

PLANNING APPLICATION REVIEW AND ASSESMENT PRO FORMA

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| Planning Application Ref No | 2018/0133/PPP |
| Local Authority Area | Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority West Dumbartonshire Council |
| RTP Area | Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) |
| Stations Affected | Balloch |
| Development Description | <p>The erection and operation of a tourism and leisure, mixed use development comprising of a range of accommodation types, residential units and recreational, educational and catering facilities.</p> <p>The development also proposes public realm improvements including the expansion and improvement of the local active travel network alongside the design of activity based areas and landscaped settings for car parking.</p> |
| Key Response Areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional alignment and joint partnership working with key stakeholders for delivering a combined local travel package • Integration of proposed active travel links with current network to support first and last mile transition to/from the railway station • Tailored ticketing opportunities and joint promotional material and travel awareness campaign with local partners • Expansion and integration of cycling schemes currently in operation locally and upgrades to fleet and promotional material • Cross promotion and tailored offering provided through station facilities and development setting to facilitate point to point travel • Enhancement and consolidation of the overall passenger and tourism experience of visiting the National Park • Future capacity demand and rail service frequencies, timetables and rolling stock requirements in light of proposed development • Level of integration with existing travel plan proposals for current leisure sites and surrounding trip attractors and institutions • Likely section 75 contributions and community involvement and participation in shaping the local area (linking rail and the locality) |
| Detailed Response | <p>The proposed development site is located in close proximity (approximately 100m) from the station site. Reference was not made to the Balloch Station Travel Plan as part of the Traffic and Transport evidence base in the Environmental Statement. ScotRail would be happy to provide the evidence base developed during the process to assist in the detailed design of the travel plan and infrastructure improvements being proposed. The Station Travel Plan is provided as an attachment to this response and we would be</p> |

happy to meet with both the planning authority and the developer team to discuss further. The research for the STP was conducted in 2017, with the TP report concluded in Autumn 2017.

Institutional Alignment

Although briefly alluded to in the proposal, establishing working partnerships across the different institutions along the Riverside, was and will continue to be an important factor in enhancing the local travel offer and arrangements for people living, working and visiting locally.

We would welcome a positive dialogue and communication to take place for collaboration on projects with a view to aligning objectives to deliver successful outcomes for the changing customer base and local population travel demands.

Limited reference has been made to the potential for greater transport integration, at least institutionally, and the consolidation and pooling of joint financial and human resources to delivering a holistic offering locally. This may be harnessed through past stakeholder mechanisms; working with Loch Lomond Stores, Aquarium and the Bird of Prey Centre.

The 'embedded mitigation' measures within in Environmental Statement is a positive step to acknowledging and committing to offsetting adverse impacts on trip generation, but does not infer, in detail, to the opportunities for sustainable travel and integrated rail solutions to help enhance the visitor experience and reduce site based opportunity costs (parking area).

We would welcome a joint discussion with the aforementioned attractions about joint facilities, such as a travel hub and visitor PTP options as part of a commitment to each local travel plan in place and being developed. We feel rail should be part of that equation and linked to area wide transport and travel improvements and services.

Integration of Proposed Active Travel Links

Welcomed expansion of the active travel network to complement the existing routes penetrating the site and to accompany and facilitate the increase in sustainable transport mode share reported in ScotRail passenger surveys from 2017 as part of the Station Travel Planning evidence base.

We welcome the commitment to effectively 'blend in' new provision with the existing physical infrastructure for consistency and legibility purposes in compliance with best practice guidance. This includes upgrading the current network (maintenance) in conjunction with proposed works to create a coherent, consistent, comfortable transition to/ from the station.

We would expect provision along the travel corridors emitting from the station to the new developments to feature appropriate onward signage displays (as indicated) and user prioritisation (traffic hierarchy). The adherence to Sustrans standards is welcomed and will help to complement aspirational map based information, information displays and journey planning support mechanisms at the station site.

We would expect that the leisure site travel plan supports measures to cross promote first and last mile access to transport interchanges and to normalise sustainable, inclusive access internally on site within the residential units and across commercial outlets being proposed to facilitate and normalise door to door journey; particularly considering the scope for short trips over the first and last mile for future visitors and residents. The proposal commentary was forthcoming in this respect but further detail is desirable moving forward.

Good reference has been made to the wider National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 7 and John Muir Way; two strategic links that plug into the station site with reassurances made over the enhancement and utilisation of such corridors in relation to the proposed site. The integration of Station Square zone with Balloch Street Design Project proposals aligns with ScotRail aspirations for the station area.

There appears to be plentiful evidence of improved permeability across site and agreeable design standards being deployed. Cross collaboration on the signage and wayfinding strategy would be welcomed once this stage is reached to help support rail and station integration over the first and last mile and to inform future design scope for information displays.

We would strongly recommend that proposals to enhance and expand the cycle infrastructure include improving street lighting along Pier Road; identified in the proposal for improvements due to the heightened perception of fear experienced in the vicinity. 'Fixing the link' between the station site, Station Square and key local trip attractors, including incidentally, Balloch Bus Station, is welcomed.

Expansion and Integration of Cycling and Hire Schemes

The 'anticipation' that walking and cycling will be the 'go to mode' of choice for local visitor trips within Balloch is both reassuring and promising; especially with reducing internal car trips across the site. The proposed bike hire scheme planned for the Station Square and enhance tourist information facilities would very much align with first and last mile support in and around the station and to enhance connectivity across the area. Provision needs to relate well to leisure facility users, those accessing the National Park, and those arriving by rail, coach or car wanting 'spot hire'.

However, references in this context are made explicitly to 'internal' trip movements; under the belief that visitors would be 'leaving their cars remote from the lodges' but not necessarily 'strategic' journeys in the depth being planned for 'internal' journeys. We would welcome a greater emphasis on offsetting the number of vehicles driving to site and the opportunity presented to encourage rail based long distance journeys alongside consideration of travel options for local journey arrangements.

To support local trips by bike, provision; in the form of suitable, good quality and appropriately positioned bicycle parking, will be necessitated; with this being earmarked at within the proposed development to complement existing provision across the locality, including the 22 spaces at the station, to facilitate active travel trips.

Consideration could be given to the role of bike maintenance facilities and personalised transport planning offer at proposed bike hire facilities / shops

alongside the installation and availability of free standing ancillary provision such as permeant track stand pumps and information / map displays. This may be something to consider as a more area wide offering.

We would certainly advocate the public hire scheme, sponsored by institutions, including the promoters of the development site, be stationed at the iCentre with access to bikes complementing the extension and upgrades to the cycle network. Links to existing social enterprise businesses already operating at Loch Lomond could be strengthened and measures to support the SME supply chain optimised.

A joint effort to enhance cycle provision and infrastructure aligns with our wider franchise objectives to promote and increase sustainable travel to and from stations and reduce single occupancy car trips. This also paves way for the expansion of hire facilities locally and the anticipated increase in users from the proposed development at Balloch.

Tailored Ticketing Opportunities and Promotional Material

The application makes fleeting reference to the accessibility and proximity of the sites location and the physical infrastructure being invested. However, complimentary 'soft' travel planning, behaviour change measures would be both necessary and desirable for offsetting the negative externalities of trip generation if cumulating in increased single occupancy vehicle trips and road based traffic congestion (particularly over peak summer periods).

Promoting rail as the mode of choice for longer distance travel and simplifying travel across different modes is an option that we would welcome further discussion on; in conjunction with partner organisations and trip attractors (e.g. Loch Lomond Shores / Loch Lomond Aquarium) for visitors, retail employees (new and existing retail facilities) and inhabitants of the residential units.

Reference to the 'Operational Stage' and Outline Travel Plan does include incentives and measures to entice future employees to travel sustainably through induction processes and provision of travel information packs. Similarly, residential travel information packs are also being proposed as part of a suite of measures at the point of occupation. We would stress the importance of thinking beyond the proposed site curtilage and the various decision making factors that influence modal choice by incorporating in details on a range of local information.

In both cases, we would advocate tailored and bespoke offerings for rail based travel for strategic journeys alongside partnering with the bike hire scheme to offer discount membership rates to embed multi modal travel locally. The finer details could be explored to link rail to the community in which it serves on both a quick win and longer term (rail season ticket discount) arrangements. We would strongly support the normalisation of sustainable travel through these outlets.

Preliminary discussions about commercial partnership opportunities should be pursued, also involving ScotRail's Tourism Manager; visitors to the site could be presented with the opportunity for a combined 'rail and partners' offer to reduce reliance on car-based journeys for accessing the area. The notion of multi modal attraction ticket combining rail and attractions for

discounted rates, is an obvious and attractive proposition and should also include Sweeney Cruises and local travel services

We would stress the importance of incorporating such offers into the mechanics of booking platforms and other public facing, virtual and 'face to face' platforms (e.g. I Centre) to inform visitors during the booking and 'pre-contemplation' stage of visiting the area for attractions and at the accommodation. This could also be fulfilled by extending the function of the Loch Lomond Shores kiosk and training on site staff members to deal with travel and transport requests.

We would strongly recommend the feasibility of an on-site, car club initiative be explored to enable visitors to travel further afield to remote locations on a demand responsive basis, whilst simultaneously reducing the need for car parking provision on the scale indicated for initially accessing the area. This type of initiative would help relive car based journeys on the road network and facilitate the incremental 'release' of car parking land for other uses.

From a rail perspective, attracting modal shift to offset the developmental impacts of road based travel, could rely on providing these alternatives to reduce car dependency and enable visitors (but also residents) to have the flexibility over transport choice as and when required at the destination. This conversation ties in with potential changes to car parking arrangements at or related to Balloch Station Identified as part of the wider 'Balloch Village Parking Proposals report (page 76)'. Note that this is not under ScotRail's car parking programme.

The proposal rightly refers to the promotion of rail as the optimal means of accessing the proposed development and ScotRail is supportive in principle to such initiatives. However further discussions will be required around the named proposals such as wrapping and branding of rolling stock to gain consent and abide by guidelines set by Transport Scotland. This particular measure would align with ScotRail endeavours to localise and personalise measures and to strengthen connections between communities and the rail industry by cross promoting local attractions.

Future Capacity Demand and Rail Frequencies

Future growth as a positive consequence of the promoters scheme, is likely to put additional attention on upgrading current station facilities. These were rightly acknowledged as being 'limited in terms of scale, size' and primitive in the form of 'limited covered waiting areas' and 'only one platform'. The proposed Station Square development and site proposal will catalyse station based improvements.

Whilst expanded parking arrangements are being considered at Balloch Station, as noted in the proposal, efforts should be made to support traffic evaporation and shifts towards active travel and public transport methods locally to avoid rail heading from setting in motion. A careful balance will need to be achieved not to contradict enhancements to the public realm within this setting.

From an operational perspective, a half hourly service currently runs to and from Glasgow (from where connections are available across Scotland and beyond) via the North Clyde Line to Balloch. Patronage levels along the line

and to / from Balloch will continue to be monitored to understand rail user demand especially during summer or peak event periods. Any proposed future rail service changes will require an ongoing conversation with Transport Scotland.

We always welcome the opportunity for residents and visitors to provide feedback on rail services and would extend the conversation to the promoter of the development to work with ScotRail to enhance the door to door experience.

We did note that the proposal makes few remarks in relation to the scope for bus-rail integration through either smart ticketing or the opportunity to coordinate timetables moving forwards to serve in the local interest. This includes looking at how provision at the proposed site could be linked to Real Time Information (RTI) to mirror proposed investments at the bus and rail stations. This would enhance the dwell time experience and help to further normalise sustainable travel options amongst visitors.

With regards to station car parking, the Balloch Village Parking Proposal and the streetscape designs being proposed are helped lead future discussion in which the promoters have been aware and acknowledged the positive contribution these will make to the overall area functionality. ScotRail would welcome the opportunity to be part of this collaborative dialogue to assist with the design integration.

Carrying bikes on train remains a challenging obstacle and a potential capacity concern with a new influx of visitors attending to the proposed site. We will endeavour to provide accessible and good facilities onboard rolling stock where able alongside a targeted promotion at the bike hire initiatives at Balloch. Enhanced parking facilities at Balloch to encourage passengers to travel by rail and by bike are aspired to within the Balloch STP, with a view to potential provision of cyclehire facilities (working with local SMEs) and improved cycle parking close to but not within station lease land. This would form more of strategic community asset or cycling 'gateway' into Loch Lomond from the east.

Travel Plan Proposals and Integration

As stated in the proposal, ScotRail have committed to travel plan integration and support services to Loch Lomond Shores and would offer the same 'critical partner' offering to the scheme promoter to help identify and support opportunities and measures to resolve high car modal share locally. A continuous dialogue, as previously alluded to, can be easily established between key local players, including community representatives, to maximise the value of resource pooling.

We welcome the proposed development and design measures expected to offset and mitigate adverse impacts on the local and strategic road network and the targeted approach on site and through Balloch Village. There are promising proposals to materially change 'road focussed culture in the area' including the Station Square and immediate streetscape to boost modal shift. ScotRail would gladly provide specific details through the STP evidence base to help shape the detailed designs.

Whilst highly commendable, the scope for traffic evaporation and potential for rail based strategic journeys and local journeys may require further ongoing discussions in line with the development of the final travel plan. We would welcome the applicant to give further consideration to understanding the decision-making stages taken by new visitors who are wishing to access the site. If there is a desire to stimulate modal choice and reduce the reliance on car-based travel as the 'norm' further thought must be given to:

- The location, capacity and availability of local shopping stores
- The transportation of visitor goods and belongings
- The booking platforms and availability of 'add on's to hospitality
- Attraction website information and directions

By making alternative arrangements visible and easy for undertaking day to day activities and making the initial booking and 'search' tailored away from vehicle preference, rail could be the preferred access mode to the area.

The implementation of a Travel Plan aligned with ongoing parking and access management strategies is referred to in the context of improved network provision across Balloch Village. There is less detail on how these will be applied in reality and through which specific internal and external measures these are to be applied to increase the propensity to use sustainable travel modes, including rail. We would refer to point one around institutional collaboration to maximise integration and collaboration in this respect.

Adhering and going beyond baseline equalities standards to support Protected Characteristic Group (PCG's) user profiles, is an approach we would encourage partners to adopt through the process of planning and delivering places. We would want to ensure that proposed enhancements to the active travel network and the Station Square proposal take into account these varying needs and would welcome this discussion to take place at the appropriate time.

Enhancement and Consolidation of Passenger Experience

The proposed monorail structure designed to enhance connectivity between Balloch Village and Loch Lomond, would be an attractive innovation to support connectivity between the different site zones and between the station and Loch Lomond. Undoubtedly, for the reason stated, enhancing this link would break down barriers to movement and amalgamate proposals with the developmental aspirations of the wider village setting.

We would be interested in what this would entail exactly and the operational scope and whether the development of a Land Train alternative had been previously considered in light of best practice examples across the UK for supporting tourism based journey arrangements and local journeys. The flexibility of this option (as a routing vehicle) and potential to connect key attractions (and joint support) whilst offering a distinctive tourist experience may lend itself to the scope of the proposal.

The practicalities of such a venture beyond the initial capital investment would be an issue to raise at this point and whether alternatives offer better value for money and adaptability (especially during off season periods). We

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| | <p>would advise on consulting the Nottingham Castle Land Train Assessment to help guide a discussion on this concept and its applicability.</p> <p>In addition, proactive provision for equality groups (particularly those with a disability) needs consideration. Therefore spot hire of mobility scooters and vehicles for individuals (ie single mobility scooters) and groups (eg golf carts) to again access to the leisure complex and the Lomond Shores area should be carefully considered .The design of the vehicles needs to look at on road and off road terrain and in line with the provisions of the Equality Act, would enhance seamless customer experience. This would complement the equipment and services available to rail users at Balloch Station and onboard rolling stock.</p> <p>Improving the passenger experience and door to door journeys is a key driving force behind the measures in the STP action plan and refers to maximising the quality and appropriateness of services across the whole duration of a trip. This outlook would be mutually beneficial for all parties.</p> <p>S75 Contributions and Community Involvement</p> <p>As outlined in the proposal, West Dumbartonshire Council (WBC), have committed funds to the redevelopment of the Station Square with direct highways contributions to enhancing the active travel network, being delivered by the scheme promoter.</p> |
| <p>Evidence Base Material</p> | <p>Schedule of evidence to support planning response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balloch Station Travel Plan (2017) Final with Appendices • Balloch Charette Report • Balloch Village Parking Proposals • Nottingham Castle Land Train Assessment |
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