

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Officer (Regulatory & Regeneration)****Infrastructure, Regeneration & Economic Development Committee
17 November 2021**

Subject: Clydebank Town Centre Development Framework

1 Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Clydebank Town Centre Development Framework and to seek approval to use it to guide future development, funding, and decisions around acquisitions and disposals in Clydebank Town Centre.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that Committee:
- approves the Development Framework;
 - agrees that a cross-Service approach is required to deliver the Framework;
 - authorises the development of projects and commencement of procurement for the projects contained within the Framework from the Local Economic Development budget bringing projects to a 'shovel ready' business case condition;
 - notes that the Framework will be presented to the Planning Committee to seek approval to adopt as planning guidance; and
 - notes that discussions on the delivery of the principles of the Framework will continue.

3. Background

- 3.1** Clydebank town centre will be shaped by a number of factors over the coming years, including the ongoing trend of internet shopping and its impact on traditional shopping centres, the regeneration of Queens Quay and the new homes being delivered there, and both the potential and threat provided by the proposed Clyde Bridge. At the moment Clyde Regional shopping centre is reasonably buoyant when compared with other towns, but high street retail is predicted to decline by another 50% in the next five years.
- 3.2** Against a backdrop of declining retail where town centres are having to reinvent their purpose, as well as the push to make our towns greener and to create 20 minute neighbourhoods, a cross-service Council officers group commissioned consultants to advise on the future of Clydebank town centre. With oversight from the officers group, the consultancy team, led by threesixty architecture who are leaders in town centre renaissance, with input from market advisers Savills and transport consultants Sweco has produced an ambitious but deliverable 15 year vision for Clydebank town centre.

- 3.3** Clydebank has a town centre that stretches from Dumbarton Road to the retail parks on the east of the town centre taking in both sides of the Clyde Regional Shopping Centre. It is geographically extensive, disparate and the retail offer is not sustainable in its current format. The proposed Clydebank Town Centre Development Framework offers an exciting vision that puts the heart back in the town centre. When embedded in planning policy the Framework will guide development, and help inform acquisition and disposal decisions.
- 3.4** An executive summary of the Development Framework is attached on Appendix One, and the entire document is available on [CMIS](#). Some minor modifications will be made to the Framework following Committee. A development framework sets out how a vision for an area can be achieved by adopting certain development principles. Development frameworks shouldn't be rigid or prescriptive, and some flexibility is required in the delivery of their development principles, and approval will be sought from Council's Planning Committee to adopt the Framework as non-statutory planning guidance. The development principles contained within the Framework for Clydebank are outlined in 4.3 below. It should also be noted that the Framework will not obligate the Council to finance delivery of the proposals at this stage.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** Community aspirations for Clydebank town centre that were expressed in the Clydebank Charrette (2015) and Clydebank Can (2018) have influenced the vision contained in the Framework. Broadly speaking the aspirations covered a range of issues including demands for better connectivity, breathing more life into the town centre and making better use of the Canal, activities for all ages and a better identity with the town centre. Further engagement with key town centre stakeholders was undertaken during the production of the Framework, and a Members Briefing on the emerging principles was held in September 2021.
- 4.2** The input from stakeholders and community, together with the consultancy team's assessment of Clydebank town centre, identified a number of key strengths and challenges that the Framework ultimately responds to. These include but are not limited to:
- A resilient community with a strong shared history that has seen significant changes in Clydebank, including de-industrialisation of the town;
 - A cutting edge district heating centre that can play a role in Clydebank evolving as a green town;
 - Opportunity to bring more people, activity and an evening economy into the town centre where currently there is little footfall after 5.30pm;
 - Public realm particularly around the Canal is good quality, but there is very limited greenspace within the town centre;

- There are development pressures from large food store operator to expand, and this in turn creates opportunity for relocation of the cinema to a more central location in the town;
- Despite perceptions to the contrary, an extensive supply of car parking that more than meets current needs and more so in the future as retail declines further;
- Important work being done to connect Queens Quay and Dumbarton Road to the town centre with an opportunity to extend and consolidate these connections;
- Energetic and enthusiastic community, charitable and third sector organisations contributing to the vibrancy of the town centre, and
- Establishing a heart of town that people can more easily identify with and that could be used for gathering, public events and so on.

4.3 Based upon the most important component of the vision – establishing the heart of the town - the Framework focusses in on the area of the town centre between the Canal and the railway station, taking in Sylvania Way and the former Playdrome site. This is identified as the Phase 1 priority area for change and a catalyst for future improvements. The key components of Phase 1 includes:

- A primarily residential-led redevelopment of the Playdrome site to provide good quality urban development that includes family accommodation and mixed uses appropriate to the market demands;
- A new transportation hub incorporating Clydebank Central train station, the bus station, and infrastructure for active travel to encourage walking and cycling;
- The redevelopment of Sylvania Way to create mixed use residential, community, retail and businesses uses;
- A new park to provide much needed greenspace, recreation, and to assist with north-south active travel linkages;
- Enhancing the setting and use of the Co-op building, one of the few remaining historical assets within the town centre, and making it the central point of a new public square and marketplace;
- Animating the Canal in a variety of ways including the proposed Activities Centre, and providing passive surveillance from new housing overlooking the Canal;
- New and improved indoor and outdoor spaces for community activities
- A number of exciting public realm improvements, and
- If the opportunity and funding arose, explore the potential of a new primary school within the wider town centre to meet demand from new residents at Queens Quay and the town centre housing sites.

4.4 The Framework also provides recommendations for the parts of the town centre outside this core study area which would be subject to longer-term change, together with an associated phasing plan. As retail declines further, these later phases include introducing new layouts to the covered mall north of the Canal that will be led by prevailing market needs, and longer-term redevelopment of the edges of the town centre including the retail parks to

introduce housing.

- 4.5** There are a number of ways that the Framework can be delivered and degrees to which Council intervention is necessary. With the exception of the former Playdrome site, the bus station layby area, and the Council's part-ownership of the shopping centre, the town centre is substantially privately owned. It is feasible that the entire vision for the heart of the town could be delivered as an investment opportunity by the private sector, including the current or future owners of the Clyde Regional shopping centre. The agent of the current owner has been consulted and has expressed an interest in the vision. However the Council may have options to acquire all or some of the shopping centre. If the Council approves this vision it will send out a strong message of a sustainable future for Clydebank town centre, and consequently land and property become more marketable to private investors.
- 4.6** The support of existing retailers, businesses, community planning partners the community and community-led organisations that already do much to contribute to the vitality of the town centre will be important in delivering the vision for Clydebank. A robust communication and engagement plan is being produced to ensure that our ambitions for the town are properly conveyed and that existing stakeholders in the town centre benefit from the vision.
- 4.7** The Framework reflects and contributes to the delivery of national policy priorities including 20 minute neighbourhoods, carbon reduction, placemaking and community empowerment. It can be embedded within the Local Development Plan and will be used to guide decision-making in relation to land, buildings, streets, spaces, transport, economic development and planning.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** Delivery of the masterplan will require commitment from various Council services and the utilisation of existing staff resources. The cross-Service collaboration, particularly across Regeneration, Planning, Asset Management and Roads/Transportation and partnerships with external partners achieved during the production of the Framework will continue into the delivery phase.

6. Financial & Procurement Implications

- 6.1** The Framework does not in itself commit the Council to fund any component of the vision at this stage. The adoption of this approach is expected to maximise the value of the Council's existing assets. Further consideration will be given to the method of delivery of the Framework, particularly for Phase One, the heart of the town, where Council land is located. Recommendations will be made to Council on this in due course. Funding for the project elements where Council is best placed to take the lead will be sourced as opportunities arise. The Council's Local Economic Development budget will be used to bring projects in the Framework to a 'shovel ready' business case condition.

6.2 The Procurement for individual projects will be discussed and agreed with the procurement service. However, at this point committee approval is sought to commence procurement processes to bring the projects to a stage where they could be delivered, should further funding become available.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 Failure to approve and to seek delivery options for the Framework and realise the vision will result in the further deterioration of Clydebank town centre, where a later intervention by the Council may become unviable or at least more difficult to achieve.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

8.1 An assessment has been carried out, attached in Appendix 2. The Framework has relevance to a number of equality groups, and positive impacts were identified for each.

9. Environmental Sustainability

9.1 In line with the Council's Climate Change Strategy, there will be 'zero carbon' approach proposals emerging from the Clydebank Town Centre Development Framework that will make a positive contribution to environmental sustainability. In particular exploring how connections to the West Dunbartonshire Energy centre could be achieved.

10. Consultation

10.1 As indicated above there has been extensive consultation on the future of Clydebank town centre before and during the production of this Development Framework, starting with the first Clydebank Charrette in 2015 and the follow-up Clydebank Can charrette three years later in 2018. The views expressed in those engagement events have been reflected in the Framework. Further individual and group consultations took place with local schools, community-led organisations, the shopping centre owner, Co-op, WCS, SPT, Chamber of Commerce, Clyde Mission and developers. The input from young people was particularly valuable with a request from one of our high school students to create a "town that looks after each other". A multi-Service team directed the consultancy and other Services such as Housing and Arts/Heritage participated.

11. Strategic Assessment

11.1 The masterplan will support Council's strategic priorities to:

- improve economic growth;
- improve environmentally sustainable infrastructure; and
- improve the wellbeing of communities.

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Clydebank Town Centre Development Framework Executive Summary
Appendix 2 - Equalities Impact Assessment

Background Papers: Clydebank Charrette and Clydebank Can reports

Wards Affected: Clydebank Central, Clydebank Waterfront