
REPORT 2
(1215/52/IM)

KILBIRNIE TOWN CENTRE – DRAFT REVITALISATION PLAN

1. Purpose of Report

This report seeks approval to release the Kilbirnie Town Centre - draft Revitalisation Plan (Appendix 1) for public consultation.

2. Executive Summary

Kilbirnie town centre is an important centre in our city. It is a key economic hub in the southern and eastern suburbs and is surrounded by a wide range of community and recreational services including the Regional Aquatic Centre and the soon-to-be completed Indoor Community Sports Centre.

While it has some good anchor commercial uses (supermarkets, post office, banks) the centre is run down and has not delivered on its potential as a sub-regional centre behind the CBD.

Economic analysis has identified that Kilbirnie town centre has struggled over the last decade and failed to perform as a sub-regional centre. In response the draft plan aims to show how the centre and its surrounds can be revitalised and enhanced, creating an attractive, vibrant people friendly and prosperous part of Wellington City.

The draft Plan is the third of a series of centre plans to be completed in accordance with the 'growth spine' concept in the Council's Urban Development Strategy. It has been developed following extensive community engagement and technical analysis.

The drivers behind the draft plan are about:

- **Growth** – to ensure expected growth in employment and residential living in and around the centre will be organised in a way that provides upmost benefit to the Council and the community.
- **Revitalisation** – to ensure the centre grows economically and lives up to its potential as a sub-regional centre for the southern and eastern suburbs.
- **Coordination** – from a Council perspective, it will ensure asset management planning and work in the public domain is coordinated and carried out in the most efficient and cost effective manner.

Consultation on the draft Plan is proposed for May/June 2010. At conclusion of the consultation process, the draft Plan will be reviewed in the light of the feedback received and any further available information. A final Plan will then be prepared for consideration by the Strategy and Policy Committee and Council in August 2010.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Strategy and Policy Committee:

- 1. Receives the information.*
- 2. Agree to release the Kilbirnie Town Centre – draft Revitalisation Plan for public consultation over May/June 2010.*
- 3. Note that the results of consultation and a final plan will be reported back to the Committee in August 2010 for further consideration.*
- 4. Delegate to the Portfolio Leader for Urban Development and the Chief Executive the authority to make minor editorial changes and further changes to the Plan, as required as a result of decisions of this Committee, prior to the its publication.*

4. Background

4.1. Strategic policy context

The following policies and programmes provide the overall rational and context for the Kilbirnie town centre – draft Revitalisation Plan (the draft Plan). In considering the approach set out in the draft Plan, it is important to note that Kilbirnie is part of a wider policy programme. The initiatives and actions, while specific to Kilbirnie, will need to be considered in relation to wider programmes and priorities that have been endorsed by the Council.

The key policies and programmes relevant to this draft Plan are:

Regional Policy

The Wellington Regional Strategy provides a strong policy directive to improve and mature key centres in the region. Recognising the importance of centres as the engine rooms of economic development, the Strategy encourages councils to grow and improve the mix of uses in key centres such as Kilbirnie. Action areas include: completing a centre vision for each of the key centres; developing infrastructure investment programmes to support centres; and encouraging residential intensification in and around these centres.

The Proposed Regional Policy statement (2009) builds on this by directing councils in the region to improve housing choices, including having more homes close to centres and transport. In addition, Policy 29 specifically directs district plans to maintain and enhance the viability and vibrancy of regionally significant centres, including Kilbirnie town centre.

Urban Development and Transport Strategies

The 2006 Urban Development and Transport Strategies outline an integrated land use and transport vision for the city. They seek to concentrate additional growth along a 'growth spine' from Johnsonville through the CBD to Kilbirnie town centre and the airport – supported by a high-quality public transport system and improved roads. The current centre plan programme seeks to implement these strategies. Improvements to the quality of development, and better integration with supporting facilities and services, are also key objectives.

Centres Policy and Programme

The Centres Policy was adopted by Council in August 2008. The key objective of the Policy is to maintain and strengthen our existing centres. The Centres Policy promotes the development of centre plans to provide guidance on how they should be managed and developed, and to assist in coordinating Council investment in and around centres. Kilbirnie town centre is defined as a sub-regional centre serving the southern and eastern suburbs.

Completing the draft Plan is consistent with the Centre Planning Forward Programme (adopted by Council in June 2008) which identifies Kilbirnie as a priority project for completion in the 2009/10 financial year.

Wellington City District Plan

The Council recently notified Proposed District Plan Changes 72 (Residential Areas) and 73 (Suburban Centres) which introduced new zones and provisions for development in and around the centre.

Proposed Plan Change 73 (Suburban Centres) aims to better align the district plan approach for these areas with the approach outlined in the Centres Policy. This includes supporting centres as core retail and commercial areas, and encouraging a mix of uses including residential and community uses. The plan change provides more focus on design quality through the introduction of a new design guide for centres. Primary and secondary building frontages have also been identified for key sites in Kilbirnie to help maintain and enhance important street edges and to ensure good quality ground level pedestrian streetscapes.

Proposed Plan Change 72 (Residential Areas) builds on the improvements made through Plan Change 56 for managing residential development across the city. In line with regional policy and the 'growth spine' concept, the plan change proposes two new 'areas of change' surrounding the Johnsonville and Kilbirnie town centres to improve housing choice and encourage medium-density housing.

While the changes proposed are generally consistent with the goals and initiatives set out in the draft Plan, it is possible that further changes to the rules and standards may need to be made to reflect some of the more detailed outcomes proposed in the draft Plan.

Community Facilities Policy

The Community Facilities Policy (2009) provides guidance on the levels of service for different community activities. The policy identifies a significant shortfall in the capacity of the community centre on Bay Road and, to a lesser extent, the Ruth Gotlieb Library. The policy notes the community centre is one

of the better-located community centres in the city. It also suggests an integrated hub approach, where the Council provides multiple services in a single location, is preferable. The policy is supported by an implementation plan which puts forward an investment programme for the Long Term Council Community Plan.

4.2 Centre plan process and consultation

The process to date has involved four key phases:

Information gathering and research (from May 2009)

Existing information was reviewed and specific research undertaken on technical areas (e.g. economy, parking, traffic and transport, urban design, infrastructure capacity, climate change, demographics and community facilities).

Engagement on issues and opportunities (May-June 2009)

Consultation was undertaken with the community through a public consultation brochure and drop in sessions at the Kilbirnie Community Centre. The consultation provided a good starting point for understanding the issues that need to be addressed in order to re-vitalise the centre, including:

- improving the look and feel of the centre
- addressing traffic management and parking issues
- improving the mix of uses and quality of retail offer
- improving the public transport hub.

The consultation also provided feedback on the aspects of the centre that are highly valued, including:

- the village atmosphere of the centre
- proximity to a wide range of community facilities such as the Regional Aquatic Centre, the Ruth Gotlieb Library, the Recreation Centre and Community Centre
- levels of accessibility, including access to public transport
- the quality of supermarket shopping.

Stakeholder interviews (July 2009)

Targeted interviews were held with key groups including, Council facilities managers, Living Streets Aotearoa, Disability Reference Group, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Housing NZ, Pacific Advisory Group, School Principals in the Kilbirnie area, churches and cultural groups.

Community-based planning and design workshops (August/September 2009)

A series of community-based planning and design workshops were held at the Kilbirnie Park Bowling Club to develop the key ideas to inform the draft Plan.

The workshops provided opportunity for Council and local input through a series of public sessions and interactive forums. With the exception of the first community forum (which had a low turnout), the public sessions were well attended and received. The use of techniques such as 'dot polling' and '3D block

models' proved to be useful methods for engaging with the community on the future issues and opportunities for Kilbirnie.

The workshops were facilitated by a multi-disciplinary consultant team led by Graeme McIndoe (McIndoeURBAN), Martin Bryant (Wraight + Associates Ltd) and John McIntyre (Athfield Architects Ltd), with support from Council officers. A Leadership Group of 12 individuals representing community and local retail and commercial interests provided direct input into the process. Along with Council officers and the consultant team, the Leadership Group played a key role in the development and critique of ideas to revitalise Kilbirnie town centre.

5. Discussion

5.1. Purpose and scope

This draft Plan provides a framework to guide the long-term revitalisation of Kilbirnie town centre. It sets out a future vision for Kilbirnie and identifies opportunities for managing change and future development. The overarching aim of the draft Plan is to show how the centre and its surrounds can be revitalised and enhanced, creating an attractive, vibrant, people-friendly and prosperous part of Wellington City.

Completion of the plan will also enable the Council to direct and prioritise its resources to achieve the greatest benefit for the Council and the community. It will also assist the private sector, by identifying opportunities for other parties to invest and partner in the revitalisation of Kilbirnie town centre.

While the Kilbirnie area has always been a 'mixed use' community with homes alongside industrial and commercial development, the centre has not delivered on its potential as a key destination. While there are some good anchors, the overall range of retail is limited and largely based on convenience goods. The centre needs to broaden its economic base and elevate its role and function from that currently of a convenience centre in decline to a vibrant sub-regional centre. The draft Plan will build on its key strengths to ensure the centre successfully performs as the key social, community and business hub for the southern and eastern suburbs.

The draft Plan aims to take a holistic approach to the future of Kilbirnie, considering all four well-beings (environment, social, economic and cultural) in the context of urban development. While the Action Plan is focussed on the role of Council, it is clear that the vision cannot be successfully achieved by Council alone. Coordinated investment and initiatives across a range of public and private sector organisations will be necessary.

5.2. Key challenges

Consultation and technical analysis¹ revealed the following key issues and challenges for the revitalisation of Kilbirnie town centre.

¹ *Kilbirnie Town Centre [KTC] Market Assessment*, Property Economics, August 2009. *Summary of Consultation and Feedback*, Wellington City Council [WCC], June 2009. *KTC Summary of Transport Issues*, WCC, July 2009 and December 2010. *Assessing the Implications of Sea Level Rise*, KTC, WCC,

Shopping, employment and mixed use

- While the centre has some good anchors (supermarkets, banks, post office, community facilities), the quality of the shopping experience is poor. The scale and intensity of retail needs to increase, and a wider range of non-retail activities are needed to raise the overall performance of the centre. Additionally, there is no locally driven business association or group to promote economic growth and coordinate activities in the centre.
- Economic analysis of future retail demand indicates there is an opportunity to significantly improve the performance of Kilbirnie, however this is only likely to occur with a significant improvement to the design quality and scale of the physical environment.

Sense of place

- Kilbirnie's sense of place needs improving. Many of the buildings are low-rise and in need of improvements. The spaces between buildings and public spaces are poorly designed and there is significant space dedicated to car parking. Overall, the centre is not a compelling place to visit.
- A key challenge is to activate and invigorate the street edge conditions in the southern end of Bay Road and to improve east/west connections between key destinations in the centre.

Movement networks

- The centre is generally dominated by vehicle traffic with significant traffic volumes on most of its streets and intersections at the northern end of the centre. Being surrounded by schools and recreation and community facilities, the centre is accessed by pedestrians and cyclists. A key challenge will be to improve pedestrian connections and safety, while providing continued access for vehicles.
- The centre has good public transport services, but the look and ease of use of bus stops needs to be significantly improved.
- Access to, and overall availability of parking is important for centre users and retailers alike. The existing provision of parking within the centre compares well to other centres. The challenge is to achieve better utilisation of existing parking and to ensure that sufficient parking is incorporated into new development.

Housing

- At present there is a limited choice of housing available in Kilbirnie, particularly in terms of apartments, terrace and town houses. The challenge is to ensure that new types of residential living are successfully integrated into the existing urban environment and that the buildings are arranged and designed to enhance (not detract from) Kilbirnie's sense of place.

Community infrastructure

- While the community centre's central location is advantageous, the buildings are poorly designed to cope with the demand and scope of activities that occur. The frontage on Bay Road is unattractive and poorly lit.
- The existing community hub in the Kilbirnie Crescent area accommodates a wide range of activities and faces ongoing demand for new and expanded uses. The buildings, however, are poorly integrated and facing capacity issues. The challenge will be to achieve maximum utilisation of community facilities while improving integration.

Resilience and climate change

- Kilbirnie is a low-lying area and some areas to the north of the centre are already prone to flooding in heavy rain. Climate change impacts (including sea level rise) are expected to exacerbate these issues. The challenge for this area is to be more resilient, ensuring these impacts are taken into account in our asset management planning.

5.3. Vision and goals

The long term vision is to revitalise Kilbirnie to become an attractive, vibrant, people-friendly and prosperous part of Wellington City. The focus on revitalisation is a direct response to consultation and the technical analysis identifying that the centre is not living up to its economic potential or its future role as a sub-regional centre.

The vision to revitalise Kilbirnie is supported by 12 goals to guide the long-term development of Kilbirnie. The goals are the strategic basis of the draft Plan and underpin the key opportunities and actions for the revitalisation of Kilbirnie.

The key goals are:

1. Develop and enhance Bay Road as the main street
2. Provide for and encourage a wider range of non-retail activities to locate in the centre
3. Support existing and new retail anchor tenants
4. Improve sense of place
5. Improve public spaces
6. Manage traffic and parking
7. Maximise the potential of public transport systems
8. Improve pedestrian and cycle access
9. Encourage more people to live in and around the centre
10. Improve housing choice
11. Maximise the potential of community infrastructure
12. Improve resilience of water-based infrastructure.

5.4. Key opportunities

The draft Plan has significant emphasis on showing the way forward by identifying key opportunities for revitalising the centre and describing how these sites (and initiatives) could be improved and enhanced in accordance with the goals in the draft Plan.

The majority of opportunities were identified during the community-based planning and design workshops in August 2009. They apply mostly to privately owned sites and are conceptual in nature – and are not intended to represent actual development outcomes. Their main purpose is to inspire and be used as a starting point for dialogue with the respective land and business owners.

Some of the key opportunities to revitalise Kilbirnie include:

- Establishing a locally driven business improvement programme, such as a Main Street programme, to organise, promote and drive the revitalisation of Kilbirnie town centre. Realising the opportunities and goals in this draft plan will rely heavily on the drive and coordination of existing and future businesses. There is currently no business association or group to promote economic growth or to help coordinate and facilitate improvements in the centre. A major opportunity exists to fill this gap.
- Improving the quality of the shopping experience in the southern end of Bay Road by creating additional retail frontage on the Woolworths site (currently a blank wall) and by creating a much more active frontage on the existing Community Centre site in Bay Road. The Community Centre site could form part of an expanded retail development (for example an expanded department store) or alternatively it could be part of a comprehensive redevelopment of the community centre with supporting retail uses.
- Potential for a new public space/mid-block link between Bay Road and Onepu Road. While one of the more difficult opportunities to realise, the link would help to achieve many of the aims and goals in the draft Plan:
 - Connects the key economic destinations in the centre (Pak n Save, Woolworths, Bay Road retail including Farmers) and improves access to parking
 - Provides much needed public space in the heart of the centre and sheltered from prevailing winds
 - Potential to expand and widen the range of uses, including food and beverage outlets at ground level and office and living above.
- Maximising redevelopment opportunities in Coutts Street (west) to significantly improve the retail/commercial experience and streetscape. Overtime this area should become an extension of Bay Road as the main street. The area is also considered to be a good location for other uses such as offices, hotel accommodation and apartment living, some of which could be incorporated into any redevelopment opportunity.
- Facilitating the redevelopment of the Bus Barns site into a high quality mixed use development. This presents a unique opportunity to kick-start the revitalisation of Kilbirnie and will help establish a positive precedent for new residential development in the centre.

- Improving the streetscape and bus waiting facilities at the existing bus stops at the intersection of Bay Road and Rongotai Road. The bus stops currently provide very little weather protection and are often full, resulting in people being pushed out onto the footpath and discouraging others from walking past.
- Potential to convert the existing drainage easement (south of the bus barns between Queens Drive and Tirangi Road) to a community walkway/cycle way. This presents a key opportunity to connect multiple destinations and improve pedestrian and cycle access to key destinations and the centre. This could be achieved through landscaping, edge treatment and a community planting programme. This area is already used informally and has the potential to deliver a significantly improved connecting open space with high recreational potential at relatively low cost.

5.5. Programme to deliver the draft Plan

The action plan is set out in Part 3 of the draft Plan. It outlines Council's intentions as well as indicative timing, relative priority and any resourcing implications.

The actions have been organised and structured to provide clarity around costs and priority and where responsibility lies within Council. There is a strong emphasis in the action plan on coordination and on-going project management to ensure the momentum is maintained and progress is monitored and checked over time.

Actions are set out under the following headings:

- Our current actions
- Priorities for funding
- Working with others
- Working within the Council
- Monitoring and review.

Flexibility has been built into the action plan to recognise that some actions require further feasibility testing and to enable work programmes and new proposals to be developed in more detail over time. Actions have also been assigned a timeframe for implementation and in some cases specific dates have been included. A review provision has been incorporated into the action plan to ensure changes can be made and to enable progress to be measured.

5.6. Financial Considerations and Long-Term Council Community Plan (long-term plan)

The 2009-19 long-term plan identifies capital funding for urban development projects and streetscape improvements in Kilbirnie. Under the long-term plan, \$190k is available in 2010/11 for public space detailed planning and design, while \$1.5m is available for implementation in the 2011/12 financial year. The draft Plan recommends this funding be allocated to streetscape improvements on the main street and the bus waiting areas at the intersection of Bay Road and Rongotai Road.

Many of the actions identified in the Plan can be achieved through existing Council work programmes and budgets (such as the Indoor Community Sports Centre work programme). Actions that will require new funding have been clearly identified. Some actions require further work to determine the extent of funding. For example, the action to investigate the feasibility of a Business Improvement District or Main Street programme would be achievable through existing budgets if focused only on Kilbirnie. New funding would be required, however, if the investigation was extended to other centres and for the implementation of such a programme. The draft Plan also promotes the potential upgrade of the Community Centre. A proposal to upgrade the Community Centre (including funding earmarked for years 2018-2021) is presently being consulted on as part of the draft Community Facilities Policy and Implementation Plan.

Some actions may be part funded through other means such as development contributions. Council policy is that one hundred percent of growth related infrastructure be funded by development contributions, and the draft Plan includes an action to assess the key growth assumptions and their development contribution implications.

5.7. Climate Change Impacts and Considerations

The draft Plan process has also provided an opportunity to take a longer-term view of the resilience of this area to climate change. Sea level rise has the potential to significantly affect the Kilbirnie area – particularly the stormwater network. By mapping and analysing a series of sea level rise scenarios, the Council has gained a better understanding of likely issues and possible solutions to deal with flooding and sea level rise over the short, medium and long term. The draft Plan highlights where improvements could be made to address flooding issues over the long term.

5.8. Consultation and next steps

Consultation on the draft Plan is proposed to begin on Tuesday 18 May 2010 to align with an editorial article in the Our Wellington page of the Dominion Post on the same day. The closing date for submissions is proposed to be Monday 21 June 2010.

The draft Plan and feedback form will be available in libraries and service centres in the southern and eastern suburbs, and on request. It will also be available on the Council's website and the Kilbirnie Facebook page.

Notices will be placed in local community papers and a leaflet drop will be made to all businesses and residents in the immediate area to increase awareness of the draft Plan. Officers will be available throughout the consultation period for briefings with community organisations, businesses and individuals. A specific briefing will be made to the Kilbirnie and Lyall Bay Progressive Association.

At conclusion of the consultation process, the draft Plan will be reviewed in the light of the feedback received and any further available information. A final Plan will then be prepared for consideration by the Strategy and Policy Committee and Council in August 2010. This will include a finalised Action Plan.

6. Conclusion

This report recommends that Council release the Kilbirnie town centre – draft revitalisation plan for public consultation. This is an important plan both at the local level and for delivering on the city’s wider strategic direction for urban development.

With a focus on revitalisation, it is hoped that the draft Plan will help to kick-start positive change in the centre and generate interest from the business community to improve economic prosperity of the centre.

Achieving the goals of the draft Plan will be a long-term process and much will depend on what private sector investment can be attracted. However, the Council has an important role to play in the revitalisation of Kilbirnie through investment in public spaces and streetscape improvements, providing improved access to community facilities and services, and helping to facilitate and coordinate future development opportunities.

Contact Officer: *Paul Kos, Principal Advisor Urban Strategy and Centres*

Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

The draft Plan directly implements Council's strategic direction for urban development as outlined by the Urban Development Strategy. The plan is also consistent with the Centres Policy and the Centre Planning Forward Programme, the District Plan review, and the objectives of the Wellington Regional Strategy.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

The draft Plan aligns with the expectations set out in the current long term plan. Notwithstanding this, there may be some future implications for capital and operational expenditure as a result of the draft Plan. Projects requiring new funding will be considered as part of future Annual Plan/LTCCP planning and prioritisation processes.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

There are no known Treaty of Waitangi considerations.

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision under the LGA. The report seeks approval for public consultation on a non-statutory revitalisation plan for Kilbirnie town centre.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

Significant public consultation and engagement has been undertaken with the community and key stakeholders on the draft Plan.

b) Consultation with Maori

Maori have been consulted as part of the consultation process.

6) Legal Implications

There are no legal implications at this stage.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report is consistent with Council policy. The draft Plan is consistent with the strategic direction as set out in the Urban Development Strategy and the Centres Policy. The consultation has been consistent with Council's engagement policy. The draft Plan is also being aligned with proposed changes to the District Plan for suburban centres and residential areas.

APPENDIX 1

KILBIRNIE TOWN CENTRE – DRAFT REVITALISATION PLAN