

**FORMER HERMITAGE ACADEMY SITE AND HELENSBURGH PIERHEAD MASTER
PLAN REVIEW AND DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT BRIEF**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On the 3rd of November 2011 the Executive authorised the Executive Director for Development & Infrastructure to instruct consultants to prepare a revised master plan for two key development sites in Helensburgh in an effort procure a proposed new Leisure Facility and further the development and marketing of the Pierhead and Hermitage Sites. Once finalised this Masterplan will then inform an eventual marketing brief for both of the sites.
- 1.2 This report contains draft Masterplans for both sites (Attached as **Appendix A**) which have been informed by the careful consideration of a number of factors including feedback from focus groups drawn from local residents in the Helensburgh and Lomond area, the requirements for the proposed swimming pool and associated leisure facilities, flood prevention measures on the Pier, an updated Helensburgh Retail Study, the current proposal by Dunbritton Housing Association and recognition of the changed residential and commercial property market.
- 1.3 The Executive is asked to approve the two Masterplans for a period of public consultation commencing on the 16th of December 2011 and ending on the 18th of January 2012.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Executive approve the draft Masterplans containing different development options for both the former Hermitage and Pierhead sites as attached as **Appendix A** of this report for a period of public consultation commencing on the 16th of December 2011.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The background to the need for the Masterplans was set out in the report approved by the Executive on the 3rd of November 2011 Agenda item 17. The content of the Masterplans have both been further informed by careful consideration of the future deliverability of the proposals in light of current economic circumstances, discussions with Dunbritton Housing Association and the careful consideration of the considered

views of focus groups held on the 23rd of November and 7th of December 2011. Reports on the findings of both focus groups have been made available on the Council's website for consideration of Elected Members and the wider general public.

3.2 The Masterplans contain both written text and illustrative sketches/plans that comply with the approved protocol for the production of Masterplans in Argyll and Bute. It should be noted that Masterplans are indicative and not prescriptive allowing them to be flexible enough to meet changing needs for the 21st century in accordance with PAN 83. The principle elements of each of the Masterplans are as follows:-

3.3 Former Hermitage Academy Site

- Retained as a housing site with a layout that includes provision for a new access and associated link road, allocated land for the Dunbritton Housing Association proposed development and allocated space for 115 mainstream houses.
- Retained primarily as housing site with the option shown to site the swimming pool/leisure facility with allocated space for Dunbritton Housing Association proposed development and allocated space for 79 mainstream houses.

3.4 Helensburgh Pierhead

- Amended Masterplan that includes a new leisure facility and a total of 66,000sqft flexible retail space with the layout capable of accommodating a large food retail unit (54,000 sqft) alongside smaller shops. Between 16 and 30 residential units are proposed above the retail. Sufficient parking for these building uses is accommodated on site, but general town parking is to be relocated elsewhere. Public access to the Pier is maintained with a new open space formed in front of the leisure building, and a continuous walkway around the edge of the site.
- Amended masterplan that includes a total of 78,000 sqft flexible retail space with the layout capable of accommodating a large food retail unit (54,000 sqft) alongside smaller shops. Residential units, are proposed as with the previous option, with an increased provision of public realm along West Clyde Street. Sufficient parking for these building uses is accommodated on site, but general town parking is to be relocated elsewhere. Public access to the Pier is maintained with a new open space formed in front of the leisure building, and a continuous walkway around the edge of the site

4.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

4.1 Both sites are currently zoned in the existing Argyll and Bute Development Plan. The former Hermitage site is included as Housing Allocation 3/1 that has an identified capacity of 160 units which forms part of the effective housing supply for the Helensburgh and Lomond area. The site also has the benefit of planning consent for 166 housing units that was granted in 28th July 2008 and the former Hermitage Academy building that occupied the site in the process of being demolished. The Masterplan as currently proposed will not alter this zoning albeit a portion of the site could potentially be reserved for the siting of the pool/leisure facility that will reduce the number of houses that could be provided on the site.

- 4.2 The Helensburgh Pierhead site is currently zoned in the existing Development Plan as town centre. The site also has the benefit of an existing Masterplan that was approved in August 2009 by the Council in an effort to attract private sector investment to facilitate the regeneration of the town; recognising that the Pierhead site is the most significant development site within Helensburgh Town Centre. The Masterplan as currently proposed will amend the content of the existing Masterplan with a renewed emphasis on deliverability in challenging economic times. Following approval by the Executive for public consultation the proposed Masterplan will become a material consideration in terms of planning albeit of limited weight until finalisation in February 2012.

5.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Following approval by the Executive the consultation period for both Masterplans will commence on the 16th of December 2011 and continue until the 18th of January 2012 (28 days; excluding 4 days for public holidays). The period of public engagement will be advertised in the Helensburgh Advertiser and on the Council's web site. Paper copies of the Masterplans will be deposited in Council Offices in Helensburgh and Lomond area and the Helensburgh Library. A copy of the draft Masterplans will also be placed on the Council's web site. Opinions on the content of the draft Masterplans will be sought primarily through an electronic response form that can be filled in on line or downloaded and e mailed to a dedicated e mail address.
- 5.2 Two open days will be held on the 13th (1 pm until 8 pm) and 14th (10am until 3 pm) of January 2012 in the Victoria Halls, Helensburgh to allow people to examine the proposed Masterplan and ask questions. During these days times will also be allocated for specific groups (i.e. business community, community groups, young people etc.) to attend for presentations on the content of the Masterplans in order to reach a wider audience and seek views. These meetings will be facilitated by consultants and council officers.
- 5.3 It is recognised that the public consultation exercise required to update the Masterplans will provoke a lot of interest and comment. This "engagement" exercise will require to be well executed and it is also recognised that it will present some difficult choices to the people of Helensburgh & Lomond including not least the timing of construction and the location of the new Leisure Facility and the associated closure of the existing pool.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Following approval by the Executive in November consultants have now completed work on draft Masterplans for two key sites within Helensburgh, namely the site of the former Hermitage Academy and the Helensburgh Pierhead. These Masterplans have been prepared following careful consideration of a range of issues, including taking account of the views of two focus groups meetings and the deliverability of a new pool/leisure facility, abnormal costs associated with the sites, public realm improvements and the reality of delivering residential/commercial development in challenging economic times. The Executive is now asked to approve the Masterplans for a period of public engagement to allow local people to provide comments on their content. Comments received will be analysed and reported back to the Executive in February together with Finalised Masterplans for approval.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS

Policy	– As per content
Financial	– As per content
Personnel	– As per content
Equalities Impact Assessment	– None anticipated
Legal	– As per content

Sandy Mactaggart

Executive Director
Development & Infrastructure
2 December 2011