

The Helensburgh Partnership

Helensburgh Retail Study

Main Report

COLLIERS CRE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Colliers CRE were appointed by the Helensburgh partnership to undertake a retail study of Helensburgh. This involved a qualitative analysis of the existing retail provision in Helensburgh and a capacity analysis to determine the quantitative need for retail floorspace in Helensburgh up to 2015.

The retail audit of the town centre highlighted that the breakdown of convenience, comparison, service and vacant units within Helensburgh largely reflected the national average, albeit with some minor differences. The audit highlighted that the vacant properties unit size tended to be smaller than average, and did not match with the size of unit which was required by retailers who may be interested in locating in the town. It was considered that the levels of vacant units in the town was not a major cause for concern, however vacancy rates should be monitored to ensure that the situation does not worsen.

There were a few retail proposals within the wider area which have the potential to impact upon Helensburgh Town Centre. Most notably there are several proposals for food and non food retail space in Dumbarton. In addition there are proposals to further increase floorspace Glasgow City Centre which will further consolidate Glasgow as the predominant comparison shopping centre in the wider area.

Our market assessment identified that there were several multiple retailers who would be interested in locating in Helensburgh, provided the right size of unit was available in the right location. There is a current undersupply of large modern floorplates for retailing in Helensburgh which prevents Helensburgh from realising its potential, particularly given the relative affluence of the local catchment area.

As part of the retail study, a 700 person household survey was undertaken. The results of that showed that the predominant location for main food retailing from the catchment area was the Co-op in Helensburgh Town Centre. The next most popular destination was ASDA in Dumbarton, which is situated outwith Helensburgh's catchment area. In terms of non-food retailing Glasgow City Centre was the predominant location for non-bulky comparison shopping, whilst St James Retail Park, Dumbarton was the most popular location for bulky goods shopping for people in Helensburgh's catchment area.

The household survey was utilised to generate a retail capacity analysis for convenience and comparison shopping up to 2015. The analysis assumed two scenarios, firstly where Helensburgh and other centre's retained their market share, and secondly where Helensburgh improved its market share. Scenario 1 concluded that in 2015 there would be an oversupply of convenience floorspace if

Helensburgh retains its current market position. Scenario 2 showed that there was sufficient capacity for an additional convenience floorspace of c. 1500 sq m net, if Helensburgh was to improve its retail offer and retain some of the expenditure that it currently being lost from the catchment area. In terms of comparison goods, Scenario 1 showed that Helensburgh there would be an oversupply of comparison floorspace, in 2015 whilst Scenario 2 highlighted that an additional 5,600 sq m net of comparison goods floorspace could be accommodated within Helensburgh, as Helensburgh would retain some of the expenditure that currently leaks to other centres such as Glasgow and Dumbarton. It is considered that Scenario 1, the 'stand still' option, is not an option for Helensburgh, as it would continue to leak trade to other centres, particularly as there are proposals to improve the retail offer of these other centres, which will mean a relative decline for Helensburgh.

It is considered that the Helensburgh Retail Study provides a detailed snapshot of the retail offer within the town in summer 2007. This study can form the foundation upon which Argyll & Bute Council, the Helensburgh Partnership, retailers and community groups can determine the future the future retail offer of the town, taking a proactive stance. In the professional opinion of Colliers CRE the timing of the study is considered apt, as the future retail offer and direction of the town is considered to be at a 'crossroads' at present.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Colliers CRE was appointed by the Helensburgh Partnership in April 2007 to undertake a study of retailing in Helensburgh Town Centre. The objective of the study was to undertake a quantitative and qualitative retail assessment of the capacity of the town to absorb additional convenience and comparison floorspace. The analysis is to help in the development of a retail strategy for Helensburgh which will provide a context and guidance for future retail development in the Helensburgh area.

1.2 The terms of the brief can be categorised into three component parts:

(i) Retail Audit

- A comprehensive audit of existing retail floorspace in the town centre in terms of its scale, function, quality and attractiveness.
- Identify the existing and proposed retail developments in the wider area, which may limit the scope for, and retail interest in, new development in Helensburgh.
- Assess the nature of shopping patterns in the area and identify deficiencies in the provision and the potential for changing existing shopping patterns
- Conduct a 700 sample household survey
- Review the Structure Plan and Local Plan policy situation with regard to potential future retail development

(ii) Retail Capacity Assessment

- Undertake a quantitative retail capacity assessment to measure the potential retail expenditure available to support retail floorspace in Helensburgh.

(iii) Retail Market Assessment

- Provide details of supply of shops in the town including estimate of total floorspace, number of units and any proposals for floorspace in the pipeline and identification of multiple retailers which operate in the town.
- Provide a description of current operating formats in town centres for multiples and food store operators.
- Assessment of retailer demand and requirements for Helensburgh. Identification of specific retailers who could be attracted to the town if the correct space was provided.
- Assessment of current prime rental levels, potential rental levels if new space was provided and current yield levels of unit shops.

1.3 In order to fulfil this brief, Colliers CRE have undertaken a household survey to determine retail patterns and to provide a base for our capacity analysis. We have undertaken surveys throughout the town centre to provide a qualitative analysis of the town centre retail provision. We have spoken to a number of retailers to solicit their views on Helensburgh as a retail destination. The responses of the individuals and organisations who have been involved in the various surveys is gratefully acknowledged as their contribution has been vital to forming a solid basis on which to base our recommendations.

