


**Falkirk Council
Community Services**

**Minute of Meeting of Grangemouth Development Group
Thursday 30 October 2008**

Present: Douglas Duff, Head of Economic Development
Pete Reid, Strategic Projects Manager, Falkirk Council
Councillor Alistair McNeill, Chair - Grangemouth Development Group
Councillor Angus McDonald
Councillor Allyson Black
Councillor Joe Lemetti, Vice Convenor - Economic Development Committee
Walter Inglis, Grangemouth Community Council & Grangemouth
Community Reference Group
Allan McCallum, Grangemouth Community Council
Julie Reid, Grangemouth Local Community Planning
Lynne Rennie, Grangemouth Retailers Core Group
Jim Waugh, Grangemouth Retailers Core Group
Lorraine Waugh, Grangemouth Retailers Core Group
PC Jim Bell, Central Scotland Police
Alastair Mitchell, Town Centre Management Ltd
Robin McClory, ADF Architects
Mary Jane Armstrong, Town Centre Management Ltd
Les Burkey, Grangemouth Retailers Core Group
Frank McChord, Local Community Planning Officer

Apologies: Councillor Allyson Black
Councillor Robert Spears
Councillor Craig Martin
Malcolm Richards, Grangemouth Community Council
Drew Lambert, Reith Lambert, Surveyors

1.0. PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed the Director of Development Services and Bernard Whittle to the meeting and took opportunity to congratulate Councillor McDonald for his work and effort in delivering the Mod.
- 1.2 Typo in para 3.7 highlighted by Walter Inglis. Last line of first paragraph should read "operating" and not "generating" as stated. Noted by all present.

1.3 The Minutes were accepted as being accurate. Proposed by Councillor Alastair McNeill and seconded by Malcolm Richards.

2.0. MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Councillor McDonald sought clarification regarding para 3.4 of the Minute as to whether the planning application would be outline or detailed when submitted.

2.2 Pete Reid confirmed it would be a series of detailed applications for the reasons set out in para 3.3 & 3.4.

3.0 PRESENTATION ON PADHI PLUS GIVEN BY THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

3.1 A copy of the presentation is annexed to the Minute.

3.2 The Director of Development Services highlighted the following points within her presentation:-

- Presentation prepared to aid the Group in understanding the PAHDI Plus assessment process following the presentation given by Robin McClory at the last meeting.
- The role of the HSE in the planning process was outlined.
- Consultations required where there is a Hazard Consultation Zone.
- Explanation given of Grangemouth Hazard Consultation Zones and how these are managed by Falkirk Council as statutory planning authority.
- The understanding of the HSE assessment process that Falkirk Council has for all planning applications in Hazard Consultation Zones by evaluating developments using the HSE computer model PADHI Plus.
- PADHI methodology was recently tightened by the HSE which changed how the HSE assesses development proposals that fall within hazard consultation zones. Falkirk Council as planning authority works very hard to maximize input HSE has in terms of economic development, a process that has taken place in respect of the town centre development as well as other significant developments in this area.

- Clarification was given to the Group as to the planning application likely to be submitted for the town centres regeneration. If an outline submission is made the HSE will object, thus affecting the whole scheme. Following meetings with the HSE, advice was given that a series of individual detailed applications could be progressed, with each individual application considered on its own merit in terms of risk criteria.
- As a consequence the scheme would require some modification to layout and use within the Inner Hazard Consultation Zone.
- Post the HSE meeting, it was confirmed to the Group that the project would not be delivered as previously indicated given the detailed planning application phasing however the PAHDI Plus process gave a mechanism to manage this process.
- Walter Inglis raised specific criticism that the planning application process and the way it was managed by Falkirk Council, given the recent Fuji planning application, specifically acted against the community and the town centre proposals by increasing risk within the town.
- Pete Reid noted that there was strong community concern over planning applications and that this had been previously discussed and recorded.
- The Director of Development Services did confirm that a balance between supporting economic development within the town and consequences to regeneration had to be taken. Several meetings took place with Members in order that the facts could be fully considered and this balance, with concern for the town, was forefront in Members minds when the application was approved. Whilst Falkirk Council and Members had not been made aware of changes by the HSE to PADHI assessment criteria, it was clear that by granting Fuji planning consent, the application could be contained within the existing inner zone consultation area and did not worsen opportunities for the town centre or community. A continuing commitment to the redevelopment of the town centre was given.
- Robin McClory stated that all proposals shown to the HSE were as per the outline masterplan in terms of delivery uses. By submitting a series of detailed applications this would foreshorten the redevelopment timeframe compared with Outline and Reserved Matters applications. He confirmed there will still be a masterplan with inevitably some alterations.
- Walter Inglis enquired as to those elements of the masterplan that would require to be changed.
- Julie Reid sought clarification as to why this had not been considered earlier.

- Robin McClory confirmed that no elements of the existing masterplan were at risk but some reappportionment of the masterplan would be required to reflect non compatible uses within the inner consultation zone. These would be placed elsewhere within the town centre.
- Drew Lambert confirmed that the masterplan would require to remain fluid to reflect that fact and retailer requirements as a consequence of changes in the retail market, however, there remained an overall commitment to regenerate the town centre.
- Pete Reid reminded the group that HSE consultation zones had always been a hurdle the town would need to be mindful of and this had been clearly stated during the consultation process. He also reminded the group that HSE assessment criteria had been changed without consultation post final masterplan redesign consultation and that progress between officers and the developers was continuing with regard to HSE and Development Agreement matters, critical steps in the regeneration process.
- Following conclusion of the presentation and discussion, the Chair thanked the Director of Development Services and Mr Whittle for attending. Both left the meeting thereafter.

4.0 TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION UPDATED

4.1 Covered in item 4.

5.0 TOWN CENTRE PROMOTION

5.1 Alastair Mitchell updated the Group:-

- Working with the Grangemouth Retailers Core Group a retailer newsletter had been produced for local businesses in the town centre.
- Farmer's Markets were not performing well in the district centres. These had always been a pilot exercise and as such a decision would be taken towards the end of the year as to whether they would continue.
- The Check it Out campaign was continuing well and given successes in Grangemouth would be rolled out to all district centres.
- A strong core retailer group has been established.
- Meetings were continuing with the opportunity for TCM Ltd and the retailers to discuss promotion expenditure and activity during 2009 welcomed. The Community Council would also be consulted on any promotional items it felt would benefit the town. A letter will be issued by TCM Ltd.

- The Shop Local initiative would be continuing with booklets being redrafted.
- Councillor Lemetti queried whether local industries could be contacted to contribute to town centre promotion or Christmas events. The Group was advised that both Ineos and Kemfine already make contributions to community events.
- Concern was raised by Jim Waugh at the number of empty units in the town centre, making the town unattractive. He also advised other traders would be closing after Christmas.
- Lynn Rennie raised concern that it will still be another two years until redevelopment starts, making trading difficult for existing retailers.
- Pete Reid updated the Group on town centre activity, the difficulty of marketing vacant units and not bringing in additional trading uses that were already well represented in the town centre.
- Alan McCallum enquired about starting a shopper bus.
- Jim Waugh stated that he heard the post office would be closing. Pete Reid confirmed that this was not the case and approach had been made to explore options of operating from another unit within the town centre, to be considered further in the New Year.
- Alastair Mitchell confirmed he continued to promote the town centre where he could and this included on Central FM. Concern was raised by the Chair that Grangemouth did not get an adequate mention in his last radio interview. Alastair Mitchell confirmed that the article had been specifically about Falkirk town centre.
- The Chair also confirmed that some retailers continued to have a downturn in business and that this remained a live issue.

6.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 6.1 Confirmation was sought regarding progress of the town clock. Pete Reid confirmed he had raised the matter with the Community Council and that the Council would seek to progress this project.
- 6.2 A query was raised with regard to para 4.4 of the previous Minute and Falkirk College's involvement. This was confirmed as a response to the query raised by Walter Inglis under para 4.2.

7.0. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 7.1 The group considered and agreed a proposal for meetings to be held in the afternoons as not all evening meetings were compatible with diaries.
- 7.2 Due to the rescheduling of this meeting it was agreed the next meeting would be in the New Year and a date would be confirmed in due course.