

**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the development and sale of properties in the Helensburgh and Lomond Area.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.2 That members consider and note the position as outlined in respect of the various properties.

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the development and sale of properties in the Helensburgh and Lomond Area.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That members consider and note the position as outlined in respect of the various properties.

## **4.0 DETAIL**

### **Blairvadach, Shandon by Helensburgh**

- 4.1 Blairvadach is a large former council office building and substantial estate grounds. The property is allocated in the Local Development Plan for Housing for 112 residential units and was marketed in early 2019 with a number of offers being received.
- 4.2 Following assessment of the offers a preferred developer was selected to work with to develop the site. Subsequently a site licence was been agreed in November 2019 to allow the preferred developer to undertake site investigations, topographical surveys, tree surveys and a structural assessment of Blairvadach House. It was anticipated that these surveys would be completed in early 2020 however this was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.3 Unfortunately the preferred developer confirmed in September 2020 that due to the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant effect on the wider economy they would be unable to proceed with their proposed development. Accordingly their interest in the site was terminated which was a major disappointment particularly considering the delays in getting to this position again caused by the pandemic stopping the site investigations for an extended period.
- 4.4 On a more positive note Callum Williamson Ltd, who previously submitted the second best offer, subsequently confirmed that they remained interested in developing the property and discussions were commenced on a phased approach.
- 4.5 The plan attached as appendix 1 outlines the proposed approach with phase 1 relating to the conversion of Blairvadach House into 8 flats with 28 units to be developed within the phase 1 grounds. The developer will also construct the main access road to adoptable standards which will assist with the development of the phase 2 grounds in the future.
- 4.6 Callum Williamson Ltd concluded the purchase of Blairvadach House and the phase 1 grounds on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and will now work towards securing

detailed planning consent for the development outlined above. This is a significant step forward and will help to secure the long term future of this important listed building while also providing new housing in the local area.

### **52 Sinclair Street, Helensburgh**

- 4.7 The Council owns a number of commercial and residential properties between the Co-op and the former Municipal Buildings on Sinclair Street. The Municipal Buildings was sold to Peckhams Investments Ltd last year and work on conversion into a bar / restaurant is now well underway although this has been impacted by the pandemic similarly to a number of development projects.
- 4.8 Working with the flat owners and commercial tenants of 52 Sinclair Street a significant refurbishment programme including replacement of the roof was commenced and was completed in summer 2021. The council owns 2 flats within the building which were initially being considered for disposal.
- 4.9 However, as part of the disposal process, the Estates Section advises other internal departments and community partners that the properties are available in case there is any alternative use which can be identified. In this case Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) noted an interest in acquiring the two flats to add to their portfolio of social / affordable housing. Accordingly officers will now progress this proposed sale to ACHA, subject to Scottish Government approval, based on the market value of the properties.

### **Sawmill Field & Colgrain Business Park sites**

- 4.10 Estates and Property Development have been working with the developers of the above sites on access and flooding issues and have previously concluded agreements to facilitate both developments. The Sawmill Field site has commenced the delivery of 143 homes by Bellway Homes Ltd and the Colgrain Business Park site recently secured planning consent in principle for the development of business / commercial space. In both cases the focus has been on developing the sites sustainably to maximise the value for the local area in terms of infrastructure and longer term employment opportunities. Discussions will now move towards appraisal of the options for development working with the developers, Scottish Enterprise and other internal departments as part of the Rural Growth Deal and covid-19 recovery plan.

### **Helensburgh Waterfront – Commercial development**

- 4.11 Following the approval of planning consent and appointment of a contractor to build the new leisure facility on the pier head site Estates and Property Development have been working with the Major Projects team to deal with property related issues on the site. The most significant part of this is in relation to the commercial development area within the masterplan which will be available for marketing following relocation of the facilities from the existing to the new leisure centre.
- 4.12 The next step in this process will be the appointment of a consultant to support an appraisal of the development options for the retail area and the delivery model which will generate the maximum benefit from the site. Accordingly an Invitation to Quote (ITQ) was issued with a return date of 12<sup>th</sup> November and it is anticipated that a consultant will be appointed before the

end of the year. There has also been some early interest in the site from retailers and developers which is positive.

### **Loch Lomond (Duck Bay) site**

- 4.13 The council has a significant land holding around the Duck Bay site adjacent to Loch Lomond. This is an important area of public recreation but there have been concerns expressed about anti-social behaviour and a lack of public facilities on the site. Estates and Property Development have been assessing the options to develop the facilities on the site to encourage tourism. Initially this has involved considering any constraints to development. Given the location adjacent to the loch one of the first investigations was a Flood Risk Assessment which was completed during 2020.
- 4.14 As anticipated the Flood Risk Assessment identified concerns about flood risk. However to clarify the extent of the risk and any potential development area it was recommended that a full topographical survey of the site was undertaken. Accordingly this has been procured and was anticipated to be completed in February 2021. However the contractor initially appointed had significant issues due to the pandemic and the works required to be retendered and were returned in August 2021.
- 4.15 The results of the topographical survey were used to update the Flood Risk Assessment but unfortunately the results confirmed that the majority of the site is compromised by flood risk. Discussions will now be undertaken with SEPA to assess if there are any mitigation works which could allow any commercial development to take place however it is considered unlikely.
- 4.16 If commercial development is unable to proceed the team will then consider options for improving the public facilities such as parking, toilets and visitor facilities in conjunction with Roads, funders and other interested parties.
- 4.17 In the meantime the council is working with the National Park Authority, the Friends of Loch Lomond and local business owners to address concerns around anti-social behaviour and public facilities in the short term.

### **Glen Loin car parks, Arrochar**

- 4.18 The council leased 2 areas of ground in Arrochar which were developed as car parks in 1995. The leases were due to end in 2020 but continued on a short term basis while discussions were ongoing with the owners. The council was keen to continue to operate the car parks as they provide a valuable public service however this does require to be based on terms which reflect the costs and benefits of operating the service.
- 4.19 Luss Estates marketed the car park which they own with a closing date set for 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021. However they subsequently removed the car park from the market having decided to operate it themselves and have been working with the council to ensure a smooth transition of the service.
- 4.20 Clydebank Developments, who own the majority of the other car park in Arrochar marketed it for sale with a closing date of 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021. The Estates team submitted an offer on behalf of the council which has been accepted in principle. Accordingly Legal Services have been instructed to conclude the acquisition which will allow the service to continue to operate. Discussions are ongoing in respect of the acquisition of the remainder of the

car park and once concluded it is proposed that the facilities could be improved to further support the local economy.

## **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Policy – None.
- 5.2 Financial – Continue to pursue sale, lease or development of properties that shall generate a financial income for the council.
- 5.3 Legal – The terms and conditions of any property transactions are intended to be delegated to the Executive Director with responsibility for Legal Services.
- 5.4 HR – None
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty
- 5.6 Equalities – Individual projects will be assessed for equalities issues.
- 5.7 Socio economic Duty – None
- 5.8 Islands – Projects which impact on island communities will be individually assessed for impacts.
- 5.9 Climate change – The provision of new housing in the local area will assist to reduce traveling to work distances particularly with the anticipated expansion of MOD personnel working in the local area. In addition the development of more modern energy efficient housing and the repurposing of the listed Blairvadach House will reuse an existing asset and minimise waste. However a refurbished building will not be as energy efficient as a new build but due to its listed status this is the best outcome that can be achieved. Similarly the provision of business and retail space in Helensburgh will reduce the requirement for travel to other centres allowing residents to work and shop locally.
- 5.10 Risk – Individual leases, disposals and developments will have specific risks which will be assessed for impacts and mitigated where possible.
- 5.11 Customer Service – None

Douglas Hendry, Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services

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### **For further information contact:**

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# Appendix 1 Blairvadach site phasing plan

