

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**MINUTE of MEETING of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held in CAMELON COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTRE, CAMELON on 7 SEPTEMBER 2010 commencing at 7.00 P.M.**

The purpose of the meeting was to hold a pre-determination hearing in terms of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006. When sitting in this capacity, the Planning Committee comprises all members of the Council.

**PRESENT:** Provost Reid; Councillors Blackwood, Buchanan, Carleschi, Goldie, Gow, Hughes, Kenna, Lemetti, A MacDonald, Mahoney, McLuckie, McNeill, Nicol, Nimmo, Oliver, Patrick, Thomson and Waddell.

**CONVENER:** Councillor Buchanan.

**APOLOGIES:** Depute Provost Black; Councillors Alexander, Coleman, Constable, Fry, Jackson, C MacDonald, McNally, C Martin, C R Martin, Meiklejohn, Ritchie and Spears.

**ATTENDING:** Acting Director of Law and Administration Services; Acting Head of Planning and Transportation; Development Manager, Senior Planning Officer (J Milne); Roads Development Officer (C Russell); Legal Services Manager (I Henderson); Committee Officer (A Sobieraj), Committee Assistant (S McGhee) and Modern Apprentice (N Nicol).

**ALSO**

**ATTENDING:** Head of Economic Development; Development Plan Coordinator; Transport Planning Coordinator; Transport Planning Officer; Environment Health Officer (S Henderson); and R Drysdale, Planning Consultant, RDPC Ltd; D Wilson, TESCO Stores Ltd; G Latto, Transport Engineer and B Travers, Transport Planning Manager (all applicant's representatives).

**DECLARATIONS**

**OF INTEREST:** None.

**P90. ERECTION OF SUPERSTORE, PETROL FILLING STATION, CAR PARK, PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICULAR ACCESS, SERVICE YARD AND LANDSCAPING AT WRANGLER FACTORY, GLASGOW ROAD, FALKIRK FOR TESCO STORES LTD - P/09/0512/FUL**

There was submitted Report (circulated) dated 27 August 2010 by the Director of Development Services on an application for full planning permission for the erection of a retail superstore, petrol station, car park, pedestrian and vehicular access, service yard and landscaping at the former Wrangler Factory, Glasgow Road, Falkirk.

1. The Convener formally welcomed those present and outlined the procedures relating to the meeting.
2. The Development Manager outlined the nature of the application.
3. The applicant was heard in relation to the application.
4. Questions were then asked by Members of the Committee as follows:-

Q(a) Information was sought on the proposals for alleviating traffic congestion at Watling Street and on how residents would be assisted in getting access to and egress from their homes, having particular regard to the traffic on Glasgow Road.

Response by the Transport Planning Officer:-

It was considered that appropriate signalling would create gaps in traffic which would assist entry to and egress from Glasgow Road. Monitoring would be undertaken with the objective of addressing the problem of rat running in the future. Should it become evident that rat running was prevalent traffic calming measures would be considered in the event that planning permission was granted.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

It was acknowledged that traffic on Glasgow Road would increase to allow appropriate gaps to enable access to adjoining streets and for pedestrians.

Q(b) Clarification was sought on what would be covered by the Section 75 Agreement.

Response by Transport Planning Officer:-

It is difficult at this stage to be specific about traffic impact problems that may arise. There would be a period of monitoring after the store was opened in order to assess any problems and this would be provided for in any Section 75 Agreement.

Q(c) Information was requested on the job opportunities that would be available within the store and whether they reflected the needs of the community in terms of skills and pay levels.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

A wide range of posts would be available as the store would open over seven days and operate 24 hours a day. Posts would include opportunities within customer services, warehousing and office work. Posts would be on a 60/40 full time/part time basis. Training opportunities would be available including management schemes. It was stated that Tesco Stores Ltd provided among the best levels of pay and benefits within the retail sector.

Q(d) The applicant was asked if Wilson Road would be a more natural junction for traffic signals rather than Watling Street.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The application site was already set. Access off Wilson Road would require the acquisition of land outwith the site and within the ownership of a third party. Synchronised traffic signals would assist the traffic flow.

Q(e) Clarification was sought on whether the installation of a roundabout had been considered in place of traffic lights.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

All options had been examined since the original application in 2001. Traffic signals were deemed to be most appropriate with regard to pedestrian access and limiting the extent of land take. It would not be possible to create a roundabout to the required design standards within the confines of the application site.

Q(f) Clarification was sought on whether an impact assessment had been carried out in relation to adjacent town centres, e.g. Denny and Stenhousemuir.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The applicant had undertaken a detailed analysis of traffic and shopping patterns. Regard was also had to the household shopping survey undertaken by the Council. A heavy flow of traffic into Falkirk Town Centre passing this site had been identified. Some supermarkets in Falkirk were already trading at twice the expected level. The application premises would enable a more even distribution of expenditure across the area. The detailed analysis had already identified a natural element of decentralised shopping. It was anticipated also that there would be a substantial reduction in spend in other Tesco stores once this store was open.

Response by the Development Plan Coordinator:-

The Retail Impact Assessment identified that trade to this site was likely to be drawn 31% from the Camelon area, 35% from Falkirk South, 10.3% from Denny, 8.5% from Bonnybridge and 8% from Larbet, Stenhousemuir and Carron. Anticipated levels of expenditure to this proposed store was also contained within the Retail Impact Assessment.

Q(g) Clarification was sought on how the site compared in size to other Tesco stores in the area.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The store would be c.5,500m<sup>2</sup> in size compared to stores in Grahams Road (>6,000m<sup>2</sup>) and Redding (6,900m<sup>2</sup>)

Clarification was sought on whether the conclusions in the Retail Impact Assessment were accepted by the planning authority.

Response by the Development Plan Coordinator:-

In broad terms, yes, although there is always an element of judgement being exercised, the important question to be asked was the implication of the figures in the Risk Impact Assessment for other town centres.

Q(i) Clarification was sought on whether either Tesco Stores Ltd as site owners or Falkirk Council had received enquiries from other parties in relation to the site.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

Over the period of ownership by Tesco Stores Ltd no enquires had been received concerning the site.

Response by the Head of Economic Development:-

Since the Head of Economic Development had been in post no formal proposals relating to the site had been received.

Q(j) In connection with the reference to 200 jobs being generated, clarification was sought on whether there would be inevitable job losses elsewhere as a consequence of the new store opening and therefore what the net job increase was anticipated to be..

Response by the applicant's representative:-

It was considered that there would be no overall loss in the number of jobs in the area and that it was likely that the overall number of jobs in the local area would increase.

Q(k) Clarification was sought on the expected additional benefit to other local businesses within Camelon.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

It was envisaged that other local retailers would benefit from the existence of the Tesco store as shoppers would be more likely to shop locally and utilise other local shops. Local suppliers would also be encouraged.

Q(l) Confirmation was sought that the existing parking arrangements would be maintained on Main Street, Camelon.

Response by the Transport Planning Officer:-

It was confirmed that there were no proposals to change these arrangements and that while there would be two lanes exiting the roundabout these would filter into a single lane again to accommodate parking.

Q(m) Further clarification was sought on the results of the household shopping survey and the effect on Denny Town Centre.

Response by the Development Plan Coordinator:-

The household shopping survey was limited to the likely turnover of any new store as opposed to impact figures.

Q(n) Clarification was sought on the relationship between the double lane on Main Street, Camelon and the current congestion problem.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The road design would be one which was commonly used. The two exit lanes on the Main Street would merge to one lane with parking retained at Main Street.

Q(o) Clarification was sought on the timescale for clearing the site should planning permission be granted.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

Any development of the site was dependant on the decision of the Council in relation to the planning application and the nature of the attached planning conditions.

Q(p) Clarification was sought on the timescale for the development of the bus lane and at the roundabout.

Response by the Acting Head of Planning and Transportation:-

Detailed work would commence following a decision of Falkirk Council on whether to grant or refuse the application for planning permission.

5. Section 38A of the Town and Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 together with Regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 give those persons who have submitted representations on relevant planning applications the right to be heard before a Committee of the Council before the application is determined. On this occasion, in addition to those persons who had submitted representations, other members of the public in attendance at the meeting were permitted to address the Committee.

(a) Mr D Goldie, in support of the development, highlighted the new jobs that would be brought to the area.

(b) Ms I Bradley, in support of the development, raised the value of new jobs to the area as well as eradicating a local eyesore by regenerating the Camelon area.

- (c) Mr S Paterson stated that he had originally objected to the application but had changed his mind having seen the plans. He remained concerned about traffic impact and parking problems, however, and sought further clarification on the filter lanes at the roundabout.
  - (d) Ms H Craig, in support of the development, indicated that the proposed store would provide a positive benefit to the area. Ms Craig also referred to the present lack of shops in the local area which was limited to one co-op and one other small shop. The local community favoured a store with a varied selection of quality goods at affordable prices. The former factory's negative visual impact was reiterated.
  - (e) Ms J Rennie, an objector to the development, advised that her concerns were not about the proposed store itself or the jobs that would be created but the impact of the location of the development on her home which was located across the road from it. In particular she raised concerns about the noise from 24 hour trading, security concerns affecting her property and the dirt during the construction phase.
  - (f) Mr L Ramsay, an objector to the development, raised concerns about how his and other bungalows which were located directly across from the proposed petrol station would be affected by the development. This included parking outside the properties and problems of vehicular access and egress. Mr Ramsey's caravan would no longer be able to be taken onto the road and would require to be moved elsewhere. The need for a petrol station at this site was questioned given that there were already two existing petrol stores in close proximity. A proliferation of petrol stations would impact on existing jobs. The location of the petrol station at the front of the development was also criticised on grounds of safety and it was asked whether the lessons learned from the Buncefield disaster had been taken into account in planning the development.
  - (g) Mr N Harris, for Henry Boot, an objector to the development, raised concern at the impact of the development on the ability to regenerate Denny Town Centre.
  - (h) Mr W Wilson referred to the inappropriateness of the traffic system and its effect on small businesses within Camelon.
6. Responses were given by the applicant's representatives and Officers from Development Services in relation to the issues raised by Members and contributors as follows:-

Response by the Development Manager:-

In July 2009 the Council received the application for planning permission and this was followed by appropriate consultation. Major applications of this nature required lengthy dialogue with applicants and other Council Services because of their complexity.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

In relation to concerns about security in the vicinity of the proposed store, 24hour security and CCTV would operate to address the local community's security concerns. Tesco Stores Ltd employed a member of staff in each store to identify and address such security concerns. The company would also work closely with Central Scotland Police on measures to discourage young people from congregating at the proposed site. This collaborative work would aim to ensure that antisocial behaviour was kept to a minimum. In relation to noise, trade at such stores was low at night and the stores tended to be used mainly by shift workers. In relation to the construction period, a contracted with a neighbourhood policy would be used. The redistribution centre for this store was located in Livingston. All distribution lorries were fitted with timers and the drivers' routes were determined in advance of departure. Drivers were required to travel with the minimum of noise and disturbance. The vehicle refrigeration systems were also turned off at night. The delivery yard for this store would be located next to the railway line and all deliveries would take place at the rear of the building. In addition, all drivers were risk assessed.

With regard to health and safety issues, stringent checks are in place. The Health and Safety Executive incorporate lessons from Buncefield when they check all new petrol stations. Deliveries to the petrol station would be subject to conditions to limit noise and the car wash would not operate at night. An acoustic report has already been prepared which has raised no issues of concern. Most petrol stations are located close to a road. The applicant had not encountered any issues with their other petrol stations along the same lines. With regard to traffic impact, the applicant was confident in the robustness of their assessments. While there may be potential disbenefits from increased traffic, they did not consider that significant delays would be introduced.

## 7. Close of Meeting

The Convener concluded by thanking the parties for their attendance and advised that the matter would be determined by Falkirk Council on 6 October 2010.