

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

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

Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee : 7 February 2007

Subject : Alexandria Streetscape Design Guide

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To inform the Committee of the preparation of the Alexandria Streetscape Design Guide, outline its broad content and to seek the Committee's approval for its adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance to be taken into account in the determination of any planning application lying within the geographical area covered by the Design Guide.

2. Background

- 2.1** In February 2006, Land Use Consultants were appointed as landscape architects and designers by the Council, to prepare a streetscape design guide for Alexandria. The aim was to produce a guide that would set the standards for the improvement of streets and spaces in Alexandria town centre, including Main Street, Mitchell Way and Bank Street. Similar work has already been undertaken in Dumbarton, with the production of a public realm design guide and a number of phases of works are now completed.
- 2.2** The preparation of the guide is recommended within the Alexandria, Heart of the Vale, Town Centre Action Plan, adopted by the Council in 2004.
- 2.3** The consultants reviewed existing relevant strategies for Alexandria. In particular the guide draws on information contained in the Alexandria Transport Feasibility Report, produced by Colin Buchanan and Partners in May 2006. The town's buildings and spaces were analysed and a pedestrian survey/questionnaire of 100 people was undertaken. A public workshop was also held in June 2006, involving key stakeholders and community representatives. The results of the questionnaire are contained in Appendix 1 of the guide.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** As a result of their research and analysis, the consultants identified the key issues to be addressed in the guide:

- Poorly used open space, such as car parks around the Railway Station and poorly designed open space, such as the area around the Smollett Fountain;
- The need to enhance the appearance of Victorian buildings and more contemporary developments in and around Main Street;
- The need to consider a range of co-ordinated pavement surfaces, lighting and street furniture for the town centre due to the poor mix and poor quality of existing materials; and
- Poor connections between the town centre, the River Leven and the Station.

3.2 As a result of these issues, a number of strategic objectives were identified, including:

- Enhancements to existing key streets and civic spaces;
- Improvements to connections and links around the town;
- Ensuring that new development will improve the town's streets and spaces;
- Improvements to approaches and gateways to Alexandria;
- The creation of new, small informal public spaces;
- Improvements to pedestrian access and movements around the town;
- The provision of play areas;
- The introduction of public art; and
- Architectural enhancements to buildings.

3.3 In addition, the implementation of the guide will assist with the improved integration of public transport in Alexandria town centre and a general maintenance strategy being developed by the Council, will cover the areas improved.

3.4 A detailed plan was then produced as part of the Guide, to inform future physical projects. Streets and spaces have been categorised in terms of their importance, where specific materials and layouts are recommended. For example, natural stone paving is recommended for parts of Main Street, the area around the Smollett Fountain and at Mitchell Way where it joins Main Street.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 There are no personnel issues at this time.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 It has been estimated that based on 2006 prices provided by Land Use Consultants, improvements to the streetscape areas identified would cost £1,435,000. Subject to the availability of funding, it is anticipated that the work would be undertaken on a phased basis. Eight work packages have been identified, varying in cost from £45,000 around the Smollett Fountain, to £360,000 for Main Street. Areas selected would be dependent on the level of

funding available including external funding opportunities and include areas where work would not be compromised by any future developments.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** A modest capital allocation has been made available in recent years for Alexandria town centre. However, if the Council was to consider funding the works recommended in the guide, a considerable increase in the size of allocation would be required, in order to improve the majority of the areas. In this respect, there is the risk that the implementation of the work could be affected, subject to the availability of funding within the Council and also in terms of the availability of external funding.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1** The Streetscape Design Guide provides guidance on the type, form and maintenance of hard and soft landscaping materials, street furniture and lighting and design layouts for improvements to streets and spaces within Alexandria town centre. As such, it contributes to the overall aim of the Alexandria, Heart of the Vale, Town Centre Action Plan, which is to regenerate the town centre. The Guide will be implemented as funding permits.

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- i) approve the Alexandria Streetscape Design Guide and adopt it as a guide for the manner in which the areas identified should be improved and as the basis of bids for external funding;**
- ii) actively utilise the Streetscape Design Guide as Supplementary Planning Guidance to be taken into account in the determination of any planning application lying within the geographical area covered by the Design Guide.**

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Date : 12 January 2007

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Appendices:

None

Background Papers :

Alexandria Heart of the Vale, Town Centre Action Plan
Alexandria Streetscape Design Guide
Alexandria, Transport Feasibility Report

Wards Affected :

17, 18 and 22

