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Milngavie Heritage Centre

Monday November 18th

Milngavie Heritage Centre Group appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the Main Issues Report. Our comments relate specifically to *Town Centre Regeneration*

We support the preferred option:

" Encourage a range of retail, community, food and drink, leisure and recreational uses, in Bearsden and Milngavie town centres, and develop a town centre plan for each area."

In relation to the above, and also to Policy TCR 6C for Milngavie Town Centre in Local Plan 2, which seeks to promote and enhance the town centre for visitors, we add the following comments:

A Heritage Centre

Since 2011, The Heritage Centre Group has mounted a series of highly successful exhibitions, well-researched and well-attended, using temporarily rented accommodation. In any future re-modelling of council properties providing public facilities, serious consideration should be given to providing permanent space for a Heritage exhibition, in effect a mini-museum for Milngavie and the surrounding area. Such a facility, a significant visitor attraction, could share premises with library, gallery or community hub. It would augment the footfall both of its partner and of the wider town centre and present an outstanding example of collaboration between public and voluntary sectors.

The Town Centre Boundary

Since the preferred option seeks to broaden the role of the Town Centre from its current retail emphasis, its contraction to a small retail core (enacted in 2005 for Local Plan 1) should be reversed, to restore to contain within its limits, presently excluded buildings which contribute to footfall and Milngavie's special identity.

These include the Town Hall, Court Room and Art Gallery, a focus of community activity and valued as a rare example of the architecture of its period; and the listed Victorian railway station, with its wealth of preserved and restored architectural features and role as a principal gateway for travellers to Milngavie. The primary school, a prime example of an original Board School of the 1870s and obvious major footfall generator, should also be included.

Setting of unique heritage amenities

Milngavie Town Centre includes several features of unique heritage and amenity value. High priority should be given to conserving and where possible enhancing the setting and overall amenity of the listed mediaeval mill, the listed Victorian railway station, and the fish-pass and waterfall. To achieve this, the boundary of the Town Centre Conservation Area should be extended to better conserve these settings. Specifically, we agree with the discussion in MIR in relation to transport, that provision of multi-storey parking would threaten amenity, and in particular stress that the railway station should not be dominated by such provision.

The mediaeval mill

The value of the iconic mill as a visitor attraction could be greatly enhanced by restoration of its water supply and wheel operation. This could offer a means of microgeneration, as discussed by Historic Scotland in "Microrenewables"

<http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/microrenewables.pdf> Paragraph 5.7.

Much detail concerning Heritage Centre's view of the setting of these unique assets of Milngavie Town Centre is provided in its publication:
http://www.milngavieheritage.org/Heritage_Context.pdf

Reconnection of the town centre each side of Woodburn Way

In support of the preferred option: the underpass connecting the historic mill with Main Street is below contemporary acceptable standards, being too steep for less-able people and potentially dangerous in adverse weather conditions. In addition to providing steps for the able-bodied, the Council should either:

- 1 Provide a lift similar to those in use at upgraded railway stations or
- 2 Ease the gradient by constructing a longer ramp.

The appearance on the Main Street side of the underpass could be much improved, and a decorative reference to the mill installed over the bare concrete - equivalent to the "Welcome to Milngavie" above the underpass at the station.

Similarly, the path leading to the fish-pass and waterfall, between precinct and underpass is also very steep and would benefit from reduction of the gradient, greater prominence of signage, including Allander Way, and general improvement of ambience.

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