1. Purpose of Report

1.1 My last report informing the Committee of progress in advancing the Master Plan was in February 1999. This report will update the Committee on progress since that date.

2. Sustainability Implications

2.1 As part of the Council's commitment to Agenda 21 this report requires to be assessed to highlight the likely sustainability implications of its proposals. In summary, this project scores highly in terms of most aspects of the sustainability checklist.

3. Structure Plan

3.1 The Glasgow & Clyde Valley Structure Plan Consultative Draft identifies Ravenscraig-Motherwell-Wishaw as one of three potential National Flagship Initiatives. The Plan acknowledges the proposal for a new town centre at Ravenscraig and associated restructuring of Wishaw and Motherwell town centres, however, it also recognises that further work on retail capacity and feasibility is required.

3.2 The Plan also identifies Ravenscraig/Motherwell/Wishaw as an Urban Renewal Area and Ravenscraig as a Green Network Priority and a Core Economic Development Area within which its potential as a single user high amenity site is highlighted.

4. Southern Area Local Plan

4.1 The Master Plan proposals have been included in the Southern Area Local Plan Consultative Draft. My report to the Committee dated 24 February 1999 on the result of the Consultation process for the local plan advised that the Ravenscraig Master Plan proposals had been included but had attracted a number of objections, primarily to the proposal for a new town centre. These objections will be heard at a Public Inquiry into the Local Plan.
5. Joint Venture

It was originally thought that there would be a two-way Joint Venture Agreement between British Steel and the Lanarkshire Development Agency/Scottish Enterprise. It is now the intention that there will be an Interim Agreement signed with a Preferred Developer which will enable them to become involved in progressing the Master Plan. The full agreement forming the Joint Venture Company will not be signed until planning permission for the redevelopment of the site has been granted.

6. Studies/Strategies

6.1 Following the original agreement of the Council to support the Ravenscraig Master Plan proposals subject to further work being carried out on a list of topics, the various pieces of work were prioritised by the Council and the LDA. A series of briefs were prepared and consultants were appointed to undertake the work.

6.2 Two of the most significant pieces of work which are being carried out at present are the study of the town centres, which is titled “Restructuring the Urban Function” and the sustainability assessment of the Master Plan which is known as the “Sustainability Audit”.

6.3 “Restructuring the Urban Function” is being carried out by Edaw on behalf of the Council and LDA. The study is developing the concept of the new town centre at Ravenscraig which was proposed in the Master Plan. This involves testing different sizes of development, likely tenant mixes and basic layouts. The study examines the impacts that the new town centre is likely to have on the surrounding town centres and the timing of these and suggests strategies for managing their changing roles. This is a large piece of work and is one of those mentioned in the Structure Plan (see para 3.1). It is due for completion in September.

6.4 The Sustainability Audit examines the Master Plan and aims to ensure that mechanisms are built into the project from the outset to ensure that the development of the site is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. It will identify where improvements could be made to the Master Plan and will identify actions which could be taken during the development process to ensure that the sustainability of the development is maximised.

6.5 The list of all the studies associated with Ravenscraig is given in Appendix 1. This appendix outlines the current position on each of these studies.

6.6 One of the factors which has become clear as the various studies progress is the lack of a corporate approach by the Council to the issues raised in relation to Ravenscraig. In an effort to overcome this difficulty an inter-departmental workshop has been held to start to identify Corporate Priorities associated with the project. It is intended that there will be a series of issue based workshops involving relevant personnel from different departments.

7. Progress on Site

7.1 British Steel is continuing to progress work on the site. The Secure Containment Facility (SCF) has now been excavated, filled and capped in accordance with the approved plans. The landscaping works have also been completed and the release of the second phase of the restoration bond has been initiated by the Council. Monitoring of the SCF for gas and contaminated leachate will be on-going. The contaminated ground water treatment plant at the Todhole Burn is now operational and all buildings on the site, other than British Steel’s offices, have been demolished.
Planning permission was given for the spine road in November 1998 and at that time it was anticipated that the road would be constructed in phases. There has now been a change in the LDA’s strategy and a contract for the construction of the entire road will be let before the end of this year. Under the terms of Resider funding, which is contributing to the financing of the road building programme, the works will have to be completed within two years of the contract being let.

The Committee will note that also being considered at this meeting are three applications for planning permission for developments associated with the project. Two alternative locations are being considered for a marketing/information centre for the site and there are earthmoving and landscaping works associated with the spine road at the Carfin end of the site. Each proposal is described fully in my application reports.

8. Future Progress

8.1 In terms of the future progress of the project there are five key issues which have to be addressed.

a) The first of these issues is the signing of the various legal agreements between LDA, British Steel and the preferred developer. These are not directly within the control of the Council but progress is vital to the advancement of the project.

b) The next key issue is to have the Master Plan proposals incorporated into the Development Plan process. This is being done through the Local Plan and Structure Plan processes as detailed in sections 3 and 4, above.

c) The strategy for the town centres has to be determined and it is envisaged that this will be finalised following completion of the Edaw report.

d) In addition, the Wider Area Impacts of this Project have to be considered and it is envisaged that the development of the studies indicated in Appendix 1 will help to resolve the relevant issues.

e) Finally, the Corporate Aims for the project have to be clarified if the maximum benefits for the Community of North Lanarkshire are to be achieved and I hope that through the key issue workshops these can be developed.

9. Recommendation

9.1 I recommend that the Committee note the contents of this report and welcomes progress to date on the project.

David M Porch
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Date:- 27th July 1999

For further information please contact: Lorna Bowden on extension 01698 302127
RESTRUCTURING THE URBAN FUNCTION

Aim: To look at the new town centre on Ravenscraig, to assess the impact the new centre will have on Motherwell and Wishaw town centres and to look at alternative and complimentary roles for these centres, suggesting ways in which these changes might be managed.

Involves: NLC, LDA and EDAW

Current position: Draft Report under preparation

SUSTAINABILITY AUDIT

Aim: To ensure that mechanisms are built into the project from its outset to ensure that the development is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. This will provide an overarching framework for each element of the development.

Involves: NLC, LDA and EKOS

Current position: Comments on draft report are with consultants

TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Aim: Currently focused on provision of public transport system for the site, particularly the provision of a railway station within the site.

Involves: NLC, LDA and SPT

Current Position: Delayed pending production of Local Transport Strategy

LANARKSHIRE HOUSING MARKET STUDY

Aim: To monitor the effect of the release of land for housing development at Ravenscraig on the surrounding housing market. Also to influence the standard of house design and housing tenure mix.

Involves: NLC, Scottish Homes, LDA and GVA Grimley

Current position: A draft report is currently under consideration.
MARKETING STUDY

Aim: To establish the marketing position for Ravenscraig, to identify and prioritise market segments and target audiences and to make recommendations on the re-branding of Ravenscraig, Motherwell and Wishaw.

Involves: NLC, LDA and John Lord Associates/Classic Concepts

Current Position: Study has been completed and will be reported to Committee.

MARKETING CENTRE FEASIBILITY STUDY

Aim: To assess whether there is a role for a marketing and educational centre on the Ravenscraig site. Also examines suitable locations and building types.

Involves: NLC, LDA and Tourism Resource Company

Current Position: Report complete and planning applications submitted for two locations within site. One is for the re-use of British Steel’s offices at Craigneuk and the other is for a new build facility on the route of the proposed spine road.

ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE STUDY

Aim: To establish the current ecological position on site and to identify any specific habitats and/or species which require to be protected from development. This will form the basis for the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Involves: LDA, Halcrow Crouch, SNH and NLC


WIDER AREA STRATEGY

Aim: To pull together the various studies that are being carried out and to formulate a strategy to deal with potential impacts and linkages to the wider area.

Involves: LDA have put a brief out to consultants and are currently considering their submissions with a view to making an appointment in early August.
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Aim: To undertake the Environmental Impact Assessment for the outline planning application for the proposed development.

Involves: LDA, British Steel and Preferred Developer

Current Position: Consultants have been interviewed but LDA have held off appointing until the Preferred Developer has signed the Interim Agreement.

ARENA FEASIBILITY STUDY

Aim: To examine the demand for a multi-functional arena on the site and to look at the associated uses. Will also assess the various options for locating an arena on the site.

Involves: LDA and KPMG

Current Position: Study has commenced.

OTHER STUDIES TO BE CARRIED OUT:

Traffic Impact Assessment
Transportation Study
Landscape Strategy
Commercial Premises Study
Urban Design Strategy