

Listing assessment of Cumbernauld Town Centre

North Lanarkshire Council's Submission to Historic Environment Scotland

North Lanarkshire Council

Enterprise & Communities

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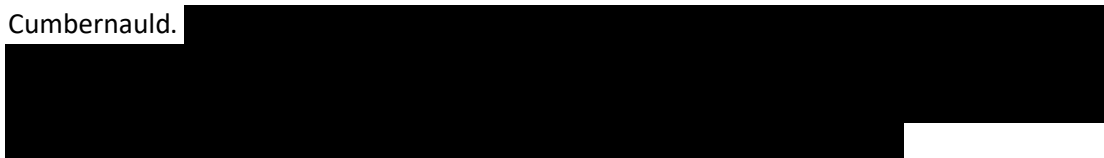
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Regeneration of Cumbernauld Town Centre

1. Summary

North Lanarkshire Council is committed to the regeneration and renewal of Cumbernauld town centre. In taking this forward, the Council has adopted a planning-based approach to support the redevelopment of the town. This has resulted in the development of the Cumbernauld Town Vision and Masterplan.

These proposals have been endorsed by the public in terms of the response to the consultation around the Cumbernauld Town Vision, Cumbernauld Town Hub and Masterplan. These advanced plans have very much been put at risk due to the proposal to list The Centre Cumbernauld.



Timeline

- 2013-2018 North Lanarkshire Council identify the need for transformational change in North Lanarkshire's town centres to respond to the high profile being given to the regeneration of town centres through National Policy such as the National Town Centres Review and the Scottish Government's response to this.
- 2019 North Lanarkshire Council commission a 'Mixed Use Town Centres Strategy' to guide future developments across its town centres and enters into discussions with town centre owners/representatives to enable the redevelopment of these towns.
- 2019 North Lanarkshire Council host a range of workshops, engaging key stakeholders (including the Scottish Government, Scotland's Towns Partnerships, housing and other private sector developers, consultants etc.) to seek input towards the development of visions and plans for all eight town centres within North Lanarkshire.
- 2019 An initial approach is made by HAMCAP (Cumbernauld) LLP (owners of The Centre Cumbernauld) to discuss the future of this centre and potential Council interest in acquiring this.
- 2020 North Lanarkshire Council appoint a multi-disciplinary consultant team who, following analysis and widespread consultation with key stakeholders and sectoral experts, produce draft Town Visions for each of North Lanarkshire's eight towns (including Cumbernauld). These Visions are aimed at identifying the individual needs of communities using these town centres and how each town needs to respond to structural change across key themes such as retailing, commercial and leisure uses, access and movement etc. The draft Visions also form part of the Council's wider 'The Place- The Vision' programme for physical regeneration across North Lanarkshire. This programme and the draft Town Visions are approved by NLC's Policy & Strategy Committee in March 2020.
- 2020 The draft Vision for Cumbernauld town centre is made subject to stakeholder and public consultation (including briefing sessions with Council Members and Community Boards) through the establishment of a 'Virtual Consultation Room' for each town. There were 1105 viewings of the proposals for Cumbernauld town centre via this consultation room and 160

respondents to an online survey (with 70% of respondents in favour of the proposals). North Lanarkshire Council also undertake a separate public consultation on the Town Hub proposals. 849 people responded to the consultation on Cumbernauld Town Hub with 77% identifying The Centre Cumbernauld site as their preferred location for this Hub.

- 2020 North Lanarkshire Council enter negotiations with HAMCAP (Cumbernauld) LLP with a view to acquiring The Centre Cumbernauld and redeveloping this site as a 'Town Hub'. Consultants are appointed to undertake an initial valuation of the centre.
- 2021 The Council appoint a range of consultants to update the valuation of the centre and undertake the due diligence required to acquire The Centre Cumbernauld. This includes, for example, title search and lease review, buildings and conditions surveys, negotiation and conveyancing works, preparation of a demolitions strategy, development of a management and run-down strategy, cashflows, costings etc. A business case for the demolition of the centre and regeneration of the town centre is also developed.
- 2021 The Town Vision and Town Hub proposals for Cumbernauld are approved by NLC's Policy & Strategy Committee in September 2021 and these are widely promoted.
- 2021 Approval for the Council to acquire The Centre Cumbernauld is provided by NLC's Policy & Strategy Committee in September 2021.
- 2021 The Council appoint consultants to develop a Masterplan for the redevelopment of Cumbernauld town centre based on the proposals and findings set out in the approved Town Vision.
- 2021 Pre-planning application discussions are held with the Council's Planning, Roads and Transportation and Education Services in order to guide the development of the Masterplan proposals.
- 2022 The Masterplan proposals for the town centre are finalised.
- 2022 The acquisition cost for the centre is agreed and the Council Leader announces that an 'in principle agreement' has been reached with HAMCAP to purchase this property.
- 2022 HES receive a request to consider listing phases 1 and 2 of the town centre as an example of mid-century modern brutalist architecture.
- 2022 The Council, in consultation with HES, issue an online survey to obtain public views on the proposed listing and Masterplan. The survey received 1706 responses with only 12.6% of respondents believing that the centre should be preserved for future generations and 87.1% believing that this was the best site for a new Town Hub in line with the Town Vision and Masterplan proposals.

2. The Centre Cumbernauld – Condition and Constraints


- 2.1 The key proposal identified in the 2021 Vision for Cumbernauld town centre relates to the purchase and demolition of phases 1, 2 and 4 of The Centre Cumbernauld which predominantly falls under HAMCAP's ownership. The demolition of the original megastructure and its 1980's extension will facilitate the move away from a single use shopping centre and allow for the development of a modern mixed use development comprising retail units, leisure provision, commercial units and a "Town Hub". It is proposed that the Town Hub will form the central focus of the new town centre and will be used to

deliver a range of public services (which may include, for example, nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary education, a library, sports centre, swimming pool, community and social work facilities and a health centre).

- 2.2 Cumbernauld town centre was designed in the 1960's and was delivered in different stages across the 1960's, 1970's, 1980's and 2000's. Unlike other town centres in North Lanarkshire, it has been developed at scale with a limited number of owners. This has resulted in the ownership of the town centre being primarily split between two institutional investment companies (HAMCAP [Cumbernauld] Ltd., who own The Centre Cumbernauld, and Bridges Antonine LLP who own the Antonine Centre) with satellite buildings being owned and operated by the likes of Tesco, Asda, McDonalds and a range of other fast-food chain and restaurant outlets.

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- 2.4 The design and physical constraints of Cumbernauld town centre itself (due primarily to the size and scale of The Centre Cumbernauld and adjoining Antonine Centre which occupy most of the available space) has also meant that since the early 2000's, there has been limited room to develop new retail or leisure facilities within the town. This has resulted in a series of large out of town retail developments at Broadwood and the Westway Retail Park being taken forward



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3. Consultant's Findings

- 3.1 Policy and best practice focus on the need for a 'town centre first' agenda, the 'place-principle' and the transition from single use to mixed-use development within our towns. In meeting these aims, the consultant team who were procured to produce the Town Vision for Cumbernauld based their proposals on research around trends and forecasts relating to a number of thematic issues such as population, housing, changes in retail, commercial and leisure demand, technological changes, access, movement and transport, energy policy and environmental considerations.

- 3.2 The key finding from the consultant's research was that as a result of structural change in the retail market, the impact of the digital economy and shifting societal and environmental needs, the decline in demand for retail floorspace in our town centres will continue to accelerate. 

[REDACTED]

3.3 The ongoing decline in town centre retail and need to reconfigure town centres to create a more resilient 21st Century offering has necessitated the need for transforming and changing Cumbernauld town centre. The Council, working with their appointed consultants, quickly realised that the only way to achieve the sizeable change needed to sustain this town centre was to create significant new space for a more effective offer. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

3.5 Based on the findings of the consultant's research, the Vision for Cumbernauld town centre proposes the development of a Town Hub designed to meet the wider educational, social, health and well-being needs of surrounding communities. The Vision also proposes planned investment in:

- modern retail and commercial facilities;
- a reconfigured Central Way redesigned to allow for the old and new parts of the town centre to be stitched together; and
- improved active travel and transport routes (including a new town centre bus station) that will better help connect communities with the town and reinstate Cumbernauld as a pedestrian-centric rather than a vehicular-centric town centre (as envisaged as part of the original design concepts for this new town).

3.6 The creation of this modern 21st Century town centre would not be possible without the acquisition and demolition of The Centre Cumbernauld. There is no other space within the town centre of the size or scale required to develop the proposals for a new Town Hub at the heart of the community and as the focus for a re-envisioned town centre.

4. Other Considerations

4.1 The potential of converting/refurbishing The Centre Cumbernauld as a new Town Hub for Cumbernauld cannot reasonably be considered for a number of reasons:

- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- the design, form and building standard requirements of modern buildings make conversion of many parts of this building for alternative use unviable

5. Community Support

Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of their community. Strengthening the connection between the people of Cumbernauld and a re-envisioned town centre that meets the needs of communities has lain at the heart of the Cumbernauld Town Vision and Masterplan. This has been achieved through:

- supporting participation in the development and evolution on the Vision for the town centre via a ‘virtual consultation room’ established to promote draft plans and proposals for the town centre;
- feedback and proposals from local residents received through an online questionnaire and survey relating to the town centre and Town Hub;
- regular updates and briefings on the development of plans and proposals for the town centre provided to both NLC member representatives and Cumbernauld Community Board (the primary community engagement/partnership body for Cumbernauld); and
- an online consultation to receive feedback on the Masterplan for the town centre and the proposal for the listing of The Centre Cumbernauld. 1706 people responded to this survey - the findings are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Survey Responses

Town Hub provision	82% said the megastructure did not meet the requirements to provide the facilities for a Town Hub
Location	87% identified the site of The Centre Cumbernauld as their preferred location for the Town Hub
Preserving the megastructure	77% of respondents did not want the structure preserved for future generations (10% said they were unsure)
Significant value	67% of respondents said that The Centre Cumbernauld holds no significant value for it to be preserved or incorporated into a new Town Hub design (17% were unsure)
Responsibility	84% of responses received were of the view that the Council is responsible for improving the town centre to meet the community’s needs
Respondents	Overall, 79% of the survey respondents live in Cumbernauld (and a further 14% within North Lanarkshire), 6% had relocated from Cumbernauld, 18% work there and 15% visit regularly

In addition to community consultation, discussions have also been held with key stakeholders (including Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, NHS and New College Lanarkshire) in relation to the potential listing of The Centre Cumbernauld and Masterplan for the town centre. The partners have highlighted their support for the Councils plans (contact details for these partners can be made available).

6. Options Appraisal

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(4) Partial demolition, extension and localised new-build for 'Town Hub' and mixed use centre

The Council is seeking to deliver a new model for education provision by promoting a Town Hub model which is anchored by a high school with associated community and partner facilities. This could for example include facilities for leisure, sports, community, adult education, social care, health and Council services. Due to the size and scale of these partnership hubs, it has been identified that the full site north and south of Central Way on which The Centre Cumbernauld is located would be required in order to deliver these proposals and that the partial retention of part of the existing centre would significantly compromise this option.

(5) Complete demolition of The Centre Cumbernauld and the site redeveloped as a Town Hub and mixed use centre

From feedback received throughout the development of the Cumbernauld Town Vision and Masterplan, the demolition of The Centre Cumbernauld and its replacement with a bespoke Town Hub that delivers a range of local services, together with new retail, improved access and transport provision and a quality modern town centre environment is **by far** the communities preferred option.

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

7. NLC Commitment to Project

As highlighted above, North Lanarkshire Council is committed to the regeneration and renewal of Cumbernauld town centre and have developed advanced plans which have been endorsed by the community and supported through pre-planning application discussions with North Lanarkshire's Planning, Roads and Transportation and Education Services.

[Redacted]

Even the part-listing of The Centre Cumbernauld would have significant impact on the Council's plans and proposals, making the development of the Town Hub and ultimately the acquisition of The Centre Cumbernauld unviable.

Coinciding with the work to develop these plans, the Council have been negotiating with the owners of The Centre Cumbernauld (HAMCAP [Cumbernauld] Ltd.) and have agreed a price in principle for the acquisition of this property. These negotiations have been supported through a range of due diligence activity which has been undertaken by a number of consultants. These appointments have included:

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]



Given this level of investment, the work undertaken to date and the approved plans which are now in place, the council believe that the proposals for the renewal and redevelopment of Cumbernauld town centre should be considered to be at a **“particularly advanced”** stage. As such, in accordance with Historic Environment Scotland’s guidance, the Council advocate that The Centre Cumbernauld, especially given its central nature to the regeneration proposals for the town centre, should not be considered for listing.

Should the planned demolition of the centre proceed and town centre regeneration proposals be taken forward, the Council will aim to recognise the role that The Centre Cumbernauld played in developing the Cumbernauld new town concept, recoding and celebrating it in the new development, providing interpretation and archives to be included as part of the proposed Town Hub and building design and the incorporation of key features of interest,



Appendixes

- Cumbernauld Town Vision
- Cumbernauld Town Centre Feasibility Study, Options Appraisal & Masterplan