

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services

Planning Committee: 4 October 2006

Subject : West Dunbartonshire Local Plan (Consultative Draft)

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report is to advise the Committee of the responses to the West Dunbartonshire Local Plan (Consultative Draft), outline the main issues raised to the Plan and recommend the Council's response to these matters and note the next steps in the Plan process.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Committee will be aware of the publication of the West Dunbartonshire Local Plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment in January 2006 following approval at Planning Committee in September 2005.
- 2.2** In January 2006 the Plan was placed on formal deposit and the necessary statutory notices were placed. Various interest groups, including Community and Special Interest Groups, private companies, developers, planning consultancies, Government Departments and statutory undertakers were advised of the Plan's publication. As a result over 300 copies of the Plan were distributed amongst these organisations. In addition exhibits of the Local Plan were placed in local libraries, presentations were given to community groups and details were also placed on the Council's web site. Comments were sought on the Plan's content.
- 2.3** Interest in the West Dunbartonshire Local Plan has been considerable, as the public and other organisations become increasingly aware of the Plan's importance in the planning process. Over 170 parties have made representations to the Plan raising over 600 issues.
- 2.4** To take forward the West Dunbartonshire Local Plan to a Finalised Plan stage, it is necessary to consider all the responses made to the Local Plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment and set out a recommended response in order that officers can begin negotiations with those making representations.
- 2.5** It is also necessary to complete further technical work relating to the Green Belt review and a Nature Conservation Strategy to advise on natural heritage matters.

Both of these pieces of work are already underway and will inform the Local Plan process in due course.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** In terms of the representations received, the Committee should note that there has been considerable pressure for additional housing sites throughout West Dunbartonshire, including suggested Green Belt releases in Clydebank, Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven. There is also considerable support from the public concerning protection of the Green Belt in certain locations, but also concern from others about the redesignation of Dalmuir Park and Auchentoshan from Green Belt to open space. Other issues concerning economic development, the requirement for additional retailing opportunities, affordable housing and renewable energy have also been raised. Details of the major issues raised and the recommended response to them are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

Housing Sites

- 3.2** The greatest pressure for the redesignation of land is for housing, both the release of land from the Green Belt and the reallocation of industrial land for residential purposes. There are 14 Green Belt sites in Clydebank, Dumbarton, Bonhill and Milton being promoted for development by developers and landowners. However the level of the effective supply of housing land (expressed in number of houses) has increased steadily over the last 5 years, from 2,214 in 2002 to 3,802 in 2006. It stands at the highest ever level in the history of West Dunbartonshire, and indicates that there is enough land to allow over 500 private houses to be built every year for the next 7 years. This is also reflected in the Glasgow & the Clyde Valley Joint Structure Plan 2006 which has been submitted to Scottish Ministers and within which there is no requirement for additional housing land to meet demand within the relevant housing market areas in West Dunbartonshire. The Local Plan indicates a distribution of sites where a range of house types can be built and it is recommended that although there is pressure for further housing land no housing sites be released from the Green Belt.
- 3.3** There is also considerable pressure for existing industrial land to be redesignated for housing land, i.e. additional brownfield land for housing. There are 11 sites where the redesignation of industrial land for housing has been proposed. It is important to retain industrial land to ensure future economic development and the Local Plan provides policy support for this. However, in certain circumstances, such as where a business has a clear relocation strategy in place which safeguards jobs or the redevelopment offers benefit to the surrounding area, such redesignation can be agreed. In this context it is recommended that the sites at Diamond Power and the site at Castlegreen Street where the gasometers once stood are combined with the housing opportunity site to the rear of Mary Fisher Crescent to form a single residential opportunity site.

Industrial Land Supply

- 3.4** An assessment has been undertaken of industrial land supply, and it has emerged that based on past trends there is a ten year requirement for 28ha of industrial land. Whilst there is currently a marketable supply of industrial land totalling 47ha, if all the industrial sites proposed for housing development were redesignated for such a use the marketable total of industrial land would reduce to 26ha. It is therefore recommended that the sites at the Vale of Leven Industrial Estate and at Napierstone Farm, Jamestown are retained for economic development purposes, and that less marketable industrial land be considered for release to housing land in order to ensure that a 10 year supply of land of 38ha for economic development purposes is retained. The land that was previously identified for media activities adjacent to the BBC is recommended to be redesignated for housing in order that all economic development activity at Strathleven is focused on the north side of the A82.

Green Belt

- 3.5** As part of the Local Plan process a Green Belt review has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of Scottish Planning Policy 21. The review of the Green Belt has been completed however it is also necessary to consider the landscape impact of development on the Green Belt and the study to address such matters will be completed later this year. A Nature Conservation Strategy will also be undertaken to identify Local Nature Conservation Sites and Wildlife Corridors and these will be reflected in the Plan.
- 3.6** There have been considerable representations made in respect of the Green Belt. In addition to development proposals made by developers there has been a significant number of responses from members of the public in respect of two areas of Green Belt. The first concerns land at Duntiglennan Farm, north of Mirren Drive, where there have been 48 letters of representation supporting the designation of the area as Green Belt and opposing any residential development of the site. As previously indicated there is no requirement for additional housing land within West Dunbartonshire and therefore it is recommended that this area be retained in the Green Belt.
- 3.7** The second area where there has been considerable public interest concerns the area at Dalmuir Park and Auchentoshan. There have been 118 representations comprising of: Clydebelt (a local pressure group), 56 members of the public who made individual responses and a petition signed by 61 people who have objected to the Consultative Draft Plan removing this area from the Green Belt. The Green Belt review concluded that this area did not fulfill a Green Belt function and so was identified as open space, public services and woodland and parkland retention. The conclusions of Green Belt study remain valid and therefore it is recommended that this area is not included within the Green Belt, but reflect the uses that have been set out in the Consultative Draft Plan.

Renewable Energy

- 3.8** At the time of the Plan's preparation the Alteration to the Glasgow & the Clyde Valley Joint Structure Plan was being prepared and was undergoing public consultation. At this point an area of search within the Kilpatrick Hills was being promoted for a windfarm, to which a number of objections were received. As a result of further technical work and consideration of these objections the Glasgow & the Clyde Valley Joint Structure Plan 2006 (which was submitted to Scottish Ministers for approval in May) has deleted the area of search for a windfarm in the Kilpatricks. Therefore to ensure compliance with the Structure Plan it is recommended that this area of search and corresponding policy be deleted from the West Dunbartonshire Local Plan.

Retailing

- 3.9** Representations have been received from retail developers and operators on a number of retail matters. Firstly there is a wish for the Local Plan to identify additional retail opportunities. Recent studies have indicated that on a purely quantitative basis there is no requirement for additional retail floorspace above the existing floorspace and that which has planning consent, or has been identified in the Plan. There is therefore no requirement for more retailing and it is recommended that the Plan does not offer further retail opportunities to those which have planning consent or have previously been identified.
- 3.10** Several representations have also sought an extension of the area included within Dumbarton town centre. The Scottish Executive has recently published Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 8 on Retailing and Town Centres, wherein it is indicated that retail parks which offer a purely retail offer should be considered as commercial centres rather than town centres. Having regard to this advice, it is recommended that the town centre areas of Clydebank and Dumbarton be reduced to exclude their retail parks, that the Retail Parks be designated as Commercial Centres and that a relevant policy framework be established for them. This would impact upon the Clyde Retail Park, Clydebank, the K Park, Clydebank, St James Retail Park, Dumbarton and the site at Castle Street, Dumbarton.
- 3.11** Finally there has been a wish to relax the restricted frontage policy for the Artizan Centre in Dumbarton to allow non-retail uses to locate here. This centre represents the retail core of the town centre and it is not felt appropriate to allow non-retail uses to locate here. It is more appropriate for non-retail uses to locate in secondary retail areas, and therefore it is recommended that the retail frontage policy be relaxed west of the Artizan Centre on the north side of the High Street to reflect the position on the south side.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Financial provision has been made within the relevant budgets to appoint consultants to assist in completing the Green Belt Review and undertake the Nature Conservation Strategy. Provision will require to be made in future years' budgets for the printing of the Finalised Plan and undertaking a Public Local Inquiry.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Considerable effort has ensured that the West Dunbartonshire Local Plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment have reached as wide an audience as possible. It is very pleasing to note the extent of interest in the Plan and the number of individuals and organisations who are engaged in the process. The number of representations made to the Plan about a wide variety of issues is welcomed, although this may lengthen the time taken to prepare the Finalised Plan. The major issues raised as part of the consultation process and the recommended responses to these issues are listed in Appendix 1. It is intended that negotiations on all representations will be undertaken in autumn this year as part of the process for preparing the Finalised Plan.

7. Recommendations

7.1 The Committee is invited to:

- **note the interest in the West Dunbartonshire Local Plan;**
- **agree to the recommended responses to the main issues listed in Appendix 1;**
- **delegate authority to officers to negotiate with all parties making representations to the Plan in order to make relevant modifications to the Plan; and**
- **note progress in the process of preparing the finalised West Dunbartonshire Local Plan.**

David McMillan

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Date : 11 August 2006

Wards Affected : All

Appendices : Appendix 1 Recommended Response to Main Issues

Background Papers : West Dunbartonshire Local Plan
WDLP Strategic Environmental Assessment
Report to Planning Committee September 2005 : West
Dunbartonshire Local Plan

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