

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Planning Committee: 5 December 2012

DC12/240: Change of use from retail (class 1) to betting shop (class 2) at 165 Main Street, Alexandria by Betfred

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1** This application relates to a property that is owned by the Council. Under the terms of the approved scheme of delegation it therefore requires to be determined by the Planning Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1** Grant planning permission.

3. DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

- 3.1** The application relates to an existing retail unit located within the main shopping area in Alexandria town centre. The property is part of a 2 storey building and is bounded by retail units on either side, a car park to the rear and a road to the front with more commercial properties on the opposite side. The unit is currently vacant and was last occupied in January 2010 by a sportswear retailer.
- 3.2** Planning permission is sought to change the use of the unit from a shop (Use Class 1) into a betting shop (Use Class 2). As well as the change of use it is also proposed to alter the frontage of the shop. At present the unit has recessed double doors located in the middle of the shop front with large glass display windows on either side. The new shop front would have a single door on the far right hand side and two large windows stretching from the fascia sign down to the ground level would be installed to the left of the door. Internally, at the rear of the unit, a small kitchen area and toilet would be installed for staff and a customer toilet would also be added. Most of the interior of the unit would consist of the public area for customers.
- 3.3** The applicant currently occupies a unit at 102 Main Street, and it is proposed that if the current application were to be approved then the existing shop would close and be relocated to 165 Main Street. The applicant has indicated that the reason for the relocation is by moving premises the business would gain a larger unit that is located in a slightly busier part of the town centre with more passing trade. The proposed hours of operation of the unit are Monday to Saturday 8am to 10pm and Sunday 9am to 10pm.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1** West Dunbartonshire Council Roads Service, Environmental Health, and Estates Section have no objections to the use.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1** None.

6. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010

- 6.1** The site lies within the defined Alexandria town centre, which policies RET1 and RET2 indicate to be the preferred location for retail and commercial leisure activities in order to sustain and improve its vitality and viability. The proposed betting shop is a commercial leisure operation, and it is therefore appropriate for it to locate within the town centre. RET5 supports town centre enhancement, including appropriate non-retail uses. There is no policy presumption against change of use of existing retail floorspace/frontage within Alexandria and therefore the proposed use accords with the local plan.

7. ASSESSMENT AGAINST MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Scottish Planning Policy

- 7.1** This supports the provision of a mixture of uses and activities within town centres. It recognises that shopping patterns are changing and town centres should support a diverse range of community and commercial activities. Planning Advice Note 59 (Improving Town Centres) emphasises the importance of providing a range of facilities within town centres in order to ensure the attractiveness of the centre. PAN 52 (Planning in Small Towns) does acknowledge that a reduction in the number/variety of shops and an associated increase in the number of non-retail uses can reduce the attractiveness of town centres. However, in this case, the unit has been vacant for some time, and the proposal would not result in any reduction in the existing retail offer. It is considered that the proposal would be in compliance with all relevant national policies and guidelines.

Acceptability of Use

- 7.2** Within the immediate area there are a mix of uses including pubs, cafes, and hot food take-aways, as well as other class 2 uses such as banks, estate agents and a dental practice. The proposed betting shop would be an appropriate use for this mixed-use area. The applicant currently occupies a unit at 102 Main Street which would become vacant as a result of the proposal, and the existing unit would be able to be used as a shop in the future, if required.
- 7.3** In terms of design, the proposed new shop front would contain a large amount of glass which would help to maintain a sense of openness. Almost all of the other commercial units within the immediate area have frontages that contain a high proportion of glass which allows some of the activity taking place inside

the units to be visible from the street. By having an 'active' frontage the unit will interact with and contribute to the vitality of the street. The general design of the new frontage would be in keeping with the area and is considered to be acceptable.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1** The proposal involves the relocation of an existing betting office within Alexandria town centre. The proposed use would be located within an appropriate area where it would contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre. The proposal complies with all relevant national and local planning policies.

9. CONDITIONS

- 9.1** None

Informatives

- 01** *The applicant is advised that under the terms of Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended), the development hereby approved must commence within a period of 3 years from the date of this decision notice.*
- 02.** *The applicant is advised that under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008, the developer is required to submit to the Planning Authority in writing upon the forms specified for the purpose and attached to this decision notice:*
- a)** *A Notice of Commencement of Development as soon as practicable once it is decided to commence the development hereby approved (which shall be prior to the development commencing);*
 - b)** *A Notice of Completion of Development as soon as practicable once the development has been completed*
- 03.** *A grant of planning permission does not authorise works under the Building (Scotland) Acts. A separate Building Warrant may be required.*
- 04.** *The plans referred to as part of this decision are Location Plan, 803BF-165EP, 803BF-165LP.*

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and Economic Development
Date: 19 November 2012

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Appendix: None

Background Papers:

1. Application forms and plans
2. West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010
3. Consultation responses

Wards affected: Ward 2 (Leven)