

## **Stirling Local Development Plan – Main Issues Report**

### **Response from The Dunblane Development Trust (DDT)**

The response to the Main Issues Report of Stirling Council's Local Development Plan was drafted by Dunblane Development Trust following a period of consultation when the Trust was able to listen to people's views on issues contained in the report. This included the two public meetings organised by Councillor Houston which were held in Dunblane High School and two meetings of DDT's Development Working Group\*.

There were also a number of joint meetings between members of Dunblane Community Council and DDT's board which were held to ensure consistency between the two Groups' submissions to the Council.

#### **The Key Points of DDT's response are:-**

- We welcome recommendations not to consider large-scale housing.
- We have concerns on loss of Open Space at Newton and the site mapping at Bogside
- The submitted expressions of interest regarding the three proposals for supermarket developments are not acceptable.
- The possible closure of the current Tesco would not be in the best interest of many residents.
- The development of a spatial analysis would give a clearer picture of retail and leisure options.
- We note other potential sites that could be developed for the benefit of the community.

*\* Meetings of all DDT's Working Groups are all advertised on the Dunblane website and in the Allan Water News. The meetings are open to everyone from Dunblane.*

## **The response document is below:**

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### **1 Housing and Open Spaces**

With respect to the proposed housing allocation, the Board welcomes and supports the suggested modest number of new affordable houses. We also welcome the firming of the greenbelt around the north east of Dunblane predominantly following the built environment but with the potential, in 20 years or so, for a small scale (with a total less than 25 dwellings) build in this area. We welcome the recommendation not to consider large scale residential developments for the reasons stated in the MIR.

In the detail we do, however, have concerns over the loss of existing recreational open space at Newton Crescent/Ochiltree and cannot support that proposal. Concerns have also been expressed about the Bogside development. We must object to the site as mapped in the MIR (we believe the Perth Road frontage was mapped in error but not corrected) and cannot support any development which would materially affect the stone wall surrounding Holmehill. Furthermore some concern has been raised as to the value of the “Scottish Woodlands Office” site as a wildlife corridor and access it affords for deer and other wildlife to the Holmehill open space area. It would of course have been far preferable to have completed consultation on the PAN 65 maps and have an open space strategy in place prior to the LDP. It may be possible for a suitable suite of affordable units to be built on the site, maintaining the mature tree frontage to Perth Road and green corridor access to Holmehill, with further consultation. Furthermore any proposal would have to complement the Green Network which is, we believe, in preparation and not, as was alluded to in parts of the LDP, as an extant and recognised system.

### **2 Town Centre and Retailing**

From recent developer presentations, we are aware that there are at least three sites (Barbush, the Golf Course and Kippenross) where major supermarkets are being proposed. We remain to be convinced of the need for a large supermarket. We also have concerns that, if Tesco's were to abandon their current site in favour of a larger store on the north or east side of the town, then, unless another food retailer is allowed to occupy the vacated store, this could potentially be to the disadvantage of those residents, many of whom may not own cars, who live in close proximity to the existing Tesco store. Furthermore we would like to consider the designation of the existing Tesco store as being part of the retail centre of the town and preserve its retail use. The emerging LDP provides an opportunity for the store to be included within an expanded central shopping area/ town centre.

### **3 Barbush**

In regard to the Barbush proposal we note that it is a brown field development however there are concerns over whether an edge of town store would damage the existing High Street trade. Further information on the likely impact of such a proposal should be considered. Whilst we maintain support the continued promotion of office development at Barbush, there is another possible use for this site related to its location adjacent to the A9 grade separated interchange. It would appear to be a good site for a new petrol station to replace the one 'lost' to Marks & Spencer's (with a significant carbon benefit). This could then form the nucleus of “Dunblane Services” if combined with appropriate catering, retail and ideally a “budget” hotel. This could help to put Dunblane on the map, and encourage many more people to stop in the city and thus make use of other facilities.

### **4 Golf Course**

We have many concerns over the suggested allocation of DUNB04 for town centre expansion, noting that the physical size of this site greatly exceeds the size of the existing town centre. It has not been proven that moving the town centre to the east of the dual carriageway will help to regenerate the existing shops on the High Street. Indeed, it could have the opposite effect. Nor is there a clear picture of the likelihood of the existing medical centre relocating from its current base. We do, however, note that the inclusion of the proposal DUNB.C in the MIR was for “discussive purposes. There is a decision to be taken as to whether the land has more value (in the non-monetary sense) as a town centre expansion area or as open space / amenity area creating the setting to the historic town.” However, we consider that this landowner/developer-led proposal is not the best way of promoting the regeneration of the existing High Street. We believe that development in this area would materially affect not only the character and nature of the localised area, but also of Dunblane as a whole. We note that there has been vigorous opposition to this proposal from the local community. We will seek to oppose the proposed development in this area, due to the wider implications for Dunblane.

## **5 Kippenross**

In regard to the Kippenross proposal, the historic landscape argument against the development of this site in the MIR is not entirely credible. We note that the Lodge House had been relocated in the 1950s during the construction of the dual carriageway. We also note that the commercial conifer crop, which is due for felling as part of the cropping cycle, screens land to the north from western Dunblane. Even if the plantation had to be restocked there would be a 20 year period when any development to the north of it would be highly visible – which could well affect the decision making process for that site. We are unconvinced that the present proposal will enhance the viability of the High Street. We believe that the proposed development would materially affect not only the character and nature of the localised area, but also of Dunblane as a whole. We will therefore seek to oppose the proposed development in this area, due to the wider implications for Dunblane.

We would prefer, from a competition point of view, to have a different supermarket chain, from those already active in the town, providing a facility to Dunblane should another supermarket be justified. However, more information and adjusted proposals may well produce a more acceptable basis for consideration.

## **6 Spatial Plan for Dunblane**

The Board also considers that the process of allowing landowners and developers to register “Expressions of Interest” and for that to be the basis of professional and public reaction may not produce the best planning outcome for Dunblane. For example, there are certain sites, such as the abattoir, which have the potential to perform a much more relevant land use function. The lack of declared interest by the current site owners should not, of its own, be a reason for excluding this site from the planning process.

The Board considers that a more proactive approach should be taken to planning the future of Dunblane. With this in mind, we are currently pursuing the idea of carrying out a ‘Planning for Real’ or similar exercise in order to engage a wide-cross section of local people in spatial planning. The Community Plan forms the basis of the work of the Development Trust. We consider that we now need a proactive, community-led initiative to ensure that the Local Development Plan can, indeed, help to deliver our aspirations for the future of the town. This spatial plan was one of the objectives of the recent Community Plan. We would hope that this exercise could further investigate the enhancement of the High Street and retail in Dunblane.

## **7 Other Sites or Uses that could be of benefit to Dunblane**

As well as the abattoir we would suggest that other small sites could be brought to consideration. Whilst not supporting any at the moment we would like to consider, in a spatial plan, land such as:

- The land at the north end of Whitecross Avenue (which should have reverted to SC ownership following Barbush development) be investigated as an alternative potential location for additional car parking and a few housing units.
- Land on the western side of the dual carriageway opposite Duckburn industrial estate for a 'gateway' development to Dunblane. This could be a small number of flats in a high quality build with improved access serving both this site and the existing Marks & Spencer store.
- The old walled garden accessible from Ochiltree in the grounds of the Hydro for housing.
- As mentioned in the text for Barbush, a new petrol station (with a significant carbon benefit). This could then form the nucleus of "Dunblane Services" if combined with appropriate catering, retail and ideally a "budget" hotel.
- Three extant sites on the High Street that are in dire need of refurbishment and should be brought into active use.

## **8 Summary of Key Points**

- We welcome recommendations not to consider large scale housing.
- We have concerns on loss of Open Space at Newton and the site mapping at Bogside
- The submitted expressions of interest regarding the three proposals for supermarket developments are not acceptable.
- The possible closure of the current Tesco would not be in the best interest of many residents.
- The development of a spatial analysis would give a clearer picture of retail and leisure options.
- We note other potential sites that could be developed for the benefit of the community.

Clearly there are still a number of major concerns and the timescales have not allowed us to achieve the level of consultation that we would have wished. We would therefore, wish to seek an extension to this consultation process in order to give us the time to further engage with the Dunblane public and engage in the "planning for Real" exercise. We would be most grateful if Stirling planners could also assist with and engage in this proposed resident-led 'planning for real' exercise.

Dunblane Development Trust  
9 August 2010