

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 26 AUGUST 2003

PROPOSED MONUMENT AT THE GALSTON ROUNDABOUT

Report by the Director of Development Services

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To seek the Committee's views on the proposal by the Rotary Club of Loudoun for a monument on the roundabout adjacent to Galston at the intersection of the A719 and A71. The report has been updated to incorporate further comments on the issue from the Rotary Club of Loudoun and the Irvine Valley Joint community Councils Group.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Rotary Club of Loudoun put forward a proposal two years ago for a monument on the roundabout adjacent to Galston at the intersection of the A719 and A71. The monument was to take the form of a small tower representing the historic castles of the Irvine Valley. It would mark the gateway to the Irvine Valley and draw the attention of visitors that they were entering a historic area. The Rotary Club believe that the monument is "a must to kickstart" the regeneration of the area by bringing back tourism and business.
- 2.2** The monument is to be built of stone requiring relatively little maintenance. They have subsequently proposed also that it would be surrounded by thorny shrubs forming a deterrent to anyone trying to access the monument. They have indicated that they would take full responsibility for supervision of construction and subsequent maintenance and take out full insurance cover including public liability.
- 2.3** It was the subject of a planning application which was assessed in relation to standard guidelines relating to road safety. It was concluded that it would not interfere with any sightlines or itself represent a danger to road users. There were no objections or other representations to the planning application at the time and it was approved under officer delegation.
- 2.4** The Rotary Club subsequently applied for financial assistance from East Ayrshire Council through the Irvine Valley Local Committee. By this time concern had emerged about the potential for the monument to distract young people walking to and from Loudoun Academy with the potential that they could place themselves at risk by attempting to cross the busy main roads running around the roundabout. The grant was refused by the Local

Committee. It is understood, however, that the Rotary Club has raised sufficient funds from alternative sources.

- 2.5** In addition to requiring planning permission the Rotary Club will also require the permission of the Council as the Roads Authority and as the owners of the land on which the monument is to be located. This matter was brought to the Development Services Committee for consideration on 5 June 2001. It also reported to the Committee that some members of the School Board of Loudoun Academy shared the general concerns about the potential hazard which the proposed monument could form as a distraction to young people. The location is particularly sensitive in this respect since it is directly in the pedestrian path from Loudoun Academy to the near Co-op, bus stops on the A71 and the town of Galston. The Committee agreed, at the suggestion of both the School Board and the Rotary Club, to re-visit the issue once the improved safety measures planned at the time for the A719 and the roundabout itself had been completed and had been assessed.

3 IMPROVED SAFETY MEASURES

- 3.1** The safety measures at Loudoun Academy include a pelican crossing on the A71 adjacent to the Co-op, a new footpath round the north-east section of the roundabout with a continuous pedestrian barrier from the pelican crossing to the school. Traffic calming in the form of raised platforms has been introduced onto the A71 and a 30mph zone has been introduced stretching to the north of the Academy on the A719 and to the east of the Co-op on the A71.
- 3.2** These measures have been successful in achieving their objectives. The new footpath is heavily used and as a result the inappropriate use of the verge on the north-east corner of the roundabout and spill-over of pedestrians onto the carriageways has been eliminated. Traffic speeds on the A719 have been greatly reduced from an average of 50mph to 30mph. A small number of young people continue to walk down the verge and cross the A71 to the west of the roundabout instead of using the pedestrian overbridge. There has been one reported accident since the road safety measures were introduced. This accident occurred at the pelican crossing and did not relate to pedestrians straying onto the carriageway at inappropriate locations.

4 REVIEW OF PROPOSED MONUMENT

- 4.1** The Rotary Club have continued to promote its proposal for the monument as a feature at the entrance to the Loudoun Valley. The new road safety measures, in particular the fence on the north-east corner of the roundabout, make it less attractive for young people to take the shortcut across the roundabout itself. But they do not represent a complete physical barrier, and the potential of the monument as a distraction remains.
- 4.2** When asked to consider alternative locations in 2001 the Rotary Club declined. They have, however, made more recent enquiries about Council

land holdings and may be willing to visit the possibility of finding a different location on the verges surrounding the roundabout.

- 4.3** In support of its proposal in a letter of 15 July 2003 the Rotary Club have pointed out that no road safety concerns were raised prior to the grant of planning consent, that the monument would be maintained by them with a possible saving of cost to the Council for maintaining the roundabout, that design features in the centre of roundabouts are commonplace, and that the monument would form a gateway feature bringing considerable benefit to the local community in terms of tourism and leisure.
- 4.4** The Irvine Valley Joint Community Councils Group have submitted an observation that they consider that the safety of school pupils has been addressed and that they do not believe that many of them will be tempted to cross the road to the centre of the roundabout.
- 4.5** Galston community Council have submitted a response expressing total support for the proposed monument. They consider that the monument would enhance interest in Galston and the rest of the Irvine Valley to both residents and visitors. They consider that given the facilities now in place to improve road safety it would be unreasonable to refuse projects to enhance the areas on the basis of how young people might react.
- 4.6** Whilst the school board agrees in principle with the proposal to construct a 'gateway feature to the valley' and support the Rotary Club's project they continue to hold the opinion that if there is any doubt on the safety of the school children they could not agree with the placement of the monument on the roundabout. Their concern is that children will attempt to climb the monument or at least venture onto the roundabout for closer inspection. They also wish to make it clear to all parties that they do not have the power to make the decision on the project, that they have no risk assessment experience and that their comments are made in their opinion only, the decision being one for the Council to take.
- 4.7** As landowner and Roads Authority, the Council is under no obligation to permit the monument to be erected. It is not equivalent to public utility installations which may be located within a public road under specific statutory provisions. It would, further, be reasonable for the Council to apply a more exacting standard in relation to a perceived road safety risk than might be sustainable in considering a planning application. Given that the proposed monument is directly within the main pedestrian path from Loudoun Academy to Galston, and given the continued concern locally that the monument could attract young people to put themselves at risk crossing over the central reservation the Committee may wish to consider refusing to permit the monument to be constructed within the central area of the roundabout. The Galston Community Council and the Irvine Valley Joint Community Councils Group have, however, indicated that they do not consider this to be a major concern.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** There are no financial implications arising from the recommendation of this report.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** In order to construct the proposed monument on the roundabout the Rotary Club require the permission of the Council as Roads Authority and site owners. If the Council were to agree to permit the Rotary Club to proceed they would be required to enter into a lease with the Council incorporating undertakings in relation to the management of site works, maintenance and public liability insurance.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1** It is recommended that the Committee reach a conclusion on whether the Rotary Club of Loudoun should be permitted to construct the monument proposed on the roundabout central reservation at the intersection of the A719 and the A71 on land owned by the Council or falling within the public road.

Stephen Chorley
Director of Development Services

11 August 2003
SC/JR

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Assessment of road safety improvements at Loudoun Academy**

For further information on the content of the report, contact Stephen Chorley, Director of Development Services, on 01563 576011

Implementation Officer: Stephen Chorley