

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Planning Committee: 6 September 2011

Subject: Consultation from Argyll and Bute Council: Erection of Class 1 food store, petrol filling station, associated access, parking, landscaping and all associated ancillary development off Cardross Road, Craigendoran, Helensburgh

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To inform the Committee of a consultation received from Argyll & Bute Council in respect of a planning application for the above development and to agree the Council's response to the consultation.

2. Background

- 2.1** The proposed development site is located off Cardross Road (A814) in Craigendoran, Helensburgh to the immediate south of the new Hermitage Academy, and therefore to the east of Helensburgh. In the Argyll and Bute Local Plan, the majority of the site is identified for industry and business with a small area identified as open space. The proposal is for a foodstore of 36,500 sq ft (3390 sq m) (proposed to be operated by Waitrose) with petrol filling station and parking.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) requires proposals for retail development to be considered against a 'sequential test'. Town centres are the preferred location, followed by edge-of-centre sites, then commercial centres and finally out-of-centre. The development site is located outwith Helensburgh town centre and is therefore considered to be an out-of-centre location in sequential terms.
- 3.2** Argyll and Bute Council recently published its Main Issues Report and it identified an opportunity at 'Pier Head' as the preferred location for new retail development in Helensburgh. The development site off Cardross Road in Craigendoran was also included in the main issues report as an option for retail development. However it is not Argyll and Bute Council's preferred site given its location out-of-centre and it is part of an existing business allocation. This Council was consulted on the Argyll and Bute Main Issues Report and supported Argyll and Bute Council's preference for the identification of the site closest to the settlement centre and requested that any retail development opportunities identified are of a scale and size to serve the Helensburgh catchment, and not of a size or format that would seek to draw trade from West Dunbartonshire area or have a detrimental impact on West Dunbartonshire's town centres'.

- 3.3** The applicant has provided a retail assessment which establishes the catchment area that the proposed store will draw its trade from. The catchment is split into two zones; Zone 1 being Helensburgh and surrounding areas and Zone 2 being Balloch, Alexandria and Dumbarton. The assessment estimates that 70% of the proposed store's trade will come from residents in Zone 1, 20% from residents of Zone 2 and 10% from elsewhere. The reliance on West Dunbartonshire residents for 20% of the proposed store's trade indicates that the store proposed is too large for the Helensburgh catchment. Whilst it is appropriate for a new store to be sought in Helensburgh to seek to clawback expenditure leakage, this should not be of a size that it relies on significant expenditure from another catchment. As well as diverting West Dunbartonshire expenditure from West Dunbartonshire stores, there is a sustainability issue with regard to encouraging people to travel further to undertake shopping.
- 3.4** The assessment also sets out the likely impact on West Dunbartonshire stores should Waitrose development go ahead on its own and also if in combination with the Pierhead development. Discussions between West Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute officers are requested with regard to methodology and some of the assumptions used within the impact assessment, particularly as some of the impact figures calculated are considered to be low. The applicant's assessment suggests that with Waitrose developed on its own there would be £19M diverted from West Dunbartonshire stores to the proposed Waitrose with a 3% impact on trade in stores in Dumbarton and Alexandria Town Centres, 6% on Asda, 5% impact on Morrisons and 6% impact on M&S Simply Food (all Dumbarton). With the Pierhead site also developed trade diversion rises to £23.1M, with the impact on Asda increasing to 13% and Morrisons to 6%, and staying the same on the others. Some of this impact is the acceptable clawback of expenditure from the Helensburgh area, but some of it is due to the loss of West Dunbartonshire based trade owing the proposed store being too large for its immediate catchment.
- 3.5** As well as impact on existing stores, the proposal would have an impact on any proposals for new foodstore floorspace in both Alexandria and Dumbarton Town Centres.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues associated with this report.

5. Financial Implication

- 5.1** There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 No risks have been identified in relation to this report.

7. Equalities Impact

7.1 There are not considered to be any equality issues associated with this report.

8. Strategic Assessment

8.1 The regeneration of Dumbarton and Alexandria town centres are priorities of the Council, and there is concern that the proposed development could impact adversely upon the vitality and viability of the town centres.

9. Conclusion and Recommendation

9.1 The Waitrose store proposed at Helensburgh is in an out-of-centre location, when a sequentially preferable location exists. The store proposed is too large to be supported by the immediate Helensburgh catchment and will rely on 20% of its turnover from West Dunbartonshire residents. This will have an adverse impact on existing foodstores within West Dunbartonshire and could impact on foodstore-led regeneration initiatives for Dumbarton and Alexandria town centres.

9.2 It is recommended that the Committee agree that the Council object to this planning application and submit Section 3 of this report as the Council's representation.

Elaine Melrose

Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Date: 21 September 2011

Person to Contact: Pamela Clifford, Planning and Building Standards Manager,
Housing, Environmental & Economic Development,
Rosebery Place, Clydebank,
G81 1TG.
Tel: 01389 738656
Email: Pamela.Clifford@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices: **None**

Background Papers: **Consultation papers from Argyll and Bute Council**

Wards Affected: All