



PRESS RELEASE

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PLANNERS BLOCKING INVESTMENT IN SOUTH AYRSHIRE

The house building industry today slammed the abysmal performance record of South Ayrshire Council's planning department and accused it of blocking investment in the area.

The Scottish Executive expects local authorities to decide on 80% of major residential planning applications within four months but figures prepared for a meeting of the Scottish Parliament's Finance Committee show that South Ayrshire Council has managed to process only 26% of applications within this timeframe¹.

Allan Lundmark, Director of Planning at Homes for Scotland, the organisation that represents companies building 95% of the country's new homes, said that the ambitions of people in South Ayrshire to own their own homes were being frustrated and described the situation as "scandalous". He went on:

"South Ayrshire needs more new homes but the planning department is blocking the significant investment the house building industry is ready to make to deliver them and the supporting community infrastructure. This money would enhance the social, economic and environmental well-being of the communities in South Ayrshire. Instead it would appear that Councillors prefer to preside over a planning system that keeps much needed investment locked up in filing cabinets."



Calling for an urgent overhaul of the planning system in Scotland, Lundmark also bitterly condemned Scottish Executive proposals to introduce a Third Party Right of Appeal, noting that, on the basis of current figures, it would serve only to grind the current planning system to a virtual halt and ensure investment was frustrated even further.

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Notes to editors:

1. Scottish Executive figures show that for the period 01/04/03 – 31/03/04 South Ayrshire Council processed only 26% of major residential planning applications within the performance target timeframe of four months.
2. Homes for Scotland (www.homesforscotland.com) is the representative membership body for the home building and residential development industry in Scotland. Its member companies provide 95% of all new homes in Scotland. The largest user of the planning system in Scotland, the industry also contributes more than £3.5 billion to the economy and employs more than 110,000 people.