

# **A VISION FOR HELENSBURGH**

***“HELENSBURGH – BE BETTER : BE EXCELLENT”***

**STRATEGIES : PRIORITIES : INITIATIVES**

**THE FULL LIST**

## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

The Helensburgh Vision Steering Group (HVSG) has followed the Community Futures process of identifying a series of **Strategies : Priorities : Initiatives** which taken together will achieve the Vision for Helensburgh. Almost 150 separate initiatives have been identified – by the HVSG itself and from the extensive consultation exercise with local organisations, Councillors and others. Each in its own contributes to one of the seven strategies and all are focussed on achieving the Vision for Helensburgh :

### ***HELENSBURGH – BE BETTER : BE EXCELLENT***

Having followed the Community Futures process in arriving at our Strategies : Priorities : Initiatives the HVSG has concluded that in themselves they will not deliver the Vision and the Helensburgh we wish to see develop in the years ahead. Three other drivers have to be in place :

- ❑ **Community Involvement** in identifying, refining and selecting the initiatives to deliver the Vision
- ❑ **Political Commitment** to achieving the Vision – from Argyll & Bute Council and from our MP/MSP
- ❑ **Professional Help** to harness support, guide implementation and raise finance

I would like to give my personal thanks to everyone who has made a contribution. The fruits of their thinking creativity, imagination and commitment are all listed in this document and are a wonderful foundation on which to go forward and begin the implementation of the Vision.

The final stage of Community Involvement is about to begin. This Version 2 of the Vision will be taken to every household in Helensburgh and comment and improvement will be gained either through individual feedback or at a series of public meetings to be held in the town in August and September. Work on gaining Political Commitment and Professional help has already started.

Bill Brackenridge  
Chairman. Helensburgh Vision Steering Group

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**N.B. In the document, Initiatives that can be achieved fairly quickly are marked “QW” (Quick Win)**

## **VISION STRATEGY 1 - THE TOWN CENTRE**

***Helensburgh is a living, active community with the Town Centre as its hub. Helensburgh needs a vibrant Town Centre with its residents involved in decisions affecting its future development. A regenerated Town Centre, with its retailers actively supported and their numbers enhanced, would be a great asset for the community and a great tourist draw for the town.***

## **TOWN CENTRE PRIORITY 1: FOR ITS RESIDENTS AND VISITORS HELENBURGH NEEDS A TOWN CENTRE THAT IS SAFE AND CLEAN**

***Shopping is Britain's favourite leisure pursuit. Helensburgh needs to compete with covered shopping arcades / malls elsewhere through its unique independent retail sector. We need to give greater preference to pedestrians, provide a safe shopping environment and one that is clean and pollution free. For more details re safety in the town, please refer to the Initiatives for Children and Young People.***

### **INITIATIVES**

- ◆ Establish cleaner, healthier streets by actively promoting civic pride. E.G. talking to school children, running poster competitions. Kick start the campaign by entering the Britain In Bloom competition.
- ◆ Conduct a full traffic survey of the Town Centre and the surrounding streets.
- ◆ Pedestrianise Colquhoun Square and West Princes St between Colquhoun Square and Sinclair St.
- ◆ Extend at a later date to Sinclair St between West Princes St and Clyde St. and East Princes Street (to allow easier access to Helensburgh Central Station)
- ◆ Consequent of giving greater priority to pedestrians, we need to improve the parking supply in the Town Central retail core, e.g. Maitland St car park could be expanded and the Drill Hall and Gasometer sites could be used. To encourage shoppers and visitors into the town, car parking must be very cheap or free.
- ◆ Build good quality public toilets, sufficient for the needs of Helensburgh residents and visitors alike. ABC to service and maintain them to a high standard QW
- ◆ ABC to provide a more efficient refuse collection service. QW
- ◆ Inhibit anti-social behaviour after dark through brightening street lighting and installing more CCTV cameras. QW

## **TOWN CENTRE PRIORITY 2: HELENSBURGH TOWN CENTRE NEEDS AN URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY**

***Helensburgh Town Centre – and the town as a whole - needs an Urban Design Strategy which delivers in terms setting high standards of excellence reflecting its layout, architecture and cultural heritage - including Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Henry Bell and John Logie Baird. The land to the east of Sinclair St, between East Clyde St and East Princes St should be considered as part of the town centre. The Design Strategy also needs to be employed throughout The Waterfront Area so that there is harmony between the two.***

### **INITIATIVES**

- ◆ In the pedestrian area of the Town Centre introduce stone paving to road surfaces and controlled bollards.
- ◆ Improve the street appearance in the Town Centre with items such as street lamps and other street furniture, consistent with Helensburgh's cultural heritage.
- ◆ Improve signage in key locations such as the Iconic Building, the Swimming Pool, and the Public Toilets.
- ◆ Renovate and redecorate the commercial and residential façades in the pedestrianised areas area and also along West Clyde St from Sinclair St to William St.
- ◆ Provide a canopy cover for the pavements in the pedestrianised retail areas along W. Princes St and Sinclair St, including Colquhoun Square.

### **TOWN CENTRE PRIORITY 3: HELENSBURGH NEEDS TO NURTURE AND INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ITS QUALITY INDEPENDENT RETAILERS**

***A vibrant Town Centre is at the very heart of a successful Helensburgh. Already the depth and quality of its independent retail sector is well known and is almost unique in the West of Scotland for a town of its size. It is a great asset and one we are proud of. It gives us a firm foundation on which to develop the Town Centre as a magnet for residents, people from the surrounding areas and visitors alike.***

#### **INITIATIVES**

- ◆ Identify the Prime Retail Area in Helensburgh, recognising existing retail concentration and giving some room for growth. The Retail Area needs to be protected to enable it to be retained for straight commercial use. The previous (1999) Local Plan boundaries should be retained. These include Clyde St and Princes St and the linking Streets between them from James St to Maitland St. Sinclair St as far as King St should also be included.
- ◆ As Helensburgh develops as a place where small shops flourish, bring into the commercial core and into active use areas which are currently derelict or which are not delivering their potential. These are the lanes adjacent to the station and those leading to Princes St from Hoods Yard and to West King St from the car park.
- ◆ Upgrade the Co-op Supermarket or build a new top quality food supermarket. The pier head site should not be used for this.

## **VISION STRATEGY 2 - THE WATERFRONT**

(From Kidston Park to East Bay)

***Helensburgh's Waterfront Area has great potential. It enjoys a wonderful setting and should / could be a real draw for townspeople and visitors alike. Unfortunately its current condition makes it less than attractive. The pier site is the entrance to the town from the sea and is THE prime development site. We need to regenerate the entire Waterfront Area so that it becomes the stunning and lovely place it used to be and can be again.***



## ***THE WATERFRONT PRIORITY 1: LAND DESIGNATION***

### **INITIATIVES**

- ◆ The Waterfront land use designation should be:
  - The area at the pierhead between Sinclair St and Colquhoun St to be zoned for Leisure, Recreation & Tourism.
  - Both East and West Esplanades to be retained as green open spaces for Leisure and Recreation.

## ***THE WATERFRONT PRIORITY 2: TAKE NECESSARY STEPS TO AVOID FLOODING***

***According to SPP7 (draft) criteria, the Helensburgh Waterfront should be classified as a High Risk Zone for Flooding.***

### **INITIATIVES**

- A Flood Study should be carried out professionally which covers the whole of the seafront from Craigendoran to Rhu. It must include the siting of a temporary tide gauge at Helensburgh Pier and research into the proposition that, in certain conditions, the Helensburgh sea front experiences higher water than that recorded at Greenock.
- A professional survey needs to be carried out to ascertain what coastal protection is required in order to protect residential and commercial properties in the vulnerable areas.

## **THE WATERFRONT PRIORITY 3: HELENSBURGH'S PEOPLE & VISITORS NEED CLEAN SAFE BEACHES & BATHING WATER**

***According to Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) criteria, Helensburgh's coastline falls below acceptable standards of cleanliness. Our beaches / bathing waters need to achieve Designated Bathing Water Status.***

### **INITIATIVES**

- Scottish Water to take up and maintain appropriate policies so that our bathing water is cleaned and remain so. Nothing less than achieving and maintaining a Designated Bathing Water Status will do.
- Persuade Argyll and Bute Council to adopt the foreshores between Henry Bell Lane to Lomond St and Colquhoun St to William St and designate them as Amenity Beaches. The Environment Protection Act would then cover them and which calls for strict levels of maintenance and cleanliness.
- Stop the collection of shellfish from the foreshore on environmental and health grounds.

**QW**

## **THE WATERFRONT PRIORITY 4: HELENSBURGH NEEDS A PIER SITE DESIGNATED FOR RECREATION, LEISURE AND TOURISM**

***The Waterfront is important for its physical focus, its service provision and its contribution to the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of the town and surrounding area. It has, in recent years, suffered from under-investment leading to a diminution of its image and a deterrent to economic confidence and progress.***

### **INITIATIVES**

- ◆ Commission a team of professionals to redesign and landscape the Waterfront Area from the pier head to Kidston Park inclusive.
- ◆ If financially viable, build a multi-functional iconic structure at the pierhead as a magnet for visitors. This structure could house a combinations of attractions e.g. a museum which reflects Helensburgh's heritage, a soft play area, a quality restaurant, a space for electronic art, a dual purpose cinema / theatre, an aquarium and an upgraded tourist information centre.
- ◆ Replace the existing swimming pool with a state-of-the-art leisure centre
- ◆ Build a "hidden" multi-storey car park to provide additional parking spaces. Replace the existing car park Gabion Structure with a rippled effect concrete structure or something similar. The Gabion structure is unsightly, lodges detritus and provides nesting for rats.
- ◆ Create a pedestrianised Town Square in the area of the pier car park between the swimming pool building and Clyde St. Have a focal point in the new square e.g. a covered band stand.
- ◆ Extend the promenade as far as the Helensburgh Sailing Club.
- ◆ Re-locate the taxi rank outside Woolworth's on West Clyde St and widen the pavement.
- ◆ Install new street furniture, better seating, lighting and paving along the Waterfront to harmonise with the town centre.
- ◆ Review safety aspects of promenade. (DES — danger of falling from a height or into deep water)

## ***THE WATERFRONT PRIORITY 5: THE SEA AROUND HELENSBURGH TO BE DREDGED***

***The cessation of dredging the coastal waters around Helensburgh many years ago has resulted in a considerable build-up of silt. This is of particular importance at the pier as continued silting there will restrict the access of the “Waverley” and the Clyde Marine ferries and tenders from cruise ships.***

### **INITIATIVES**

- Commission a survey to determine the structural integrity of the timber pier and instigate a “stitch in time” maintenance programme.
- Introduce a programme of dredging in the area around the pier and the approaches to the pier. This must be both thorough and sustained so that vessels such as the Waverley, the Scottish Strathclyde (DES) Passenger Transport ferries and cruise ships’ tenders can berth successfully at all states of the tide.
- Reinstate the landing stages to the rear, eastern side of the pier to enable small crafts to berth.
- Install a pontoon near the pier end of the waterfront for visiting yachts and liner tenders.
- Build a groyne across the shore opposite James St. Import sand into this area.

**QW**

### **VISION STRATEGY 3 - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

***Helensburgh has an above national average numbers of families with children and with an exceptionally large and diverse range of activities available to them in the town and nearby. There is a need to list and to publicise these opportunities for families, children and young people. All our young people should have access to, and be involved in, some positive kind of leisure, cultural or recreational activity.***

***Attention should be given to issues raised by young people themselves, especially a youth meeting place, improved indoor and outdoor sports facilities, part-time jobs, a sense of insecurity in the town centre at night and youth antisocial behaviour. Helensburgh needs to be a safe and secure town, free from crime, vandalism and muggings. This is often seen as crucial to the successful realization of the Vision. The sense of insecurity applies to people of all ages and not only to the young.***

***Attention should also be focused on Helesburgh's peripheral housing estates. Agencies like the Social Inclusion Partnership and the Dunbritton Housing Association need to be involved in discussions and decisions involving the future of Helensburgh.***

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PRIORITY 1 : HELP FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE MORE AWARE OF LOCAL FACILITIES**

***Help families, children and young people to be more aware of the range of facilities and activities available to them and counteract the false and negative view that “there is nothing for young people to do” in and near Helensburgh.***

### **INITIATIVES**

- List and describe all support services and facilities (official and voluntary) for families, children and young people. Publicise these in a booklet and a website. **QW**
- Approach the 200 (approx.) voluntary organisations in Helensburgh to ascertain what facilities they offer for children and young people. Summarise these in a booklet and a website, especially highlighting those that encourage child and youth participation and emphasising the family nature of Helensburgh as indicated by the 2001 census results. Update the booklet / website periodically and make data widely available.
- Add a development link to existing websites E.G. 'youngscot', 'youthinformation.com', ABC website. Update this regularly. **QW**
- Create a text messaging system: What's on in Helensburgh for Young People'. **QW**
- Produce and distribute credit size information leaflets re. what's on for Young People in Helensburgh.
- Produce a film, created by young people for young people: young people's view of Helensburgh and what there is for them here.

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PRIORITY 2 : INCREASE INDOOR AND OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

***Encourage ABC to increase the provision of indoor and outdoor sports facilities as appropriate to the population in Helensburgh and its surrounding area. Refer to the HVSG submission to the draft ABC Sports Plan.***

### **INITIATIVES**

- Initiate a survey of the indoor and out door sporting needs for all age groups in the town and the surrounding area.
- Draw the Council's attention to the need for better indoor and out door sports facilities.
- Encourage greater attention by the Council to the sharing with the community the sporting facilities at the replacement Hermitage Academy. **QW**
- Have designed and built a large sports hall which could accommodate indoor tennis, badminton, table tennis, keep fit, mini football e .t. c. This could be a "pay as you go" facility.
- Provide more sport and leisure facilities in Helensburgh's housing estates for older children. Currently these are mostly play parks or areas with play equipment appropriate for pre-school age children.

### ***YOUNG PEOPLE PRIORITY 3 : INFORMAL MEETING PLACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE***

*The provision of a commercially run cyber-café or “dry bar” with a recording studio attached*

#### **INITIATIVES**

- Benchmark similar initiatives in other towns and involve young people themselves in this initiative

### ***YOUNG PEOPLE PRIORITY 4 : PART-TIME JOBS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE***

*Publicise to local commercial firms, retailers and voluntary organisations that young people are looking for part-time employment*

#### **INITIATIVES**

- Discuss the problem more fully with young people.
- Circular to local organisations, prepared by young people, about the issue.
- Create a part-time job agency set up by and run by young people.



***PRIORITY 5: GREATER SENSE OF SECURITY FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND  
ADULTS IN TOWN***

***Young people (and adults) expressed worries about a sense of insecurity in the town centre late at night due to the antisocial behaviour of some young people***

**INITIATIVES**

- Seek cooperation of police in ascertaining the nature and extent of the problem.
- Consult police, Area Committee and Helensburgh Community Council about possible actions.

## **VISION STRATEGY 4 - TOURISM STRATEGY**

*Helensburgh is an important tourist destination for both short term and longer term visitors who bring substantial economic benefit to the town. As well as day trippers Helensburgh attracts many visitors from the rest of the UK and overseas. They come to savour Helensburgh's wonderful seaside setting and waterfront : its great views and townscape : its trees and heritage : its unique independent retailing sector. It is the gateway from the sea to the National Park.*

*As a tourist destination Helensburgh is in competition with other similar towns – nationally and internationally. To compete with them a Tourism strategy for Helensburgh has to provide improved facilities for day visitors and, building on its tremendous assets, embrace the needs of tourists generally who want :*

- ◆ *a 12 month holiday period*
- ◆ *a special retail experience*
- ◆ *to cater for themselves*
- ◆ *green tourist opportunities*
- ◆ *special events throughout the year*
- ◆ *good food and entertainment*

### **PRIORITIES :**

#### **HIGH IMPACT**

1. Designate the Pier Area for tourism : recreation and leisure
2. Open an all-year : all-weather theme attraction
3. Open a ¾ star hotel in the town

#### **QUICK WINS**

1. High quality seating : WCs : Shelters along the waterfront
2. Provide attractive & welcoming entry points to the town
3. Complete the paths network around the town

## **PRIORITY 1: GREEN TOURISM**

***Green Tourism is a growing tourist market built round sustainable development. By exploiting its townscape, its trees, its seascape, its countryside setting, its access to the National Park and the Highlands Helensburgh is ideally positioned to exploit the opportunities Green Tourism presents.***

### **POSSIBLE INITIATIVES**

- ◆ Complete the paths networks - foot, cycle and bridle - around Helensburgh plus links to nearby settlements and the National Park, should be completed, as planned, by the Helensburgh & District Access Forum QW
- ◆ The Reservoirs and Skating Pond area, while remaining in the Greenbelt, should be designated for outdoor and recreational use in the Local Plan. Recreation could include canoeing, boating and fishing
- ◆ First impressions count - the approaches & entry point to the town should be attractive and welcoming
- ◆ "Trail and Train" schemes should be developed with the rail companies
- ◆ Specialist trails to be promoted, e.g. children's trails, nature trails, parks and gardens, town and countryside heritage, architecture, ornithological etc
- ◆ Eco-tourism possibilities should be explored , e.g. bird watching, tree-trails`
- ◆ Integrate Helensburgh with the Forestry Commission's plans linking urban areas with the countryside through parks, open space and green corridors while strengthening the wildlife gene pool
- ◆ Encourage tourist operators to join the Green Tourist Scheme
- ◆ Promote the new cycleway to/from Loch Lomond
- ◆ Develop a cycleway to/from Dumbarton

## **PRIORITY 2: THEME TOURISM**

***For a town of its size Helensburgh enjoys a rich, wide-ranging and unique heritage:***

- ◆ **Architecture** – Rennie Mackintosh : Leiper  
- Town layout and setting
- ◆ **TV** – John Logie Baird
- ◆ **Steamships** – Henry Bell (Helensburgh's first Provost)
- ◆ **The Arts (particularly painting and the theatre)**  
- The Glasgow Girls and Boys : Jimmy Logan

***Apart from the Hill House they wait to have their latent tourist potential realised and exploited. If it is financially viable, Helensburgh should have at least one more national, all-weather, all - year theme attraction situated in the Town Centre / Waterfront (See The Waterfront, Priority 4). In addition, the ancestral potential of Helensburgh should be exploited, e.g. Clans Colquhoun and MacAuley.***

### **TOURISM PRIORITY 3: THE WATERFRONT**

***Helensburgh's Waterfront is a magnet for day visitors and tourists alike, as well as residents – from East Bay to Kidston Park. It needs to be attractive and provide entertainment, activity and information. (See The Waterfront Strategy, Priorities and Projects above.)***

#### **POSSIBLE INITIATIVES :**

- ◆ The Local Plan designates the pier area for recreation and leisure with enhanced all-year facilities (See the Waterfront Strategy above) **HI**
- ◆ A high quality tourism information centre (See the Waterfront Strategy above)
- ◆ Adequate supply of quality seating : shelter WCs **QW**
- ◆ Improved car / bus parking and other transport links; easy pedestrian access to the Town Centre and Waterfront from Helensburgh Central Station
- ◆ Enhanced facilities for day visitors – play areas : sand pits : skateboarding
- ◆ Produce a dossier of pictures from the Helensburgh Advertiser archives of extreme weather on the sea front.
- ◆ A secondary visitor "hub" at Kidston Park with provision of catering, toilets and play facilities for the very young
- ◆ Provide a continuous promenade and safe cycleway from East bay to Kidston Park
- ◆ Provision for improved launching access for sailors / windsurfers. Create a small car park to the west of the pumping station opposite Suffolk St. Restrict this to the use of windsurfers' vehicles
- ◆ Persuade Scottish Water to improve the appearance of the pumping station opposite Suffolk St
- ◆ Encourage the Helensburgh Sailing Club to include a tea room / restaurant in their plans – open to the public and with a view over the moored and sailing boats

## ***TOURISM PRIORITY 4: HELENSBURGH - A QUALITY SHOPPING DESTINATION***

***Quality shopping is a year round tourist attraction in itself. Helensburgh must exploit its unique and wide-ranging independent retail sector in attracting visitors to the town. (See the Town Centre Strategy, Priorities and Initiatives above.)***

## ***TOURISM PRIORITY 5: GATEWAY TO THE NATIONAL PARK***

***Helensburgh is the Coastal Gateway to the National Park and must be integrated with it in terms of the supporting amenities and services it can provide.***

### **POSSIBLE INITIATIVES**

- ◆ Identify an attractive site for an additional hotel in the town HI
- ◆ Quality self-catering, guesthouse and Bed and Breakfast accommodation
- ◆ Improved public transport links to the National Park incorporating the Hillhouse
- ◆ Signage identifying Helensburgh as a Gateway to the National Park
- ◆ Provide full heritage and tourist information within the railway station
- ◆ Identify a suitable site for caravans and self catering lodges.

## **TOURISM PRIORITY 6 : EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

***With its unique location, townscape and seascape Helensburgh should develop a wide range of events and activities attractive to both day visitors and tourists alike***

### **POSSIBLE INITIATIVES**

- ◆ Water based events, perhaps in partnership with other Clydeside towns, e.g. sailing regattas
- ◆ Initiate a "Spring Blossom Festival" based on the town's flowering trees & spring gardens
- ◆ An autumn colour festival linked to the annual fireworks display
- ◆ Craft fairs, a Christmas fair, Scottish Country Dancing Festival, Live Music Festival, Flower Festival, Farmers' Market **QW**
- ◆ Promote a Loch Lomond Steam Railway and possibly a miniature railway or a tram line from Craigendoran to Kidston Park
- ◆ A shuttle bus linking key locations including the Pier, Kidston Park, Hillhouse and town trails
- ◆ Improve public transport links to/fro the National Park **QW**

## **TOURISM PRIORITY 7: PUBLICITY & SIGNAGE**

***Promoting Helensburgh as a tourist and day visitor attraction requires an integrated publicity campaign - to "show off" Helensburgh : to guide people to Helensburgh : to inform people when they are here.***

### **INITIATIVES**

- ◆ A coherent and integrated publicity programme in partnership with the Area Tourist board and ABC **QW**
- ◆ Brown tourism road signs highlighting Helensburgh's attractions at key road access points
- ◆ A joint marketing/publicity campaign with the "Waverley" & Clyde Marine **QW**

- ◆ Improved street signage in the town centre highlighting key facilities, plus Welcome to Helensburgh signs at the pier and the rail stations

## **VISION STRATEGY 5 - THE TOWN INFRASTRUCTURE**

*Helensburgh's Infrastructure has to be fit for the purpose in terms of its quality : quantity : accessibility and sustainability. It has to recognize that Helensburgh is a district retail and service centre as well as a residential town. It also has to cope with development and expansion. Helensburgh also is dependent on some infrastructure and services provided by the greater Glasgow conurbation.*

*The welfare of Helensburgh - its residents and future generations - should be the basis of decisions on the town's infrastructure. Advantage to others (e.g. to developers, landowners, the Council or others) is secondary. Thus:*

- 1. Planning decisions should be tested against sustainability : environmental quality : economic suitability : social justice : good design and local involvement (not merely consultation).*
- 2. Decisions based on, or influenced by, hoped-for or offered planning gain should be avoided. Planning gain should be an additional bonus; it must not be the reason for the planning decision itself.*



## **TOWN INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY 1: HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

***Helensburgh is and should remain a residential town. It is important to retain the town's scale and avoid urban sprawl. This does not mean that there should be no development; nor does it mean 'preserving Helensburgh in aspic'. What it does mean is its built environment and heritage should be valued, protected and enhanced. Future development should be of good design, make suitable allowance for open spaces and especially seek to improve the town centre. (See the Town Centre Strategy above.)***

### **INITIATIVES:**

- Use brownfield sites as much as possible for new housing **QW**
- Whenever possible, build housing above single storey properties in the Town Centre
- Build more social housing in the Town Centre. In particular, homes designed to meet the needs of the elderly and disabled should be built near Town Centre amenities
- Avoid urban sprawl into the Green Belt or woodlands
- If the Academy is built on a new site, designate the current site for housing and include a sizeable % for affordable housing **QW**
- Identify other sites that may become available for future housing development e.g. the Esso Station in the east of the town, St Joseph's or Hermitage Primary, 2 churches, Victoria Infirmary
- Designate a % for affordable housing on all other substantial developments
- Complete the improvement of tenement properties in the Town Centre

## **TOWN INFRASTRUCTURE 2: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

***Helensburgh should not be industrialised through the deliberate encouragement of large businesses to set up in the town. Local Helensburgh businesses (especially retail and service enterprises) should be allowed to expand as appropriate. The relocation and restructuring of Argyll and Bute Council offices should be concentrated in the centre of Helensburgh.***

### **INITIATIVES:**

- Avoid large scale development
- Provide additional office space in the Town Centre
- Allow local businesses to expand, e.g. car dealers move to the east edge of town
- Encourage small new businesses to develop and grow in town

### **PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY 3: HELENSBURGH NEEDS GOOD COMMUNICATION LINKS AND ALSO GOOD SERVICES**

***Helensburgh faces east. As well as being a commuter town much of the physical infrastructure and services used by Helensburgh people are located in the greater Glasgow conurbation. For example: aspects of employment, further and higher education, transport, hospital provision, policing, housing, business and industry, leisure, recreation and cultural facilities, and services. Close co-operation with neighbouring Councils should be integral to the management and enhancement of the infrastructure of the town. Some 10% of all journeys for work or study originating in Helensburgh are by rail (three times the national average). It must also be remembered that the MOD installations at Faslane and Coulport provides employment for Helensburgh people and the workforce provides spending power in the town.***

#### **INITIATIVES**

- ◆ Telecommunication and electronic links should be enhanced by encouraging Helensburgh to be a model electronic town. With the census figures showing that the town has above average educational qualifications, the opportunity is greater than for most places.
- ◆ There is a need to develop a clear policy about location of telecommunication masts, site sharing and mast sharing because new technological developments will require more masts and without a policy there could be a commercial free-for-all and local tensions.
- ◆ Hospital and specialist health services are and should remain in our conurbation and should not be rurally based. The importance of the Vale of Leven Hospital, the Victoria Infirmary and the services of major specialist centres in Glasgow are integral to the town's welfare.
- ◆ Provision of most of the schooling and some community education is, properly, based in Helensburgh. Growth of distance and open learning methods can also assist locally. However, Helensburgh depends on the greater Glasgow conurbation to provide most further and higher education. One aim could be to have a Tertiary Learning Assistance Centre included in the new Hermitage Academy.
- ◆ Policing is also a regional service centred on Glasgow and needs to be to provide specialist services. However, the needs for more manpower, improved CCTV facilities, a stronger residential element to the town centre and other security steps are clear.
- ◆ In many other respects - culture, entertainment, specialist services, etc. - Helensburgh relies on the physical infrastructure of Greater Glasgow. In a survey of opinions of Helensburgh's young people, proximity to Glasgow for facilities without the city's drawbacks was seen as one of the benefits of living in Helensburgh.

## **PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY 4: PUBLIC OFFICES AND FACILITIES SHOULD BE CONVENIENT AND EFFECTIVE**

**Access to a quality service from public offices and facilities are important to residents of the town.**

### **INITIATIVES**

- ◆ Ideally council offices and services, including Blairvadoch, should be located to ensure easy access for all. That means more than just disability access. It includes convenience for those who do not have cars. While a 'one-stop-shop' is the ideal, the minimum requirement is for close proximity to public services in a central location.

Considering schools and community education from the physical infrastructure point of view (as distinct from the nature of the services) these should also be conveniently located and suitably designed for future changes of use– e.g. growth of distance learning.

- ◆ Replacement of Hermitage Academy has generated much local debate and concern. In physical infrastructure terms, it is important that this is more than just a secondary school but should be a New Community School (in line with government policy). In particular that means both sharing sporting and other facilities, including storage, with all the community and ensuring that the design incorporates all the educational, recreation and leisure amenities needed by the community. The more the building is used during the day, the week and the year, the less likely it is to be vandalised. A fresh approach, introducing community involvement, is urgently needed for future developments.
- ◆ In terms of physical infrastructure, medical facilities should be convenient, both those locally situated and those which are in the wider conurbation. The Vale of Leven Hospital needs to be retained and supported.

## **PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY 5: COMMUNITY LEISURE AND RECREATION FACILITIES NEED IMPROVEMENT**

*The closure of the Clyde Community Centre, the wear and tear on the swimming pool and the general neglect of community leisure and recreation facilities of the town has caused mounting concern. They need to be replaced. (See the HVSG submission to the ABC draft Sports Plan, dated May 2004.)*

### **INITIATIVES**

- Provide a new state-of-the-art leisure facility on the pier site
- The replacement Hermitage Academy should share appropriate sporting and other facilities with the community **QW**
- “Quiet” (mostly non-sporting) community facilities to be located in a new structure at the rear of the Victoria Halls. (See the HVSG submission to the ABC draft Sports Plan.) Storage facilities need to be incorporated into the plan.

## **PRIORITY 6: UTILITIES SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT FOR THE FUTURE**

***All utilities – sewers, water, telecommunications, gas, electricity, etc. – should be sufficient for the town. Here we concentrate on sewerage and flood prevention. (See also the Waterfront Strategies, Priority 2.)***

### **INITIATIVES**

- ◆ The Victorian sewerage system is inadequate for the town. It needs to be modernised. No new developments, which would put extra pressure on it, should be permitted until the system is upgraded.
- ◆ There are two main types of flooding i.e. tide levels & wave action from the sea and hill run-off. Both are being made more likely and more unpredictable by climate change and global warming. Adequate sea defences and diversion of hill waters at times of heavy rain / snow melt are not matters to be delayed until there have been a number of expensive crises. They require planned attention NOW.

## **PRIORITY 7: UNDER-USED AND DEGRADED PARTS OF THE TOWN SHOULD BE IMPROVED VISUALLY AND BETTER USED**

***One of the most unsightly and wasteful aspects of the Helensburgh town centre is the way valuable central sites are neglected, under-used and degraded. These sites require co-ordinated and planned development.***

### **INITIATIVES**

- ◆ Main sites include: the former Civic Chambers : the Railway Station building : Town Centre East (from Sinclair St to Charlotte St)
- ◆ Identify future sites that **may** become available for development e.g. the Esso Station in the east of the town : St Joseph's Primary School : 2 Churches : Victoria Infirmary

**QW**

## **PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY 8: TRANSPORT AND ACCESS SHOULD BE GOOD**

***Good transport arrangements are important for many reasons including; mobility within the town (remembering that pedestrians are the most important element), access to the countryside and water for recreational reasons, contact with other parts of the greater Glasgow conurbation and success as a revived tourist centre.***

***Adequate quantities of cheap or free parking in or close to the Town Centre is essential.***

### **INITIATIVES**

- ◆ Adjust the road expenditure allocation formula to be fairer to places like Helensburgh where heavy use rather than length of road is a cause of disrepair.
- ◆ Incorporate improved car parking with any developments (e.g. beside the pier) to serve both residents and visitors. The most obvious site for a multi-storey car park is the gas works. Increased roadside car parking through creation of a one-way system and park-and-ride. Also under-building car parking and/or a multi-storey car park on the pier site could be considered.
- ◆ Improve in-town pavements and pathways. **QW**
- ◆ Improve traffic calming in Helensburgh's housing estates e.g. on Winston Rd north of Churchill Square. Pedestrian crossings in specific locations would help, especially outside the supermarket.
- ◆ Support the implementation of the plans for countryside paths drawn up by (and partly implemented by) the Helensburgh and District Access Forum in conjunction with Lower Clyde Greenspace. (See the Tourism Strategy above.)
- ◆ Cycle routes both within and to/from the town to be developed and completed.
- ◆ Improvement to the rail system would make Helensburgh more attractive to residents and visitors, including :
  - *shifting the central station eastwards*
  - *cleaning up the track and its surrounds*
  - *avoiding unsightly industrial development in the land on either side of the track between Helensburgh and Ardmore Point*
  - *creating rail-and-trail schemes: see Tourism Sub-Group paper*
  - *improving commuter car parking at Craigendoran station*
  - *recognition of the potential value of the West Highland Line for Helensburgh*
  - *a bus service between the upper part of Helensburgh and the town centre.*
- ◆ Investigate possible extensions to current bus services.
- ◆ Provide parking facilities for visiting yachts.

## **VISIOIN STRATEGY 6 - SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE**

*View-gathering surveys and seminars over the past 5 years have shown that important aspects of the way Helensburgh is “managed” are causing concern among residents. In the June 2000 Consultation Day governance concerns were the third most frequently mentioned topic of the 15 recorded. In the June 2003 Community Seminar governance and systems worries were prominent. Other sources (e.g. the Jackie Baillie seminar on Helensburgh’s future, the Strathclyde University survey) also noted the views about governance and the systems infrastructure.*

*Systems Infrastructure has to be looked at two separate, albeit interdependent, levels - Local and Council.*



## **SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY 1 : LOCAL LEVEL**

***Scottish Executive policy to ensure local community involvement in planning decisions is clear and unambiguous. However the present centralised ABC system of “community planning” goes against this as it does not always include local involvement. This needs to change and have issues of community planning and social inclusion devolved to the genuinely local community level, or to intermediate administrative levels (e.g. the four Administrative Areas in H&L).***

### **INITIATIVES**

- **COMMUNITY PLANNING.** Based on the Scottish Executive suggestion a Local Planning Forum for Helensburgh Involvement should be established to guarantee a system of community planning in which key decisions are determined at community level, not at Council level. E.G. the Social Inclusion Partnership should be well involved in discussions about the Helensburgh housing estates.
- **COLGRAIN.** With the demise of Colgrain Community Council, it should be included in Helensburgh Community Council.

## ***SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY 2 : COUNCIL LEVEL***

***Strong evidence exists that at the capital level ABC per capita funding is much higher for other parts of A&B than for the Helensburgh and Lomond Area. While some differential may be justifiable, the extent of the difference appears to be too great. Helensburgh is the Council's largest settlement and represents one-sixth of its population. It is one of the main contributors both directly (Council Tax) and indirectly (central government grants linked to population) to Council revenue. It should therefore be one of the main recipients of Council capital expenditure.***

***The planning area designated as "Helensburgh and Lomond" in the Structure Plan is massively larger (in terms of population) than other planning areas in Argyll & Bute. It includes rural, military and conurbation elements which would be more usefully separated for planning and other purposes.***

***Helensburgh has one-sixth of the Council's population. This should be recognised in its administrative structure and its distribution. ABC is reported as having difficulty in recruiting staff because Lochgilphead is remote; Helensburgh does not suffer from this disadvantage. Our location provides an opportunity to rectify that situation while simultaneously giving proper recognition of the central role of Helensburgh in the authority's structure.***

### **INITIATIVES**

- Council capital expenditure should be distributed fairly and without distortion across all local communities especially the six largest settlements. Financial data should be published regularly and openly.
- Three planning sub-areas should be introduced into H&L. These would be (i) the Clydeside Strip (from Cardross to Shandon), (ii) the Rosneath Peninsula, and (iii) the militarised zone centred on the Faslane Naval Base
- Helensburgh is officially recognised as the authority's "Second Administrative Capital". Whenever a new Council unit or office is to be set up, it should be sited in Helensburgh town centre.

## **VISION STRATEGY 7 - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS**

*Helensburgh residents value the distinctive nature of the town – its setting : its unique townscape : its position next to the River Clyde. It is also a green town encircled by the Green Belt. The central core of the town is one of architectural distinction and delight and is protected by Conservation Area status.*

- ◆ *Helensburgh is a green town, particularly when viewed from the River Clyde.*
- ◆ *The Green Belt is a key asset of the town and must be protected and enhanced.*
- ◆ *The inner edge of the Green Belt ( the edge of the built-up area) is its most vulnerable sector*

## ***ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PRIORITY 1: HELENSBURGH NEEDS AN URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY***

### **INITIATIVES:**

- Develop a 3 dimensional Urban design strategy for Helensburgh, based on the agreed vision, which reflects and integrates the complex relationship between all the key elements in the town including :

**buildings** – their scale, architecture, design and density

**The linkages between buildings** – streets, parks / open spaces, squares, seafront

**public street “furniture”** – roads / pavements, signs, esplanade, seating etc

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PRIORITY 2: HELENSBURGH'S CIVIC PRIDE**

*Civic pride is many things. Particularly excellent Public Realm Management - litter free : the maintenance of grass verges and hedges : the upkeep of mutual areas to the rear of property : rubbish collection : dog fouling : noise : chewing gum : inappropriate car-parking. The list goes on. While Argyll and Bute Council do some things well, change is required in others. For example:*

- *The Zero Waste concept. It is also a marketing tool. It attracts visitors. It provides local employment.*
- *The Safe Town concept. A balance is needed between pedestrians and motor vehicles (other than public transport); a balance which is in favour of the pedestrian - and cyclist. NB the term "pedestrians" includes such disadvantaged groups as adults with prams or toddlers, those who find walking difficult, people in motorised buggies or wheelchairs, and the blind. The Safe Town concept has another application as that of the perception of the absence of vandalism and crime. (See Young People, Strategy 5.)*

### **INITIATIVES**

- ◆ **Campaign for greater social responsibility**
  - Need - many of the populace does not appreciate that they themselves can contribute to the well being of the community by being good neighbours.
  - Benefit - the community at large, and visitors, by making Helensburgh a more attractive place in which to live and work.
  - Involvement - the whole community and the relevant special interest groups.
- ◆ **The reinforcement and extension of Argyll and Bute Council's Waste Management Strategy with emphasis on recycling.**
  - Need - there is still a long way to go for society to be living in a sustainable manner.
  - Benefit - the whole community, and individuals who may be in employment as a result.
  - Involvement - the whole community.
- ◆ **Safer in-town routes, integrating Helensburgh Central Station, for pedestrians and cyclists** **QW**
  - Need - currently the emphasis is to give priority to motorists. Every motorist is also a pedestrian.
  - Benefit - all pedestrians who would have a more pleasant, perhaps safer, and healthier environment; reduction in pressure on park-and ride facilities.
  - Involvement - the Roads Authority, public transport undertakings, retail businesses and the community as a whole.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PRIORITY 3: THE URBAN GREEN ASPECT OF HELENSBURGH.**

***View Helensburgh from the water (or the air) and one is struck by its greenness. Its tree-lined streets, a feature of Helensburgh, should link the green areas of the town - Hermitage Park (as a Victorian park), Kidston Park, the East Bay, the land adjacent to the former Clyde Street School, Duchess Woods, the Walker's Rest, the cemetery, East King Street public park, the skating pond and the reservoirs area. Tree Conservation should be supported. Longer term, taking part in, e.g. Britain in Bloom or having a stand at major Flower Show, should be our goals.***

***Trees need to be managed, protected and enhanced – both on public and private land. Tree preservation can be achieved other than by more Tree Preservation Orders. There are guidelines and statutory requirements in relation to construction near trees; people need to be made aware of these.***

### **INITIATIVES**

- ◆ Develop and implement a programme for managing, protecting and enhancing ALL the green spaces (incl. woodland) within the town.
- ◆ Encourage more active woodland management and create more Tree Preservation Orders. Acknowledge and encourage the work of the Street Preservation Trust **QW**
- ◆ Formulate a strategy for enhancing the present SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest)

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PRIORITY 4: THE HELENSBURGH GREEN BELT**

*The Green Belt around Helensburgh is a key asset of the town. It is not there just to protect the town. The Green Belt makes a positive contribution to the local environment for the benefit and enjoyment of landowners, residents and visitors. The content of the Green Belt is also important. Varying themes such as deciduous woodland, coniferous woodland, wet land and coastline are appropriate and develop what is there already.*

### **INITIATIVES**

- ◆ **A strategy to manage, protect and enhance the character of the landscape in the Green Belt.**
  - Need - there is no co-ordinated plan to manage, protect and enhance the Green Belt; so anything that may be done is done in isolation rather than as part of an overall scheme.
  - Benefit - the value of the Green Belt.
  - Involvement - Argyll and Bute Council, the various landowners and relevant interest groups.
  
- ◆ **A project, or projects, should be undertaken to create varied natural environmental niches within the Green Belt.**
  - Need - a practical expression of the management, protection and enhancement of the green belt.
  - Benefit - the environment and the community.
  - Involvement - Argyll and Bute Council, the various landowners and relevant interest groups.
  
- ◆ **The Green Belt's outer boundary in the north should be moved out to meet the National Park.**
  - Need - there seems no merit in having a strip of undesignated land between the National Park and its management regime on the one hand, and the Helensburgh Green Belt and its potential management on the other.
  - Benefit - the landscape.
  - Involvement - Argyll and Bute Council, the various land owners and relevant interest groups.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PRIORITY 5: OTHER GREEN ASPECTS**

*A plan should be formulated for their management, protection and enhancement. For example:*

- *The entry points to Helensburgh i.e. the main roads, especially those to the North and East of the town and rail (principally to Helensburgh Central station), need improving. Currently they are scrappy, unwelcoming and a disgrace.*
- *The Helensburgh & District Access Forum's paths network should be completed. Linking Helensburgh to the National Park by more than the current route through Glen Fruin should be a priority.*
- *The area from Ardmore Point westward should include all-weather footpaths, improved sign posting, the planting of appropriate native species and the elimination of undesirable "foreign" species.*

### **INITIATIVES**

- ◆ **An area around each entry point to the town should be designated in the Local Plan for landscaping and improvement.** HIP  
Need - Helensburgh, as a tourist destination, will benefit from attractive approaches.  
Benefit - the community at large, but more particularly those involved with any aspect of tourism.  
Involvement - Argyll and Bute Council, the various landowners and relevant interest groups.
  - ◆ **The whole of the planned path network of the Helensburgh and District Access Forum should be recorded on the Local Plan.**  
Need - to avoid its being lost from sight and its subsequent degradation by ignorance or deliberate design.  
Benefit - the environment, landowners and the community.  
Involvement - Argyll and Bute Council, the various land owners and relevant interest groups.
  - ◆ **The present Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) should be managed, protected and enhanced.**  
Need - without a management plan the system is liable to degrade under pressure.  
Benefit - avoidance of degradation of the environment.  
Involvement - Argyll and Bute Council, the various landowners and relevant interest groups.
- A strategy formulated to indicate the existing local biodiversity and how it may be managed, protected and enhanced.**
- Need - without a management plan, the system is liable to degrade under pressure. Biodiversity is at its most accessible and vulnerable on the fringes of urban areas.
  - Benefit - the environment and the community.
  - Involvement - Argyll and Bute Council, landowners and relevant interest groups.