

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services)

Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee: 7 February 2007

Subject : Dumbarton Housing and Commercial Study

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To inform the Committee of the preparation of the Dumbarton Housing and Commercial Study, outline its broad content and to seek the Committee's approval to provide partnership support to Dunbritton Housing Association for the next stage in taking the study forward to implementation.
- 1.2** To support the inclusion of these sites within the emerging West Dunbartonshire Local Plan.

2. Background

- 2.1** This study was commissioned in December 2005 by the Council, Dunbritton Housing Association and the former Town Centres Initiative Ltd. Consultants Turley Associates, who have past experience in preparing similar studies, were appointed in conjunction with Ryden Property Consultants. The aim of the study was to identify opportunities for investment in affordable housing and commercial property in Dumbarton town centre. This involved looking at the existing fabric of buildings, potential for conversion, and potential for new developments which could positively enhance areas of the town centre.
- 2.2** The Council's support of the study relates to the Rediscovering Dumbarton, Dumbarton Town Centre Action Plan. The Action Plan recognises the importance of encouraging residential development above commercial premises, to create a livelier town centre. In addition, the current Local Plan encourages the use of vacant upper floors within town centres.
- 2.3** The study examined trends in the office, retail and residential markets, sources of funding and opportunity sites. The opportunity sites were short listed following questionnaires and interviews with tenants and owners to establish interest, and a workshop with relevant Council officers, Dunbritton Housing Association and Communities Scotland.

3. Main Issues

3.1 The following key findings were made by the consultants;

- The development of a modern business centre would address the demonstrable lack of modern, good quality office accommodation in the town centre;
- There is a demand from social economy organisations such as Dunbritton Housing Association, for office space in the town centre;
- There are potential economic benefits for the town centre, if a more significant number of office staff was based there;
- It would be desirable to introduce some social rented housing and low cost home ownership in the town centre, to maintain a balance in supply; and
- The likely principal sources of funding would be from Communities Scotland, Historic Scotland and partnerships with the private sector.

3.2 The following five projects were identified with the most potential to be delivered within the town centre;

- North-west corner of High Street and Bridge Street
- 147, 149 -157 High Street
- Card Warehouse, Quay Street Toilets and former Nightclub
- 24-20 High Street (Co-op building)
- 10 Church Street (Dental Surgery)

3.3 Since the preparation of the Study, certain events have taken place that could impact upon the ability to deliver these sites, however it is believed that they remain worthy of consideration to be taken forward for potential implementation, in discussion with the private owners of these properties.

3.4 Preliminary design guidelines were prepared for the sites. These include development principles and the capacity of each site for different uses. The study estimates that overall, the projects would deliver 3,000 square metres of new or refurbished, ground floor mixed use and around 80 new or refurbished residential units in 1 or 2 bed flatted accommodation. It is considered that these sites should be supported as opportunities within the emerging West Dunbartonshire Local Plan.

3.5 A number of steps are recommended to take the project forward; however this is dependent on Dunbritton Housing Association leading on the project in partnership with the Council and Communities Scotland.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 There are no personnel issues at this time.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial issues at this time.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 There are no risks in relation to this report.

7. Conclusions

7.1 The study is a valuable piece of partnership work between Dunbritton Housing Association and the Council, to investigate opportunities within Dumbarton town centre. The success of the next stage depends on a number of factors, the most crucial being the willingness of private landlords and tenants to participate in any of the projects. It is considered that should any of the five sites identified be re-developed appropriately, they would make a considerable contribution to progress with the regeneration of the town centre

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- (i) note the contents of the Dumbarton Housing and Commercial Study, the possible opportunity sites arising from the study and to support Dunbritton Housing Association in progressing the study.**
- (ii) support the inclusion of these sites within the emerging West Dunbartonshire Local Plan.**

Irving Hodgson

**Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services
(Housing and Regeneration Services)**

Date : 15 January 2007

Person to Contact : Marnie Ritchie
Team Leader, Forward Planning & Regeneration
Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton G82 3PU
Tel : 01389 737175
E-mail : marnie.ritchie@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices: None

Background Papers : “Rediscovering Dumbarton, Dumbarton Town Centre Action Plan”
“Dumbarton Housing and Commercial Study”

Wards Affected : 15

