
Report To:	Regeneration Committee	Date:	7th May 2009
Report By:	Corporate Director – Regeneration and Resources	Report No:	RC/09/05/01/SJ/WW
Contact Officer:	Head of Economic and Social Regeneration	Contact No:	01475 715555
Subject:	Covered Walkway – Port Glasgow Town Centre		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with further information on the feasibility study carried out on a potential covered walkway linking the Tesco site with the existing town centre.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Officers have worked with the Port Glasgow Traders' Association developing a number of projects with a view to ensuring the ongoing viability of the Port Glasgow Town Centre.
- 2.2 During discussions with the Port Glasgow Traders' Association, the connectivity of the Tesco site to the existing town centre, was seen as crucial. The traders felt that a covered walkway would improve the connectivity. Accordingly a feasibility study was instructed to explore the viability of such a proposal. A copy of the feasibility study is contained in Appendix 1.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Committee considers the content of the feasibility study, and delegate authority to the Head of Economic and Social to provide formal feedback to the Port Glasgow Traders' Association.

Stuart Jamieson
Head of Economic and Social Regeneration

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Port Glasgow Traders' Association represent 67 businesses in the Port Glasgow Town Centre area.
- 4.2 The group was formed in an attempt to ensure the ongoing viability of the town centre.
- 4.3 Officers have met with the group and a number of projects have been developed to improve the appearance of the Port Glasgow Town Centre, as well as addressing the sustainability of a number of businesses.
- 4.4 A covered walkway would potentially improve the accessibility of the existing town centre from the Tesco site and officers were instructed to commission a feasibility study to explore the merits of such a scheme. The report is contained in Appendix 1.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Finance:

Financial Implications – One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
n/a					

Financial Implications – Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

- 5.2 Human Resources: None.
- 5.3 Legal: Land ownership issues have been considered.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Consultation has taken place with Tesco along with the Planning.

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 The feasibility study is contained in Appendix 1.

Port Glasgow Town Centre Retail Park Covered Walkway Feasibility Study



report by

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Contents

1.0	Introduction	Page 1
1.1	Context	
1.2	Client Objective	
1.3	Study Reporting	
2.0	Port Glasgow	Page 4
2.1	Context	
2.2	Town Centre Action Plan	
2.3	Edge of Centre Retail	
2.4	Inverclyde Local Plan 2005 – Retail Centres and Retail Development	
3.0	Developing a Covered Walkway	Page 7
4.0	Evaluation	Page 8
4.1	Town Centre Regeneration Benefits	
5.0	Conclusion	Page 12
Appendix 1	Proposed Covered Walkway Plans	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

Inverclyde Council are considering the needs of Port Glasgow Town Centre and are seeking to undertake a Feasibility Study to assess the practicality, value and benefits of enhancing connectivity with the edge of centre Tesco Superstore.

The main element of the project would be to review the construction of improved links between Tesco and Shore Street/ Princes Street, Port Glasgow and include consideration of:

- Improved pedestrian crossing.
- Provision of a covered walkway.
- Other measures.

1.2 Client Objective

Inverclyde Council's objective is to address regeneration of Port Glasgow's retail core and make the Town Centre a more successful vibrant centre recognising local needs and aspirations.

The Feasibility Study should be undertaken within a context of both Inverclyde Council's and Riverside Inverclyde's regeneration remit and makes clear recommendations on appropriate measures and investment requirements.



1.3 Study Reporting

The Study Report reviews the opportunity for closer integration of all retail, business and service activity in Port Glasgow and evaluates potential value and outcomes arising from various support measures.

The report is sub-divided into three sections that summarise the main findings in terms of:

- Port Glasgow's Town Centre
- Connecting Retail Centre/ Edge of Centre
- Recommendations

This draft report has been issued to Inverclyde Council. Detail comment is awaited and as a draft the assessment reports the findings of the consultants and should not be understood to represent the views of Inverclyde Council.

The edge of centre new retail superstore has involved a major redevelopment of (the former Scott Lithgow and East Glen Yard) on the waterfront and involved reorganisation of the local road network. The main road now effectively bypasses the town albeit that the former Town Hall (Library) and Coronation Park still form the important visual and physical gateways to the Town Centre.

The Community Futures Plan for Port Glasgow sets out a strategic community vision for regeneration and is strongly supported through a partnership between:

- Inverclyde Community Development Trust
- Inverclyde Council
- Riverside Inverclyde
- Scottish Government/ Communities Scotland

The Community Futures Action Plan has established the priority need for regeneration of the Town Centre (Theme 2) acknowledging the challenge that a major superstore offers the historic core of independent traders.

The Community Consultation Event (June 2007) identified Town Centre Regeneration as the top priority action.

2.0 PORT GLASGOW

2.1 Context

Port Glasgow (population circa 16,000) is a major town in Inverclyde with the Town Centre offering a full range of services (Retail/ Transport Interchange/ Business/ Local Government Services/ Health/ Cultural etc) with a historic and compact town centre.

Port Glasgow historically was Scotland's Chief West Coast port in the 17th Century and has developed with strong links to ship building and engineering support services.

The Town Centre is formed by a grid of streets (Fore Street/ King Street/ /Church Street/ Princes Street) with the restored 'A' Listed former Town Hall building (now library and community facility completed in 1996) forming the 'gateway' into the town.

The Town Centre is well served by public transport (rail link to Glasgow/ Bus Links – local and regional) with parking (free parking) primarily on-street or associated with:

- Town Hall/ Civic Square
- Port Glasgow Library
- Tesco Superstore



2.2 Town Centre Action Plan

The Community Futures Action Plan (CFAP) develops the theme of a 'town centre to be proud of' and suggests a number of potential actions including developing the connection between Town Centre and the Tesco Supermarket.

- Develop and implement proposals for a covered walkway between Tesco and the Town Centre.
- The walkway should be an architectural feature with strong heritage links.
- Put in place a Shopper's Bus which is wheelchair and buggy friendly to connect Tesco, Town Centre and Lidl.

Other priorities set out in the CFAP include:

- Improve Town Centre shops.
- Create a family and pedestrian friendly environment.

2.3 Edge of Centre Retail

The Tesco Extra superstore (10,245m²/ 110,000 sq ft) was given Reserve Matter Consent by Inverclyde Council in July 2004. The original Outline Planning Permission for redevelopment of the site followed a Public Local Inquiry in 2000 and was promoted as a fully integrated extension of Port Glasgow Town Centre. The store associated site infrastructure, major road works and parking were completed in late 2007. The Tesco Superstore forms Phase 1 of a larger Retail Park proposal that is envisaged to offer:

- 160,000 sq ft of non-retail floorspace.
- Mixed use development (Licensed Leisure/ Hotel/ Restaurants).
- Total development consented for 20,763m².

The development proposals and Planning Conditions required the formation of a new Civic Square and environmental improvements to the River Clyde Foreshore area.

2.4 Inverclyde Local Plan 2005 – Retail Centres and Retail Development

In May 2008 Inverclyde Council issued a formal update on Retail Centres and Retail Development to clarify the Council's planning policy in light of developments (specifically Port Glasgow) since publication of the Final Draft Inverclyde Local Plan First Review, 2002 and adoption January 2006.

The Local Plan recognises that there has been limited investment in Port Glasgow Town Centre but records the importance of the centre and supports regeneration to provide a range of services thereby retaining a larger proportion of local expenditure and providing a better balance of floorspace within Inverclyde.

Inverclyde Council (Dec 2006) issued an 'Issues Report' to consult on the future status of retail centres and specific issues relating to a potential alteration of the Port Glasgow Town Centre boundary (into the Town Centre) or alternatively the designation of Port Glasgow Town Centre as a 'commercial centre'.

The Conclusion to the Planning Review and consultation on the issues report is summarised in the Retail Centres and Retail Development Policy Paper and concludes:

- Port Glasgow's town centre boundary should not be changed to incorporate Tesco's and Waterfront Development [to be reviewed with Local Plan].
- The Port Glasgow Waterfront retail development site will be considered significantly preferable to any site outwith the Central Shopping Area of Inverclyde's town centres.
- Retail development in Port Glasgow has altered the mix of retail across Inverclyde and now services an Inverclyde-wide catchment.



3.0 DEVELOPING A COVERED WALKWAY

A development proposal has been put forward to improve the connections between the Tesco Extra Superstore and the Town Centre by means of:

- A covered walkway linking Shore Street to the Tesco Store extending 160 metres.
- Walkway formed by a 'T' form structure with central glazed dividing wall.
- Contemporary steel and glazed construction of nominal dimensions 160 x 3 x 6 metres.

The development proposals are currently being designed/ under design development by Inverclyde Council and are indicative layouts at present time. Sketch illustrations are included in this report but are subject to revision and do not necessarily reflect the final proposal.

The covered walkway would if completed be constructed as two elements to allow for a car park road access in the centre of the site. The main elements of the proposal are understood to be:

- Covered walkway with overhang canopy to Tesco building.
- 75-80m section on existing path link not involving any loss to car park spaces.
- 70 metre section connecting to the Civic Square next to the fountain pond and south of the Comet.
- Connection to the pedestrian crossing on Shore Street connecting to Princes Street.
- Loss of formal avenue tree planting provided on the existing walkway connecting Town Centre and Superstore.
- Maintenance of existing walkway route and current provision within the Tesco car park.



 Proposed Covered Walkway Location

Figure 1
Site Plan



Figure 2
Benchmarking

4.0 EVALUATION

The proposal for a covered walkway has its foundation in improving the connectivity of the edge of centre retail park with the Town Centre. The objectives that underpin this goal should be clear and set clearly within a context of:

- Delivering town centre regeneration benefits.
- Delivering public benefits.
- Offering 'best value' particularly if funding involves any public investment.

4.1 Town Centre Regeneration Benefits

Large supermarkets sales are highly variable (Retail Need Assessments) but typical average sales density is of the order of £8,000 per sq/m nett (Experian 2002 Data).

Tesco potential sale assuming 10,500m² store offers retail capacity of the order of £84 million gross turnover.

The Local Plan, Community Plan, Community Futures Action Plan and Regeneration Strategy for all partners and stakeholders is to secure regeneration and strengthen Port Glasgow Town Centre.

Assessment of non-strategic schemes needs to consider the complimentary and synergistic benefits of proposals that can collectively incrementally deliver against objectives or outcomes.

Will a Covered Walkway Support Town Centre Regeneration?

Mechanism	Review	Assessed Outcome
Improved Link encourages Tesco shoppers to use Town Centre	Potential reverse with Tesco capturing sales from centre.	Medium/ low Negative
Improved Link encourages Town Centre shoppers to use Tesco parking and walk into Centre.	Low. Civic Centre car park better placed and Port Glasgow no major parking problem.	Neutral
Improved Link supports Tesco customer and service and approval of store to local residents.	Supports connection and assist Tesco marketing	Negative (Town Centre) Positive (Tesco)
With better connections support local (ICDT) measures, independent trader marketing, events.	Much depends on future of Town Centre. Phase 2 of Retail Park consent 20,763m ² .	Neutral (see public benefits)

Will a Covered Walkway Deliver Public Benefits?

Mechanism	Review	Assessed Outcome
Improved link improves connectivity and mobility.	Improved amenity (shelter) will support use.	Medium Positive
Improved link helps reduce barrier to walking connection and enhances use by older people.	Improved amenity (shelter) will support use.	Medium Positive
Covered walkway increases weather protection and user amenity.	No other parts of Princes Street covered or Town Centre. Favours Tesco's over centre.	Positive Medium/ High Main beneficiary Tesco
Covered walkway attracts anti-social behaviour and use at night exploiting shelter.	Highly visible location. Shelters in Civic Square	Neutral

Will the Covered Walkway offer ‘Best Value’ for public investment?

Mechanism	Review	Assessed Outcome
Funding of the covered walkway involves Public Funds.	Main beneficiary of scheme is Retail Park. Development should require minimal public investment.	Medium/ Low Negative
Public Sector funding should be being used to enhance value of scheme; promote added value or quality.	Scheme proposal is a modern quality scheme without any embellishment/ added value.	Negative
Public sector funding could offer greater benefits by direct support to Town Centre schemes.	Regeneration of town centre is currently requiring investment from partners. Better value to be secured through offer interventions.	Negative

5.0 CONCLUSION

The assessment of the proposal to develop with public monies a covered walkway between Shore Street and the Tesco Superstore at Port Glasgow whilst considered feasible is not considered to offer best value.

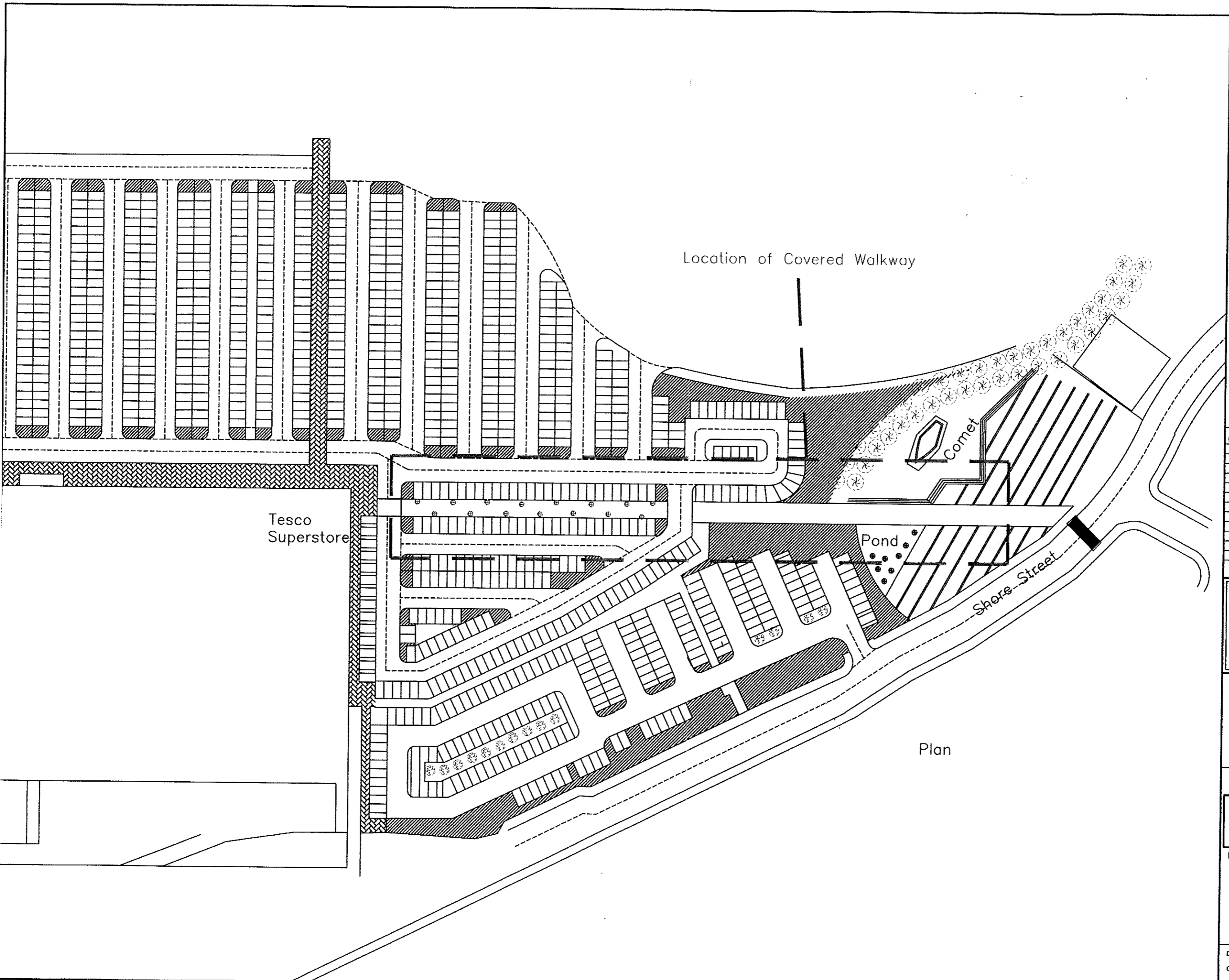
Our assessment suggests:

- The public should benefit in terms of environment and amenity (shelter) from a covered walkway.
- The supermarket operator would benefit in economic and customer servicing terms potentially to the dis-benefit of existing town centre traders.
- The scheme offers only limited value for regeneration of the town centre and potential down side impacts exist in drawing customers away from the centre.
- The scheme is feasible and could be implemented by Tesco's supermarkets without need for public funding as part of commitment to its customers and addressing local community interest.
- The proposals do not appear to offer added value for regeneration and no evidence exists that the scheme represents 'best value' for public investment.

This assessment has been undertaken to review a developing proposal that it with Inverclyde Council and may be subject to change. Our assessment would suggest that whilst benefits would exist these do not align closely with the Council's town centre regeneration objectives and that every attempt should be made to:

- Secure 100% funding from the supermarket operator.
- Secure implementation, management and maintenance by the supermarket operator.
- Public investment could deliver wider benefits by addressing schemes within the town centre boundary

Appendix 1 Proposed Covered Walkway Plans



REV	Description	Date

Inverclyde
council

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JOB

**COVERED WALKWAY,
SHORE STREET,
PORT GLASGOW**

DWG. No.	REV.

DWG. TITLE

AS EXISTING

Drawn	Checked	Date	Scale

