

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET15 August 2024Report by Director of EnvironmentEAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL CITY DEAL PROGRAMME UPDATE**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the progress of East Renfrewshire Council's Glasgow City Region City Deal funded M77 Strategic Corridor Programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Cabinet is asked to:
- a) note the progress of the remaining three City Deal projects;
 - b) agree to delegate authority to the Director of Environment for the submission of two Business Cases to Glasgow City Region Programme Management Office for approval and release of the next phase of project funds;
 - i. Full Business Case for the new Balgray Rail Station in Barrhead South to be submitted to Glasgow City Region Chief Executives' Group;
 - ii. Outline Business Case for new visitor facilities in Dams to Darnley Country Park to be submitted to Glasgow City Region Cabinet; and
 - c) note that Cabinet will receive further updates on progress.

BACKGROUND

3. The purpose of the £1.13 billion City Deal infrastructure fund across the Glasgow City region is to enable a programme of works that add to the value of the local regional economy over a number of years. East Renfrewshire is benefiting from a £44 million City Deal investment package comprising £38 million from the Scottish and UK Governments and co-funded by the Council's £6 million capital contribution. The programme of projects is as follows:

- Aurs Road Improvements
- New Rail Station at Barrhead South
- Country Park Visitor Facilities
- Lavern Works – land remediation (Completed)
- Greenlaw Business Centre: The Greenlaw Works (Completed)
- Balgraystone Rd improvements (Completed).

4. Details of the completed projects can be found in Appendix 1.

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

Aurs Rd Improvements

5. The Glasgow City Region Chief Executives' Group approved the Aurs Road Realignment Full Business Case in October 2023. Aurs Roads has been closed since January 2024 when the site works for this project commenced. Once completed, the works will:

- improve local connections between Newton Mearns and Barrhead
- enable visitor facilities at the Country Park
- upgrade and realign 2km of Aurs Road from the junction of Springfield Road in Barrhead to Stewarton Road in Newton Mearns
- deliver the installation of a promenade and active travel route.

6. The Aurs Road contract is making progress. The original anticipated re-opening date was the end of December. In the course of the ongoing works, some issues have been encountered with ground conditions. The identification of areas with challenging ground conditions is not unusual on major construction projects. The contractors have sought to mitigate delays on site, as far as possible, by continuing to work around the impacted areas.

7. The realignment of the road will leave an area of land which can then be developed to provide visitor facilities within the Dams to Darnley Country Park. Further information on this proposal can be found in paragraph 16.

8. The project is physically taking shape on site, allowing the transformative impact of the project to be visually apparent. The monthly recording of drone footage will continue until completion. The following milestones have been successfully achieved:

- the deep cut for the culvert is complete and the remainder of the culvert is under construction;
- the cut into the dam face for the promenade construction is nearing completion and the promenade structure is being constructed on site;
- excavation works to form the new straightened sections of road are substantially complete;
- the old bridge has been removed and the new road bridge is under construction;
- excavation of the site for visitor facilities is complete;
- the car park is formed with drainage in position with the sub base under construction;
- Scottish Power Energy Network's diversions are complete.

9. The remains of a water works found while excavating the Active Travel Route have been subject to an archaeological survey by Guard Archaeology. The find comprises the remains of a water filtration tank, a silt trap and a well dating from the 1870s. The Guard report was submitted to the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) who have since confirmed the structures are of fairly recent construction, their function is known and understood, and has already been recorded. The WoSAS response concludes the structures do not meet the usual criteria to require preservation in situ at all costs. As the structures are not regarded to be of critical importance and they have a significant negative impact on the planned active travel route, they will not be retained. Contractor John Graham Construction Ltd is preparing a proposal to remove the stone and lay it aside (on an area to be agreed), to allow us to explore the potential for its reuse, including within the country park area.

10. There have been delays in relation to movement of existing utility provisions, areas where ground conditions are not as anticipated and the need to remove the water works

structures. The current assumption is that these delays will extend the length of the construction period and delay the opening of the new road.

11. The City Deal team recognises the importance of this project and the disruption experienced by local residents and commuters. The City Deal team is working alongside the appointed project managers and contractors to understand the impact that these factors will have on the programme. Some further work is required to assess impacts before a revised timetable can be put into place. Frequent meetings take place between all members of the wider project team, to keep these matters in sharp focus and ensure that the road is re-opened as soon as possible.

New Railway Station at Barrhead South

12. The completed City Deal funded improvements to Balgraystone Road provide access to the new rail station with active travel option, a bus turning circle and potential for a bus stop. The proposed rail station at Barrhead South, to be named Balgray Station, will be located on the existing Glasgow to Neilston line at Barrhead South. Balgray station will:

- enhance the sustainable travel options for existing and new residents;
- be integrated with active travel provision in Barrhead South;
- improve access to jobs, services and communities;
- support increased visitor numbers to the Dams to Darnley Country Park from both East Renfrewshire and the wider City Region; and
- promote increased health and wellbeing associated with the enhanced parks and green spaces offering within the area.

13. In [March 2023](#), ERC Cabinet granted delegated authority to the Director of Environment to submit the Outline Business Case (OBC) to Glasgow City Region Cabinet for approval. Approval was granted and the subsequent tranche of funding was released in [August 2023](#). This led to site investigations, detailed design and costing to inform the Stage 2 Detailed Strategic Transport Appraisal (STAG2) as well as the preparation of the Full Business Case. An artist's impression of the proposed Rail Station is attached (Appendix 2).

14. On 7th August 2024, Transport Scotland will present the findings of the STAG2 to its Investment Decision Making Board (IDM) for formal endorsement. The IDM is a forum where Transport Scotland's directors meet to agree investment decisions, providing the Chief Executive Officer with assurances on value for money. A previous meeting was delayed as a result of the Pre-Election Period and had been expected to be held in June 2024.

15. It is intended that the Director of Environment will submit the Balgray Station Full Business Case (FBC) to the Glasgow City Region's Chief Executives Group for approval, on 25 July 2024, subject to the delegated authority sought by this report. It is anticipated that this will be approved at the next meeting of the Group on 5 September 2024, allowing the release of the next tranche of funding (on the assumption that TS IDM endorses the proposal on 7 August). The construction of the project has previously been tendered and awarded to Network Rail's contractor Story and the outline design phase of the project is complete. Construction is estimated to start in early 2025 with approximately a 12-month build. The first trains are expected to stop at the new station from Spring 2026. The rail timetable traditionally changes twice per annum for passengers in December and May and it is anticipated that services will commence from May 2026.

Country Park Visitor Facilities

16. The purpose of this project is to establish Dams to Darnley Country Park as a destination by creating the essential facilities that will encourage increased visitor numbers and opportunities for future investment. In the past there have been large-scale proposals for visitor attractions in the area, however, these relied on significant private and public sector investment which is no longer available. Since the early proposals, construction costs have increased significantly and the availability of revenue within the Council for servicing and maintaining a facility has reduced. The budget for this first phase of works is an estimated £2.8m. There is a wider long-term aspiration to increase the level of facilities on offer and future funding will be sought, when suitable opportunities arise.

17. Proposals currently include public toilets and showers, an area suitable for vehicles serving refreshments and associated water and electricity connections, a covered space for events led by the rangers, an outdoor classroom space and vehicle parking. There will also be a small area of staff accommodation for the rangers. Possible future activities could also include a play area and non-motorised water sports such as paddle boarding. Ultimately, the project will enhance the park and green spaces offering within the area, providing increased health and wellbeing benefits. It is anticipated the visitor facilities will stimulate and attract complementary commercial and leisure opportunities to the park.

18. This will be the final project in the Council's City Deal funded programme. Some initial feasibility and site investigations have been undertaken and will inform the final design. The detailed design stage of this project is underway.

19. It is intended that the Director of Environment will submit the Dams to Darnley Country Park Visitor Facilities Outline Business Case for approval on 13 September 2024, subject to Cabinet's agreement to the delegation of responsibility. This will lead to the release of the next tranche of funding by Glasgow City Region Cabinet on 5 November 2024. The funding will be used for the detailed design and costing of the facilities and the preparation of the Full Business Case.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

19. No additional funding is requested.

CONSULTATION

20. Since inception in 2015, the Council has undertaken a number of consultations at various stages of project development involving a wide range of stakeholders. The visitor facilities proposal have been discussed at a range of public consultations, including the Local Place Plan and the Barrhead Masterplan. An update briefing for all elected members on City Deal projects that are either in delivery or development stages will be arranged in the next quarter.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

21. With regard to partnership working, details are set out in paragraph 7 above, for the Aurs Road realignment project. In addition there has been consultation with the Glasgow City Region City Deal Programme Management Office, Scottish Water, Sustrans, Transport Scotland, Roads and Transportation, Dams to Darnley Country Park Officer, local landowners and other Council teams.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

22. An equalities impact assessment in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 is undertaken for this project at both the Outline and Full Business Cases, to supplement the Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment (E&HRIA) that was prepared alongside the East Renfrewshire Proposed Local Development Plan. The E&HRIA sets out what positive and negative impacts the plan or its policies might have.

23. Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) Stages 1 & 2 will be completed throughout the progression of the project and the appropriate level of CCIA will be undertaken and noted in both the Outline and Full Business Cases.

CONCLUSIONS

24. East Renfrewshire's £44 million City Deal programme is a clear example of long-term planning by the Council to stimulate sustainable inclusive economic growth. Significant economic benefits have already been achieved with a number of projects now complete.

RECOMMENDATIONS

25. The Cabinet is asked to:

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 - ii. Outline Business Case for new visitor facilities in Dams to Darnley in Dams to Darnley Country Park to be submitted to Glasgow City Region Cabinet; and
- c) note that Cabinet will receive further updates on progress.

Director of Environment

Further information can be obtained from: Michaela Sullivan, Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer), Michaela.Sullivan@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

August 2024

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Appendix 1: Completed City Deal Projects

Levern Works

1. Completed in 2016, this project prepared vacant land in Barrhead for business growth and commercial investment. The projects are both based within the Dunterlie ward which ranks within 5% most deprived in Scotland. It was jointly funded by City Deal funding and Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund and comprises two elements:

- Crossmill Business Park - the development of ten 72sqm / 10,000sqft commercial units in Barrhead in 2016. The project is complete and all units have been fully let since 2017 enabling 10 small local businesses to grow.
- Former Nestle factory site at Glasgow Rd - preparation of part of the site for private sector investment. This investment attracted a major discount retail park to the site and the 6080sqm/65,500sqft retail park was developed in conjunction with the private sector and opened in Spring 2023. It has boosted economic growth and provided substantial local job opportunities in the region of 150-200 jobs.

2. Work EastRen, the Council's employability team offered assistance to employers (Starbucks, Card Factory, Baynes the Baker, Burger King, B&M Stores, Lidl) in terms of promoting vacancies, accessing job fairs and employer recruitment incentives. Work EastRen also hosted several retail vocational training courses for residents to help prepare them for job opportunities which covered aspects of Customer Service, Communication Skills and Employability as well as Accredited Certificates for Emergency First Aid and Food Hygiene.

The Greenlaw Works (Greenlaw Business Centre)

3. The Greenlaw Works has provided of high quality office accommodation to meet a growing local demand, helping to stimulate local economic growth and create opportunities for start-up and small to medium sized businesses to develop within East Renfrewshire. The 20,000 sqft building comprises 35 office suites, meeting rooms, breakout areas and a Business Gateway presence onsite. Located in Newton Mearns, adjacent to Junction 4 of the M77, it creates the final element of the existing retail and commercial centre at Greenlaw, providing employment opportunities.

4. The facility was completed and due to open in Spring 2020 but remained temporarily closed due to the global pandemic, with the carpark serving as a Covid testing centre. An event to mark the official opening of The Greenlaw Works took place on 16 February 2023 and was attended by both UK and Scottish Government Ministers.

5. Since opening in September 2022, 80% of desk spaces (utilising 92% of overall floor space) is now occupied by a diverse range of business sectors including finance, law, architecture, marketing and logistics. Marketing activity is ongoing to secure tenants for the remaining office spaces with activity including social media, signage, targeted TV and print advertising.

6. The Greenlaw Works is not yet financially self-sustaining and the business case for Greenlaw had projected a three year period to become self-sustaining. A review of management arrangements is currently underway.

Balgraystone Road Improvements

7. This road improvement project accelerated residential development in Barrhead and improved accessibility to the Country Park and planned rail station. The project is complete and the road opened in October 2020. It was subject of a full report to the Cabinet in February 2021. The following added value has been achieved:

- New residential development opportunities have been developed to support the regeneration of Barrhead. The first phase of which includes a development of around 47 Council homes.
- 336 new homes have been built in Barrhead South including 71 social rented homes, 26 entry level homes and 239 privately owned homes creating new residential community with affordable homes prioritised.
- The Council's land at Barrhead South received planning permission in April 2024 for 348 homes and the land has been sold for residential development.
- Improved access to Dams to Darnley Country Park and the proposed new rail station has been created further enabling a future rail and bus interchange and active travel infrastructure to the new rail station and Country Park from Barrhead.
- Along with planned improvements to Aurs Road, this project will support the wider long term economic objective of delivering a new sustainable community.

APPENDIX 2: Images of ERC City Deal Funded Aurs Road and Proposed Balgray Station

1. Aurs Road Improvements - view looking south towards Newton Mearns



2. Aurs Road Improvements - view looking north towards Barrhead



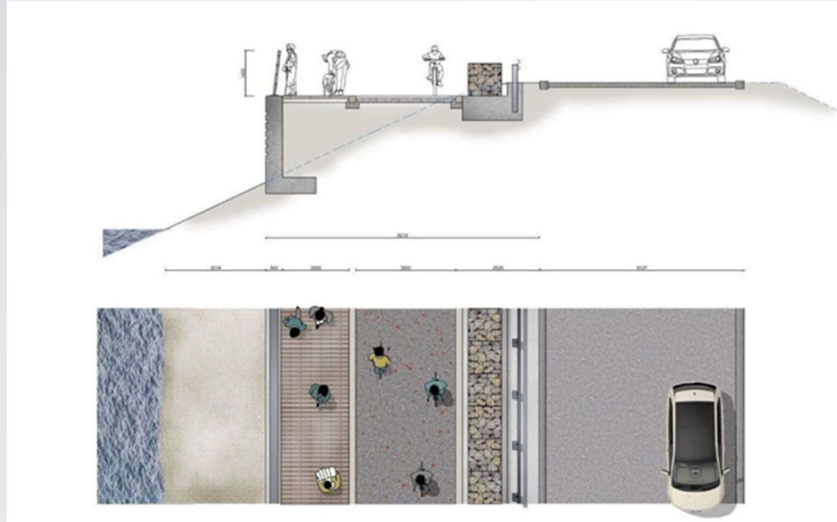
3. Aurs Road Improvements - view looking North towards Barrhead at point where Aurs Road crosses Brock Burn



4. Aurs Road Improvements - mid-way along the Promenade



7. Aurs Road Improvements - This is a typical section through the Promenade showing the arrangement of spaces (vehicle heading South)



8. New rail station at Barrhead South on Glasgow to Neilston line



9. New rail station and bus interchange at Barrhead South on Glasgow to Neilston line

