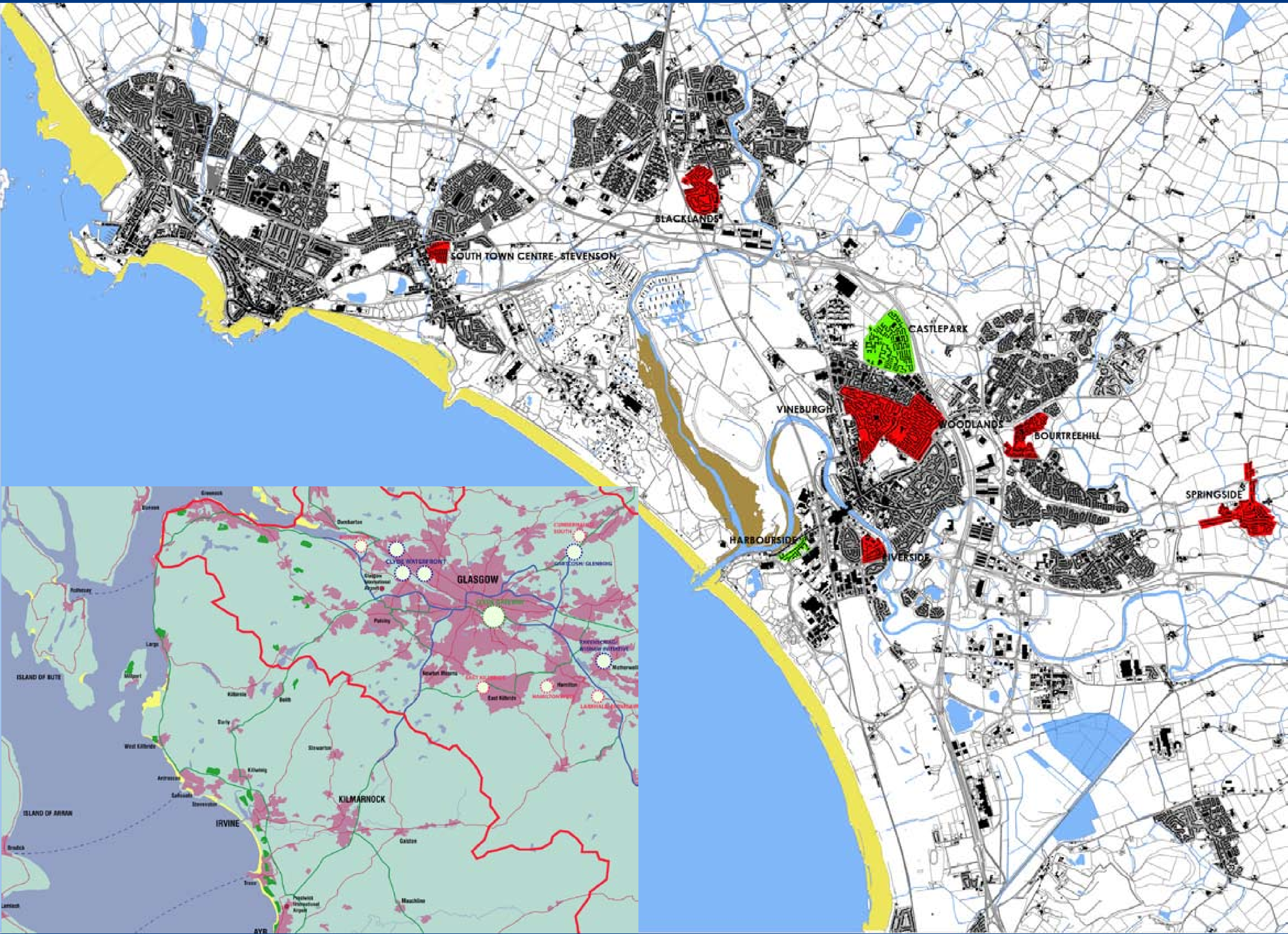
- **Trends:** Population of The Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan area is projected to fall by 30,000 people by 2024. The population is currently younger than the Scottish average reflecting the legacy of the new town. It is however aging rapidly with a projected 50% increase on older people by 2024. This is the result of an aging population, the loss of young people as they move away to find work, and an influx of people retiring to parts of the area. Household size is reducing so that even with a falling population, there is a requirement for new housing.

- **Unemployment:** Unemployment rates are higher than the Scottish average in North Ayrshire, concentrated particularly in the Irvine Bay area. In Saltcoats the unemployment claimant rate is nearly 1 in 10 of working age population (Feb 2005), and only slightly lower in Irvine and Ardrossan (9.5%) . In Kilwinning and Stevenston the rate are lower (7.5% and 8.5% respectively). There are high female unemployment rate as 'female occupations' in the area have not replaced traditional 'male industrial' jobs as seen elsewhere.

- **Training and skills:** Almost 40% of the IBRA working age population have no qualifications compared to a third in Scotland. Only 18.7% have qualifications at or above NVQ compared with 26.4% in Scotland and the proportion of graduates is almost half the Scottish average. The schools in the area are however not bad. Three of the secondary schools are above the Scottish average for pupils achieving 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 4 or better (Kilwinning Academy, St Andrew's Academy - Saltcoats, and St Michael's Academy - Kilwinning). The Greenwood Academy in Irvine is broadly on the Scottish average and the other three schools, Ardrossan Academy, Auchenharvie Academy and Irvine Royal Academy are 15-19% below the average.

- **Deprivation:** Around a third of the population live in a household receiving means tested benefits or credits which ensures income deprivation affects a large proportion of each local community.

- **Distinct communities:** There is not a sense of identity shared by the five towns – or for that the 'three towns' of Ardrossan, Saltcoats and Stevenston. This sense of local communities is in many respects positive, however it will make it more difficult to foster a sense of belonging to the Irvine Bay area.


BLACKLANDS
SOUTH TOWN CENTRE- STEVENSON
CASTLEPARK
VINEBURGH
WOODLANDS
BOURTREEHILL
SPRINGSIDE
HARBOURSIDE
RIVERSIDE
Greenock
Dumbarton
CLYDE WATERFRONT
GLASGOW
Paisley
Rothesay
Largs
ISLAND OF BUTE
Millport
Kilbirnie
Beith
Dalry
West Kilbride
Stewarton
Kilwinning
Ardrossan
Saltcoats
Stevenston
ISLAND OF ARRAN
IRVINE
KILMARNOCK
Galston
Brodick
Troon
Mauchline
Newton Mearns
East Kilbride
Hamilton
Motherwell
AYR

Housing

While it is important to stem population loss, it is also important to use the 9,000 planned new homes effectively. If they were allocated to sites in the east of the district there is the risk that the newcomers will travel to work and to spend their money elsewhere with minimal impact on the problems of the five towns.

- **Population:** As described above the trend projection is for the population of the area to decline. However because of smaller household size, these people will live in a larger number of homes. The population of the neighbouring Glasgow City Region has been losing population for years but this has just about stabilised. The Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Structure plan includes a sustainable growth strategy for the area including major plans for housing development (See inset plan).

- **Stemming the flow:** The Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan aims to stem population loss by stabilising population at today's levels by 2025. This equates to a difference of 16,000 households between the trend and planned scenarios – put another way an annual turnover of £250 Million in the local economy. To do this there is a need for 9,000 new homes, of these 5,600 are allocated so there is a need to accommodate a further 3,400 (2,050 by 2017). (Plan showing major housing sites in North Ayrshire with numbers).

- **Social housing:** 31% of the housing stock in North Ayrshire is social rented (Council or RSL). This is high because of the new town (reaching two thirds of households in Irvine) but also the interwar council estates in and around the other towns (more than half of households in all the regeneration areas are socially rented) . However the vacancy rate is only 1% and the quality of the stock is generally good although there is some concern about meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard in some letting areas.

- **Demand:** There are seven low demand social housing estates as well as several high demand letting zones particularly in Kilwinning and Irvine. (See main plan). Social housing void rates have reached as high as 7% in South Beach (Saltcoats/ Ardrossan). The number of social rents (particularly the most desirable properties) is falling as Right-to-Buys deplete the council stock at an average of 183 each year in Irvine/ Kilwinning and 127 in the three towns with a low rate of new RSLs completions.

- **Weak Housing markets:** There are some areas of weak housing demand and values (See main plan). In 2001 some of the lowest house prices were found in Irvine North, Saltcoats East and Stevenston South.

- **Private housing markets:** 61% of housing in North Ayrshire is owner occupied with a further 4% privately rented. Private developers are keen to build in the area but believe that there is a lack of available sites. The concerns of private developers are the poor image of the area, the confusing layout of the new town, the drab appearance of the town centres and the perception that it lacks a 'soul'. However where there have been new developments these have sold well to local people and incomers who made up about a third of sales between 2001 and 2003.

Harbour Street
site at 'The Braes'

Retail

The outlook for retailing is grim. As accessibility increases and the competition gets stronger, Irvine will further lose its retail position and will not be able to compete for existing spending let alone new spending power attracted into the area via new housing. As traditional centres the other towns are better placed to attract convenience and leisure spend if they can up the quality of their offer.

- **A leaky retail market:** There is a net outflow of retail spend from North Ayrshire. 2% of the convenience spend is lost to the area rising to 35% for spending on clothes.

- **Relegation from the retail rankings:** Irvine Bay has 57,122m^2 of retail space of which more than 54,700m^2 is in the main shopping centre Irvine. Irvine's retail ranking has fallen from 211th to 483rd since 1994. Currently only 7% of retail floorspace is vacant (22 units). The market analysis suggests that this is a low level of vacancy and there is no sign of retail failure.

- **Competition:** There is fierce retail competition with nearby Kilmarnock. Trade has also been lost to Glasgow with the completion of Braehead only 30 minutes away by car. The competition will soon become even more intense with the completion of the Pollok Centre in Glasgow in 2007, and a new retail development in Ayr (The Ayr Central Centre).

- **Retail capacity:** Based on the leakage of spend there is capacity for 4,336m^2 of new convenience shopping and 27,857m^2 of comparison shopping. This is all accounted for by retail consents on East Road and the Rivergate extension scheme although there is a question about whether the latter will be built.

- **The Irvine problem:** The problem in Irvine is the low amount of money available within the local population leading to struggling shops and lack of investment while offering little variety to the more prosperous members of the population or visitors. The local offer is deteriorating and people with money are increasingly shopping elsewhere leading to further decline. Something dramatic is required to break this cycle and if new retailing is not possible redevelopment will be necessary.

- **The other towns:** These are much lesser shopping centres and don't feature in the previous analysis greatly. Kilwinning and Saltcoats appear to remain well occupied and lively but are dominated by down market retailers, pound shops and charity outlets. Stevenston provides only limited local convenience retail opportunities whilst Ardrossan was never really a retail centre and the few shops that exist are severely struggling. Its decline could be halted or further exacerbated by the proposed ASDA development at the harbour.


Walking & Cycling in the Three Towns
Ardrossan Saltcoats Stevenston
www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/outdooraccess
Safety Advice


LITTER
LITTER

Leisure

For an area that has historically been an entertainment draw - attracting visitors from across the region for the races at Bogside since 1636 or for a seaside break at Saltcoats - Irvine Bay today has only limited leisure activities available. The major one of these is Golf which has been played here since the17th Century and there is a growing market for sailing facilities, building on the 250 moorings currently available. However Irvine also needs to cater for a wider constituency in arts, culture and entertainment.

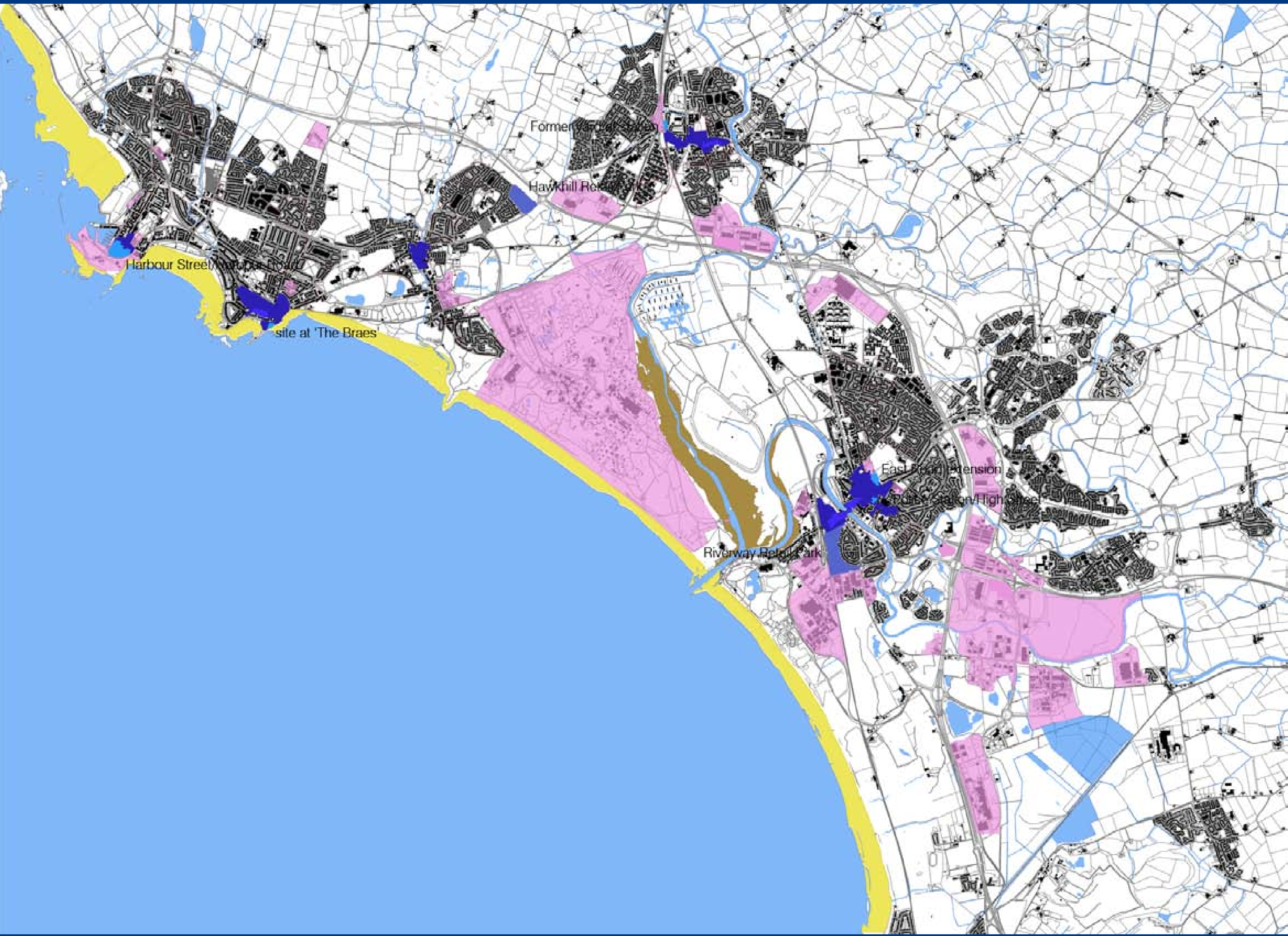
- **Cultural activities:** Irvine has previously been described as a 'cultural wasteland'. Although at one point in the 1970s and 80s Irvine was firmly on the cultural circuit. Today it is rare that a significant show, or cultural event will visit the town. Within the area the main venue for theatre is at the Magnum Centre in Irvine but this is an under used resource. Within the wider regeneration area there is only one cinema, The Apollo at Saltcoats, most other cinemas long having been converted into bingo halls.

- **Museums and galleries;** The major museum in the area, other than the local interest North Ayrshire Museum at Saltcoats, is the Scottish Maritime Museum at Irvine Harbour celebrating the area's long shipbuilding heritage. This is a valuable heritage resource but is currently being held together by dedicated volunteers and is not marketed as a 'must see' national destination, rather a focus for maritime enthusiasts . With the growing sailing tourism to the area it is possible that this could become more of a draw if it was displayed and promoted more effectively.

- **Festivals and Arts:** Recently the Harbour Arts Centre has been re-launched at Irvine and there are plans to develop the area as a destination to build on some of the high quality public art on display around the new town. The HAC has acted as a focus for community based arts projects. The Marymass Folk Festival and Merrymass Festival has been traditional event for August in Irvine for many years and acts as a successful draw for local visitors to the town.

- **Sporting activities:** Now mainly known for its golf, Irvine was home until the 1960s of the Scottish Grand National at the Bogside race course. This along with Irvine's greyhound track, was a major draw for visitors from across lowland Scotland. Golf still remains a massive draw to the area, which has been famous for high quality courses since the 19th century. Today there are many very popular courses, offering a range of skill levels and surroundings, within the regeneration area. Nearly 250,000 rounds of golf are played by visitors to the area every year, bringing approximately £3.4m into the IBRA area. It is clear that there is also a large demand for sailing and other watersport activities. Irvine has been identified as a suitable transit point as the harbour already offers a selection of facilities, something noticably lacking in Ardrossan. There are also sub aqua facilities at Saltcoats and there is potential to offer similar and more extreme water and beach sports. The bay has already become a focus for skateboarding at the successful Evolution Skate Park at Stevenston.

- **Beach life:** The Irvine Bay area has superb natural coastal surroundings unspoilt by high levels of visitors and offering peace and solitude. There are well marked cycle and walking routes around the area's Beach Parks helping to protect the SSSI's and vulnerable sites in the area.


site at 'The Braes'

Economy

The traditional manufacturing base of the area is in danger of disappearing and Irvine Bay is poorly placed to attract new industry. The area's main source of wealth could therefore diminish leaving a population without the skills to compete for new jobs or the resources to travel elsewhere. There will also be increasing pressure to release industrial land for housing which could mop up housing demand without contributing to the regeneration of the area.

- **An industrial community:** Irvine Bay was built on manufacturing industry. The new town attracted a range of large manufacturing employers (such as Volvo and Glaxo Smith Kline attracted by modern premises and excellent accessibility. Stevenston grew up as virtually an ICI company town and Ardrossan was a model Victorian town built around the docks.

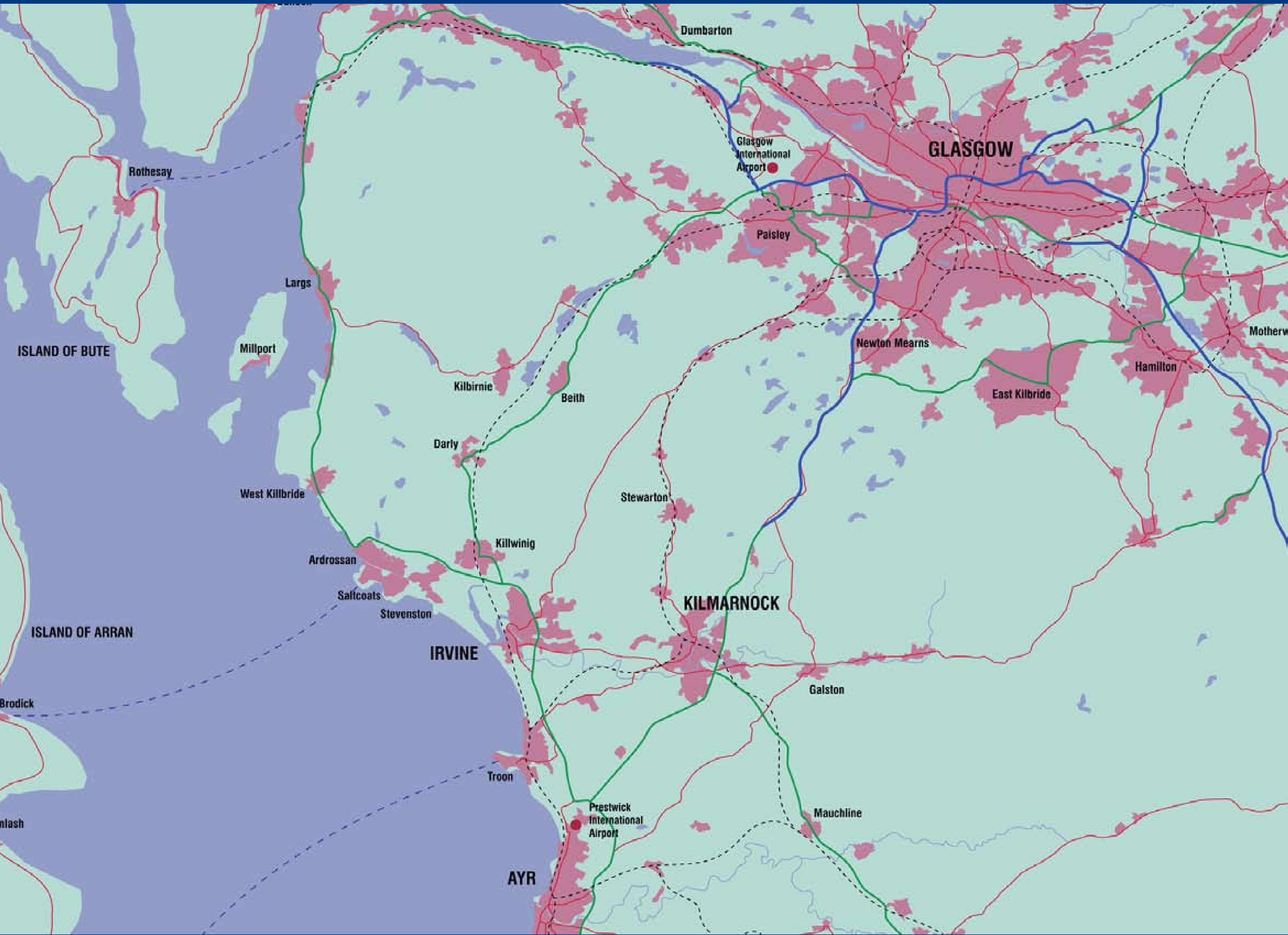
- **Manufacturing decline:** The area has seen a dramatic loss of manufacturing jobs. 35% of manufacturing jobs were lost between 1998 and 2003 and the market report suggests that the rate of decline has not slowed since then. Nevertheless Irvine still has 25% of workers employed in manufacturing compared to 16% in Cumbernauld and 20% in East Kilbride, the other Scottish New Towns, and is therefore vulnerable to further decline.

- **Employment:** It is projected that there will be a further fall in employment of between 1.5% (600 jobs) and 4% (1,600 jobs) by 2010 – depending on which projection you use – after which employment will stabilise. However this masks a further fall of around 14% in manufacturing and with only a modest growth in offices.

- **Energetics:** The one bright spot in manufacturing is the Ardeer Peninsular where Chemring have increased their workforce from 350 to 450 in just 12 months.

- '**Available' property:** The Irvine Development Corporation property portfolio had a 7% vacancy rate in 1994. It is now owned by Ashtenne and vacancy has risen to 30%. There is 2,400ha of allocated employment land in North Ayrshire or which 720ha is undeveloped. There is 138ha of vacant industrial property and 188ha on the market.

- **Office demand:** The modest growth in the office market does create demand for just under 17,000m^2 of new offices. In the past there has been little speculative office development. However the few schemes that have been built have been let.


Dumbarton
GLASGOW
Glasgow International Airport
Rothesay
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Largs
ISLAND OF BUTE
Millport
Newton Mearns
Motherw
Hamilton
Kilbirnie
Beith
East Kilbride
Darly
Stewarton
West Kilbride
Killwinig
Ardrossan
Saltcoats
KILMARNOCK
Stevenston
ISLAND OF ARRAN
IRVINE
Galston
Brodick
Troon
Mauchline
Prestwick International Airport
mlash
AYR

Access

Transport links are one of the area's great strengths. There is a huge historic investment in road infrastructure and very good train services. This makes it possible to base the area's regeneration in part at least on the growth of the Glasgow City region. 39% of the economically active people already travel out of the area to work although only 12% go to Glasgow. However this is a double-edged sword in that it also makes it easy for spending, investment and people to move out to competing centres.

- **New Town legacy:** As an ex-new town Irvine has an excellent highways infrastructure with broad high capacity road giving good access to most parts of the five towns. This has recently been improved with the completion of the bypass. This is however a classic new town layout with roads that make it easy to get to everywhere but difficult to find anywhere. In Irvine in particular there are large dual carriageways and traffic islands that no longer need to be as large as they are because traffic has been diverted onto the bypass. The railway is also an important barrier to movement in both Irvine and Saltcoats.

- **Road links:** Accessibility into (and out of) the area has been improved with the completion of the M77 extension. There is however a need to improve the A737 through Dalry. These improvements will make it easier for people to live in Irvine Bay and commute to work elsewhere stimulating the housing market. They will also make it easier for people to leave the area for shopping and leisure threatening local facilities.

- **Car ownership:** The levels of car ownership in the Irvine Bay regeneration wards are below average with nearly four out of 10 households having no access to a car.

- **Bus services:** Therefore bus services are very important. The services between the towns are very good and do connect the town centres and the buses are also very affordable. However there are some gaps in services to outlying residential areas and around the towns themselves.

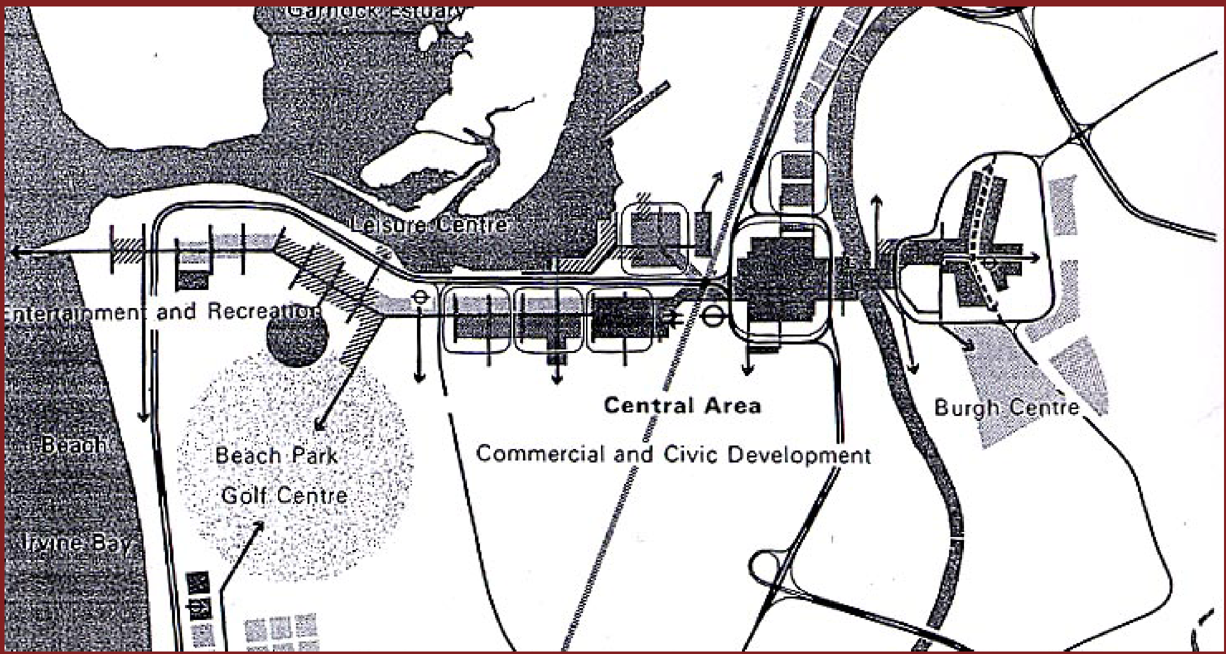
- **Arran Ferry:** Ardrossan is an important gateway to Arran and some 600,000 people travel through the town to use the ferry both by road and rail.

- **Prestwick Airport:** The development of the airport as a budget airline hub is a major opportunity and has already led to a major increase in foreign tourists for boating or golfing holidays. A recent study by The Tourism Resource Company has shown that Ryanair which currently operates 22 air routes from Prestwick, carries 3 million passengers a year (1.4 million inbound leisure / business tourist visitations to Scotland). This has created 3,000 Scottish jobs but much of the spending has not been captured by North Ayrshire.

- **Rail links:** There is a good train service to Glasgow from all of the towns, the most frequent service being at Kilwinning where the two lines meet. The rush hour trains are overcrowded but no more than the trains into any other large city. There are plans to increase the frequency of service and the quality of the stock. The standard of station facilities and 'gateway access' are variable across the local network, but all have been recently modernised.

Section 2

Irvine Bay's Position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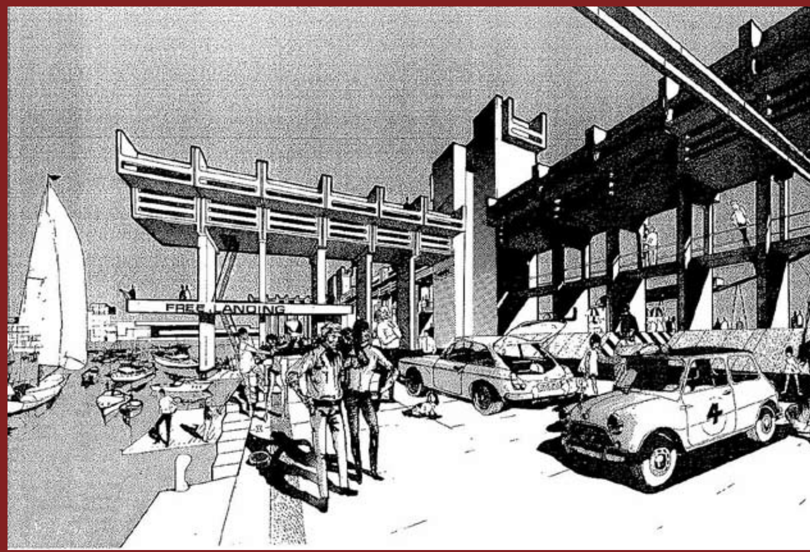
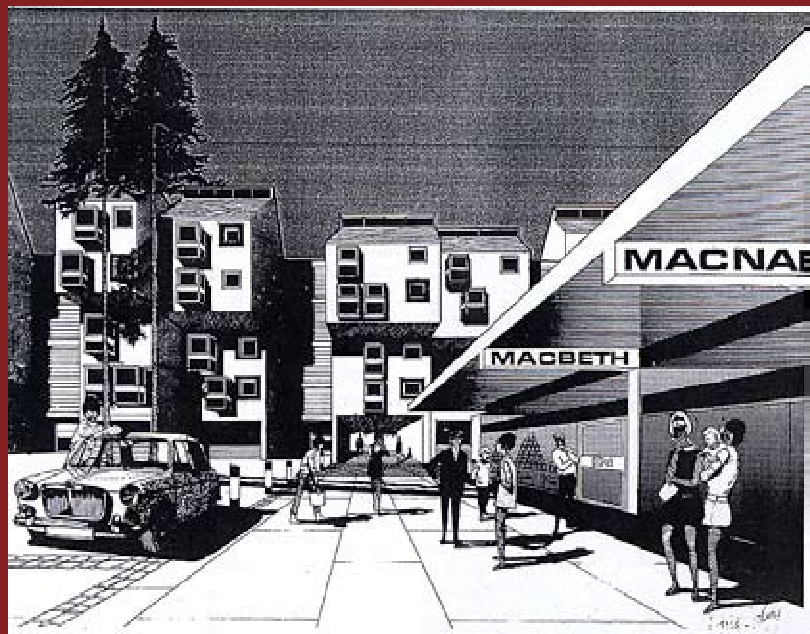
Central Area
Burgh Centre
Beach
Beach Park
Golf Centre
Commercial and Civic Development
Irvine Bay


FREE LANDING
4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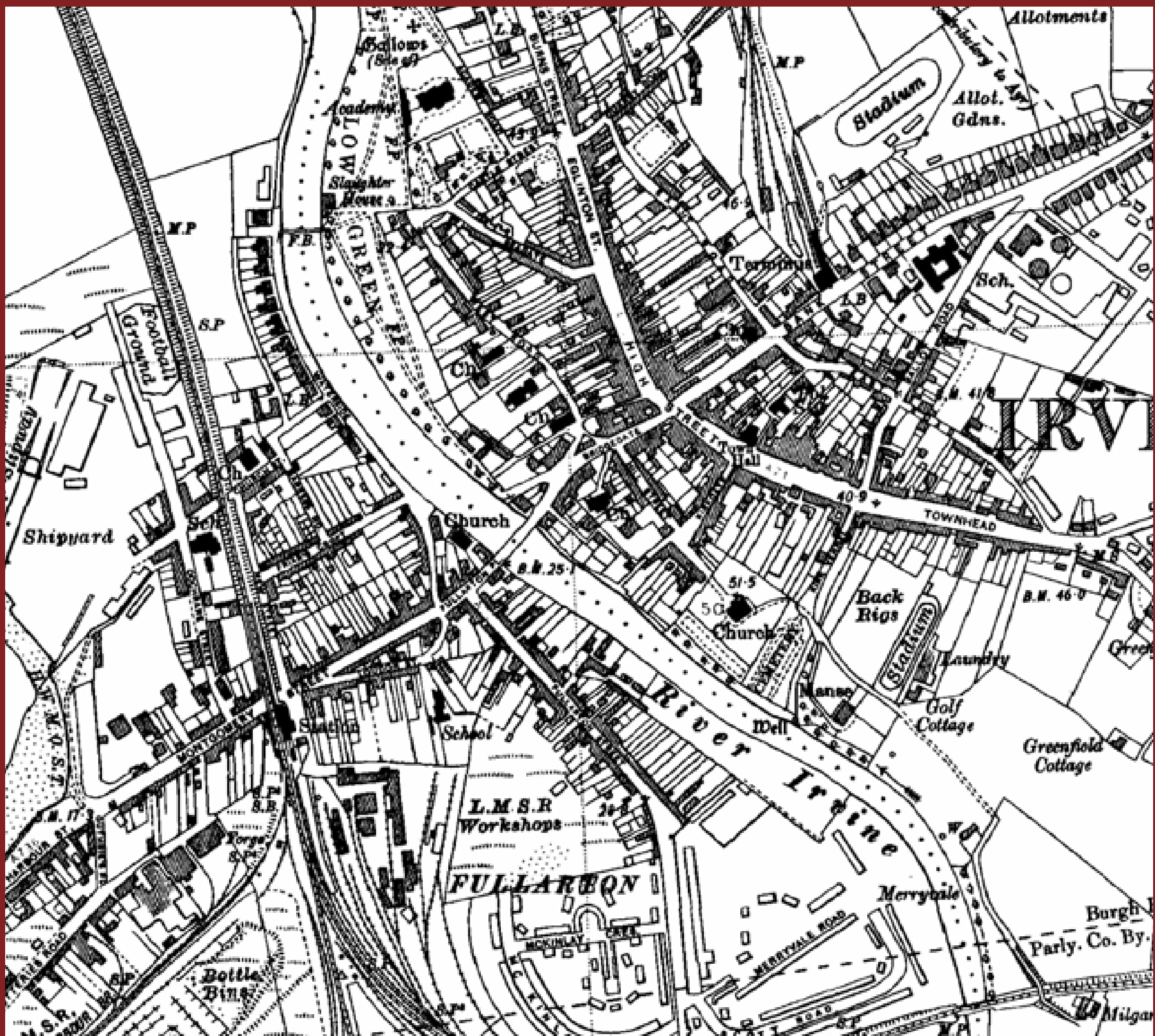
Allotments
Gallows
Academy
Stadium
Allot. Gdns.
LOW GREEN
Football Ground
Shipyard
Terminus
Sch.
HIGH STREET
EGLINTON ST.
TOWNHEAD
Church
Back Rigs
Stadium
Laundry
Manse
Well
River Irvine
Golf Cottage
Greenfield Cottage
School
L.M.S.R Workshops
FULLARTON
Merryvale
Burgh
Parly. Co. By.
Bottle Bins

The Past

The five towns all have historic routes, Stevenston has a history that can be traced back 1000 years. The character of the area has however been shaped in two periods of dramatic change. The first was the Victorian era when the rail and port facilities led to widespread industrialisation. The second was the 1970s with the development of the new town (encompassing Kilwinning). The new town was never really finished and never really thrived. It attracted manufacturing industry but the town only survived because low levels of mobility meant that people had little choice but to use local facilities.

- **Prehistory:** Evidence of human habitation in the Irvine Bay area reaches well into prehistory. In the last century a 'shell mound' was found on the northern peninsula of Ardrossan with the remains of many sea shells that had provided food to prehistoric man. Also found were a chisel and two bone needles.

- **Conflict:** During the medieval period Irvine became the site for ongoing inter family warfare as the Montgomeries fought their local rivals the Cunninghames. There are several examples of where this bitter rivalry spilled out onto the town's streets.

- **Industry:** The industrialisation of Great Britain bought significant change to the five towns of Irvine Bay. There had been mining in the area since 1656 and the changes in industry caused the operation to grow substantially. In 1849 the Glengarnock Iron Company established five blast furnaces to smelt pig iron on the foreshore at Ardeer to utilise the local supply of iron ore and coal, although this was soon replaced by materials imported from Tunisia to meet new quality standards. Transport in and out of the area was mainly enabled by the ports at Saltcoats and Ardrossan, reached by unmade tracks, and later a canal (some of which can still be traced at Ardeer). The pits were a cause of prosperity and disaster as they were liable to flooding which resulted in the all too often loss of life. Industrialisation also bought the Swede Alfred Nobel to Ardeer in 1873 as he choose Ardeer as the site for his explosives factory (manufacturing 'guhr' dynamite, a safe nitro-glycerine based dynamite) and the area has remained a centre for explosive and propulsive technologies ever since.

- **New Town:** In 1965 Wilson and Womersley prepared a repot and plan for a possible new town around and including Irvine and Kilwinning. The overriding objective of the proposed developments was to "build a town where people can lead happy, healthy lives with the every opportunity for fulfilment of their diverse ambitions." The Irvine Development Corporation oversaw the development which involved changes in the historic centres and demolition of large areas of Fullarton. The best received work undertaken by the IDC was the development of the Beach Park and Magnum Centre which opened in 1976 and was a major attraction that drew visitors to the area. However, the new town legacy has damaged Irvine Bay, plans were not fully built out and the large clearances left the towns without character buildings and coherent centres.


ack's
Place
HOTEL

The Present

Since the 1990s the manufacturing base of the area has been decimated. This has triggered a cycle of decline in which the loss of money to the local economy has led to the decline of the town centres. That decline has coincided with improvements in competing centres and the resurgence of Glasgow. Increasing mobility has meant that those with money to spend have taken it elsewhere leading to further decline locally. The local population are increasingly divided between those with money and mobility and those without either who are unable to compete for jobs or travel to work elsewhere.

- **Declining economic base:** The New Town left the area over-dependent on manufacturing industry. The economic strategy of the Development Corporation was based on attracting inward investment which it did very successfully. However this investment has not stuck and companies like Volvo have now left the area together with long established companies like ICI. There remains a significant manufacturing base of the area and there are opportunities for growth in energetics in particular. However the answer to the area's economic problems is unlikely to lie in a widespread revival of the manufacturing sector.

- **Loss of spending power:** Economic decline has triggered a cycle of decline caused by a loss of money circulating in the local economy. The population has declined as has the amount of money in people's pockets. However the town centres remain reasonably lively and there is not widespread vacancy. The lack of spending power has however caused the centres to head down market with units taken over by pound shops and charity shops.

- **A two speed economy:** The area is developing a two-speed economy. Those with money who may live in the area but rarely venture into the town centres and those without who find themselves increasingly unable to compete for jobs or to travel to work elsewhere but can live in relative comfort with few incentives to change things. There is a need to attract new people into the area to increase local spending power. However this cannot be at the expense of dealing with the issues faced by the local population.

- **Outdated land supply:** One of the consequences of industrial decline is that the supply of employment land has far outstripped demand. As a result many of the industrial estates are under occupied and feel neglected. There is a need to rationalise the industrial land supply and to modernise the land that remains in order to retain and attract employers.

- **Prognosis:** The trends outlined above could create a number of future scenarios. The most gloomy is one in which population loss, an erosion of local spending power, manufacturing closures and town centre decline all reach a tipping point. In this scenario people attracted to live in the area through new house building increasingly shun the declining urban centres thus depriving the existing residents and businesses of the benefits of new development. As has happened in UK cities like Leeds, this can create a two-speed economy with increasing disparities of wealth. Our work attempts to avoid this reality.

Strengths

Irvine Bay has a number of fantastic natural, historical and built assets. These assets have been masked by the industrialisation of the area in the late 19th century and the later development of the new town. However they are still there and can be exploited to regenerate the area. This is all within easy reach of the economic vitality of Glasgow, and the important gateways of Prestwick Airport and the ferry to Arran. These strengths could be used as the basis for a strategy to make Irvine Bay a good place to visit and to live.

- **Attractions:** It was made clear at the workshop that the Irvine Bay area has many strengths and attractions:
  - An attractive coastline with some beautiful beaches and dunes (which the towns largely turn their back on)
  - High quality marina facilities at Ardrossan with scope for expansion adjacent to world class sailing areas
  - A rich maritime history in Irvine and the under used resources of the Maritime Museum
  - A historic coastal resort in Saltcoats
  - A historic market town in Kilwinning with a abbey founded almost 900 years ago.
  - A tremendous natural environment and views to the Isle of Arran
  - Thirteen golf courses including a number of 'links' courses, some of which are world-class standard.
  - A strong sense of community spirit.
  - Excellent transport links to Glasgow and to Prestwick Airport.

- **Market:** All of these assets are within easy reach of the economic vitality of the Glasgow region and the important gateway of Prestwick Airport. A number of recent studies have explored this potential including the report into the impact of Ryanair flying into Prestwick, the McKenzie Wilson study on the potential of sailing and the report on the impact of the extension of the M77. It is clear that there is a huge potential market for people who might visit the area including the visitors arriving at Prestwick those embarking for Arran, those using the 13 golf courses in the area and those within easy drive in the wider region.

- **Livability**: As other areas have found, the elements needed to attract these people to visit Irvine Bay are similar to those that attract people to live, and to set up businesses in an area. Indeed with the growth of second homes and weekend retreats the lines between visitors and residents are becoming more blurred. It is clear that Irvine Bay is not maximising the potential of this market to the extent that its natural assets would suggest that it should. The trick will be to ensure that these opportunities are exploited to attract visitors and residents while spreading the benefit to the existing community.

The Lowell exemplar:

This strategy is similar to the example of Lowell, a mill town about 30 miles from Boston in the US that suffered the catastrophic loss of its textile industry. Its strategy was not to replace the jobs but to make it self a good place to live and to improve transport links to Boston which was booming. It started to attract commuters and in the first five years there was a significant outflow of people going to work in Boston. However as Boston got more expensive, companies started to move out to Lowell. The great step forward happened when Wang Computers converted a mill complex in the town. After 10 years there were as many people commuting into Lowell from Boston as there were in the other direction.

Strategy

The work that has been done to date on the development of strategy for the area has taken two approaches. One has been targeted at supporting and developing the existing community and business base while the other has been based on attracting outsiders to bring extra spending power into the area which in turn will stimulate the economy and generate new jobs.

The strategy for the area needs to combine these two approaches. Attracting outsiders to live in the area will exploit the area's strengths and tap into the economic potential of the Glasgow region. This will secure the long-term future of the area but is unlikely to do so quickly enough to help the existing population. This strategy therefore needs to be combined with a strategy to assist the area today, to renew its neighbourhoods and to support and expand its economic base.

- **The Yellow Book Strategy:** This strategy made the case for the URC and developed a strategy based on four objectives: increasing the number of local jobs; attracting and retaining key workers and high income households; realigning land-use policy and to improving the amenity and quality of life. The report covered a great deal of ground and sought to balance improvements to the existing situation with the encouragement of new housing.

- **The Tribal Strategy:** The Tribal strategy takes a different approach. It starts by dismissing manufacturing industry as well as the 'fickle' tourist industry and concludes that there is a need to attract knowledge, creative and high skilled jobs. However the report suggests that there is little chance of this happening at present. The suggested solution is to attract the people who work in these industries to live in the area. Overtime these people will start up new businesses allowing the grow of indigenous knowledge business. The strategy is therefore to encourage new housing for people who will commute to Glasgow, with care taken that the towns should not become dormitory centres – 'living on the edge of Glasgow but not in its shadow'. They propose taking the area up-market, creating a higher-quality retail and leisure offer to attract the spending of the newcomers - 'the city by the sea' as they call it. This will inject more money in the local economy and start to address the weaknesses in the economy.

The strategy is therefore based on the following elements:

- Exploiting and enhancing the area's natural and built assets to attract spend into the area from the ***Glasgow City region***.

- A major part of this will be to exploit the area's unique selling point, its ***Coast*** through a strategy to develop a coastal park to attract visitors new residents and leisure spending.

- The aim will be to increase ***jobs and wealth*** in the area both directly by investing in the local economy and indirectly by attracting greater spending power from new residents and visitors.

- In order to achieve this it will be vital to **enhance the environment** of the area, both the appearance of the five town centres and the countryside between the towns.

- Together the strategy will **change perceptions** of the Irvine Bay area from 'worn-out' new town by the sea to a beautiful chain of historic coastal towns.

The aim of the strategy will therefore be to 'rediscover the coast and enhance connections to Glasgow, create a vibrant Irvine Bay with a strong economy, a high quality of life and an enhanced environment'