



Bowling Basin Redevelopment Masterplan

Elected Members' Pre-Application Meeting: 12 November 2014

1. Purpose

The purpose of this briefing note is to advise Members of a forthcoming major planning application, and to give Members an opportunity to highlight any additional issues which they consider the application ought to address. The merits of the proposal are not being considered, and no decision will be made at this stage. The procedures and protocol for Elected Member involvement at the pre-application stage were agreed by the Planning Committee on 27 August 2014, and a copy of the procedures and protocol is attached as an appendix.

2. Background

Scottish Canals has a longstanding aspiration to regenerate the Bowling Basin area. In February and March 2014 a charrette (interactive design workshop) was held which brought together the local community and other stakeholders to work directly with a specialised design team in order to devise options for the development of the site.

Scottish Canals used the charrette outcomes to prepare a preferred masterplan, which formed the basis of a proposal of application notice (PAN14/006) submitted to the Council in July 2014. In accordance with the regulations for pre-application consultation, a further two-day public event was held in Bowling Village Hall in August. Scottish Canals are now close to submitting a planning application for planning permission in principle which will set out a phased masterplan proposal for the whole site.

3. Site

Bowling Basin is situated to the east of Bowling village, at the point where the Forth and Clyde Canal joins the River Clyde. The site consists of a series of canal basins and locks bisected by a disused railway line, along with the former customs house and lock-keepers' cottages. Historically the location was once an important transport hub where freight was interchanged between sea, canal and rail transport, but today the main use is for boat mooring, including a number of houseboats. In addition to the cottages there are a range of activities including leisure, office and business uses within the Customs House and the railway arches. There is naturally seeded woodland on the ground between the canal and the River Clyde, most of which is former railway land. The former railway swing bridge structure over the canal has

self-seeded and there is open space/amenity areas around the Lower Basin. The canal is a scheduled ancient monument and most of the buildings and structures are listed, while this part of River Clyde is part of the Inner Clyde SPA, a RAMSAR site and an SSSI.

4. Development Details

The masterplan covers an area of 12ha, and development proposals comprise:

- **Improved boaters' facilities** in a new operational hub centred on the existing boaters' amenity buildings between the outer harbour and the railway line. Scottish Canals' existing operational functions would relocate from Customs House to a new building in this location, and there is potential for a new small business unit for a boat builder / chandlery.
- **Development of Customs House** for tourism use, such as a restaurant.
- **Refurbishment of railway arches.** Permission has already been granted and some arches have already been refurbished. Two are occupied by a bicycle shop/hire business. It is hoped that other small businesses will occupy the remaining arches, and ideally such uses would include a café.
- **Woodland outdoor activity hub.** The majority of the woodland area to the south of the old railway line would be retained and managed for public access/outdoor activities. The old railway itself would also be managed as a recreational space.
- **New housing,** comprising approximately 25 2- and 3-storey houses on the hardstanding area to the north of the canal and 50 houses to the south of the canal, avoiding the existing wooded areas.
- **Additional car parking** at a number of locations to meet future visitor demand, notably in the area to the south of the upper basin arches.
- **New opening bridge** to the west of the Upper Basin, to reach the proposed new parking and residential areas south of the canal.
- **Path & cycleway improvements** to encourage public access to the site and along the canal towpath (part of national cycle route 7). The old railway line and swing bridge would be developed as a linear park/cycle route improving connections to Bowling and the west, while a new path would connect the area with Old Kilpatrick to the north east. A long-term aim is to restore public access along the north of the harbour to provide access to the railway station and any future development to the west of the harbour.
- **Road improvements** to the lane into the site from Dumbarton Road, which is constrained by a narrow railway bridge. This lane would be widened where possible and junction improvements would be carried out to improve safety and pedestrian facilities and to provide an appropriate gateway into the site. South of the canal the new road leading to the visitor car park would be designed as a woodland track.

The masterplan would be implemented on a phased basis, as and when funding is available.

5. Planning Policies

The site is identified in the adopted local plan as a Redevelopment Opportunity Site for mixed uses including residential, leisure, commercial, tourism, small-scale ancillary retail and open space including the retention of some natural habitat. The emerging local development plan identifies Bowling Basin as a “Changing Place” site where the strategy is to create:

- an exemplar of integrating green infrastructure into development;
- residential development along both sides of the canal;
- low density housing within improved woodland south of former railway line;
- green network enhancements including a linear park along the former railway line; and
- commercial/leisure uses centred on the lower basin and railway arches.

The local development plan requires that a masterplan be agreed to guide the comprehensive development of this site.

Other policies of both plans emphasise the importance of good quality design and the need to protect and enhance built and natural heritage assets.

6. Main Issues

It is considered that the main issues requiring to be addressed as part of any planning application will include the following:

Cultural and Historic Value. The site is a very important industrial heritage asset containing an important section of the canal (a scheduled ancient monument) and several related listed buildings/structures. It is essential that the setting and character of these be protected and enhanced. In particular the new bridge and housing areas will require to be positioned and designed in such a way as to minimise impact upon the character of the canal.

Placemaking and Design. The site has significant potential as a visitor attraction and it is essential that both new and old parts of the development combine to create an enhanced sense of place that is unique and attractive. A high standard of design and materials will be needed for the new-build elements, notably the housing and the bridge. Paths and cycle tracks should be well-designed and allow ease of access through the site.

Transportation Impacts. The proposal has potential to significantly increase the amount of traffic to and from the site, using the existing narrow access lane. Improvements will be needed to this lane to accommodate the additional traffic and to improve facilities and safety for pedestrians, although widening of the existing narrow railway bridge is not proposed. Traffic impacts within Bowling also need to be considered, and the proposals should maximise opportunities to use public transport, walking, cycling and boating. New car parking should be designed to be convenient for visitors but not unduly visually prominent, and should be sympathetically surfaced and landscaped.

Nature Conservation. The development should not have any adverse impact upon the River Clyde. In particular, the Inner Clyde SPA is an internationally important

habitat for overwintering redshank and it is necessary to ensure that there is no adverse visual or noise disturbance to bird life either during the construction period or upon completion of the development. The wooded area within the southern part of the site is valued by local residents but would benefit from more active management, and proposals should seek to enhance the environmental value of this area whilst minimising the impact upon existing trees.

Impacts on Residents. The impact of the development upon the existing residential properties in and around the site (including houseboats) will require to be considered. The proposals are likely to result in increased traffic and visitor numbers so the relationship of roads and public areas to residential properties should be designed to minimise any adverse impacts. The impact of construction activities upon existing residents must also be considered and a noise impact assessment will therefore be required.

Community Safety. The site has previously been subject to low-level anti-social behaviour and the proposals to increase visitor numbers should seek to discourage this through good design, security measures and natural surveillance.

7. Next Steps

All Elected Members are invited to attend a presentation on the proposals by Scottish Canals, and to participate in a subsequent discussion.

Following the pre-application meeting, Scottish Canals intend to finalise their planning application for submission by the end of the year. On receipt of any such application it would be advertised in the press, weekly list and the Council website to allow the public to view the plans and make representations. The application would then be presented to Planning Committee for consideration and determination in due course.

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Date: 31 October 2014

Appendices: Appendix 1 - "Protocol 3 – Elected Member involvement in Pre-Application Discussions"
Appendix 2 - "Planning Procedures for Councillor Involvement in the Pre-application Stage"

Background Papers: Bowling Basin Masterplan

Wards affected: Ward 3 (Dumbarton)