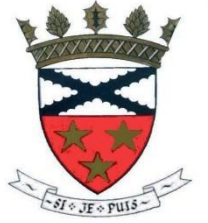


Helensburgh Waterfront

Public Meeting on Section 104 Consultation

13th October 2026



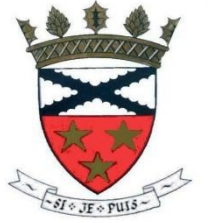


Why are we here?

To ensure the community is informed and engaged



Agenda



- Apologies
- Helensburgh Waterfront
 - A very quick history: 1838 to 2026
- Review of consultation outcome
- Common Good
- Concerns on the Council Officer Report
- Next steps
- Q&A

Waterfront Site



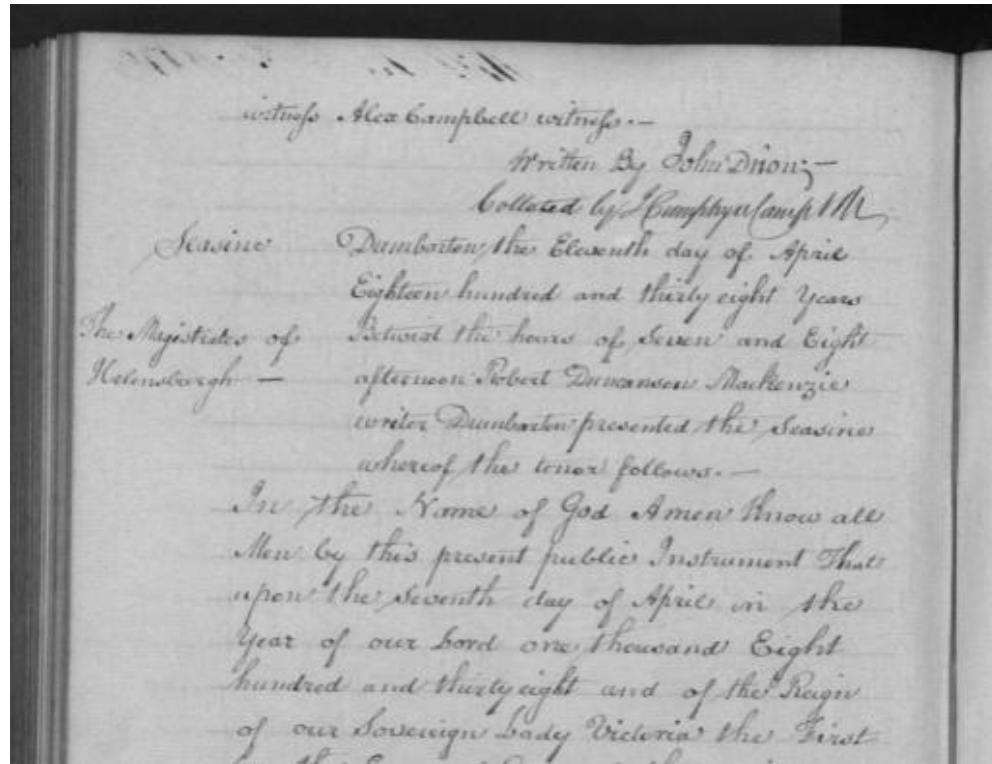
The site under consideration for disposal: 1.38 acres of Common Good land

Helensburgh Waterfront

Quick recap: 1838 to 2026

A site repeatedly protected from inappropriate development

Waterfront is Common Good: 1838 Sasine



...the said Sir James Colquhoun... disposed to and in favor of the said ...present councillors of the said Burgh of Barony of Helensburgh... **without the power of Alienation** In the first place All and whole that piece of ground part of the Lands and Barony of Milligs lying upon the south side of the turnpike road...

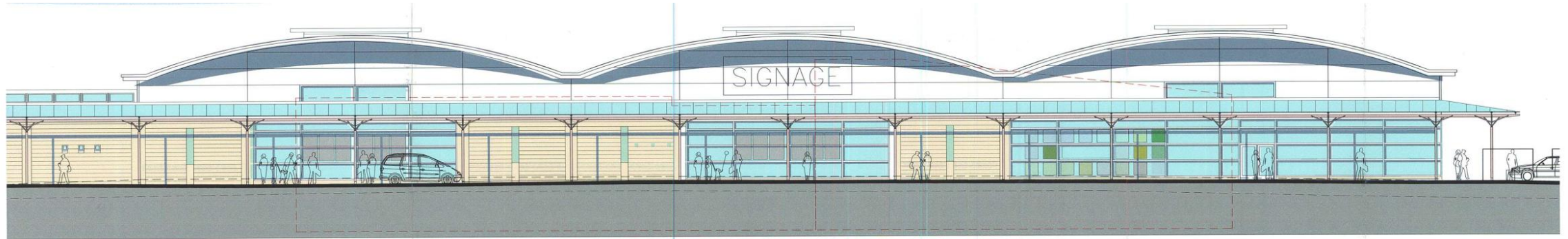
1993: Co-operative application - rejected

1993

- 2700sqm supermarket with car parking
- Infill to seaward of Tower Place
- Refused by West Dunbartonshire Council
 - “The proposal would be visually detrimental to the seafront at Helensburgh in that it would represent a development of the town centre out into the Firth of Clyde, thereby reducing the open aspect of the town from Clyde Street”
- Refused on Appeal by the Scottish Reporter due to visual impact
 - “...the impact on visual amenity and the loss of residential amenity would result in demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance”

2000: Safeway application - rejected

2000



- Demolition of the 1970s swimming pool
- 4600sqm supermarket on the pierhead
- New pool/sports hall where the Scout Hall was beside the HLCC site
- Car parking on infill outside Tower Place
- **Approved** by Argyll and Bute Council
- Refused when called-in by the Scottish Reporter due to scale
 - “I find that the scale, proportions, form, design and materials of the proposed supermarket building are not in accord with aspects of SSP95 policy”

2000: Safeway application (continued)

- The Co-operative objected to this supermarket proposal the pierhead site, saying:
 - “In short there is no requirement for a supermarket of the size proposed in Helensburgh, and even if there was, the pierhead is not a suitable site.”
 - “There is no justification for a store the size proposed as in qualitative terms the store would increase the level of large floorspace convenient retailing to the detriment of other shopping floorspace in Helensburgh and the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole.”
 - “The pierhead proposals conflict with other important policy objectives in terms of impact on tourism and realising tourism potential, loss of environmental quality, coastal quality, and effect on local amenity.”
 - “At present shoppers using the pierhead car park have to cross West Clyde Street to access the town centre. If the proposals are implemented, then shoppers would be able to park and shop on the same side of the road, thereby reducing the incentive to visit other outlets in the town centre. That disincentive would be compounded by the net reduction in town centre parking provision.”

2000

2004 “Yellow Book” report



- Commissioned by A&BC from Willie Miller Architects
- Commented on the Reporter’s rejection of the 2000 plan:

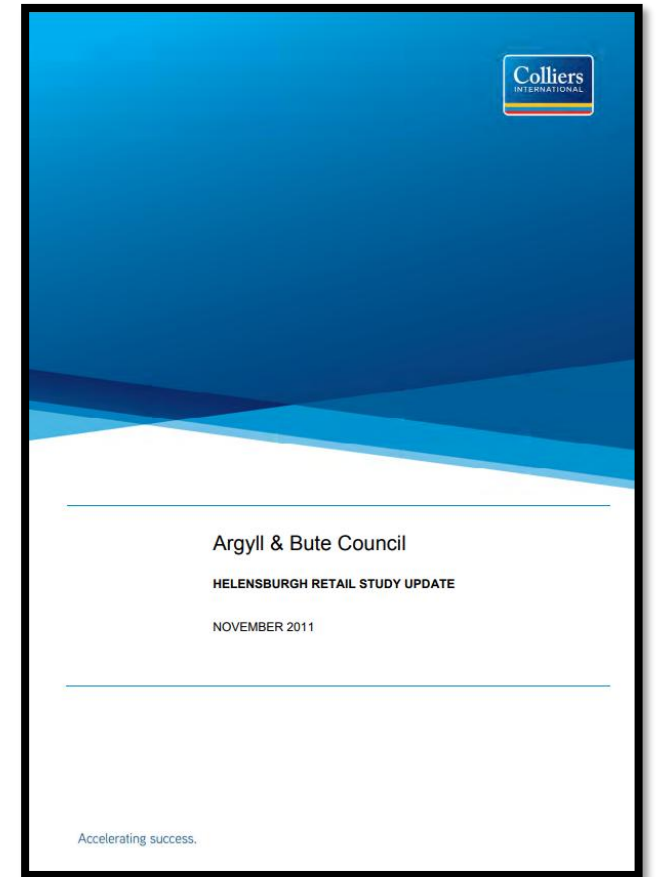
2004

*“Against this backdrop it is perhaps not surprising that the development of a **superstore** on this site appeared to some an attractive option. In fact, there could be no more eloquent testimony to the collapse of confidence and poverty of aspirations. The rejection of these proposals by a Scottish Executive Reporter should be seen as a **turning point** in the fortunes of the town centre. It saved Helensburgh from a blow from which it would have been hard to recover, and created an opportunity to recover a distinctive **sense of place**.”*

2007: Colliers retail study

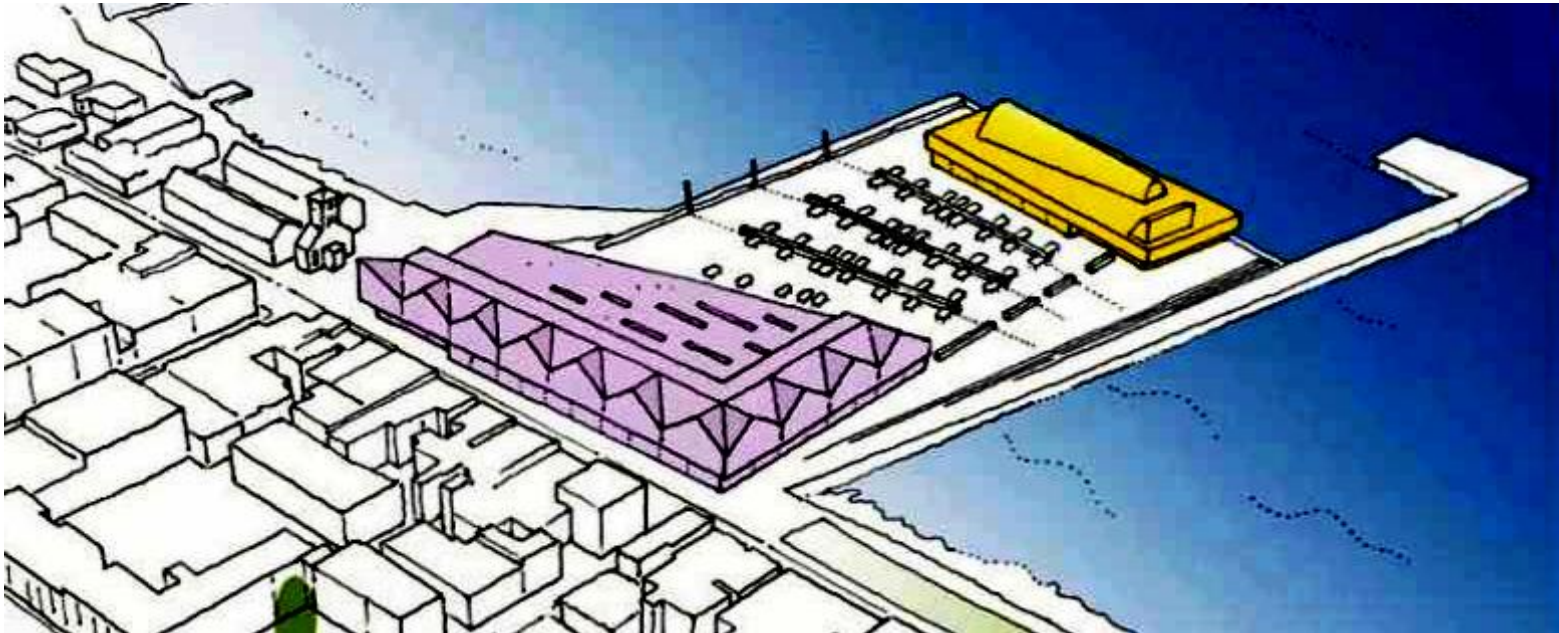
- A&BC commissioned Colliers to review Helensburgh retail provision
- Telephone survey undertaken in May 2007
 - Long before:
 - The dominance of internet shopping
 - Co-ops in Cardross and Rosneath
 - Asda, B&M, Halfords and Lidl in Dumbarton
 - Aldi in Alexandria
 - Tesco, Next and M&S in Port Glasgow
 - One question asked whether people shopped at Somerfields in Dumbarton

2007



2011: Site attracts interest; Draft masterplan

- Sainsburys, Asda and Waitrose expressed interest in the pierhead
- A&BC consulted widely on a draft masterplan with a supermarket:



2011

- 1200 people responded and **55% rejected** this masterplan

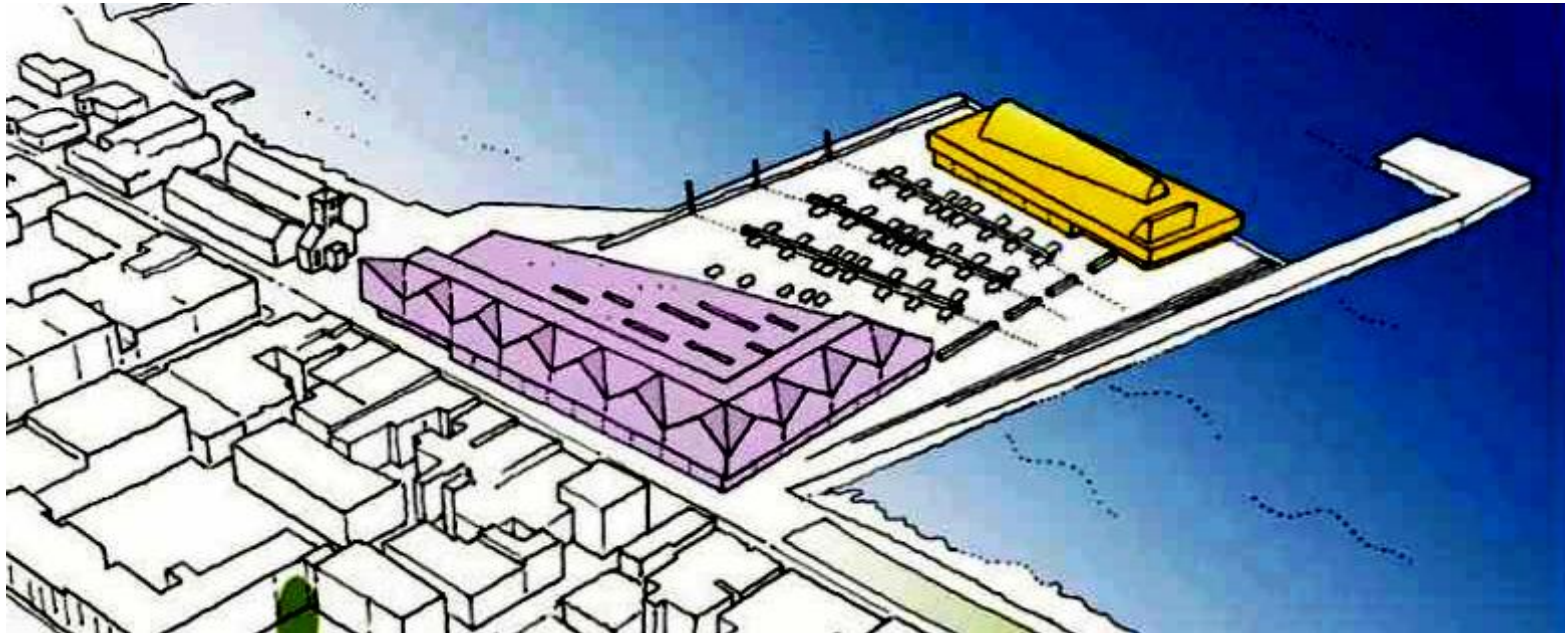
2012: Revised masterplan; Waitrose approved

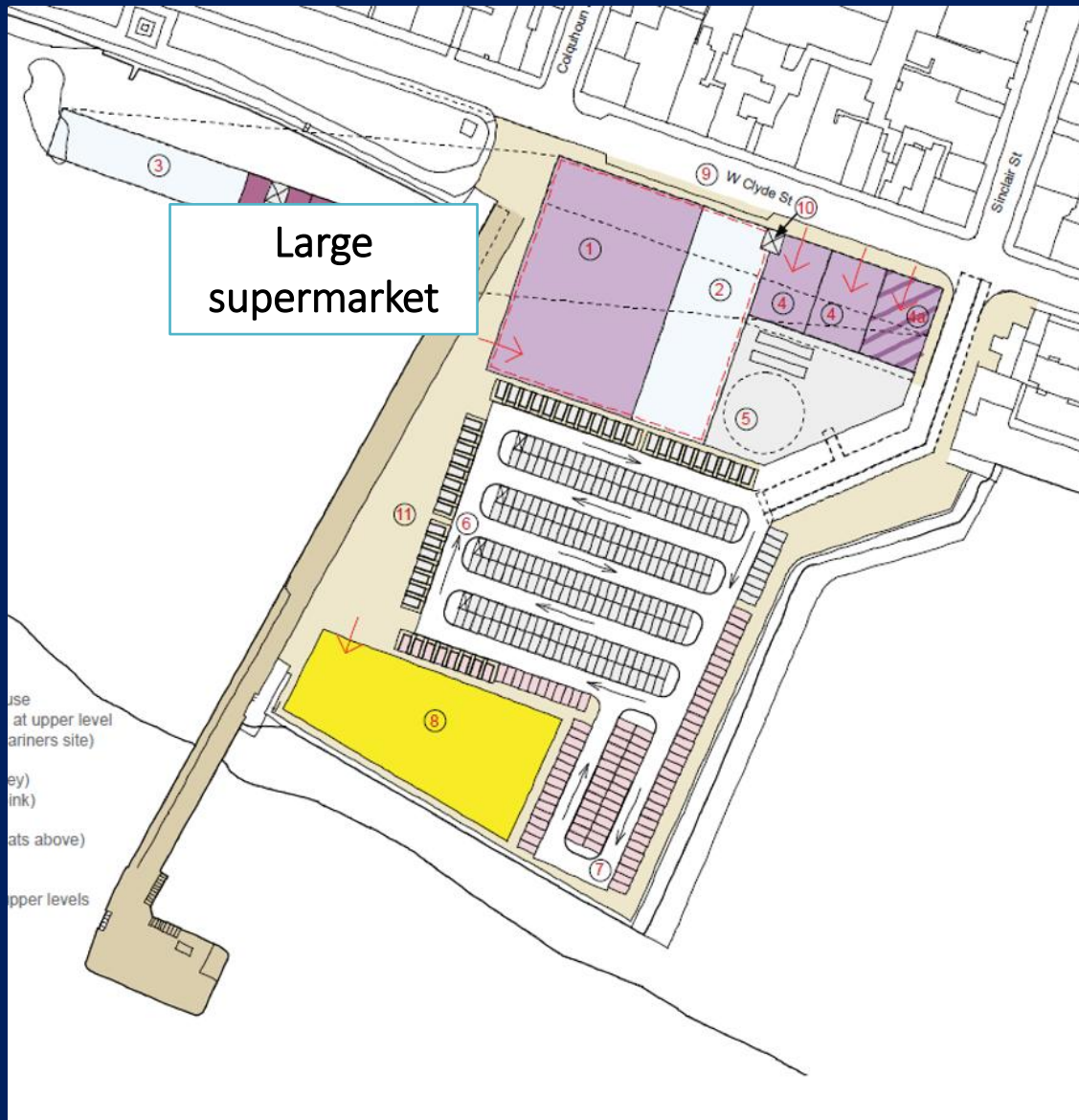
- A&BC revised their masterplan to remove the supermarket
 - *“with regard to the Pierhead this substantially reduced the scale and massing of the proposed retail units with the proposal for a larger scale supermarket being deleted from the Master Plan”*
 - 4 medium-size retail units instead
 - The largest being 1,140sqm
- Before this was consulted on, Waitrose at Colgrain was approved
 - A&BC recommended approval only because the pierhead was **not** an acceptable site
 - “the Pierhead site [can be] discounted as a suitable site for a retail food store of the size proposed”

2012 Masterplan approved

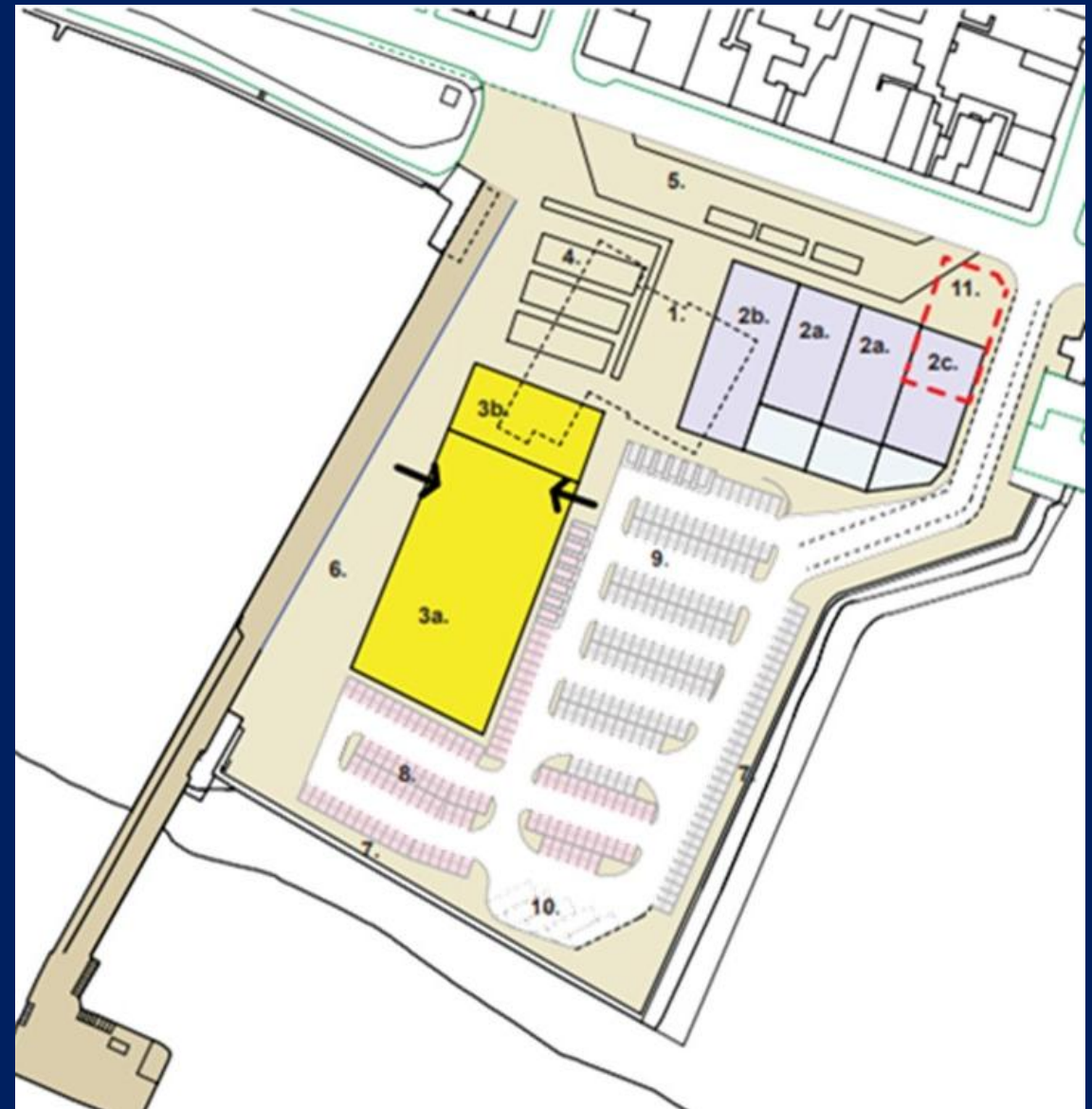
- The new Masterplan was put out for consultation in September 2012
- Just 29 responses were received over 4 weeks
 - **“the general sentiment of submitted forms has been positive”**
 - **“That said, a number of people remain against the idea of any new retail units on the Pierhead”**
 - No quantification of responses
- HCC “expressed concern that the consultation was insufficient to adequately understand local people’s views”

Recall the 2011 draft masterplan with a supermarket:





2011 Draft (rejected) Masterplan



2012 Approved Masterplan

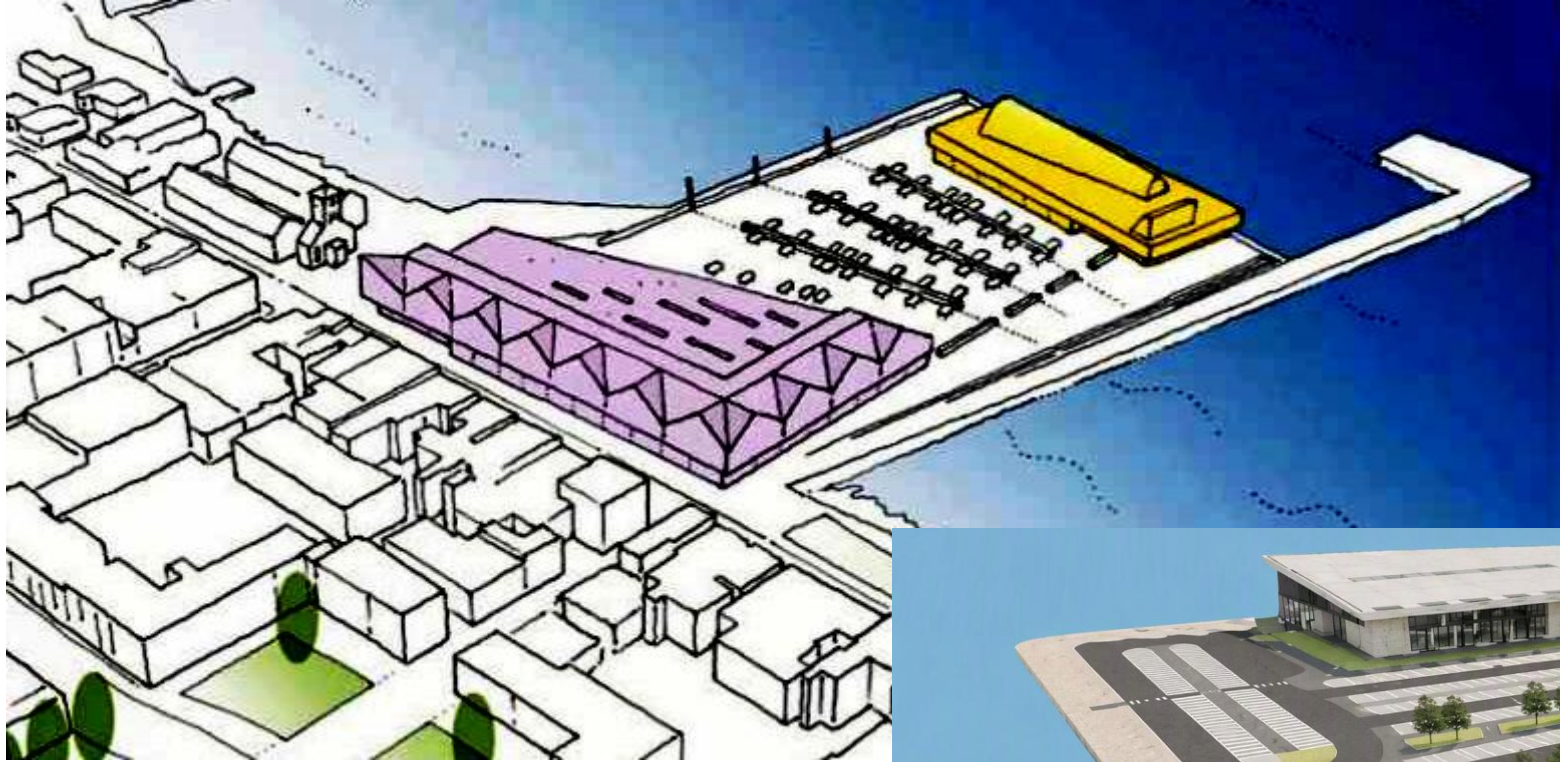
2017-2022: Leisure Centre planning & build



2017-2022

2023-4: Waterfront site bid process

- 2023
 - May: A&BC requested Expressions of Interest
 - June: Public consultation over 1 week – 83 people consulted
 - September: A&BC shortlisted 7 bids
 - December: HCC, and others, provided bids
 - HCC community-centric bid – skatepark, leisure space & bouldering/water play area
- 2024
 - January: Colliers retail study “updated” but using 2007 data
 - March: 2 bids shortlisted
 - August: P&R Committee authorizes officers to arrange Heads of Terms with Forrest Developments Ltd for a supermarket development
 - October: HCC raises Judicial Review about the process



A&BC 2024 Marketing

Rejected 2011 Masterplan



2025-6: Waterfront site bid process

- 2025
 - November: Lord Ericht's judgement dismisses HCC petition, treating it as a commercial transaction. Explicitly:
 - "It is not a situation where the exercise of the right to dispose of the land would deprive persons of an existing right or benefit, such as the disposal of land held for an educational purpose (*Barnet London Borough Council*), or **the disposal of common good land** (*Grahame v (Magistrates of Kirkcaldy* [1882] 9 R (HL) 91). It is a commercial transaction with which the council as seller is concerned in essentially the same way as a commercial body who is the seller of land"
- 2026
 - June: P&R Committee is advised that the land **is Common Good**
 - 6-week Section 104 consultation; 3,430 responses
 - **15th October:** P&R Committee to consider Officer Report recommendation to dispose of the Common Good land

Why does this history matter?

- The site has been a target for supermarket acquisition for years
 - Co-operative, Sainsbury, Waitrose/Asda/Sainsburys, Co-operative
- The Approved Masterplan does not include a supermarket on this site
- The 2024 Helensburgh Retail Study still relies on 2007 survey data
- The community has repeatedly repelled these attempts due to:
 - The visual impact
 - The commercial impact on our existing retailers
 - It is Common Good land
 - It should be community land for the benefit of the community