

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **Report by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration**

**Planning Committee: 25 June 2014**

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**DC14/087:                    Formation of new road junction including traffic signals and associated works relating to revised car parking and landscaping at Castle Street, Dumbarton by West Dunbartonshire Council.**

#### **1.     REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1**     This application is considered to raise issues of local significance, and under the terms of the approved Scheme of Delegation it therefore requires to be determined by the Planning Committee.

#### **2.     RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1**     **Grant** planning permission subject to the conditions set out in Section 9.

#### **3.     DEVELOPMENT DETAILS**

- 3.1**     The application relates to the eastern section of Castle Street, to the public car park located to the north of Castle Street, and to the junction of Glasgow Road and the St James Retail Park. Castle Street was historically the main route into Dumbarton town centre from the east, but was curtailed by new road construction in the 1970s and is now a cul-de-sac which provides access to the Denny Tank museum, a small number of flats and offices ("Castle Terrace"), the public car park and the vacant development site formerly occupied by Allied Distillers. Glasgow Road is a dual carriageway with a signalised T-junction providing access into the St James Retail Park. Between the two roads is a triangular area used as a public car park, and a landscaped verge along the southern side of the dual carriageway. Apart from the Denny Tank and Castle Terrace the only building in the immediate vicinity of the site is the McDonalds drive-through restaurant which lies to the north east, but which is accessed from within the retail park.
- 3.2**     Planning permission is sought to remodel the existing junction in order to form a new road access into Castle Street. The extent of the work would include construction of a new section of road linking Castle Street with Glasgow Road, reconfiguration of the junction and of Castle Street itself, revisions to the remaining public car park and to parking spaces on Castle Street, new traffic signals, and public realm works to improve the appearance of the hard and soft landscaping areas adjacent to the new junction.
- 3.3**     The new road link would be formed across part of the existing public car park, and some of the existing opportunities for parking on Castle Street itself would be lost as a result of the road remodelling. Some reconfiguration of the

remaining parking is proposed in order to minimise the impact, but the total capacity of the car park and the area adjacent to Castle Terrace would be reduced from approximately of 63 spaces to 32 spaces. The grass verge and trees along the southern side of Glasgow Road would also be removed, but there would be new hard and soft landscaping at the junction in order to provide an attractive entrance to the town centre. The current provision of pedestrian barriers along Glasgow Road is to be revised and reduced. The proposed junction improvements are intended to improve pedestrian and vehicular linkages between Dumbarton town centre and the east (notably St James Retail Park), to improve access for public transport and to provide suitable access to vacant development sites on Castle Street.

#### **4. CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1** West Dunbartonshire Council Estates Service and Roads Service have no objection and support the application.
- 4.2** West Dunbartonshire Council Environmental Health Service has no objection subject to conditions relating to construction activities and dust control.
- 4.3** West of Scotland Archaeological Service has no objection to the proposal subject to a condition being attached to any planning permission which requires the developer to undertake an archaeological watching brief during all ground disturbance.

#### **5. REPRESENTATIONS**

- 5.1** None.

#### **6. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

- 6.1** West Dunbartonshire Local Plan (2010)  
The site is primarily located within the defined Dumbarton Town Centre, although a very small part of the site is within the neighbouring Commercial Centre. The Local Plan indicates that the Council wishes to revitalise Dumbarton Town Centre and to guide investment towards the opportunities which exist therein. Policy T2 encourages the Council to identify opportunities for access improvements to the Regeneration Priorities. The proposal would support the regeneration of the town centre by improving access and providing infrastructure which would help to unlock important development sites off Castle Street.
- 6.2** Policy GD1 states that all development is expected to be of a high quality of design and should not detract from the character or amenity of the surrounding area. In particular, any development should meet the roads, parking and access requirements of the Council. Policy T1 further states that the Council will support measures to provide sustainable transport modes and improve access to public transport and path networks. This proposal has

been designed in accordance with the Council's adopted road development standards and incorporates high quality landscaping to provide an attractive entrance into the town centre. It is therefore considered that the proposal is supported by the above policies of the adopted local plan.

## **7. ASSESSMENT AGAINST MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **7.1 West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (LDP), Proposed Plan**

The site is located within the defined Dumbarton Town Centre, which is also identified as one of "Our Changing Places", where significant new development is expected or desired. The plan specifically highlights the fact that the junction of Castle Street and Glasgow Road is a crucial point in the links between the town centre and St James Retail Park and states that the Council will support the re-opening of this junction to vehicular traffic and its reconfiguration to improve pedestrian and public transport accessibility and traffic flow into the town centre. The proposal would therefore support the strategy of the emerging LDP.

### **7.2**

Policy DS1 requires that new development contribute towards the creation of successful places, by having regard to criteria which include being easy to get to and move around, and being welcoming with attractive gateways and simplicity of layout. The proposal would re-establish the historic and direct route into Dumbarton town centre from the east of the town, and would provide an attractive landscaped gateway at the new junction. It is therefore considered to be in compliance with this policy.

### **7.3**

Policy SD1 supports the development of transport schemes set out in the Local Transport Strategy subject to adequate mitigation of adverse impacts. The West Dunbartonshire Local Transport Strategy 2013-18 identifies traffic access and management problems in the vicinity of Dumbarton town centre and Church Street roundabout as a 'Tier 1' problem of strategic and local significance, and poor pedestrian links between Dumbarton town centre and St James Retail Park as a 'Tier 2' problem of local significance. The proposal would address these issues and would therefore be in accordance with the Local Transport Strategy and with Policy SD1 of the emerging LDP.

### **7.4 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)**

This document supports the provision of a mixture of uses and activities within town centres and recognises that development should integrate successfully and create links with the surrounding urban fabric. It is therefore essential that town centres provide a high quality, inclusive and safe environment. Well designed public spaces and buildings can improve the health, vitality and economic potential of a town centre. Actions to support improvements in town centres and to create distinctive and successful places are encouraged and range from small scale public realm works to the assembly of larger scale development sites which aid regeneration. It is considered that the proposal would contribute towards the regeneration of Dumbarton town centre by improving access and assisting in the redevelopment of important sites, and that it would therefore be consistent with the SPP.

## **7.5** Historical Context

The construction of the Artizan Bridge and associated new roads in the 1970s bypassed Dumbarton Town Centre, and whilst this had the advantage of removing a large volume of through traffic from the High Street it also formed a physical barrier between the town centre and surrounding areas and resulted in the loss of the most direct vehicular route between the town centre and the east of the town (i.e. Castle Street). Although Castle Street remained open as a through pedestrian route, over the years it developed a more peripheral character due to the lack of through traffic and the demolition of the former distillery buildings. Furthermore, the fact that Castle Street had become a cul-de-sac became a constraint which makes redevelopment of the former distillery site more difficult. The development of the St James Retail Park added a major pedestrian, public transport and traffic destination to the east of the town centre, which was not well connected to the High Street due to the barrier formed by the 1970s dual carriageway. The current proposal is intended to address all of these issues.

## **7.6** Traffic and Parking

Currently traffic congestion can arise on the stretch of Glasgow Road between St James Retail Park and the Strathleven Place roundabout. The reopening of Castle Street would allow traffic from the town centre to avoid this stretch of Glasgow Road. This should reduce congestion and which would be particularly beneficial to bus passengers and motorists travelling to the town centre as the new route would be shorter and would avoid the Strathleven Place roundabout. The Roads Service considers that the overall impact on traffic would be positive.

**7.7** The proposal would result in the loss of around 30 car parking spaces from the Castle Street area. The loss of parking spaces within the town centre is not something which would generally be encouraged, but the existing car park on Castle Street is not used to its full potential. Other car parks are closer to the High Street, and it is likely that the parking at the east end of Castle Street is mainly used by Castle Street residents and businesses. The public car park is very rarely used to anything approaching its full capacity, and there is therefore scope to reduce parking numbers without this having a significant impact. The proposal would retain 18 spaces within a smaller public car park to the west of the new junction, and a total of 14 spaces on the short stub of Castle Street serving Castle Terrace and the Denny Tank museum (which also has its own small private car park). Some of the spaces opposite Castle Terrace would be reconfigured to increase capacity at this location. It is considered that this level of provision would be sufficient to meet the needs of these properties, and that the overall impact upon parking would be acceptable.

## **7.8** Regeneration

Whilst Castle Street is already the most direct pedestrian route to the east of the High Street, the existing connections onto Glasgow Road are not particularly attractive, and the linkage across Glasgow Road to the retail park is considered to be particularly poor. Although the St James Retail Park is actually relatively close to the High Street, the two locations function as two

separate destinations rather than complement each other, and it is hoped that the provision of an improved pedestrian route between them would encourage people visiting the retail park to visit other shops and facilities within the town centre, including the Denny Tank. The improvements to the pedestrian facilities on Castle Street would also benefit residents walking to the town centre from residential areas in the east of the town and would encourage walking trips to the town centre from this direction.

- 7.9** The proposal would also have the very important benefit of assisting in the redevelopment of the former Allied Distillers site and the land to the east of the Burgh Hall. The proposed alterations to the road have been designed to accommodate additional traffic which may arise from future redevelopment of these sites. Redevelopment of these key sites would have significant benefits for the regeneration of the town centre and Dumbarton as a whole.

**7.10** Appearance and Design

The new junction would form an important gateway into Dumbarton town centre and it is important that it presents an attractive appearance. Although the proposal will inevitably require the removal of an existing verge containing a number of medium-sized trees, the proposal will retain such trees as it is possible to keep, and will provide new landscaped areas alongside the new road link. Whilst the design of the proposed landscaping is constrained by the need to maintain forward visibility around the curve approaching the junction, the proposed landscape scheme would provide an attractive green area at the junction. It is also proposed to retain the section of disused railway siding which passes through the western edge of the car park, as this is considered to be an interesting historical feature. It is proposed to retain and improve the stone cobbles along the line of the old siding and to install an information plaque explaining its history and those of the industries it served.

**8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1** This proposal would result in significant improvements to the road network and pedestrian linkages to the east of Dumbarton town centre. In addition to being beneficial to traffic movement and public transport, the proposal would provide improved access to Dumbarton High Street and enhanced links between the High Street and St James Retail Park. The new road link would also provide access to key regeneration sites off Castle Street. The proposal would assist in the regeneration of Dumbarton Town Centre, which is one of the Council's major planning policy objectives, and the proposal accords with the policies contained in both the adopted and proposed local plan.

**9. CONDITIONS**

- 1. Exact details and specifications of all ground surfaces, bins, seating, external lighting, railings and walls shall be submitted for the further written approval of the Planning Authority prior to any work commencing on site and shall thereafter be implemented prior to the junction being operational.**

2. Notwithstanding the approved plans, final landscaping details shall be submitted for the further written approval of the Planning Authority prior to any work commencing on site and shall thereafter be implemented the next planting season following the implementation of the new junction.
3. During the period of construction, all works and ancillary operations which are audible at the site boundary, or at such other places that may be agreed with by the Planning Authority shall be carried out between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 1pm on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or Public Holidays.
4. No development shall commence on site until such time as a scheme for the control and mitigation of dust has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The scheme shall identify likely sources of dust arising from the development or its construction, and shall identify measures to prevent or limit the occurrence and impact of such dust. The approved scheme shall thereafter be implemented fully prior to any of the identified dust generating activities commencing on site and shall be maintained thereafter, unless otherwise approved by the Planning Authority.
5. No development shall take place within the development site until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant agreed by the West Of Scotland Archaeology Service and approved by the Planning Authority. Thereafter the developer shall ensure that the programme of archaeological works is fully implemented and that all recording and recovery of archaeological resources within the development site is undertaken to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority in agreement with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

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**Date: 6 June 2014**

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**Appendix:** None.

**Background Papers:**

1. Application documents and plans;
2. West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010;
3. West Dunbartonshire LDP - Proposed Plan; and
4. Consultation responses.

**Wards affected:** Ward 3 (Dumbarton)