

MSP warns against unsuitable buildings

Following an announcement by the Scottish government that the planning system will be changed, North Ayrshire and Arran MSP has warned against unsuitable buildings on Arran.

The wide-ranging package of planning improvements will aim to make Scotland's planning system leaner and fitter and work to improve efficiency, ensuring planning is geared towards economic growth.

Mr Gibson said: 'We do not want development on Arran for the sake of it.

'What islanders want to see are positive and enabling changes, involving local people at an earlier stage of the process.

'Better joint working to free up resources will ensure local priorities are addressed. With the right partnerships in place and a smarter approach, applicants will be provided with

quicker decisions.'

In September, 21 Arran residents including six community councillors attended a seminar arranged by MSP Kenneth Gibson and hosted by Planning Aid for Scotland in the Ormidale Pavilion.

Five planning experts were on hand to give insights into the new Planning Act (Scotland) 2006. The delegates heard how it could be easier for the public to make comments to planning applications in layman's terms and without resorting to jargon.

They also heard that a new electronic planning system is to be formally launched next Spring.

The moves have been developed in partnership with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish En-

vironment Protection Agency, Scottish Water, Architecture and Design Scotland, Historic Scotland, Transport Scotland, the Scottish Property Federation and Homes for Scotland.

To aid clarity, the Scottish government is streamlining more than 20 separate Scottish planning policies into one. The first two parts, on core principles and the key elements of the planning system are published today. The third part, a statement of policy on a number of development themes, will be published in spring 2009.

Other measures include the setting up of a dedicated unit to support the requirements of strategic environmental assessment and a group to identify ways to get more people onto planning courses and get more interchanges between the public and private sectors.