

Appendix 2

West Dunbartonshire Council response to Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority.

Planning application: 2018/0133/PPP: Tourism led recreational, residential, food and drink development on land at West Riverside and Woodbank House, Balloch

West Dunbartonshire Council offers the following comments to the above planning application as a neighbouring authority.

Planning Policies

The Council recognises that the assessment of this application for Planning Permission in Principle will be considered against the policies contained within the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Local Development Plan 2017-2021. West Dunbartonshire Council advised the Park Authority in August 2018 of the main issues that should be considered with regard to the potential impact of the proposed development on the West Dunbartonshire Council Planning Authority Area and provided an outline of our planning policy framework to aid the assessment of cross boundary issues.

Economic Benefits

The proposed development of West Riverside and Woodbank House are key projects identified within the Balloch Charrette Action Plan and have potential to make a significant contribution to the visitor economy of Balloch. The adopted Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Local Development Plan 2017-2021 identifies the development site as a Strategic Tourism Opportunity recognising its potential for enhancing its role as a premium visitor destination and gateway to the National Park. This potential development will bring significant economic benefits to the local area and local businesses. The investment of £37.75m in the construction phase and the creation of 354 Construction jobs during the development period is to be welcomed. Tourism related jobs of 80 full time and 50 part-time jobs with a further 70 seasonal jobs created annually will be a real boost to the West Dunbartonshire economy. It is understood that it is the applicant's intention to recruit locally with opportunities and training being accessible to local people. This tourism related development will also bring wider and spin off benefits to the commercial centres of Balloch and Alexandria. Proposals at Station Square which will be a key arrival and focal point associated with the development - restaurants, cafes, a brewery and outside performing space will benefit the wider West Dunbartonshire area beyond the Park boundary.

Pedestrian and Cycle Access

It is recognised that the existing pedestrian and cycle network as it exists through the West Riverside site will be retained and enhanced to provide greater connectivity to the wider network. Key walking and cycling routes such as NCN Route 7, the John Muir Way, and West Loch Lomond Cycle Way will be enhanced and widened to Sustrans standards. The enhancements to these shared walking and cycle routes will also bring benefits to the wider community and this is a welcome addition.

An important connection is the proposed public route through the site, connecting Balloch as a whole with the development at Lomond Shores. This requires to be designed in such a way as to encourage public access and reduce the use of the car, bringing more opportunities for the residents of Balloch and the surrounding area. We are pleased that there are improvements proposed to the riverside walkway and its accessibility. The introduction of a monorail between Station Square and the Pierhead will provide better connectivity between Balloch and Loch Lomond shores and will assist in supporting an evening /winter economy together with the proposed tourism and commercial developments in this area. Bike hire, available at Station Square, will encourage more movements by bike and will be a welcome addition to the facilities proposed at this location. The area of West Riverside is an important asset to local people and it is requested that unrestricted public access is maintained to the river and through Drumkinnon Wood at all times when the development is operational and that efforts are made to manage public access during the construction period.

Traffic Impact

The proposed development site is embedded within an established road and access network and will be principally accessed by the A82 and A811 and locally by Balloch Road, Old Luss Road, Pier Road and Ben Lomond Way. While it is recognised that users of the facilities will be encouraged to use public transport and that discussions are ongoing with ScotRail/Abellio to agree in principle promoting access to the development by rail, it is accepted that the majority of people will come by car thus having a significant impact on the local road network. Mitigation measures of an Access and Parking Management Strategy and an enhanced Signage and Variable Message Signage (VMS) installed at key approaches to the site will assist in reducing the impact of the development on the road network and minimise unnecessary routing through the local roads of Balloch and neighbouring towns of Alexandria and Jamestown.

Roads guidance in relation to network capacity identified an am and pm peak time. The traffic movement at peak times have been assessed and the network capacity is considered acceptable by the Roads Service with the additional trips from the development. The Transport Assessment submitted by the applicant has been independently assessed by consultants for the Roads Service. This independent roads assessment is evidence based and found to be acceptable.

However, it is widely known that the summer season, good weather weekends and local events can increase traffic significantly on the A82, A811 and the local roads, all to the detriment of the local area. It is considered that this development could exacerbate existing conditions. Concerns are expressed that the impact of this development has not been fully assessed at peak times such as good weather weekends and during the summer months to determine the associated amenity and environmental effects on the wider area.

Parking Provision

The parking proposed as part of the development will provide additional parking for the development and will supplement existing parking already provided in the local area and help to avoid on street parking. There is a recognition that while parking demand must be catered for, overprovision is equally unacceptable in the overarching effort to encourage uptake of sustainable travel modes over private car. The parking provision will include 44 spaces for a Park and Ride facility for Balloch Railway Station which will benefit the wider community. Parking provision for the accommodation-based visitors elements will be provided remotely from the accommodation and it is hoped this will reduce the use of cars for short-trips by guests throughout their stay with it being more convenient to walk, cycle or use the monorail for shorter and site internal trips. Existing provision within the existing Loch Lomond Shores general car park and the overspill parking area is to be utilised for those occasions when parking demand increases due to events or good weather and to prevent it overflowing on adjacent roads. Monitoring and management of the existing parking areas requires to be ongoing as each land use/activity is developed to prevent future parking issues.