

REPORT TO: PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE - 13 FEBRUARY 2006

REPORT ON: LOCHEE MASTERPLAN

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION

REPORT NO: 76-2006

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek authority from committee to bring forward a development framework for Central Lochee to secure the upgrading of the retail and residential properties in the area and provide an integrated land use strategy within which future proposals may be judged.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a authorise the preparation of a Development Framework/Masterplan for Central Lochee as the basis for consultation with the community, proprietors, tenants, public transport companies and prospective developers; and
 - b remit the Director of Planning and Transportation to report progress on this consultation exercise within 6 months.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications for the Council arising directly from this report.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Local Agenda 21 implications of relevance to this report cover a whole range of key themes, in particular issues of sustainable development, ensuring that local needs are met locally, and access to facilities, services, goods and people is not achieved at the expense of the environment and are accessible to all.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In consulting on the draft Lochee Masterplan, efforts will be made to ensure that a wide range of interests are given the opportunity to participate and that equality issues are considered in developing a final Masterplan.

6 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 Dundee's District Shopping Centres are part of a historic legacy of shopping and service centres which have traditionally served as the focus for distinct communities within the City. Albert Street, Hilltown, Lochee and Perth Road lie at the heart of inner city communities, while Broughty Ferry serves the suburban population on the eastern edge of the City.
- 6.2 Over recent years certain problems have become apparent in the Broughty Ferry, Albert Street and Hilltown District Centres which have given rise to separate studies aimed at addressing issues including vacant property, traffic volumes and physical decline of the general shopping environment and shopper comfort. These issues are all apparent within Lochee District Centre therefore it is now opportune that similar studies are carried out within Lochee District Centre.
- 6.3 In addition to meeting their day to day shopping and related requirements the District Centres help define and reinforce the identities of those communities by providing shared facilities,

local meeting places and opportunities for social interaction. They can be seen as sustaining, and in turn being sustained by, these communities.

- 6.4 The aim for all of these centres is to ensure that they remain an important part of the City's shopping provision and continue to offer valuable shopping and related facilities and services for their communities. This recognises that they may need to adapt and evolve in response to changing shopper behaviour and expectations. It also suggests the need to respond to the challenges presented by constantly evolving modern retailing concepts including retail parks and large new food supermarkets. Although they cannot replicate the type of service provided by these more recent retail formats, there is scope to improve the comfort, convenience and attraction of traditional District Centres, in particular Lochee, and to tackle traffic and safety issues. In this way it should be possible to build on the inherent advantages deriving from its very strong sense of community with which the centre is associated, its range of shops and services, and the extensive investment of existing infrastructure whilst tackling a range of issues including pedestrian and public transport access and the deterioration of building fabric in a sustainable fashion.
- 6.5 In this respect the City Council has adopted policies in the District Local Plan Review to tackle these issues. In particular Policy 38 states:

"Within the areas defined on the Proposals Map the City Council will encourage new retail and other shopping developments which would contribute to the vitality and viability of the District Centres."
- 6.6 In addition the Local Plan review seeks to remedy various deficiencies through Proposal 5, which states:

"The City Council proposes to undertake a programme of traffic management, parking, public transport and related measures within the District Shopping Centres to enhance their safety and accessibility. Consideration will also be given to other measures which could assist in improving the range and quality of shopping in these centres."
- 6.7 In addition, the Planning and Transportation Committee, at its meeting on 12 December 2005 agreed to appoint consultants to undertake a shopping study covering the Dundee City Region. This will include undertaking a qualitative assessment of the city's district shopping centres, including Lochee, aimed at identifying measures to enhance their attraction and competitiveness.

It is essential that measures be identified to reinforce and improve the links - pedestrian, public transport, vehicular, between the centre and its catchment.
- 6.8 The recently granted consent for the construction of a food supermarket on South Road west of Lochee Bypass reinforces the need to improve pedestrian access over the Bypass to combine with suitably reinforced pedestrian routes from the High Street to Stack Leisure Park.
- 6.9 Members will be aware that within Central Lochee, the Highgate Centre and Weavers Village have seen little recent investment and as a result these commercial properties have become unattractive to both shoppers and prospective tenants.
- 6.10 The Local Community Plan identifies the need to make local residents safer in the Highgate Centre and Lochee High Street and seeks improvements to the appearance and range of shops in Lochee High Street.
- 6.11 There are a number of issues within the Lochee High Street area, which need to be addressed. These include:

- the poor pedestrian access between the west side of the Lochee Bypass, in particular the existing Council housing and new housing opportunities, to High Street;
- the considerable number of unofficial crossing points along the Lochee Bypass;
- the tortuous and unpleasant pedestrian routes between the Lochee Bypass and High Street;
- the unattractive pedestrian links between the various car parks and the shopping spine;
- the remoteness of the car park east of the Lochee Bypass at Sinclair Street from the east side and south end of High Street;
- the unattractive vacant sites adjacent to the shopping area, in particular close to the pedestrian routes;
- the substandard layout of the shopping centre and the limited retail choice;
- the links between the High Street shops and the existing and proposed retail and leisure elements of the Stack Leisure Park;
- the pedestrian links between the High Street shops and the recently approved Lidl site;
- the substandard condition of tenement housing within the centre and the deterioration in its quality;
- the volume of vehicular traffic on High Street and the conflict between this traffic and the volumes of pedestrian traffic crossing High Street at different locations throughout its length;
- the number and size of a range of vacant or derelict sites in the vicinity of the centre; and
- the lack of good vehicular and public transport access from large parts of the natural catchment of the District Centre.

6.12 There are a number of opportunities on which to build within the catchment of the District Centre. These include:

- housing development at South Road;
- development sites within Kirk Street;
- emerging strategy at Dunsinane Industrial Estate;
- retail and leisure development at Stack Leisure Park;
- potential development sites at Foggyley/Landsdowne;
- potential development at Clement Park House;
- current housing proposals at Pitalpin;
- emerging land use strategy at Charleston;
- extensive new housing at Ardler only 1.75km to the north;
- small potential development sites very close to the shopping spine;
- provision of car parks nearer to the shopping spine to serve both sides of High Street;
- improving vehicular access to the High Street at its north junction with the Bypass;
- investigation of ways to reinforce and expand the present shopping catchment of the centre; and
- investigation of possible improvements to public transport access between the centre and its catchment.

6.13 The opportunity to address a number of these issues is greatly increased if one or other part of the shopping centres was replaced or reconfigured. This could facilitate:

- additional shops and smaller superstore based on current demand;
- creation of a 'town square/car park at the heart of the High Street much closer to the shopping area and in particular to the units on the east side;
- the improvement of pedestrian access to and circulation within Lochee;
- a phased disposal of the present car park for development purposes if a car park of this capacity is provided at the heart of the centre;
- environmental improvements within the High Street itself;
- façade enhancement to shopfronts in the High Street;
- improved links to the existing and proposed housing to the west of the Bypass; and

- improved public transport access between the centre and its catchment including linkages to and from the Stack Retail Leisure Park and into the High Street.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Lochee District Centre is vitally important in providing day to day shopping and other services to the surrounding area. However, a number of issues require to be addressed to enhance the attraction of Lochee and to fulfil its potential. At the same time there are a number of opportunities within Lochee and nearby which could bring significant benefit. The draft Masterplan seeks to identify some of these issues and opportunities as a basis for undertaking public consultation with the local community and a wide range of interested parties.

8 CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning), Director of Housing and Director of Economic Development have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

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