

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration****Planning Committee: 5th June 2024**

DC23/086/FUL: Erection of activity centre incorporating a community hub and bicycle workshop, together with associated work on land adjacent to the south bank of the Forth and Clyde Canal, Clydebank by West Dunbartonshire Council.

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1** The planning application raises issues that in the opinion of the appointed officer merits the determination of the application by Committee. 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 below.

3. DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

- 3.1** The application site relates to a 943sqm area of land located adjacent to the South Bank of the Forth and Clyde Canal and the NCR 7 cycle route, to the south of the Clyde Shopping Centre, Clydebank. The site is linear in form, slopes gently down from south to north, and is comprised of amenity grass and 8 trees, most of which are located along the northern extent. The site also includes 5 sculptured seating elements. Currently, the site functions as open space and is part of a wider area that forms the southern canal bank.
- 3.2** The site is situated within Clydebank Town Centre and surrounded by a mix of uses, with a church to the south, Clydebank Shopping Centre and amenity greenspace to the north, Clydebank Bandstand and South Sylvania Way to the west and a walkway and greenspace to the east. The site of the former Playdrome Leisure Centre, for which planning permission has been granted for a residential development, lies to the southeast.
- 3.3** Planning permission is sought for the development of an activity centre which includes a community hub and associated kitchen, launderette, coffee hatch, bicycle store, workshop and landscaping. It is indicated that the Community Hub will host a range of recreational and educational activities, such as yoga and cooking classes. The proposed modular building would have a footprint of 234sqm, being 6.7m D x 35m L, with the flat roof rising to a highest point of 3.85m and overhanging the building footprint by approximately 1.3m on the northern elevation to create a covered corridor (loggia). The building is comprised of two parts connected by a roofed external cycle storage area which can be closed off at the sides. A condenser store is located at the eastern end. All window openings are floor to ceiling, with five windows and a door proposed on the northern elevation, four windows on the southern elevation and one window on the western elevation, all of which would be fitted with folding security shutters. Two skylights are also proposed.

The building would be comprised of a polished pre-cast concrete base rising to a highest point of 1m, with the walls finished with a series of metal fins infilled with perforated 1.5m wide metal mesh panels. The windows would be comprised of aluminum with the door being metal. The walls, windows and door would be finished in a powder coated Green RAL 6003 colour. No information has been provided on the finish of the membrane roof.

- 3.4 With respect to the wider site, a hardstanding area is proposed within the northern half of the western extent, along with a gravel pathway along the eastern and southern elevations. A wild garden is further proposed adjacent to the southern elevation.
- 3.5 While the application indicates that there would be illuminated signage on the northern elevation, this will require to be assessed under a separate application for Advertisement Consent.
- 3.6 In support of the proposal, the applicant has submitted a range of documentation and information, including a Design Statement, Tree Report, and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 West Dunbartonshire Council Roads Service have no objection to the proposal in respect of roads and parking together with flooding matters.
- 4.2 West Dunbartonshire Council Environmental Health Service have no objection, subject to two conditions on construction and operating hours.
- 4.3 West Dunbartonshire Council Biodiversity Officer has no objection, subject to two conditions relating to landscaping and biodiversity enhancement.
- 4.4 Historic Environment Scotland had initially objected due to the potential impact upon the canal which is a scheduled monument, but following further consideration the objection was removed.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 None received.

6. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

National Planning Policy 4

- 6.1 Policy 1 relates to tackling the climate and nature crises and states that when considering all development proposals significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises. Policy 2 also relates to the climate in the form of climate mitigation and adaptation and states development proposals will be sited and designed to minimise lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions as far as possible and development proposals will be sited and designed to adapt to current and future risks from climate change.
- 6.2 Policy 3 seeks to protect biodiversity and deliver positive effects from development, requiring that local development includes appropriate measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity. It is noted that measures should be proportionate to the nature and scale of development.

- 6.3** Policy 6 aims to protect and expand forests, woodland and trees. It advises that proposals will not be supported where they result in the loss of ancient woodlands, ancient and veteran trees, or individual trees of high biodiversity value. Where woodland is removed, compensatory planting is expected to be delivered.
- 6.4** Policy 7 aims to protect and enhance historic environment assets and places, with proposals affecting scheduled monuments only supported where direct impacts on the integrity and setting of scheduled monuments are avoided or exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to justify the impacts on the monument and any impacts have been minimised.
- 6.5** Policy 12 relates to waste and advises that development proposals will set out how much waste the proposal is expected to generate and how it will be managed.
- 6.6** Policy 13 supports proposals where they provide direct, easy, segregated and safe links to local facilities via walking, wheeling and cycling networks and are accessible by public transport.
- 6.7** Development proposals will be designed to improve the quality of an area whether in urban or rural locations and regardless of scale, as per Policy 14. Policy 15 relates to local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods, with development proposals required to contribute to both, where relevant, through local access to a wide range of facilities and activities, including lifelong learning and recreation facilities
- 6.8** Under part (f) of Policy 19, proposals for buildings that will be occupied by people will be supported where they are designed to promote sustainable temperature management, for example by prioritising natural or passive solutions such as siting, orientation, and materials.
- 6.9** Green infrastructure is considered through Policy 20. Proposals that result in fragmentation or net loss of existing green infrastructure will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that this would not result in or exacerbate a deficit in green infrastructure provision, and the overall integrity of the network will be maintained.
- 6.10** Policy 21 seeks to promote and facilitate spaces and opportunities for play, recreation and sport. It advises that development proposals likely to be occupied or used by children and young people will be supported where they incorporate well designed, good quality provision for play, recreation, and relaxation that is proportionate to the scale and nature of the development and existing provision in the area.
- 6.11** Policy 22 addresses flood risk and water management, stating that proposals will not increase the risk of surface water flooding to others, or itself be at risk; manage all rain and surface water through sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), and seek to minimise the area of impermeable surface.
- 6.12** Policy 23 aims to safeguard people from environmental harm and promote and facilitate development that improves health and wellbeing. Development proposals that will have positive effects on health will be supported. Policy 24 supports proposals that incorporate appropriate, universal, and future-proofed digital infrastructure.

- 6.13** Policy 27 seeks to promote and facilitate development in our city and town centres, advising that proposals that enhance and improve the vitality and viability of city, town and local centres, including proposals that increase the mix of uses, will be supported.
- 6.14** The proposed development is supported by NPF4 and is assessed fully in Section 7 below.
- West Dunbartonshire Adopted Local Plan 2010
- 6.15** Policy GD1 seeks to ensure that all new development is of a high quality of design and respects the character and amenity of the local area.
- 6.16** Policy RET 5 advises that applications for non-retail uses within the designated town centres will be favourably considered where they contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre and do not conflict with other Local Plan policies.
- 6.17** Policy R1 relates to the retention of existing open space. It includes a presumption against development which adversely affects the use, character or amenity of areas of functional and valued open space. Developments on existing open space will be considered against the existing or potential future use, quality, function and value of the open space and the sufficiency of provision of the facility type in the local area.
- 6.18** Policy T1 and T4 require sites to be integrated with sustainable travel. Policy E1 relates to the Council's Biodiversity duty and Policy E5 requires new development proposals to consider impacts on trees and incorporate suitable tree planting. Policies F1 and F2 aim to ensure that new development is not at risk from, and does not increase the risk of flooding, and has suitable SUDS drainage infrastructure. Policy DC7 supports the inclusion of on-site micro-renewable technologies.
- 6.19** Policy BE 5 advises that the Council will resist any development proposals that would have an adverse impact on or affect the setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument, unless a number of criteria are met.
- 6.20** Policy R 4 seeks to ensure that new development on or adjacent to the Forth and Clyde Canal is compatible and appropriate, with Policy R 4C encouraging recreational activities adjacent to the canal. Policy R 4F notes that development of canal-side sites should, wherever possible, be oriented towards and integrate with the canal, overlook the canal to provide a supervised edge and provide direct access to the existing canal side paths.
- 6.21** The proposal complies with the policies of the adopted local plan and is assessed fully in Section 7 below.

7. ASSESSMENT AGAINST MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (LDP2) Proposed Plan

- 7.1** On 15 March 2023, the Planning Committee took a decision that the Council would not adopt Local Development Plan 2. The Proposed Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2), incorporating the recommended modifications of the Examination Report received on 22 April 2020, which were accepted by the Planning Committee of 19 August 2020, remains the Council's most up to date spatial strategy and is therefore afforded significant weight in the assessment and determination of planning applications, subject to compatibility with NPF4. The Scottish Ministers' Direction relating to the adoption of LDP2, dated 18 December 2020, is also a material consideration.

- 7.2** Policy CP1 seeks to ensure that development is of a high quality, adaptable and designed to be suitable for a mix of occupants. It indicates that all new development will be expected to contribute towards creating successful places by having regard to the six qualities of a successful place (distinctive, adaptable, resource efficient, easy to get to/move around, safe and pleasant, and welcoming). Policy CP2 requires the integration and consideration of green infrastructure from the outset of the design process through to its maintenance and stewardship of the resource.
- 7.3** Clydebank Policy 1 advises that the Council will encourage proposals adjacent to the Forth and Clyde Canal which introduce a mixture of uses associated with a leisure and evening economy, such as recreational activities. These uses will be supported where they will help to transform this area into a well-used multi-functional Town Centre that extends a range of activities into the evening and makes the Canal a focal point for activity, whilst also being complimentary to existing Town Centre uses. In line with this, the Clydebank Town Centre Development Strategy supports the transformation of the area around the Forth and Clyde Canal into a focal point and multi-functional area for recreation which connects people again with the Canal. Policy FCC1 advises that development alongside the Forth & Clyde Canal should enhance this green network asset. Development that would have an adverse impact on the canal or its setting will not be permitted.
- 7.4** Policy SC1 advises that proposals for retail, commercial and leisure investment, and other key Town Centre uses, should align with the sequential approach and the preferred uses set out in Table 5, which includes Class 11 – Assembly and Leisure. Developments are directed sequentially to Town Centres in the first instance.
- 7.5** Policy GI1 relates to open space and outdoor sports facilities. It advises that development which would result in the loss of open space which is, or has the potential to be, of quality and value will not be permitted unless provision of additional open space of equal or enhanced quality and value is provided.
- 7.6** Policy BE1 advises that where development would adversely affect a scheduled monument or the integrity of the setting of a scheduled monument, permission would only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- 7.7** Policy CON4 sets out a need for all developments to install sufficient broadband provisions.
- 7.8** Policies ENV1, ENV4, ENV 5 and ENV6 are all similar to the ecology, tree, water environment and flooding policies of the adopted Local Plan. Policy ENV8 requires developments to address air quality, lighting and noise as part of the planning process.
- 7.9** Policy RE4 encourages micro-generation and heat recovery technologies within or associated with individual properties, with Policy RE5 advising that new buildings are required, as far as possible, to integrate low and/or zero carbon generating technologies.
- 7.10** It is considered that the application complies with the relevant policies above, as set out in the assessment below.

- 7.11** The Creating Places Guidance – November 2022 seeks to achieve high quality development with a design led approach based on a thorough appraisal of the site and an analysis of its context and sets out that this is expected for all development proposals. The Green Network and Green Infrastructure Guidance - November 2022 seeks to ensure that the proposal integrates landscaping and green infrastructure as part of the setting of the new development and open space created. This will include a focus on biodiversity enhancement. Following a full assessment, it is concluded that the proposal presents no conflict with the aims of the guidance.

Principle of Development

- 7.12** While the application site is not allocated for a specific use in the Proposals Maps of the Local Plan and proposed LDP2, it is located in Clydebank Town Centre and subject to the policy requirements associated with this location. It is considered that a community focused Activity Hub located adjacent to the Canal would contribute to the provision of a mix of uses within the Town Centre, thereby improving the vitality and viability of the Centre. The proposed provision of recreational and educational opportunities would also promote lifelong learning, health and wellbeing and help create a multi-functional area that connects people with the Canal. In light of the above, the principle of development is supported by Policy 15, Policy 21, Policy 23 and Policy 27 of NPF4, Policy RET 5 and Policy R 4C of the Local Plan, and Clydebank Policy 1, Clydebank Town Centre Development Strategy and Policy SC1 of the proposed LDP2.

- 7.13** It is noted that the site, which is comprised of amenity grass, trees and sculptured seating, has value as open space. While it is not identified as open space in the Proposals Maps of the Local Plan and proposed LDP2, Policy R 1 and Policy G11 of the respective Plans safeguard open space which is, or has the potential to be, of quality and value. Policy 20 of NPF4 advises that development proposals that result in the fragmentation or net loss of existing blue and green infrastructure will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would not result in or exacerbate a deficit in blue or green infrastructure provision, and the overall integrity of the network will be maintained. With significant areas of similar amenity grassland located along the canal to the north and east of the application site, it is considered that the proposal, which would result in approximately a third of the existing open space being lost, would not result in or exacerbate a deficit in green infrastructure at this location. It is also considered that a proposal of this nature will enhance facilities at this location and compliment the wider areas of open and public space that form this part of the southern canal bank. In this context, the proposal complies with Policy 20 and is acceptable.

Site Layout, Design and Appearance

- 7.14** New development requires to be well designed, take cognisance of the setting into which it is introduced and provide high quality, well designed buildings, whilst recognising the impact on existing neighbouring properties.
- 7.15** The 234sqm building footprint is appropriate relative to the 943sqm site size, with the single storey scale and linear form aligning with and complimenting the adjacent cycle path and Canal. The building would have a contemporary and attractive appearance, with the use of floor to ceiling windows/door, projecting fins infilled with perforated mesh panels and an overhanging roof providing a good degree visual diversity and interest. With the front elevation orientated towards the Canal, the proposal would also provide an active frontage that engages positively with the Canal. The proposed Green RAL 6003 colour finish would also blend in with the surrounding greenspace.

While samples of the proposed materials and colour finish have not been provided in advance of the determination of the application, these can be secured through condition and subject to approval prior to the commencement of development.

- 7.16** It is noted that the application does not include information on the provision of low and/or zero carbon generating technologies, as required by Policy RE5. This matter can, however, be addressed through condition.
- 7.17** Overall, it is considered that the proposal would create a well-designed development that addresses the six qualities of successful places by having a distinctive identity, using high quality materials and being well connected and sustainable. As such, it complies with Policy 15 of the NPF4 and policies GD1, DS1 and CP1 of the adopted and proposed Plans, alongside the Creating Places Guidance (2022).

Residential Amenity

- 7.18** The layout and scale of development proposed relative to the proximity of existing housing raises no concerns with respect to privacy, overshadowing or overbearing effects. While the development will undoubtedly bring additional activity to the area, it is unlikely to result in any noise or activity beyond that typically found in a Town Centre during the day. It is noted that the Activity Centre will not operate before 9am or beyond 8pm and a condition can be attached to secure these operating hours. Although it is accepted that the construction phase will produce an element of short term noise and disruption, the consultation response from the Council's Environmental Health Service highlights the requirement for the construction of the development to be undertaken in a way that ensures that adjacent residential amenity is not adversely affected, which can be secured through condition.

Trees, Open Space and Landscaping

- 7.19** While the submitted Tree Survey identifies eight trees on the site, comprising 2 Wild Cherry, 3 Norway Maple, 2 Callery Pear and 1 London Plane, it notes that there are no ancient or veteran trees on the site. Although six trees would need to be removed to accommodate the development, the proposal complies with Policy 20 and Policy ENV4 as no ancient or veteran trees or those covered by a TPO would be removed. It is noted that, following pre-application discussions, the applicant has included a wild garden as part of the landscaping in an effort to offset the loss of trees.
- 7.20** The proposal would provide approximately 630sqm of open space, comprised of hardstanding and grassed areas. While a detailed landscaping scheme has not been submitted, a gravel walkway is proposed adjacent to the eastern and southern elevations, along with a hardstanding area within the northwest extent and a wild garden adjacent to the southern elevation. The approach outlined is acceptable in principle and a detailed landscaping scheme can be secured through condition.

Traffic, parking and road safety

- 7.21** The proposal raises no concerns with respect to traffic generation and road safety due to the scale and nature of the development and the excellent public transport and active travel connections associated with a Town Centre location. While no dedicated parking is proposed, it is considered that there is adequate parking within this Town Centre location. It is also noted that the consultation response from the Roads service raised no objection in relation to these issues.

Transport and Connectivity

- 7.22** With the site being located in the Town Centre, it is accessible to a wide range of local services and within a 5 min walk of frequent public transport services to centres across West Dunbartonshire and beyond to Glasgow and Helensburgh.

The site is also located adjacent to the NCR 7 cycle path. It is therefore concluded that the development is provided in an appropriate location within an established settlement accessible by means other than the private car.

Flooding and Drainage

- 7.23** The proposal raises no concerns with respect to flooding as the site is not identified as being at risk on SEPA's Flood Maps. The consultation response from the Council's Flooding Officer also raised no objection. In relation to drainage, the application indicates that foul wastewater would be discharged to the public sewer, with surface water discharged to the canal. While no detailed information on drainage, including the use of SUDS, has been provided, this matter can be addressed through condition. The proposal is therefore acceptable, subject to condition.

Ecology

- 7.24** The preliminary ecological appraisal submitted with the application found that the habitats on the site were of low conservation value, with no evidence of protected species and limited scope for nesting birds. The appraisal includes a number of recommendations, such the minimisation of light spill, which can be secured through condition. The Council's Biodiversity Officer has no objection to the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, but requests that a detailed Landscaping Scheme and Biodiversity Enhancement Plan be provided, which can again be secured through condition.

Cultural Heritage

- 7.25** A large portion of the application site is located within the Forth and Clyde Canal Canal: Old Kilpatrick - Linnvale Scheduled Monument, which includes the canal, towpath and areas to either side in which traces of activities associated with its construction and use may survive. While Historic Environment Scotland initially objected to the proposal due to concerns about the potential adverse effects of the proposal, the objection was subsequently removed after discussions with the applicant. In light of this, the proposal is acceptable in this context.

Waste Provision

- 7.26** The proposal is expected to generate a level of waste commensurate to a community facility of the scale proposed. A refuse store is proposed within the eastern corner of the building, which is acceptable.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1** The proposal is welcomed and would provide a high quality, community focused activity centre that would contribute to the mix of uses and vitality of the Town Centre and help connect people with the canal, without any detrimental effects on local amenity.
- 8.2** The proposal presents no conflict with the policy requirements of NPF4, the adopted Local Plan, the proposed Local Development Plan 2 and associated Planning Guidance.

9. CONDITIONS

1. Prior to the commencement of development on site, exact details and samples of all proposed external materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning

Authority, the development shall be completed in strict accordance with the approved material details and palette.

2. Prior to the commencement of development on site, full details of all hard surfaces shall be submitted for the further written approval of the Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter proceed in accordance with the approved details.
3. Prior to the commencement of development on site, a detailed soft landscaping plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority, the development shall be completed in strict accordance with the approved plan.
4. Prior to the commencement of development on site, a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan setting out how the proposal enhances biodiversity beyond the current baseline, together with the implementation on site, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority, the development shall be completed in accordance with the approved plan.
5. The approved hard and soft landscaping and all associated approved planting details shall be implemented within a timescale to be agreed with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works on site.
6. That any trees, shrubs or areas of grass which die, are removed, damaged or become diseased within five years of completion of the landscaping shall be replaced within the following year with others of a similar size and species.
7. All recommendations within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal dated August 2022 and hereby approved, shall be implemented in full to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.
8. That prior to the commencement of works on site, full details of the proposed drainage regime, inclusive of calculations and overland flow details, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The drainage regime shall then be implemented and maintained as approved at all times thereafter.
9. That all surface water shall be intercepted within the site both during construction and on completion of the development and full details of measures to ensure that surface water run-off is contained within the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing to the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any works on site. The measures shall be implemented and maintained as approved.
10. Prior to the operation of the Activity Centre, the developer shall install the necessary infrastructure to enable the development to be connected to the existing fibre optic network, where available in West Dunbartonshire, and in accordance with the relevant telecommunications provider's standards.
11. Prior to the commencement of any works on site, full details of the incorporation of low and/or zero carbon technologies shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.
12. The development hereby approved shall only operate between the hours of 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

13. During the period of construction, all works and ancillary operations which are audible at the site boundary (or at such other place(s) as may first be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority), shall be carried out between the following hours unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority:
- Mondays to Fridays: 0800 – 1800
 - Saturdays: 0800 – 1300
 - Sundays and public holidays: No Working

Alan Douglas
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Date: 5th June 2024

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Appendix: Location Plan

Background Papers:

1. Application forms and plans
2. Consultation responses
3. National Planning Framework 4
4. West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010
5. Proposed West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan 2 2020, as amended
6. 'Green Network and Green Infrastructure' Planning Guidance (2022)
7. Creating Places Planning Guidance (2022)

Wards affected: Ward 5 (Clydebank Central)