

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services

Community Safety & Environmental Services Committee : 4 October 2006

Subject: Grounds of Crosslet House

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report advises the Committee of options in respect of providing access to a proposed housing development in the grounds of Crosslet House and seeks the Committee's instructions as to the way ahead.

2. Background

- 2.1** Crosslet House is in the Council's ownership. It stands in substantial grounds. The house itself is presently leased to Halo Nurseries Limited. This lease has a further 8 years to run.
- 2.2** The balance of the land at the Crosslet Estate measures 4.7 hectares or thereby. There are a number of mature trees across this site. The site is zoned as a housing development opportunity within both the adopted Dumbarton District Local Plan and the Consultative Draft West Dunbartonshire Council Local Plan. There is a need to consider bringing forward proposals for the disposal of this site to secure its development potential.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The main issue is to determine how vehicular access should be provided to the Crosslet House site. Two options have been identified.

Option 1

- 3.2** Widen the leg of Argyll Avenue which leads into this site and then take access from this point. This could require the acquisition of further land to facilitate road widening. Given the number of houses already using Argyll Avenue as a main access route, Roads guidelines would limit the number of further residential units which could be constructed to 35. Nevertheless, this option would involve only limited infrastructure improvements to secure access to the site. There would be some additional traffic utilising Argyll Avenue and exiting at this point onto the A82, and this could cause concern to local residents. Disposal of the site for 35 house units, which could be built on larger plot sizes, could generate a receipt of £3.5 million less the cost of any infrastructure improvements.

Option 2

- 3.3** Require the developer to construct a new roundabout to facilitate vehicular access to the site off the A82. Preliminary investigations suggest that this roundabout would be best located at the junction with Dunbritton Road (see plan). However, Dunbritton Road is a residential street with a 'Twenty's Plenty' designation. Consequently, it is not considered appropriate to supply direct access to the roundabout from Dunbritton Road by promoting this street as a primary access route from central Dumbarton on to the A82.
- 3.4** In terms of traffic flow, the advantage of the roundabout is that traffic from the residential areas to the north of the A82 could exit at a new roundabout. Traffic from the Argyll Avenue and Barnhill areas could be diverted along Sutherland Drive and Glenpath respectively to access the new roundabout via the residential distributor roads formed within the new Crosslet House grounds development. This could result in some gaps in the central reservation on the A82, which presently allow traffic to make right turns to cross the carriageway being closed, thus improving road safety, for example, at the exit from Argyll Avenue. At other locations these gaps would require to remain open, eg. at Greenhead Road. These are matters which require further investigation.
- 3.5** Residents of the Argyll Avenue and Barnhill areas could use the newly created roundabout junction to exit from their area. In particular a new roundabout would facilitate right turn movements. Other residents could have concerns that there would be a flow of through traffic along their street for the first time.
- 3.6** The capacity of the site with a new roundabout would be 120 new houses. This would generate a capital receipt of around £7.2 million. The cost of a roundabout and other road improvements would require to be deducted from this figure. No firm estimate is available in respect of these costs but around £2 million might be considered to be reasonable.
- 3.7** Consideration would require to be given to procurement of designs for the new roundabout, bearing in mind that the consent of the Scottish Executive (Transport Scotland) will be required following extensive consultation. One option would be to require the purchaser to carry out all work in respect of the provision of an appropriate junction. The developer would be required to reach appropriate agreements with the Scottish Executive with respect to the design and implementation of the roundabout. In these circumstances, these two parties would agree upon the design and implementation of the roundabout with the cost being deducted from the capital receipt which would be paid to the Council. The Council would not be directly involved in these negotiations.
- 3.8** An alternative option which would give greater control to the Council, and is preferred for this reason would be for consultants to be appointed at the Council's expense to design to an appropriate stage the roundabout and, following consultation with the Scottish Executive, for this design to be issued along with the development brief for the site. This would mean that funds which could later be set against the capital receipt would be required to meet consultancy fees.

Other matters concerning A82

3.9 The Committee will be aware that it is proposed to construct a new roundabout at the A82 to facilitate the proposed residential and business park development at Strathleven. A further report to Committee on progress on this matter will be submitted in the near future. However, the present programme for this development indicates that work on this additional roundabout will commence in early 2007.

3.10 A public meeting involving local elected representatives, Council Officers, Scottish Executive representation and residents, mainly from the Barnhill Road area, recently took place. This meeting was about residents' concerns regarding the difficulty of exiting from Barnhill Road and road safety. A number of points were raised including the desirability of traffic signals at this location. The Transport Scotland official agreed to give further consideration to the points raised.

Drainage

3.11 Consideration will require to be given to drainage issues associated with this development as this would impact upon flood risk which exists in this area. This would be investigated as part of feasibility studies concerning development at this location. However, the more limited development option would have a smaller impact in this respect. Liaison and discussion with SEPA at an early stage will be required.

Timescales

3.12 One consideration that the Committee will wish to bear in mind is the question of timescales. There is no doubt that pursuit of the option of access through Argyll Avenue, provided that road widening could be achieved is a much simpler option. Timescales involved in progressing a development at this location would consequently be relatively short and, assuming that all matters can be resolved, a capital receipt within the year 2007/08 could be anticipated. Given the complexities of pursuing the roundabout option, it is not possible to forecast in which financial year a capital receipt based on this option would be obtained, though it is clearly likely that a significant amount of work would be required to resolve all matters to the satisfaction of the Scottish Executive. At this stage it can only be stated that this option could take a number of years to progress should problems arise.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 There are no Personnel Issues.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Both options 1 and 2 have the potential to generate significant capital receipts for the Council, however there are a significant number of matters to be resolved before it is possible to be more specific as to the amounts which could be generated.

The level of bids which could be secured for the site under either option will not be known until such times as the market is tested. In addition with respect to both options, the cost of infrastructure improvements has not been fully investigated. In the event that the Committee determines that it wishes to pursue the roundabout option and carry out design work before going to the market, then an allowance would require to be made for consultant's fees which could subsequently be set against any receipt generated.

6. Conclusions

6.1 The grounds of Crosslet House are zoned as a residential development opportunity. There is an opportunity for the Council to generate a significant capital receipt from the disposal of this site. Options exist to take access for a limited residential development from a widened Argyll Avenue. Alternatively a roundabout junction on the A82 could provide access to a larger residential development. The option of using Argyll Avenue would possibly be simpler and more straightforward. The introduction of a roundabout would significantly alter the flow of traffic to the north of the A82 and would introduce a roundabout facilitating right turn movements into and out of this area. Provision of the roundabout would require extensive consultation with the A82 Trunk Roads Division and would be one of three roundabouts on the A82 within Dumbarton following the construction of the new roundabout at Strathleven.

7. Recommendation

7.1 The Committee is recommended to instruct the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services to develop Option 2 for accessing Crosslet House grounds development site and to submit a further report for the Committee's consideration once design proposals are available.

pp **David McMillan**

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Date: 14 September 2006

Background Papers: None

Appendix: Plan of roundabout

Wards Affected: 12 & 13

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