

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL31 October 2018Report by Director of EnvironmentGLASGOW CITY REGION CITY DEAL UPDATE**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Council in relation to progress with the Glasgow City Region City Deal programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Council notes:
- (a) the contents of this report and the progress made on the development and implementation of East Renfrewshire's M77 Strategic Corridor City Deal programme; and
 - (b) that the Director of Environment will submit regular progress reports to the Council in the future.

BACKGROUND

3. The City Deal initiative is a long term programme and a clear example of long-term planning by the Council.

4. An M77 Strategic Corridor masterplan prepared by Jones Lang La Salle in 2011 provided the strategic justification for the direction of future economic infrastructure investment in East Renfrewshire. This was a key document that informed the Local Development Plan which was adopted in 2015.

5. In August 2014, the Council agreed East Renfrewshire's participation in the Glasgow City Region City Deal arrangement and delegated to the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Chief Executive, to conclude negotiations.

6. In December 2014, the Council approved the creation of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Cabinet as a Joint Committee and agreed the delegated functions of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Cabinet.

7. The £1.13 billion infrastructure fund across the Glasgow City Region is aimed at enabling a programme of works that will greatly add to the value of the local regional economy over the next 20 years. East Renfrewshire will benefit from a £44m investment package comprising £38 million investment from the Scottish and UK Governments and co-funded by the Council with a £6 million capital contribution.

8. The City Deal M77 Strategic corridor programme will focus on delivery of the key elements that will accord with the long term ambitions of the Council to stimulate sustainable economic growth.

9. This report updates the Council in relation to the work which has taken place to date across the City Deal programme of work for projects within East Renfrewshire.

REPORT

10. Within the £1.13bn programme of infrastructure projects, East Renfrewshire's projects total £44m. The City Deal investment in East Renfrewshire is focused on the delivery of new and enhanced transport, leisure and business infrastructure. The programme will support and accelerate investment and development activity within a number of strategic locations within the M77 corridor.

11. The proposed programme will physically connect the two communities of Newton Mearns and Barrhead, while opening up commercial opportunities within the employment, leisure, retail and education/training sectors. The investment will help generate net additional GVA and employment. The current status of the projects within the programme are described below.

Crossmill Industrial Units

12. This project was the first City Deal Infrastructure project completed across the wider City Region. It was designed to meet unmet demand for industrial units and to permit local businesses to grow. The units were completed in 2016. Ten commercial units have been constructed, with seven units let, with the remaining three under offer.

Former Nestle Site, Glasgow Road, Barrhead

13. This was a jointly funded City Deal/ ERC/ Regeneration Capital Grant Fund project. The Nestle site groundworks are complete and a report was presented to Cabinet on 26 January 2017 regarding the disposal and subsequent development of the former Nestle site by London and Scottish for a mixed use retail/commercial development. A planning application has been submitted and is under consideration. It is expected that this project will boost economic growth and provide substantial local job opportunities.

East Renfrewshire Business Boost - Greenlaw Business Centre

14. The Greenlaw Business Centre is now under construction and is a more extensive centre with a greater economic impact than initially envisaged in the City Deal Outline Business Case. This was developed as a result of studies indicating that there was a demand for office space as a result of a number of local start up business operating from residential addresses. Taking account of external expert market advice the development at Greenlaw will comprise 21,000sq.ft. gross including small offices of differing sizes to meet differing demands for office space. The building will be completed by January 2019. Interest in taking space in the new business centre has already been received. This project will benefit start-up businesses and boost local economic activity.

15. It is intended that the running of the business centre will be undertaken by an operator on a full repairing and insuring head lease for probably a 15 year term. A property agent, Savills, has been appointed to market this opportunity to potential operators.

East Renfrewshire Business Boost - Foundry Links

16. The Foundry Links project has provided enhanced facilities for employability and business development services. This project is now completed. This has provided private interview spaces for employability and business start-up clients. This improved environment will lead to better outcomes for clients and businesses.

17. The current total budget for both of these Business Boost projects is £5.6m. The Greenlaw Business Centre project will be delivered in line with expected timescales (January 2019).

Aurs Road Realignment

18. For many years the absence of a direct bus route between Barrhead and Newton Mearns has been identified as an impediment to economic growth and restricts access to employment opportunities. Proposed improvements to the existing Aurs Road include the replacement of the weak bridge, straightening of the sharp bends on Aurs Road and the provision of access into the proposed visitor centre to serve the country park. The entire stretch of the road will also be resurfaced. This upgrade will improve connectivity between the two communities, allowing the potential for public transport links and providing access to the country park. Servitudes/acquisition of land from private interests and Scottish Water to allow the work to proceed was approved by Cabinet in May and June 2018 respectively and legal contracts are now being concluded.

19. Site investigations have now been completed and a tender for the design of the road was issued in mid-September 2018 with an expected appointment in November 2018. Following the completion of the detailed design, work on site is expected to begin in October 2019 with completion and opening in September 2020. The total budget for the project currently including a proposed Boardwalk is £9.8m.

20. This project will provide the access and land required for the proposed Visitor Centre serving Dams to Darnley Country Park (see paras 26 and 27) increasing leisure opportunities to both East Renfrewshire residents and those from further afield.

21. This project is behind the original target date for completion which was the end of 2018. There are a number of reasons for this including, for example, delays in reaching agreement with Scottish Water over the Licence to Occupy for the site investigations on the Dam, the signing of the Barrhead South collaboration agreement and the complex nature of the works.

Levern Valley Link Road

22. The second sub project of the Levern Valley Access project as currently envisaged is the establishment of a new road, the "Link road" between Newton Mearns and the Levern Valley. This link road would provide a more direct connection from the M77 to Barrhead. At present, travelling the M77 to Barrhead means exiting the motorway and undertaking a convoluted urban route through Darnley or through the suburbs of Newton Mearns. The new road may also open up development and investment opportunities along the route. Currently the area where the road is proposed is accessed via small single track country lanes and sits within the rural areas of Newton Mearns. This road will connect Barrhead South to the main travel network.

23. However, there is a potential longer term opportunity that exists to explore a wider City region connected route, extending beyond the boundaries of East Renfrewshire and connecting into the A737/Glasgow Airport within Renfrewshire. The current funding allocation does not presently allow for this more strategic opportunity to be constructed but it is considered that options should be explored to develop the policy and evidence base to allow the council to be prepared should additional funding become available.

24. Peter Brett Associates (PBA) have now been appointed to undertake a feasibility study on route options to identify the optimal use of the available budget and to develop an Outline Business Case. The initial focus of PBA's work will be to look at the economic case for a phase 1 route, particularly the commercial opportunities presented at Junction 5 and the potential wider benefits of a more strategic route. This analysis is ongoing.

25. There is a budget of £10.3m currently available for this project. The original OBC suggested a target completion date of mid-2019. This will not be achievable and best estimates at the moment are site start in 2021.

Visitor Centre / Wake Park – Country Park

26. The need for a visitor centre within the Dams to Darnley Country Park was articulated within a wider study of the M77 Strategic Corridor. This looked at a variety of improvement schemes one of which was the provision of a leisure destination at the Dams to Darnley Country Park and the opening up of this area to the wider East Renfrewshire population as well as the whole Clyde Valley region. An options appraisal concluded that the creation of a Visitor Centre was a preferred option. The building will deliver much needed visitor facilities and utilities within the Country Park which will improve the park for local residents and increase visitor numbers. The centre will also act as a catalyst to attract more investment and improvement into the area.

27. The Visitor Centre will provide a learning experience for visitors as well as required toilet and café facilities together with possible training/meeting facilities for the Park Rangers. The new facility will likely be run and managed by an independent operator. Initial estimates of increased visitors predict that with the inclusion of Wakepark activities within the Park, visitors to the Park could increase from 90,000 per annum to around 300,000 per annum with consequent increase in visitor spend and day trips.

28. The Wake Park (a facility that allows users to water ski without the need for a motorboat - the skiers rope and handle are pulled across the water by an electrically driven cable) location was originally proposed to sit on the north-west bank of the reservoir but with a drop in water level undertaken by Scottish Water, with no guarantee of a final level, the original location became impractical and at risk of water levels being too low to operate successfully. On that basis the decision has been taken to move the wake park to co-locate with the visitor centre and the design brief for the design team will reflect this. The project budget is £4.8m.

29. Sustrans funding towards the design of a pedestrian/cyclist boardwalk on the banks of Balgraystone Dam has also been secured and the design of the boardwalk will be undertaken as a component part of the design of Aurs Road realignment. This will provide a circular route around the dam and will be able to be utilised for sporting events such as triathlons. The construction of the boardwalk remains under discussion with Scottish Water and will require their formal agreement to a servitude to allow this to progress.

30. The construction and design of the visitor centre relies upon the completion of the northern section of Aurs Road and the replacement of the weak bridge at the southern section. The programme for the visitor centre has therefore been changed to reflect the construction programme for Aurs Road which is due for completion in September 2020. The Visitor centre is likely to open around one year later possibly in September 2021.

Balgraystone Road

31. The improvement of Balgraystone Road in Barrhead (opposite St Luke's High School) will provide a number of key benefits – it will provide access to the proposed Rail Station and Bus Interchange on the Glasgow to Neilston line, improve access to the Country Park and open up residential development opportunities in Barrhead South, including an area for affordable housing. The road at Balgraystone is currently a single track road of poor quality that does not provide adequate access to the land beyond it.

32. The improvement of Balgraystone Road was initially substantially delayed due to the Scottish Water (SW) Amlaird pipeline work. This work was within the area of the site where a bus turning circle and car park were proposed. The project is now back on track and is progressing at pace.

33. The construction tender for the project will be issued in November 2018 with a site start in June 2019. Construction dates are constrained by the need for work within the grounds of St Luke's High School during school holidays and the need to avoid school examination periods. The project will include the provision of utilities to serve the proposed affordable housing site in Balgraystone West. Project budget is currently estimated at £2.2m.

34. Balgraystone Road will provide access to the affordable housing site where 39 units will be constructed. Housing construction is programmed to commence on site in October 2019 and will provide welcome family homes in an attractive location.

Barrhead South Train Station

35. The proposed new rail station is on the Glasgow-Neilston line at Barrhead South and will be serviced by the realignment and upgrade of Balgraystone Road.

36. The case for a new station has been the subject of a series of appraisals, feasibility and preliminary technical studies over a number of years. A new station would offer enhanced commuter links into Glasgow City Centre, allowing local residents the opportunity to take up employment there and travel to and from work in a shorter time frame (as opposed to driving or taking a bus). The station also offers better commuter links for visitors to the Dams to Darnley Country Park and the new Visitor Centre and Wake Park. With a station on the doorstep of these facilities this allows easy access for visitors from Glasgow and as far as Stirling (a recent Jones Lang LaSalle survey found that people would travel from Stirling to an attractive active destination).

37. Considerable work has been undertaken by the team to move this project forward, particularly in preparing and submitting a revised Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG), working with Transport Scotland, SPT and Network Rail. Approval of the STAG is required prior to moving into the Governance for Rail Investment Projects (GRIP) stages.

38. Several revisions to incorporate further evidence of stakeholder engagement, patronage forecasting and modelling of timetable/journey time impacts, requested by Transport Scotland, have been completed.

39. The Council, in agreement with Transport Scotland, have now instructed a further consultation exercise to be undertaken and have appointed Aecom to undertake this work and to feed the outcome into a refresh of the STAG. This is expected to be submitted by December 2018. The process for approval thereafter lies with Transport Scotland and a decision is expected by April 2019 which should allow progress towards GRIP (which is the next stage of the approval process). Current estimates are for a construction start in 2021 with completion by the end of that year. Total project budget is £10.3m.

40. To summarise it is felt that there are clear economic and social benefits arising from the development of the station. It opens up employment opportunities, particularly from residents in Barrhead; it reduces dependency on private cars; it opens up leisure access to the Country Park from within and outwith the Council boundary; and it facilitates the opening up and development of residential opportunities at Barrhead South.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

41. Costs associated with the feasibility and construction work will be met from existing Capital Plan allocations. As Members are aware the East Renfrewshire City Deal programme is supported by £38 million funding from the Scottish and UK Governments.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

42. An appropriate level of consultation with both internal and external stakeholders will be undertaken on an ongoing basis.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

43. There are no new staffing, IT or equalities implications at this time.

CONCLUSION

44. The report outlines the challenging nature of these aspirational projects and highlights the ongoing practicalities of developing and implementing these projects.

45. Further regular progress reports will be submitted to the Council in due course.

RECOMMENDATION

45. It is recommended that the Council notes

- (a) the contents of this report and the progress made on the development and implementation of East Renfrewshire's M77 Strategic Corridor City Deal programme; and
- (b) that the Director of Environment will submit regular progress reports to the Council in the future.

Director of Environment

Further information can be obtained from: Andrew Cahill Director of Environment or Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services) on 0141 577 3186 or Phil.Daws@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

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