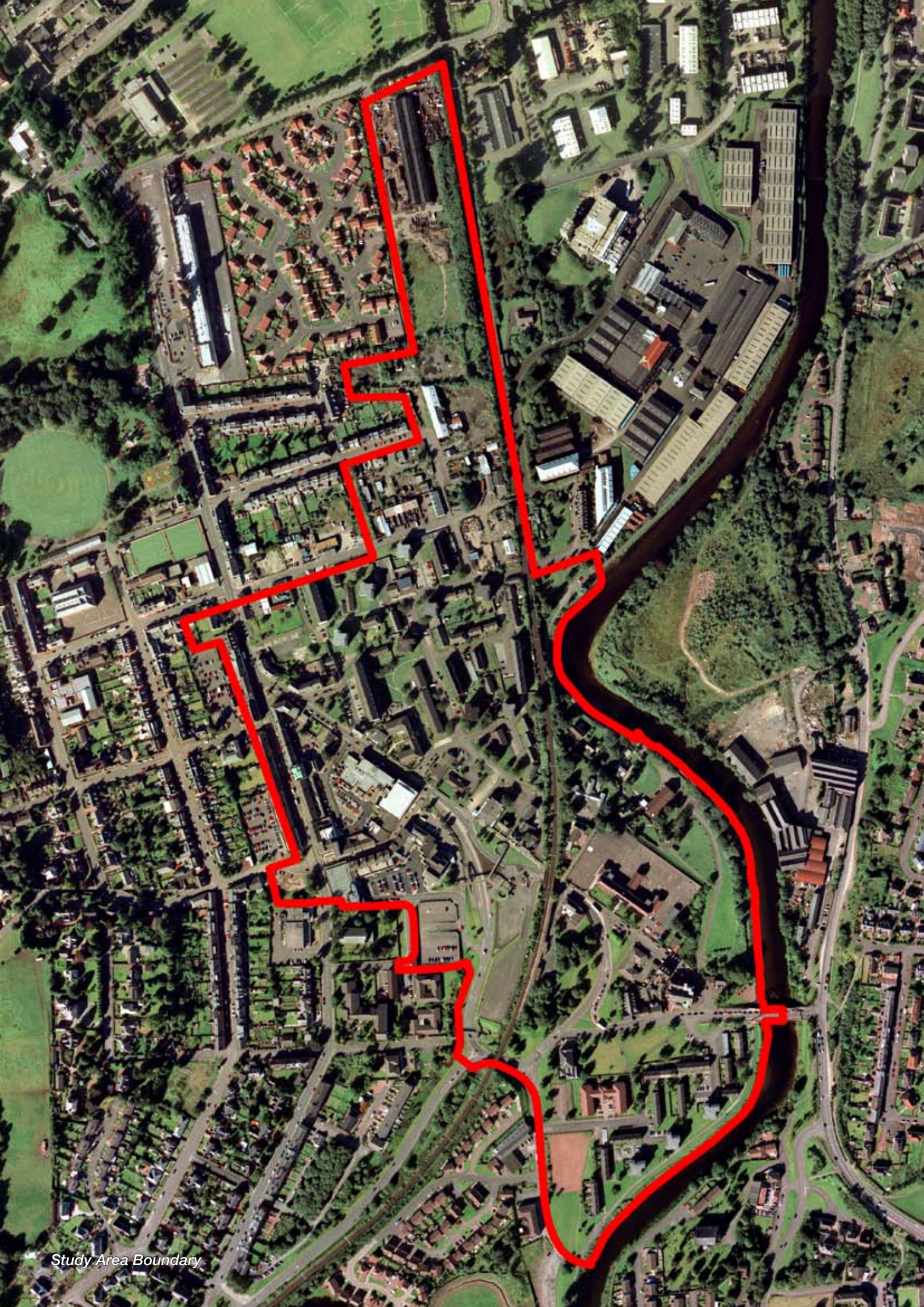


Chapter 1

Introduction





Study Area Boundary

Introduction

In April 2007, in pursuit of the objectives set out in the West Dunbartonshire Council “Town Centre Action Plan”, Gillespies in association with Yellowbook and MVA were commissioned to produce a masterplan to guide the sustainable regeneration of Alexandria Town Centre.

The vision for Alexandria contained within the Town Centre Action plan states that *“the long term vision for Alexandria is of a well functioning and sustainable town centre that serves the local community and contributes to the wider regeneration and economic development of West Dunbartonshire and the wider metropolitan area”*

This brief aims to realise this vision through the identification of strategic opportunities and recommendations derived from comprehensive research on the area.

Objectives

The challenge is to develop a clear vision for Alexandria, which has the support of the local community and stakeholders and is deliverable on the ground. The masterplan seeks to identify key interventions, both development and public realm based, to foster sustained growth. A robust delivery strategy with projects that can be phased and realised within the overall vision is also set out.

The agreed projects need to be tied in to proposals for housing regeneration priorities in Alexandria Town Centre.

Cognisance with other town centre studies has been essential to the formulation of the masterplan. To achieve this, the masterplan was written with specific reference to the following documents.

- Alexandria, *Heart of the Vale*, Town Centre Action Plan
- Dumbarton District, District Wide Local Plan,
- West Dunbartonshire Local Plan, Finalised Draft, August 2007
- Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009
- West Dunbartonshire Council Social and Economic Profile
- Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Plan
- Alexandria Streetscape Design Guide, 2006
- Alexandria Transport Feasibility Study
- Alexandria Retail Strategy, 2005

alexandria

Study Area

Alexandria is located in the Vale of Leven, which lies on the periphery of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park to the north. It is also in close proximity to the urban areas of Dumbarton and Clydebank to the south. Alexandria is the third largest settlement within West Dunbartonshire with a population of around 13,000. In a wider context, the Vale of Leven has a population of around 26,000 where five original villages now coalesce, served directly by the A82. Alexandria is showing many signs of a once prosperous post industrial settlement, which is struggling to reinvent itself as a thriving modern community.

A vital element of the study is to focus on key development areas (KDA) within the town centre. The brief identifies the following as Key Development Areas (KDA's);

- Railway Station
- Mitchell Way
- Gap Sites on Bank Street
- Former Kippen Dairy Site

The masterplan also makes specific recommendations for other areas of housing identified within the brief

(Figure 1). It makes considered recommendations on what can be demolished in the longer term, proposed phasing for re-development, and what scale, massing and patterns of development would result in the most successful redevelopment of the area and provide the most benefits for the Alexandria housing market.

Vale of Leven Hospital Site

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde recently confirmed, at its Annual Accountability Review with Nicola Sturgeon MSP (the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing on 18th August 2008), that in setting out its future vision for the Vale of Leven Hospital, the new Alexandria Health and Care Centre would be built on the Vale of Leven Hospital site.

This was subsequently confirmed in the publication of the Boards 'pre-consultation' document on the future vision for the hospital, which was formally approved by the NHS Board at a special meeting on 16th September 2008.

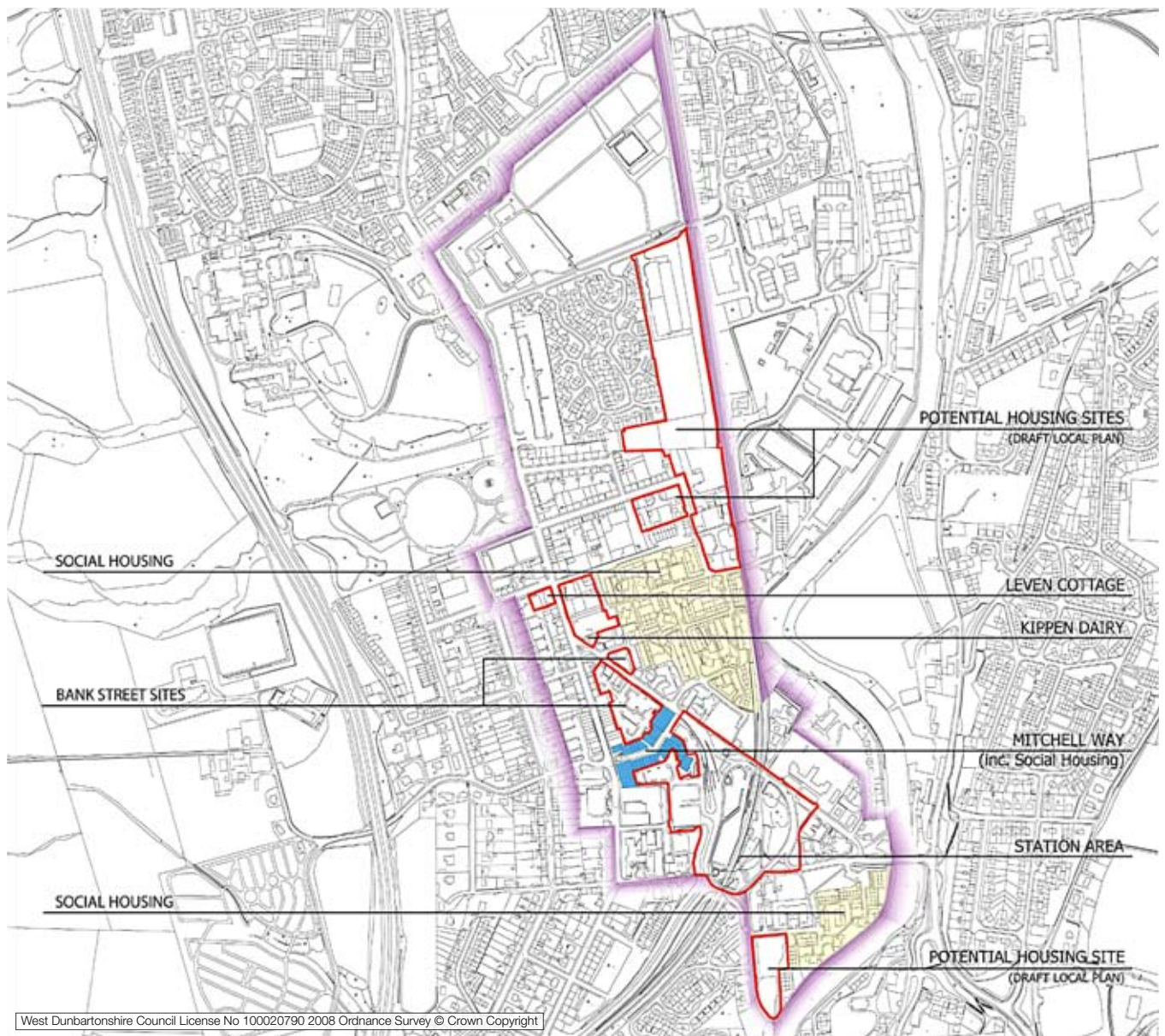


Figure 1 Key Intervention Sites

Planning Policy Context

The Scottish Government and West Dunbartonshire Council have made a commitment to the creation of sustainable communities that can meet social, economic and environmental needs. The Scottish Government has placed the creation of sustainable communities high on the planning agenda.

SPP1 'The Planning System' states that 'The architectural design, siting and setting of development in its surroundings are valid concerns of the planning system. The drive for quality should not focus solely on buildings. It should also be concerned with the way that buildings, old and new, work together and create the space and sense of place that have such an influence on the quality of life for communities.'

Policy statement "Designing Places" stresses that good design is a vital component of sustainable development. It identifies the physical qualities that can make Scottish towns, cities and villages distinctive;

- Identity
- Safe and Pleasant spaces
- Ease of movement
- A sense of welcome
- Good use of resources

The Masterplan has evolved to reflect the principles set out within Scottish Planning Policy (SPP's) and Planning Advice Notes (PAN's) including:

- PAN 67-Housing Quality
- PAN 68-Design Statements
- PAN 76- New Residential Streets
- PAN 77-Designing Safer Places
- PAN 78-Inclusive Design

At a local level, the current adopted plan covering Alexandria is the Dumbarton District, District Wide Local Plan, adopted March 1999. Presently, a finalised draft for West Dunbartonshire local plan has been prepared. A large area of the master plan boundary as shown in Figure 1 is identified as Alexandria Town Centre in both the adopted and finalised draft local plan. It is therefore subject to the normal development control criteria for such areas. Furthermore, it should be noted that Alexandria is located within the Dumbarton retail catchment when considering retail provision and retail impact assessment.