

FALKIRK COUNCIL

**Subject: DENNY TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION:
UPDATE REPORT**
Meeting: FALKIRK COUNCIL
Date: 7TH DECEMBER 2011
Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report advises Members on the progress and results of the Council's Denny Town Centre Regeneration Project Stage I consultation. This was undertaken following the Council's decision on 5th October 2011, to progress the regeneration project in Denny through a Council led phased option as described in a report considered at that meeting.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 As previously reported to Members, the Council has undertaken extensive consultation in relation to plans for the regeneration of Denny Town Centre. This has involved issue of masterplan proposals for comment accompanied by several newsletters and a series of public consultations events. These took place during the following periods and is fully set out in Appendix 1:-

- Announcement of the project in June 2006 with Henry Boot
- November 2006 – January 2007
 - a survey, display and events, securing 93% support for the masterplan
- Operation of the Denny Development Group since November 2007
- November 2007 – January 2008 consultation on an updated version of the masterplan securing 76% in favour of the proposals
- August 2010 – presentation of an amended version of the masterplan with 90% finding the proposals a positive step for Denny.

2.2 As a consequence of this activity extensive consultation has taken place with the Denny community and retailers on the regeneration masterplan. This activity has highlighted strong support for the regeneration masterplan with the key priorities being the need for the removal of the existing Church Walk blocks and development of a new vibrant town centre. The masterplan has been amended to reflect comments from the community, business sector and Architect & Design Scotland regarding the public square, access for pedestrians and disabled people, and the service access for the proposed foodstore.

- 2.4 The significant downturn in market conditions and impact of the economic recession resulted in Henry Boot (the Council's development partner) being unable to secure a food operator and progress the agreed masterplan. This led to the report to Economic Strategy & Development Committee in September 2011 and Council in October 2011, recommending a Council-led approach to delivering the project. In agreeing to proceed on this basis the Members agreed that further consultation on the proposals should take place. A three stage consultation has been put in place and is summarised below.

3.0 DENNY CONSULTATION STAGE 1 FEEDBACK

3.1 Stage 1 Consultation

- 3.2 The first phase of consultation requested by the Council has been completed. It was conducted to enable the community to be informed and consulted on the Council's decision and the intended change of approach to delivery of the scheme.

- 3.3 The consultation was delivered as follows:-

- A newsletter was prepared, printed and distributed to residential and commercial properties in the Denny and Dunipace area (6,000 households and businesses) detailing the Council's change of strategy. The newsletter advised that consultation with the community has taken place at each stage of this project and gave contact details for people to learn more about the project or express views. The three new stages of consultation detailed in the newsletter set out:

Stage 1 – Communication to the Denny community of the Council's decision and approach to delivery of the scheme.

Stage 2 – Key timescales for presenting to the Denny community the outline masterplan and Phase 1 detailed planning consent drawings.

Stage 3 – Planning application process and opportunity for Denny community to further comment on the regeneration plans

- The newsletter invited residents and businesses to attend the Stage 1 consultation event and make their views known to the drop-in workshops. The newsletter is attached in Appendix 2.
- The consultation events were advertised in Falkirk Herald, on digital screens, on-line on the Council's website, and were promoted a few days before the event with newsletters and posters handed into shops, and a broadcast on Central FM.

- Three workshop events took place in Denny Community Education Centre, 1st, 2nd and 3rd November 2pm-8pm each day. At these events, officers explained the overall change of strategy. The events also updated on the demolition activity and gave examples of the quality of buildings the Council has recently delivered. Comments were obtained via a survey, maps, 'Post-It' notes and online. The event gave a significant opportunity for visitor feedback.
- 3.4 Approximately 100 people took the opportunity to attend the events and 79 feedback forms were submitted. The format and total numbers attending were similar to regeneration consultation events conducted for Tamfourhill, Stenhousemuir and previous Denny town centre regeneration events.
- 3.5 The results of the survey provided information on the use of the existing town centre and priorities for the new town centre (see Appendices 3 and 4). A summary of the results and feedback from those attending the events is provided below (it should be noted that not everyone completed all questions):-
- a) When would you like to see a new town centre delivered?
 - 67 - as soon as possible (84.8%)
 - 12 - wait for a better scheme (15.2%)
 - b) Do you think the Council's plans are a positive step forward for Denny?
 - 54 - Yes (68%)
 - 17 - No (21.5%)
 - 5 - Don't know (6.3%)
 - c) How helpful was the drop-in event?
 - 34 - Very helpful (43%)
 - 37 - Helpful (46.8%)
 - 6 - not helpful (7.6%)

The main comments provided on the response sheets were noted and analysed to identify the main concerns felt by the community of Denny. A table detailing comments received is provided in Appendix 4. In summary, the main issues raised include:-

- There is a need to see a complete scheme for the town centre, delivered as soon as possible.
- People would like to see civic pride restored in the town.
- It is important that the traditional character of the town is maintained.
- Many would like to see a better mix of shops with few empty units.
- Traffic management was a key priority for many.
- Safety and cleanliness was raised consistently.
- Community and recreation facilities are very important to local people.

- Concern at the impact of a foodstore.

These comments will assist in the preparation of designs for the next stages of delivery for the project. It should also be noted that there has been correspondence from various individuals concerning the approach that the Council has adopted to delivery of the scheme and these are also provided in Appendix 4.

- 3.6 This response to the survey demonstrates the concern amongst the Denny community to see the town centre regenerated as quickly as possible. The support expressed for the Council's approach is also positive and suggests a need to progress its delivery. While there are concerns over the current lack of detail on Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the scheme, by progressing towards the next stages, further detail on these phases can be brought forward.

4.0 NEXT CONSULTATION STAGES

4.1 Stage 2

It is intended that the Council now proceeds to prepare two planning applications for the regeneration of the town centre:-

- an outline planning application detailing the overall regeneration masterplan for the town centre with the intention that Phase 2 and 3 sites be marketed for retail development including a foodstore; and
- a detailed planning application providing detailed plans, elevations and artists impressions for Phase 1 including the car park, library, shops, town square and public realm.

Additionally the Council will now commission key technical studies to support the planning application. A formal Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) can lodged immediately following the Council meeting. This will commence the formal consultation stage which is required in connection with submission of the planning applications.

The local community will be invited to attend further consultation events to be held during early 2012. At these events we will seek views on the detailed content of the plans, including intended uses, building perspectives and material finishes for the town centre proposals. Details of the plans will be distributed early in February in the form of a newsletter with further opportunity to comment and feedback.

4.2 Stage 3

It is intended that submissions for both the outline planning application for the overall masterplan and the detailed planning application for Phase I will be made in March 2012. Again through the statutory planning process Denny residents and businesses will have further opportunity to comment, support or object to the content of the scheme during this phase of the project.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The first stage of consultation on the Council's approach to delivery of the Denny town centre project has been completed and this signals support for the town centre proposals to be delivered as soon as possible. There will be two further opportunities commencing early in the New Year for local people to contribute to the masterplan for the town which will enable the scheme to progress.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that Council notes:-

- (i) The completion of the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy Consultation Stage 1 and the feedback received on the Council's approach to delivery of the scheme; and
- (ii) The proposals to conduct further stages of consultation as part of the planning process for delivery of the Denny town centre regeneration project.

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Director of Development Services

Date: 28th November, 2011

Contact Officers: Colin Frame/Peter Reid/Douglas Duff. Ext: 0972/0971/0905.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Town Centre Regeneration Files.

Anyone wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01324 590972 and ask for Colin Frame, Peter Reid or Douglas Duff.

APPENDIX 1

DENNY TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION CONSULTATION TO DATE

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 15 th Nov 2005 | P & R Committee approved Henry Boot Developments as preferred developer for Denny |
| April 2006 | Letter to affected parties notifying of appointment of Henry Boot Developments. |
| July 2006 | Original masterplan presented to affected retailers. |
| July 2006 | Masterplan presented to Denny community at a Public Meeting in Broompark Community Centre on 26 th July 2006. |
| Sept 2006 | Second meeting with affected retailers. |
| Nov & Dec 2006 | Public Display of revised plan. |
| Nov 2006 | Newsletter and questionnaire distributed detailing proposals. Falkirk on-line detailed proposals. |
| Jan 2007 | Consultation workshops attended by residents, retailers and Community Council. |
| Feb 2007 | Public presentation on consultation process and results. 93% considered masterplan satisfactory or better (750 responses). |
| Feb-June 2007 | Working group to resolve traffic management issue on Stirling Street (Community Council, Retailers Association and Council officers). |
| 12 th June 2007 | P & R Committee approve Henry Boot masterplan. |
| Nov 2007- Jan 2008 | Further consultation undertaken on revised plan to resolve management of traffic and pedestrian access, site levels and phasing of the works. This included:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation to local business; ▪ Public meeting; ▪ Public display of masterplan; and ▪ On-line masterplan inviting feedback. |
| Jan 2008 | Feedback to the community identifying over 76% support for proposals. |
| June 2009 | Outline planning application submitted. |
| August 2009 | TCRF award finding 3 projects in Denny:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Denny Cross signalling replacement completed in May 2010; ▪ Stirling Street shop front improvements completed in March 2010; and ▪ Private vacant property acquisitions completed in March 2010. |
| Feb 2010 | Public meeting in St. Patrick's Primary School on 22 nd February 2010 concerning progress of the scheme. |
| June 2010 | Report to P & R Committee and Council to agree revised scheme for delivery with Henry Boot. |
| August 2010 | Amended masterplan presented to community through 2 drop-in sessions. 160 people attended. 90% found the proposals a positive step for Denny. |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| April 2011 | Regeneration signage and electronic information signage introduced. |
| August 2011 | Regeneration office established. |
| Sept 2011 | Report to P & R Committee and Council to agree revised scheme for delivery by the Council. |
| Oct 2011 | Newsletter distributed. |
| Nov 2011 | 3 day consultation events. |

APPENDIX 3

Denny Town Centre Regeneration – Drop-In Event

Results 1st, 2nd and 3rd November 2011

1. *How often do you shop in Denny Town Centre?*

| Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Hardly Ever |
|-------|--------|---------|-------------|
| 44/79 | 25/79 | 1/79 | 8/79 |

2. *If the Town Centre improved, how often would you visit?*

| Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Hardly Ever |
|-------|--------|---------|-------------|
| 42/79 | 17/79 | 0/79 | 0/79 |

3. *How long do you spend at the Town Centre?*

| All Day | Half a Day | Less than Half a Day |
|---------|------------|----------------------|
| 1/79 | 7/79 | 68/79 |

4. *How do you travel to the Town Centre?*

| Car | Bus | On Foot |
|-------|------|---------|
| 33/79 | 3/79 | 41/79 |

(9 ticked both car and on foot, 1 ticked bus and on foot)

5. *Where do you currently do your main food shopping?*

| Denny | Falkirk | Stirling | Cumbernauld | Other |
|-------|---------|----------|-------------|-------|
| 35 | 30 | 19 | 15 | 10 |

(14 people ticked more than one location)

6. *What do you like about Denny Town Centre? (Please Tick)*

| | Very Important | Quite Important | Neither | Not Important | Not at all Important |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------|---------------|----------------------|
| It's easy to reach | 56 | 15 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| Good local shops | 32 | 22 | 8 | 8 | 4 |
| Ease of Parking | 18 | 28 | 11 | 4 | 5 |
| It's safe to use | 24 | 19 | 14 | 11 | 5 |
| Cleanliness | 23 | 18 | 11 | 11 | 8 |
| Community Facilities | 18 | 19 | 11 | 1 | 8 |
| Library | 34 | 23 | 9 | 4 | 5 |

7. *What were your priorities for improvement of the town centre (Please Tick)*

| | Very Important | Quite Important | Neither | Not Important | Not at all Important |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------|---------------|----------------------|
| Remove the Church Walk Blocks | 68 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| A new foodstore | 17 | 16 | 14 | 10 | 12 |
| A new Town Square | 31 | 34 | 8 | 2 | 0 |
| Car parking | 36 | 24 | 8 | 3 | 3 |
| Improved safety | 38 | 22 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| Good local shops | 63 | 11 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Cleanliness | 52 | 20 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Community facilities | 42 | 22 | 5 | 3 | 0 |
| Improved Library | 47 | 22 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| Toilets | 41 | 24 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| Entertainment & Events | 35 | 26 | 11 | 4 | 0 |
| Places to eat and drink | 42 | 29 | 4 | 2 | 0 |

(Some ticked more than one option)

8. *When would you like to see a new town centre delivered? (Please Circle)*

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| As soon as possible | Wait for a better scheme to come forward |
| 67 | 12 |

9. *Do you think the Council's plans are a positive step for Denny? (Please Circle)*

| | | |
|-----|----|------------|
| Yes | No | Don't Know |
| 54 | 17 | 5 |

10. *How helpful was this drop-in event? (Please Circle)*

| | | |
|--------------|---------|-------------|
| Very helpful | Helpful | Not Helpful |
| 34 | 37 | 6 |

APPENDIX 4

COMMENTS

I would like to see more shops. Roads widened, less on street parking - all for safety of children.

I think removal of the church block flats will be a significant improvement and would be keen for this to happen as soon as possible.

Denny deserves better.

Your main focus for Denny Regeneration is a super market? Denny does not need a new store or even an enlarged car park! Denny deserves better than something this simple, and which is already there!

Community places and places to eat and drink being a young person there are no opportunities for young people and I do not believe the current plans will improve this at all. Denny deserves much better!!

A large supermarket and car park appears to be the main focus, Denny does not need this, there are already two large car parks and local small business stores, with a supermarket, these businesses will die. DENNY DESERVES BETTER!!!

Denny deserves better. We don't need another supermarket - we don't want our town centre to look like a retail park.

Allowing the older shops to return.

Want a ramp up to library provide better access if the lift breaks down. Concern that access to the library is clearly sign posted and not dark or unsafe.

A good variety of shops, places to eat and drink and a good supermarket.

That it's kept clean & tidy at all times.

Local investment, local views, security.

A social space which is attractive and well serviced by shops, restaurants and facilities. I think the design of the building is very important given the poor design of the current blocks.

Important that the residents of the town have a centre they can be proud of. Visitors find it a nice place to visit. Encourage clothing retailers rather than a major supermarket retailer.

It would be nice to see all shop units filled.

I am very happy with the current proposals for the new Town Centre and would welcome completion of phase 1 as soon as possible.

Community facilities e.g. for meetings perhaps in the library, making it safer for bike users. More units in the first phase.

It is not a town centre, it is a slum that has been and probably will continue to be ignored by councillors & officials of Falkirk T.C.

A place that is comfortable to be with attractive shops, café's and places for socialising.

2015 seems a long way away & no certainty of a full proof plan.

Community clean up day every week because its such a mess.

To feel that community of Denny are provided with facilities which are good quality and will stand the test of time.

Heavy vehicles to be re directed from town centre by pass road created for this, more office/leisure.

Need people living along the plan area.

Local people need to support the new retailers or will loose them.

More shops at one level, all the money spent on new traffic lights system, a waste of money. What we need is the completion of Eastern Approach Road

Long overdue, well done for starting and actually doing something.

Essential to local Economy and therefore all our lives are enhanced.

Congrats to Falkirk Council and Councillors for having the foresight to do this. Well done!

Residential Presence - no police station - who reports vandalism? To spend £6.5 million initially we need to protect our new town centre.

Breathe life into Denny by making it more than a shopping centre, recreational sites are missing from this plan.

A By Pass for the cross making safer foot access to shops - if good shops are available.

Having been a resident in Denny for 40 years, I am dismayed that the town centre Regeneration has taken so long and that Henry Boot whom the Council once said were the only option were allowed to drag their heels. I think the plan to take down Blocks A & D will do nothing to enhance the town centre as it then opens up the back of Blocks B & C which are the worst. With no date for demolition of these this does not bode well for a aesthetically pleasing town centre over the next few years. The town square is where the Bank is - this is not due to come down until 2017!! The current plan to me

looks like a barren wasteland which will attract people hanging about. I don't think the current plan is a good option for Denny in the longer term.

More variety of shops then people would spend more time and money.

Emphasize that is phase 1.

Police Station.

Denny town centre needs to be done as soon as possible and the other areas in Denny need to be maintained by the Council. The old bingo hall is a disgrace and need to be cleared. Grass cutting in the area is a disgrace.

Shops in Stirling Street on street level.

Shops all on one level on Stirling Street.

We've lived with this for so long it's important to get it right - suitable for the future - affordable and hopefully what people want from this town.

Traffic management and shops on Stirling Street at street level.

Very helpful event, providing adequate information for the future development of Denny town centre.

Affordable retail units - toilets - seating not to be stone/metal also to have back support for elderly and those with health issues.

Just want it done quickly.

Denny deserves better. What has Maddiston Primary School got to do with Denny?

Cycle parking please. Please make it "sympathetic" to the original buildings on the other side. Much as I love the "space age" style of Bonnybridge Library, something more "domestic" in style would be appropriate, with traditional style.

New library should have level access - ? From the rear at Wallace stairs, new buildings should mirror as much as possible buildings on east side of Stirling Street.

That the design and construction be of a high standard and aesthetically pleasing.

I would like to see the war memorial re-sited, into some sort of town square, some good street furniture in this area also to encourage more use.

Falkirk Council keeping their word at last!!!

I am ashamed of Denny town centre including the bingo hall site. The people of Denny deserve a better town centre.

Wider Main Street with diagonal parking.

The whole identity of Denny is based on public image. A nicer town centre would increase the civic pride, give children more to do and reduce crime.

Denny deserves better and look at all options available.

To leave a legacy to future generations.

I think the Council should engage more with the residents of Denny and listen to their thoughts, hopes and aspirations. Denny town centre at night is used by kids on BMX bikes & skateboards, causing mischief. Where else do they go, what is there for them or indeed for me to do. Denny needs to be reinvented as a post industrial town and not just redeveloped or else it has a danger of becoming nothing more than a massive housing scheme.

More independent retailer's small studios community building with art gallery & suitable for projects/events for young and old.

It is extremely important that the work starts ASAP but I most certainly do not want to wait till 2014-17 for it to be complete! I do not want to be looking at a building site! Keep the co-op.

Denny is the designated route for visitors to the Falkirk Wheel complex. What an advert for Scotland in general and the Central Belt in particular.

Local people are ashamed to bring friends to Denny because of the eyesore in the centre. It's like living in Beirut.

All of these plans the Council have are taking too long people in the town are getting used to travelling out of town for shopping I think its going to take a really smart town centre to woo them back.

Impose heavy penalties on dog fouling, litter bugs as soon as new shop/town centre is opened.

A sense of community, being involved in the process gives the public a voice. Places to sit, flower beds and speciality shops.

I hope that the new town centre will complement the existing old town centre using some sort of old sandstone brick and not a concrete shambles like last time.

There are no shops selling clothes. There are no shops selling paint.