

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee: 8 October 2008

Subject: Alexandria Town Centre Masterplan

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the preparation of the Alexandria Town Centre Masterplan and to outline its broad content.
- 1.2** To report the outcomes of the public consultation events held in April 2008 and the views of the Alexandria Regeneration Forum on the content of the Alexandria Town Centre Masterplan.
- 1.3** To seek approval and adoption of the Alexandria Masterplan as Supplementary Planning Guidance as a strategy for the regeneration of the town centre.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Committee will be aware of the master planning exercise which has been underway in Alexandria from May 2007, when urban design consultants Gillespies were commissioned to prepare the masterplan for the town centre. The aim of the masterplan 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 aim is to set out a strategy to consolidate the role of Alexandria based upon a modern shopping location and provide significant economic and community benefits.
- 2.2** Gillespies had previously submitted the Draft Alexandria Town Centre Masterplan for consideration when it was reported to Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee in March 2008. At the Committee it was agreed that the draft masterplan should be subject to a further stage of public consultation. Thereafter a series of public consultation events were held in April 2008 which took place in various venues throughout Alexandria.

- 2.3** The consultants were originally proposing two options for the Kippen Dairy site, the first of which considered it as the location for a replacement Medical Centre. However, on 18 August 2008, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde confirmed, at its Annual Accountability Review with Nicola Sturgeon MSP (the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing) 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 Board's 'pre-consultation' document on the future vision for the hospital which was formally approved by the NHS Board at a special meeting on 16 September 2008. This very recent decision has removed the option of developing the new Medical Centre on the Kippen Dairy site.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The public consultation events, which took the form of a series of exhibitions and presentations, were undertaken in seven communities surrounding Alexandria as well as in the town centre itself. Approximately 185 people visited the various venues throughout the course of the consultation events. A total of 114 questionnaire surveys were returned, 89 were a multiple choice option and 24 were straight questionnaires.

Of all respondents:

- 75 (66%) supported the masterplan,
- 20 (19%) did not support the masterplan, and
- 4 (4%) did not know.

Of the 89 multiple choice questionnaires:

- 67 (75%) supported the medical centre on the Kippen Dairy site, while
- 16 (18%) supported it on the Vale of Leven Hospital site.

Some respondents did not indicate a preference on this matter.

- 70 (78%) supported the redevelopment of Mitchell Way;
- 51(73%) supported the maximum intervention option for Mitchell Way;
- 14 (20%) supported the lesser intervention option for Mitchell Way.

Some respondents did not indicate a preference for either option despite indicating support for the redevelopment of Mitchell Way.

In general there was support for the masterplan that was circulated among the communities. The majority of respondents supported the medical centre on the Kippen Dairy site. There was significant support for the redevelopment of the Mitchell Way site, with the majority of respondents supporting the comprehensive redevelopment option.

3.2 The production of the Alexandria Town Centre Masterplan has coincided with the decision being taken by NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde to relocate the medical centre to the grounds of the Vale of Leven Hospital site as noted in paragraph 2.3 above. This was always a possibility throughout the preparation of the master plan which is the main reason for alternative proposals being considered for the Kippen Dairy site in parallel.

3.3 The main findings of the Alexandria Town Centre Masterplan, which was informed by the findings of the public consultation events, are the identification of six key intervention sites with the following proposals.

3.4 The Kippen Dairy site

Following the decision stated in paragraph 2.3 above there is now only one option for the development of this site which is for residential development. The consultants have proposed the development of two residential blocks with pedestrian access from Alexander Street extending to join Main Street, improving linkages to the river from the town centre.

3.5 Leven Cottage site

The masterplan contains one redevelopment proposal for this site which involves the residential development of the site.

3.6 Mitchell Way site

Two redevelopment options have been identified for this site. The first, preferred option, is the maximum intervention option and involves Mitchell Way being demolished and the full redevelopment of the site. In addition to this a number of the 1970s style retail units on Main Street are proposed to be redeveloped. The second option represents a lesser intervention and features only part of the southern side of Mitchell Way being demolished and redeveloped. In both options the western side of the traffic gyratory system is removed; most pedestrian bridges are removed - the bridge to the east of the railway station is retained; extensive ground works are involved; and the introduction of a 35,000 square foot supermarket and new residential units between Church Street and Bridge Street are proposed. Further preparatory work will be undertaken to ascertain which of the options can be implemented, given the various complex issues involved.

3.7 Alexander Street site

One redevelopment proposal is suggested by the consultants for this site. Implementation depends upon opportunities arising from the Standard Delivery Plan. The consultants have suggested the demolition of 9 residential blocks of flats built at an angle to the street grid and the development of new 2 or 3 storey residential units parallel to the grid layout. The development of the Bank Street/Suzannah Street junction is proposed to create new street frontage along the western end of Suzannah Street. Residential properties are proposed to Bank Street. The vehicular/pedestrian/cycle links to the Riven Leven are proposed to be upgraded along Alexander Street and Suzannah Street.

3.8 Railway site

One redevelopment proposal has been put forward for the site. The consultants have proposed the residential development of the site. A layout to positively address Heather Street, North Street and Lennox Street frontages has been proposed, as has the provision of gateway features to the entrance of the site to give a sense of welcome and identity.

3.9 Leven Street site

One redevelopment proposal is provided for the Leven Street site which features the residential development of the site to provide housing for rent.

3.10 The content of the Alexandria Town Centre Masterplan was presented to the Alexandria Regeneration Forum at its meeting of 8 July 2008 and subsequently to the meeting of 2 September 2008. The Forum raised a number of general points and arrived at the following views in relation to each of the options listed above as follows.

3.11 Kippen Dairy Site

There were differing views on the preferred option for this site although the majority favoured the option of the development of a new medical centre. At the meeting on 2 September the Health Board decision was intimated. The Forum acknowledged the implications and recognised that this site should now be promoted for housing.

3.12 Leven Cottage Site

The Forum supported the redevelopment proposal for this site.

3.13 Mitchell Way site

The Forum supported both redevelopment options for this site.

3.14 Alexander Street site

The Forum supported in principle the redevelopment proposal for the site, but acknowledged that it is a long term redevelopment proposal.

3.15 Railway Street site

The Forum supported the proposal for this site.

3.16 Leven Street site

The residential development of the site was supported by the Forum.

3.17 As well as the key intervention sites highlighted above, a series of public realm projects including a hierarchy of civic space and streetscape improvements is included in the Masterplan. These areas relate to;

- Main Street (including Overton Street and rear car parks);
- Bank Street and Smollett fountain area;
- Riverside;
- Station Site (east of tracks)

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Implementation will depend on funding being made available from a number of sources including Housing Associations and the private sector.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 Failure to progress the masterplan to the next stage could contribute to the further decline of the town centre.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1** The Alexandria Town Centre Masterplan identifies land uses and their relationships within Alexandria Town Centre. This has been arrived at following comprehensive public consultation throughout the development of the masterplan.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- **note the results of the public consultation and the comments of the Alexandria Regeneration Forum;**
- **delegate authority to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to take forward the Masterplan, reporting back to Committee as appropriate; and**
- **approve and adopt the Alexandria Masterplan as Supplementary Planning Guidance, as a plan for the regeneration of the town centre.**

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Date: 10 September 2008

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Appendices:	Report to Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee of 5 March 2008 entitled Draft Alexandria Town Centre Masterplan
Background Papers:	Finalised Draft Alexandria Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Strategy
Wards Affected:	1 & 2