

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Council: 28 May 2008

Subject: Dumbarton Town Centre Masterplan

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise Members of further communication with Business for Dumbarton and Dumbarton People's Theatre, with regard to the final draft of the Dumbarton Town Centre Master Plan following continuation of the item at Committee on March 2008 and to seek approval and adoption of the Dumbarton Town Centre Master Plan as Supplementary Planning Guidance as a strategy for the regeneration of the town centre.

2. Background

- 2.1** Members will be aware that consultants Broadway Malyan had submitted a finalised draft of the Dumbarton Town Centre Master Plan for consideration and it was agreed at the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee in January 2008, that the finalised draft Master Plan should be subject to a further stage of public consultation prior to it being adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- 2.2** The outcome of this further stage of consultation was reported to the HE&ED Committee in March 2008. The Committee was advised that of the completed comments forms, some 45% of respondents supported the Master Plan that had been prepared, 23% were not in favour and 32% were not sure. Business for Dumbarton who represent local traders within the town centre had made representations to the Council on the Master Plan indicating support for certain elements within the Master Plan, but also outlining a number of concerns.
- 2.3** The HE&ED Committee therefore agreed to continue consideration of the Master Plan to allow more time for members of the public to consider and express their views on the proposals. As a result both Business for Dumbarton and the Dumbarton People's Theatre expressed further views that they drew to the attention of the Committee.
- 2.4** Following a deputation received by the HE&ED Committee in May 2008, from the Dumbarton's People Theatre, the Committee sought to remit this matter to a meeting of the full Council for consideration.

3. Main Issues

3.1 The main proposals of the Masterplan as previously reported to the HE&ED Committee are :

- A large retail unit to the north of the Artizan Centre with decked parking, to anchor the town centre;
- A new vehicular access from the A814 to service the unit;
- A new public space, including parking spaces, between the retail unit and the Artizan Centre;
- New retail development on the corner of High Street and Risk Street, with decked parking;
- The creation of a new street between the former Co-op building and 20 High Street; and
- New retail development with residential use above between High Street and St Mary's Way.

3.2 The Masterplan also recommends proposals for adjoining areas. These relate to new commercial and café/bar developments along the quayside to the rear of High Street and civic, community and Council related uses on the Old Academy Building redevelopment site.

3.3 The public consultation events generated significant interest in the Master Plan and 141 completed comments forms were received, and the details of the issues raised were reported to the HE&ED Committee in March 2008. Generally, these comments support the comments of the first exhibition held in June 2007.

3.4 Following the March meeting of the HE&ED Committee correspondence has been received from both the Dumbarton People's Theatre and Business for Dumbarton and their concerns are set out below

3.5 Dumbarton People's Theatre (DPT)

The Denny Civic Theatre is considered a major asset to the town and is used by a variety of local theatrical groups and performers, and the DPT have viewed the Master Plan as having potentially four scenarios for the Denny Theatre : the present theatre retained within the redeveloped town centre; the present theatre not closed until a new replacement facility is provided; the present theatre closed with a long term commitment to a new replacement facility; and the present theatre closed with no plans for a replacement. The DPT then outline potential consequences of the above scenarios.

3.6 It appears that the DPT is not opposed to the principles of the Master Plan; rather it is the delivery and the timing of proposals that is of concern. The DPT like other comments received during the consultation event have indicated that if the Denny Theatre was to be demolished, then a new facility should be built prior to its demolition.

3.7 The delivery strategy set out in the Master Plan indicates that any redevelopment of the Denny Theatre would be a medium term project and would follow the larger retail blocks and majority of decked access car parking to the west and rear of the Artizan Centre which are seen as priority projects.

3.8 Business for Dumbarton

Previous correspondence indicated that Business for Dumbarton supported a number of aspects of the Masterplan including the relocation of Council offices to the east of the town centre, the proposed building of new homes in the area and they accept that a new supermarket would attract more shoppers to the area. They have expressed concern regarding the proposed reduction of parking at the quayside, particularly if new residential development went ahead in this area. This element of the proposals would also restrict access for servicing shops. They are concerned that parking provision seems to be concentrated towards the supermarket. They are also generally concerned about access matters for the High Street area and that the Masterplan could exacerbate access problems, although they note that access is well provided for in relation to the new supermarket.

3.9 Previous correspondence from Business for Dumbarton was reported to the HE&ED Committee in March. Business for Dumbarton has now consulted more widely with their members and has re-iterated the points previously made particularly those relating to parking (and most particularly any plan which would introduce charging). They also indicate that they support the recent decision to fund a feasibility study on readmitting cars to the High Street and would urge that this should be part of any Masterplan following consideration of a report to the January Committee on Dumbarton Town Centre car-parking, it was agreed to a change to the High Street restricted access times, undertake a study of blue badge holders to determine if further change would enhance access opportunities and that a further report be prepared to update the effects of the above following a further customer survey. In addition following the Council meeting of 27 February, Members agreed to undertake a feasibility study into the regeneration of Dumbarton Town Centre and the opening up of Dumbarton High Street.

3.10 It is evident therefore that issues concerning parking and traffic management are being pursued by the Council and it is not considered that the principles of the Master Plan would be significantly affected by a change to the traffic management operations. As development proposals proceed, matters such as traffic management will be considered and reported to HE&ED Committee for consideration.

3.11 The Master Plan seeks to provide a basis for investment to create a successful town centre. It provides strategic guidance to allow developments to take place as part of an overall vision. It therefore provides the context for the regeneration of the town centre, however in taking the Master Plan forward it is essential that co-operation between the Council, the private sector and other stakeholders continues and that the Council provides leadership to deliver the regeneration of the town centre.

3.12 No impact assessment has been required at this stage

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 Delivery of the Masterplan will require commitment from various Council Departments, and will involve a restructuring of Council facilities once implemented, however at this stage any impact of personnel is unknown.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Initial redevelopment costs have been provided. Further consideration will require to be given to these and any available funding, prior to the Council embarking on the implementation of specific projects within the Masterplan.

6. Risk Analysis

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

7. Conclusions

7.1 The draft Masterplan sets out a series of actions for revitalising the core town centre area of Dumbarton. Its delivery will require partnership working between the Council, the private sector (in particular Jermon), landowners and other stakeholders. It is clear that there are concerns about particular details of the delivery of the Masterplan; however it is considered that such matters can be addressed as development proposals proceed. As matters progress further reports will be prepared for HE&ED Committee's consideration.

7.2 It is therefore proposed that Members approve and adopt the Dumbarton Town Centre Master Plan as Supplementary Planning Guidance as a strategy for the regeneration of the town centre.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that Members:

- a) note the results from the public consultation, and further communication from Business for Dumbarton and Dumbarton People's Theatre and agrees that the Denny Civic Theatre is not demolished until a new theatre is open for business;**
- b) delegate authority to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to finalise the draft Masterplan, taking into account any minor editorial matters; and**
- c) approve and adopt the Masterplan as supplementary planning guidance, as a plan for the regeneration of the town centre.**

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Date: 14 May 2008

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: Dumbarton Town Centre Master Plan

Reports to Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee, 5 September 2007 entitled Dumbarton Town Centre Projects 2007-2008, 9 January 2008 entitled Dumbarton Town Centre Masterplan Update and 5 March 2008 entitled Dumbarton Town Centre Masterplan

Wards Affected: 3