

**Falkirk Council  
Community Services**

**Minute of Meeting  
Grangemouth Development Group  
Monday 10 March 2008 - Leapark Hotel**

Present: Walter Inglis - Chair Grangemouth Local Community Reference Group  
Malcolm Richards - Secretary Grangemouth Community Council  
Allan McCallum - Grangemouth Community Council  
Drew Lambert - Reith Lambert Surveyors (Developers' representative)  
Robin McCory - ADF Architects (Developers' representative)  
Alastair Mitchell - Town Centre Management Ltd  
Tom Gardiner - Central Scotland Police (Architectural Liaison Officer)  
Councillor Craig Martin (Convenor Economic Development)  
Councillor Joe Lemetti (Depute Convenor Economic Development)  
Councillor Alistair McNeill  
Councillor Allyson Black  
Councillor Robert Spears  
Councillor Angus MacDonald  
Douglas Duff - Head of Economic Development  
Pete Reid - Strategic Projects Manager

Apologies: Jacquie McArthur - Economic Development Officer  
Maryjane Armstrong - Town Centre Management Ltd

## **1.0 Introductions**

- 1.1 Douglas Duff welcomed all attending and introduced the purpose of the group which is to engage local members, community representatives and traders in the regeneration of Grangemouth town centre. The town centre masterplan has progressed since the initial consultation phase and the developer has made amendments to reflect community concerns.
- 1.2 Prior to progressing matters a Chair for the group required to be elected. Councillor MacDonald suggested that the group select a Chair.
- 1.3 Malcolm Richards expressed his dissatisfaction at the way matters were progressing - to the agreement of other community representatives and requested clarification of this matter.

- 1.4 Douglas Duff confirmed that the working group was an informal body and the whole group was at liberty to select a Chair, but the Council's approval to form the group was on the basis that the Chair required to be a Local Member.
- 1.5 Councillor McNeill was proposed by Councillor Black, seconded by Councillor Lemetti.
- 1.6 The whole group then agreed that Councillor McNeill chair the group for this meeting only.

## **2.0 Town Centre Regeneration Update**

- 2.1 Pete Reid gave an update on the preparation of the information boards proposed for consultation, to inform the business and community on to how the plans have been amended to reflect specific concerns, these being:-
- i) Proposed location of library and museum.
  - ii) New food store design adjacent to Talbot Street houses.
  - iii) Poor relationship of Asda to the town centre.
  - iv) New car park design.
- 2.2 Councillor Spears raised the matter of a model of the regeneration proposals for the town centre and the need for this to be provided as part of this final phase of consultation. Pete Reid explained that the most appropriate time for a model to be produced, given the substantial costs involved would be as part of the planning application process once the masterplan had been finalised.
- 2.3 Douglas Duff emphasised that there will be further statutory consultation at the planning application stage, where the community will be formally engaged.
- 2.4 Walter Inglis requested that a model of the town centre be produced prior to the planning application being lodged. Pete Reid stated that the modelling would be undertaken and would liaise with the developers regarding this after all appropriate committee consents and legal agreements were finalised.

## **3.0 Retailer/Public Consultation Process & Timetable**

- 3.1 Pete Reid confirmed the proposed timescale and next stages for progressing the consultation and that this would be undertaken by:-
- Grangemouth Library - display of information boards & comment boxes
  - One Stop Shop - display of information boards & comment boxes
  - Grangemouth Sports Complex - display of information boards & comment boxes
  - Plans attached to a shop front at 47 La Porte Precinct
  - Online

- Public exhibition in Library on 20 April between 2.00-8.00 pm
- 3.2 The above was being extensively advertised in the local press and it was noted that the Falkirk Herald had omitted key consultation dates in their first advert, a matter which they had promised to resolve in subsequent adverts.
- 3.3 The consultation period to inform the community of amendments would be between 11-31 March 2008 - a period of 3 weeks.
- 3.4 Pete Reid advised that a presentation of the amended plans was given to the Grangemouth Traders group and this was positively received. Alastair Mitchell confirmed the traders were specifically pleased to see improved links between Asda and the town centre.
- 3.5 Robin McCory gave background to previous consultation undertaken and explained to the group the contents of the display panels and where significant changes had occurred, in particular the new building now proposed to house the Library and Museum linked to the Town Hall.
- 3.6 Drew Lambert confirmed that his clients had acquired the former bingo hall building recognising the significant location of this building. These changes in his view reflected the seriousness of their clients to invest in the town and the importance being placed by Falkirk Council on providing a significant new purpose built community asset.
- 3.7 Pete Reid confirmed that locating the Library and Museum at this location presented a significant link between the town centre and Asda, encouraging footfall and bringing improved focus to the Town Hall as a venue.
- 3.8 Robin McCory explained the development of the food store would be a final phase of the regeneration proposals and that until a food store operator was confirmed no further details as to how this building would look could be suggested at this stage. The extent of community concerns over this proposal were noted by his clients and the area was being emphasised within the revised Masterplans as a zone of architectural design sensitivity.
- 3.9 The Chair requested comments and observations from the group and the following were received:-
- The new library/museum considered to now provide an attractive link and focus for the town.
  - Could Grangemouth Heritage Trust be closer to the museum? Pete Reid advised that there may be operating issues in terms of Grangemouth Heritage Trust and Falkirk Council operating policy and displays.

- Further detailed information must be made available as to how the buildings will look - Robin McCory confirmed this and would be provided at the detailed planning application phase but this group would be consulted on proposed finishes prior to progressing with the application.
- Concern as to how the car park will look as drawings 004 & 005 do not detail how many storeys this would be. Robin McCory confirmed this car park will have two upper levels.
- The opportunity for the Old Town Clock or the Charlotte Dundas replica to be incorporated in the new town centre was raised. Pete Reid confirmed the Town Clock was in storage awaiting reconstruction as a feature in Grangemouth, with the location yet to be decided. As town centre plans progressed an opportunity would be considered with appropriate community groups. Councillor Black advised that Community Services - Cultural Services are undertaking a review of the Charlotte Dundas model.
- There was extensive discussion about why a new railway station was not included in the scheme and feasibility of a connection. Pete Reid advised this was not a matter for the regeneration of the town centre, but that nothing was being done that would prejudice or restrict any future work. Councillor Martin reinforced this point, stating that there were major financial and infrastructure constraints to any proposal for a rail link, however these matters were being raised at national level.
- Councillor Lemetti requested:-
  - i) That tenancy boards in the town centre be updated.
  - ii) Information regarding compensation packages be available to retailers and assistance during consultation phase. Pete Reid advised that the Hardship Relief Scheme established would be applicable when consultation work commenced and other financial packages would be arranged between the developer and the trader.
  - iii) There was concern that no traders were represented at the meeting. Alastair Mitchell confirmed they were informed and would ensure there was representation at the next meeting.

3.10 The group were advised that the next stage after Committee approval would be the planning process which could take up to 18 months - a procedure outwith the control of the developer or the Council.

#### **4.0 Town Centre Promotion**

- 4.1 Alastair Mitchell gave further details of the last retailers meeting where there was agreement to take forward a specific town centre marketing campaign.
- 4.2 A Farmer's Market would be taking place in Grangemouth on 20 March 2008 and in addition to ongoing promotion there would be advertising in the local paper.
- 4.3 The town centre will be taking part in the Mod event later this year with live music opportunities within the town centre.
- 4.4 Alastair Mitchell also confirmed that the negative and inaccurate reporting in the Falkirk Herald had caused anger amongst retailers and this despite efforts by both himself and Pete Reid to paint a positive picture. Further efforts were being made to ensure the Falkirk Herald had the correct facts about retailers and the regeneration plans.

#### **5.0 Any Other Business**

- 5.1 There was discussion about past and current town twinning arrangements for the town centre and ensuring twinning activities took place in Grangemouth town centre confirmed by Alastair Mitchell as happening.
- 5.2 Overall the group agreed that it was now necessary to progress the regeneration proposals forward.
- 5.3 Group agreed to meet again once the final phase of the consultation was concluded and group members would be informed of a suitable date.

#### **6.0 Date of Next Meeting**

- 6.1 To be confirmed.