

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HELENSBURGH & LOMOND AREA COMMITTEE HELD ON
A HYBRID BASIS BY MICROSOFT TEAMS AND IN THE MARRIAGE SUITE IN THE
HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND CIVIC CENTRE
ON TUESDAY, 12 MARCH 2024**

Present: Councillor Gemma Penfold (Chair)

Councillor Math Campbell-Sturgess	Councillor Paul Donald Kennedy
Councillor Maurice Corry	Councillor Ian MacQuire
Councillor Graham Hardie	Councillor Gary Mulvaney
Councillor Fiona Howard	Councillor Iain Paterson
Councillor Mark Irvine	

Attending: Stuart McLean, Committee Manager
Hugh O'Neill, Network and Standards Manager
Stuart Watson, Assistant Network and Standards Manager
David Allan, Estates and Property Development Manager
Ross McLaughlin, Head of Commercial Services
Colin Young, Strategic Transportation Delivery Officer
Douglas Whyte, Housing Strategy Manager
David Hagerty, Community Development Officer
Stuart Green, Corporate Support Manager
Sonya Thomas, OD Project Officer
Dianne Richardson, Helensburgh CARS Project Officer
Brendan Docherty, Education Manager
Allison Smith, Head Teacher, Kilcreggan Primary School
Carolyn Randall, John Logie Baird Primary School
Inspector Bart Simonis, Police Scotland

1. APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Maurice Corry declared a non-financial interest in relation to item 8 of the agenda (Supporting Communities Fund – Monitoring of projects funded), due to being the director of Project 81 Youth & Community Enterprise Ltd. He advised that he would remain in the meeting during the consideration of this item.

Councillor Mark Irvine declared a non-financial interest in relation to item 9 of the agenda (Housing Services Activity Update - Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) – Annual Update), due to being on the board of Argyll Community Housing Association. He advised that he would remain in the meeting during the consideration of this item.

3. MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND AREA COMMITTEE, HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2023

The Minute of the meeting of the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee, held on 12 December 2023 was approved as a correct record.

Councillor Math Campbell-Sturgess joined the meeting during consideration of the following item of Business.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Having noted that there were members of the public in attendance, the Chair invited them to submit any questions they may have.

Kenneth Lockhart, Cardross Cycle Path Action Group

Since the year 2000, Argyll and Bute Council have been discussing and have partially implemented a cyclepath between Helensburgh and Dumbarton. There have been lengthy delays in delivering this route for a variety of reasons. We note from the previous minutes, the delivery of this path is a stated Council Priority. 24 years on, anticipated completion is still some years away. On behalf of the community of Cardross, The Cardross Cyclepath Action Group would like to ask:

What assurances can the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee give to the community of Cardross that construction of the cyclepath, as a stated Council Priority, will be given the highest priority in terms of both staff and financial resources?

How can the community of Cardross and the Cardross Cyclepath Action Group best support Argyll and Bute Council in delivering this sustainable travel route?

The Committee members agreed that they all wished the cyclepath to be completed and that they were aware of issues and assured Mr Lockhart that the cyclepath remained a priority.

Councillor Mulvaney highlighted his frustration regarding the lack of progress and welcomed the support of the community to get this over the line. Councillor Mulvaney suggested that if landowners got the message of this support for the cyclepath it may be helpful to move the project forward. The Committee Manager advised that with permission, he would share Mr Lockhart's contact details with the designated officer.

Norman McNally, Helensburgh Community Council

I read that both the Ryder Community Engagement exercise and the Collier Retail Study have been instrumental in finalising the bid selection for the Waterfront site.

My question concerns the Helensburgh Waterfront Community Engagement Reporting carried out by Ryder Architecture, Glasgow.

This stakeholder engagement was carried out over the course of a week between 17 and 23 June 2023. The architects had prepared five sets of themed image panels "illustrating the range of options currently being put forward for the Waterfront site in terms of broad function or type".

Ten scheduled events were held in which a total of 83 people participated. The Report was published in September 2023. Attendees were invited to identify any images they liked or disliked (green and red dot-sticking) and discuss the pros and cons of each option.

The Report uses a wide range of loose descriptions to indicate the frequency of similarities in feedback gathered, and thus attempts to arrive at some important Key Findings. Words such as:

Everyone, Most, Many, Some, Several, Others, Few, Small number and further vague descriptors such as mixed feedback, positive feedback, very popular, positively received, even 'close to the hearts'

In developing the feedback descriptions above, the author(s) will have had the dot-tally from each option to hand; one trusts the above commentary is based upon the numerical dot-sticking feedback gathered over those ten sessions. I am concerned that this verifying data remains absent from public view, particularly in the light of the Council's declared reliance on this study.

My question is this.

Can the Council affirm that the selected development will meet the Key Findings criteria laid out the Ryder Report?

Which of the five alternative themes offered by Ryder Architecture received the greatest positive, and which alternative theme received the greatest negative Stakeholder Engagement returns?

Will the Council publish the actual (positive and negative) dot-tally data that relate to each of these five options?

The Estates & Property Development Manager advised that they had recently received information from the consultants and that the engagement consultants gave advice on how they would like to take things forward and where they would like to set it up. Mr Allan highlighted that the idea of the consultation was to reach parties who had not previously engaged with the Council, to get their views and find out why their views were what they were. It was highlighted that from the engagement study there was no strong consensus with many different views. Mr Allan advised that he would provide a written response in detail to Mr McNally following the meeting.

The Head of Commercial Services advised that the engagement report was based on engagement workshops carried out in September 2023, reinforcing that there was no consensus on any of the 5 options.

Mr Allan advised that the engagement exercise was an additional step undertaken by the Council to encourage people who were not engaging to give their views and that there would still be statutory consultation on any application by way of the planning process.

Cameron Foy, Helensburgh Community Council

At the last Area Committee meeting Councillor Mulvaney wrongly stated that supporters of Helensburgh skatepark were "re-writing history" in relation to the location of a skatepark on the waterfront development. A permanent skatepark on the waterfront in Helensburgh town centre was promised by Argyll & Bute Council in its Masterplan adopted back in 2012 after lengthy public consultation.

Is the Council still committed to delivering the key elements of its approved Masterplan, including limiting commercial development to 2,600 sq m gross, and space for a skatepark as intended?

The Estates & Property Development Manager confirmed that this is built into the Masterplan and none of the proposals would exceed that space. Mr Allan also advised that as agreed at the September 2023 Area Committee, the skatepark would be located on the Waterfront unless a more suitable location was identified.

Peter Brown, Helensburgh Community Council

Question 1 and 2

The agenda for the H&L Area Committee meeting states that the Committee will be asked to pass a resolution to exclude from the public Appendices B, C and D of the Pierhead development item. These Appendices are referenced in the overview briefing as:

- Appendix B - a summary of the five proposals received.
- Appendix C - council officers' assessment of the five proposals, and selection of 2 preferred bidders, and
- Appendix D - Avison Young's review of the proposals.

I would firstly like to remind Councillors of the statement in the Council's Constitution which says:

All decisions of the Council, or any Committee or Sub-Committee will be made in accordance with certain immutable principles, which includes "A presumption in favour of openness".

The reason given for exempting these Appendices is given as Paragraph 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, which is: "Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services."

But this paragraph is qualified by Part II of Schedule 7A in Paragraph 4 which says "Information falling within paragraph 9 of Part I above is exempt information if and so long as disclosure to the public of the terms would prejudice the authority in those or any other negotiations concerning the property or goods or services."

Would Councillors agree therefore that at least Appendices B and C should be able to be shared with the public without prejudicing any negotiations as long as any financial information was redacted and that, only if these Appendices are made public will this committee be fulfilling the Council's Constitutional requirement in favour of openness?

If these Appendices are not shared, can Councillors confirm that full minutes of the exempt section will be provided? As a reminder, section 50C of the Local Government Act says:

Inspection of minutes and other documents after meetings.

- a. After a meeting of a local authority the following documents shall be open to inspection by members of the public at the offices of the authority until the

expiration of the period of six years beginning with the date of the meeting, namely—

- a. the minutes, or a copy of the minutes, of the meeting, excluding so much of the minutes of the proceedings during which the meeting was not open to the public as discloses exempt information;
- b. where applicable, a summary under subsection (2) below;

(2) Where, in consequence of the exclusion of parts of the minutes which disclose exempt information, the document open to inspection under subsection (1)(a) above does not provide members of the public with a reasonably fair and coherent record of the whole or part of the proceedings, the proper officer shall make a written summary of the proceedings or the part, as the case may be, which provides such a record without disclosing the exempt information.

The Committee Manager advised that appendices B, C and D would be considered in private in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and that the minutes of any Council Committee are never a verbatim record. The Committee Manager advised that he would provide Mr Brown with a summary of any relevant discussions had at the item, confirming that this would not include any commercially sensitive information.

Question 3

The Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 2010 makes clear that councils do not need to get the best price for a piece of land. Specifically:

4. -(1) The circumstances in which a local authority may dispose of land for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained are that -

- the local authority is satisfied that the disposal for that consideration is reasonable; and
- the disposal is likely to contribute to the promotion or improvement of-
 - (a) economic development or regeneration;
 - (b) health;
 - (c) social well-being; or
 - (d) environmental well-being.

The overview document, which is the only one that we can see, says repeatedly that the bids selected are the "best value for the council". Can Councillors reassure us that they know they are not obliged to accept the best price for this site?

The Head of Commercial Services advised that The Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 2010 is a statute that they work to and that there are a variety of different mechanisms for choosing the preferred bidder for any site. In this particular project there are 5 recognised criteria, price, community benefit, risk, deliverability and economic benefit.

Question 4

At the weekend, I sent all Councillors Helensburgh Community Council's summary of the Colliers Retail Study Update. I will not attempt to summarise all of that detail here, but I

can update it based on information that we received from Colliers yesterday through David Allan.

Our primary concern with the Retail Study Update is that Colliers have significantly underestimated the existing retail floorspace in the town centre. Colliers said that they had taken the floorspace figure from an Experian Goad Category Report, and that the list of shops and their individual floorspaces “do not materially impact the conclusions of the retail impact assessment”. But they do, if the list of shops and floorspaces is wrong.

We obtained the underlying Experian data yesterday. This data, supposedly specifically created for Helensburgh, said that Val’s Toy Shop on the front was part of the Jolly Giant Toy Superstore and therefore was a significant multiple retailer. Unbelievably, The Jolly Giant Toy Superstore went into receivership in 2002.

Given this kind of hole in the data, it may come as no surprise to the committee that we can demonstrate definitively that the floorspace figure that Colliers have used for 2023 is too low, for both convenience and comparison shops. What that means is that their conclusion is wrong and, in fact, that any expansion of food (convenience) stores will close down some of our existing shops.

A similar position applies to the Colliers’ comparison floorspace and conclusion but, more significantly, the comparison sales percentages have been based on very old figures, from 2007. We asked Colliers what error margins should be applied to allow for such old data, to which they responded “Error margins are not applied to retail assessments, as they are reviews by market specialists based on specific scenarios using data from multiple sources.”

There is also a crucial figure in the Colliers calculations, which is the “benchmark sales density”. If this is too low, it will suggest that more floor area is required. Colliers have told us that “The benchmark sales density was provided by Experian and is a national figure that is based on the average sales density of all comparison retailers, including multinational and small independent retails. It must be appreciated that a benchmark sales density for comparison goods is difficult to estimate...”

We have examined another Retail Capacity Study, prepared by Nexus Planning for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council in April 2022. This report said “...there are no robust, industry standard benchmark sales densities for calculating the turnover of smaller independent retailers that typically make up the majority of the comparison provision of town centres. Moreover, the trading levels of comparison retailers can fluctuate significantly depending on a number of localised variables, most notably the location of the retailer relative to similar providers.

“As such, we adopt a standard approach that comparison goods retailers across the Study Area are trading ‘at equilibrium’ at 2022, meaning that we adopt the survey derived turnover of each facility, and examine capacity by measuring the growth in available expenditure to 2035.”

So this consultancy, which was the UK’s Town Planning Consultancy of the Year in 2020, calculates required capacity in a completely different way. Using the same approach shows that in either Scenario 1 or Scenario 2, Helensburgh Town Centre will need 600sqm less of comparison retail by 2033.

My underlying question is this – given the holes and inconsistencies in Colliers underlying data and resulting conclusions, will Councillors accept that there is clear evidence that additional retail in Helensburgh's town centre will adversely affect our existing shops?

The Estates & Property Development Manager advised that they have referred back to Colliers for responses to the questions and are happy to pass on any further questions that can be looked into. Mr Allan advised that as a town centre site there is no requirement for any retail impact assessment or retail study due to national and local policy and that the work undertaken was additional and that the Council had went beyond what was required.

The Head of Commercial Services highlighted that this it is a town centre site and is for mixed use and that retail is nationally and locally found to stimulate footfall in town centre.

Sarah Davies, Helensburgh Community Council

Question 1

At the last meeting of the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee I asked about the allocation of the recently awarded £20 million from the Westminster Governments Levelling up Fund.

I was assured that the Council would be looking in to this. As yet 5 months later we have heard no further updates on this matter despite the very public budget discussions. My question is when will this money be allocated, who will make this decision and when will the Argyll and Bute residents be consulted about this?

I understand that this money needs to be allocated to ready to go projects. Might I suggest that there are three such projects in Helensburgh and Lomond which would welcome the money, the pier regeneration project, the community plan to buy and develop the Tower Cinema and Arts Centre and last but not least the development of our Waterfront into a Public leisure area with a state of the art Skatepark, public event space, pop up shops and coach parking.

I am also very concerned that given that this is a General Election year that this money identified for Argyll and Bute if not used may well be lost.

Councillor Penfold advised that a report on the Levelling Up Fund would be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee in due course.

Councillor Mulvaney highlighted that at the moment the process is driven by the UK government who are having discussions with officers and that the Council have to work to their criteria. It was advised that the report with shortlisting of projects would be going to the Policy and Resources Committee in the near future.

Question 2

Helensburgh in Motion Active Travel Study

Engagement with the community is always welcome. As a community council we were very happy to be involved. We advertised this widely, shared our community contacts and invited the consultants to our monthly meeting. Unfortunately due to the short period of the consultation this didn't happen. Now In paragraph 1:2 of the executive summary page 155

it suggests that this consultation was on the Helensburgh section of the Dumbarton - Helensburgh cycleway. At no point was it made clear that this was the purpose of the survey. Can you assure us that further consultation will take place on the preferred route and that this is not the only consultation?

We also have concerns in paragraph 4:13 on page 160 that there is a role for volunteers to support the maintenance of the cyclepath because the Roads and Infrastructure Service have previously stated they do not wish to adopt sections of cyclepath remote from the road. The Community Council and other groups willingly coordinate volunteers to clean the beach and tend to the shrub beds maintaining cycle paths would be quite a different matter for which we have neither the expertise or the equipment.

Councillor Penfold advised that this question would be passed onto the Strategic Transportation Delivery Officer who would provide a response to Ms Davies.

Question 3

On the agenda today Item 12 pages 123-128 is an item Area Plans Update. As the Chair of the Helensburgh and Lomond Community Planning Group I can report we have already had this presentation. It would appear that the Area Committee, the Community Planning Partnership along with Community Councils and community groups will have a significant role to play in the production of these plans. I would like to ask how you as a committee feel we can all better work together to produce an area plan for Helensburgh and Lomond which truly represents the needs and aspirations of the local community?

Councillor Corry confirmed that he would welcome any suggestions in this regard from Ms Davies.

Jackie Hood, Helensburgh Skatepark Group

The Helensburgh Skatepark Project carried out a poll which got 123 responses, 73% wanted the Skatepark to remain on the waterfront, 15% supported a move to Kidston Park and 12% didn't mind where they just wanted a Skatepark. This poll showed a clear preference for the skatepark to remain on the waterfront despite the size restrictions imposed by the council planning conditions. However, should Kidston Park be deemed by the current feasibility study to be a suitable alternative location for our community skatepark, and the skatepark is forced to move to this location, can the Council confirm that the replacement ramps will be allowed to remain on the waterfront location until the alternative park is constructed and operational so that there is no further loss of amenity for our young people?. They have already had to endure 3 years without a skatepark. We need confirmation that the temporary ramps can remain on the pierhead site until a new facility is up and running.

Can the Council also confirm that any funds left over from the £80,000 after the feasibility study has been concluded, will be put towards the planning, design and construction of a permanent skatepark?

The Estates & Property Development Manager advised that due to planning considerations an alternative location would need to be agreed before relocating it.

The Head of Commercial Services advised that at the December Area Committee there was a preference for further investigations into Kidston Park and also Hermitage Park and that investigations in this regard are ongoing. Mr McLaughlin confirmed that that there

would be a skatepark on the waterfront site until such time and any revised relocation proposal is agreed.

The Estates & Property Development Manager confirmed that any funds left over from the £80,000 after the feasibility study would be used to facilitate the new development.

Angela Anderson, Plastic Free Helensburgh

Following on from the question I raised last quarter on drainage and flooding going back to August, and increasing and more disruptive as the year progressed, I received a reply that routine gully cleaning would take place in March.

Since the last area meeting you are all no doubt aware of multiple rainfall events. The gully gratings across the town are blocked or barely porous with grit. Sinclair Street runs ankle deep in water as do adjacent streets. East and west streets are flooding and spilling across verges overwhelming French drains which were never intended to cope with street flooding and flooding down to the back of houses. Across the street, shops and tea rooms flooding of gardens and houses is the talk of the 'steamie'.

I also understand the gully cleaning apparatus is currently loaned to the Dunoon depot. Gullies taking three days to clear are deemed slow draining and as the water doesn't stand on sloping streets they are outwith the metric. Our campaign for the town to take better care of what goes into drains is still on hold.

My question is can the Committee ensure that our streets are adequately husbanded going forward, the gutters adequately cleaned to prevent gully covers blocking, the gullies kept clear and that there is a serious exercise to ameliorate the problems to households from flooding from the roads?.

Some of this may well be expensive but the predictions are that these weather patterns will be the norm as climate change bites. There is a willingness across the town to look after our environs but an increasing feeling that the Council doesn't care. We know that the Council and staff are hard pushed.

Councillor Penfold advised that the Committee would speak to officers regarding the gulley cleaning and maintenance and encouraged members of the public to report any dog fouling either to the Council directly or to their local Councillors.

Councillor MacQuire advised that he had submitted reports in relation to gulley cleaning in the Colquhoun Square and West Princes Street and that these were cleared, adding that he had put in a further report for Sinclair Street and West Clyde Street and that these should be cleared within the month.

Polly Jones

The Committee Manager read out the below question submitted by Polly Jones:

Please can you set out, including in writing, what the process is to appeal the decision by the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee on the successful waterfront tender, for:

1. another tender bidder
2. A community council
3. Members of the public

The Head of Commercial Services advised that he would refer this question to the Council's Monitoring Officer who would follow up with a written response.

Fiona Baker

In light of the recent eye-watering 10% increase in Council Tax, imposed during a cost of living crisis, and with Argyll and Bute Council having over £96 million in reserves, over £8m of which is unallocated, and an award of some £20 million of Levelling Up funds, can the Councillors explain why there is continued insistence that the pierhead site must be sold off to the highest bidder and generate at least £1m for Council coffers?

It seems with all this extra income and the Council's reserve funds there is no need to destroy Helensburgh's prime waterfront site with a retail development we don't want or need. As a town centre retailer and member of the Helensburgh Business Group I can advise that Councillor Hardie has not asked our view on the development and his anecdotal 75% of local retailers are in favour is incorrect.

The Collier's Retail Study, for all its many flaws, as pointed out by Dr Brown of Helensburgh Community Council, advises Helensburgh is above the national average on provision of all kinds of shops, but behind on leisure. And with approximately 21 vacant shops this suggests we do not need any more shops, but we do need more public amenity. There will always be leakage, as there is leakage from other areas to Helensburgh for our specialist independent shops, and as you can order your food shopping from your preferred retailer and have it delivered to your door thinking a new supermarket will stop leakage is a fallacy.

If the political will was to listen to the evidence based representations and pleas of residents to provide people with the amenities we so desperately need to attract and retain local spending and visitors, a community focussed development, a real investment in the town's future, which the majority desire, could proceed. The funds available to the Council clearly demonstrate that the £1m price tag for our town's future is not a purely fiscal issue so please can you explain this unjustified financial argument?

The Estates & Property Development Manager highlighted that the Waterfront is a mixed use site and that the Council had invested a substantial amount of money into the Leisure Centre and advised that there has been a lot of investment into Helensburgh over the years to bring people into the town and added that the mixed use nature of the site is key to encouraging people into the town centre.

The Head of Commercial Services highlighted that there are a number of open spaces in Helensburgh including Colquhoun Square, The Civic Centre and Hermitage Park and advised that the item on the agenda was not about one bidder but to confirm further investigations into two bidders with subsequent interviews in advance of a preferred bidder being identified.

The Committee confirmed that they would be looking at and discussing every proposal before coming to a decision that would be best for the town.

Michael Darcy

I am here today regarding the deforestation of mature semi-natural woodlands at Blairvadach, including 7 out of the 9 giant redwoods that were there, which sequestrates

more carbon than any other tree in the world and Scotland only has around 4% of mature natural woodlands left so all remaining fragments are very precious to this type of nature crisis. The new national planning framework 4 recognises this in law and seeks to protect ancient woodlands from development and the community in Rhu fought for tree preservation orders for Blairvadach and Argyll and Bute Council delivered the Tree Preservation Orders in 2018, this made the Community think that the trees would be protected and any development would be nature sensitive. In 2020 the children in Rhu and staff at the primary planted hundreds of tree saplings and the community is being responsible and climate aware but why is the Council betraying us by signing death warrant for mature woodlands?

Will the Council commit to giving back to the community what is left of Blairvadach Woods so that we can ensure mature trees continue to sequester the carbon, purify the air and water, provide homes to owls, hedgehogs and bees and all who live there?

The Committee highlighted their disappointment at hearing what had happened and agreed to contact Planning Officers to look into the matter as a matter of urgency.

The Committee Manager advised that if the land was owned by the Council there is a Community Asset Transfer process in place and agreed to put Mr Darcy in contact with the relevant officer.

5. POLICE SCOTLAND UPDATE

Consideration was given to an update which provided information on the ongoing work of the Service and information on yearly crime statistics; the support on the 16 days Against Gender Based Violence campaign; fraud prevention and awareness, specifically relating to scam calls; personal safety inputs provided to Lomond and Argyll Advocacy Service staff and the success at the Divisional Recognition Awards 2023.

Decision

The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee considered and noted the information provided in the report.

(Reference: Report by Inspector Bart Simonis, Police Scotland, submitted)

6. AREA PERFORMANCE REPORT - FQ3 2023/24

Consideration was given to the Area Performance Report for financial quarter 3 of 2023/24 (October to December 2023) which illustrated the agreed performance measures for this period.

Decision

The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee:

1. noted and considered the performance and supporting commentary as presented;
2. noted that upon receipt of the Quarterly Performance Report the Area Committee should contact either the Responsible Named Officer or the Organisational Development Project Officer with any queries; and

3. noted that work was ongoing and to respond to the Organisational Development Project Officer with requests or comments regarding the layout and format of the Performance Report and Scorecard.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services, dated 7 February 2024, submitted)

Councillor Paul Kennedy joined the meeting during consideration of the following item of Business.

7. PRIMARY AREA ATTAINMENT REPORT: HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND

The Committee gave consideration to a report and a presentation which provided a range of key information about primary school provision in the Helensburgh and Lomond area during the school session June 2023 to January 2024 and reported the national collection of attainment and achievement data from June 2023.

Decision

The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee considered and noted the information provided within the report and presentation.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated March 2024, submitted)

8. SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FUND - MONITORING OF PROJECTS FUNDED

The Committee gave consideration to a report which highlighted the positive outcomes of the Council's Supporting Communities Fund in 2022/23 for communities in the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

Decision

The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee:

1. noted and consider the positive contribution of the Supporting Communities Fund detailed in section 4 of the report and the attached table; and
2. noted that a total of £1,675.50 in unspent funds had been returned and agreed that this would be included in the distribution of the Supporting Communities Fund for 2024/25.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive, dated 9 February 2024, submitted)

9. HOUSING SERVICES ACTIVITY UPDATE - STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN (SHIP) - ANNUAL UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update on Housing Services activity and the delivery of the Local Housing Strategy within the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

Decision

The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee considered and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth, dated January 2024, submitted)

10. ROADS CAPITAL RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME 2024/25

The Committee gave consideration to a report which included a draft programme for roads reconstruction schemes for 2024/25 in the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

Decision

The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee:

1. provided comments on the draft programme contained at appendix 1 of the report, which were noted by the Head of Roads and Infrastructure Services; and
2. noted that the programme would go forward to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on 21 March 2024 for endorsement.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, dated February 2024, submitted)

11. PROPOSED ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL (OFF STREET PARKING PLACES AND CHARGES) (HELENSBURGH) (AMENDMENT) ORDER 202_

The Committee gave consideration to a report which provided an update on the proposed Traffic Regulation Order “The Argyll and Bute Council (Off Street Parking Places and Charges) (Helensburgh) (Amendment) Order 202_” (hereafter, the “TRO”) and provided detail of a single objection to the draft traffic regulation order.

Decision

The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee agreed that the draft “The Argyll and Bute Council (Off Street Parking Places and Charges) (Helensburgh) (Amendment) Order 202_” TRO be made with the following amendment:

- that the Order is amended to designate this area for coaches and limit the stay to 20 minutes maximum.

(Reference: Report by Executive with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, dated March 2024, submitted)

At this point, the Chair ruled and the Committee agreed to vary the order of Business and take agenda item 17 (Helensburgh Waterfront Development (Commercial Area) – Update & Shortlisting of Final Offers) next.

The Chair advised that should Members wish to discuss the content of appendices B, C and D of the following item there would be a requirement to agree to exclude the press and public.

12. HELENSBURGH WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT (COMMERCIAL AREA) - UPDATE & SHORTLISTING OF FINAL OFFERS

The Committee gave consideration to a report which highlighted the assessment of the final propositions and candidates selected as preferred bidders to move into the interview process and detailed negotiations. The report also noted the completion of the retail study, which supports commercial development of the site.

Members agreed that they wished to discuss the information contained within the exempt appendices of the report and resolved in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the press and public for the following item of business on the grounds that it was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

Decision

The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee:

1. noted and considered the content of the retail study completed by Colliers Surveyors at Appendix A, which supports commercial development of the site to support the long-term viability of the town centre;
2. noted and considered the varied interest in the site and the summary of the five proposals received as outlined in paragraph 4.4 and in Appendix B;
3. noted and considered, commercial consultant, Avison Young's review of the proposals attached as Appendix D;
4. noted and approved the Property Development Working Group's assessment on 19th January 2024 of the 5 proposals with 2 being selected as preferred bidders as outlined in Appendix C;
5. noted appendices B, C & D are publically restricted given commercially and financially sensitive nature of the live bidding process; and
6. agreed that a Business Day be held following the interview process and before the final report is presented to the Policy and Resources Committee.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services, dated 12 February 2024, submitted)

Following consideration of the information contained within the exempt appendices of the report the Area Committee welcomed the press and public back to the meeting.

Councillor Paul Kennedy left the meeting during consideration of the following item of Business.

13. AREA PLANS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a presentation which provided information in relation to the progress of the Council's Area Plans project.

Decision

The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee considered and noted the information provided.

(Reference: Presentation by Chief Executive's Unit, dated 13 March 2024, submitted)

Councillor Math Campbell-Sturgess left the meeting during consideration of the following item of Business.

14. 2023/24 ACTIVE TRAVEL PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee gave consideration to a report which provided an update on the progress made in 2023/24 in relation to active travel projects in the Helensburgh and Lomond area, and sought continued support for the projects from Members.

Decision

The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee agreed to:

1. welcome the progress made to date across a significant number of active travel projects by the small Active Travel Team;
2. support the continuation of the projects and the submission of future funding applications to external challenge funds (while these still exist) to continue to develop design and construction stages in order to deliver these projects;
3. support the allocation of the active travel funding element in the Council's 2024/25 block grant to the development and delivery of appropriate active travel projects, including those already underway in Helensburgh and Lomond; and
4. instruct Officers to continue to identify and develop new active travel projects to benefit local residents, businesses and communities.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth, dated 5 January 2024, submitted)

Councillor Gary Mulvaney left the meeting during consideration of the following item of Business.

15. HELENSBURGH, CARDROSS AND DUMBARTON CYCLEPATH UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report updating Members on the progress made since the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee on 12 December 2023 in relation to the delivery of a dedicated, high quality walking and cycle route linking Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton.

Decision

The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee:

1. welcomed the community engagement to support the identification of a preferred route linking Morrisons Supermarket/Hermitage Academy to Helensburgh Town Centre/Waterfront;
2. instructed Officers to progress with review of deliverables received from WSP, identification of outstanding requirements and to progress with securing these deliverables including sourcing funding for these as appropriate;
3. considered the guidance from Legal Services in relation to Compulsory Purchase Order process and timescales;
4. instructed Officers to submit a report to Council requesting approval for development and submission of a Compulsory Purchase Order for all land required to construct and maintain the preferred route alignment for the whole of Stage 1 (Colgrain to Cardross) and Stage 2 (Cardross to Dumbarton) of the Helensburgh – Cardross Dumbarton Cyclepath;
5. considered how they can secure of match funding towards land acquisition and construction of this priority project, including from internal Council sources; and
6. considered future maintenance options for the cyclepath, including if there is a role for community group volunteers.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth, dated 7 February 2024, submitted)

Councillor Iain Paterson left the meeting following this item of Business.

16. HELENSBURGH CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME (CARS) RECOMMENDATION OF SHOPFRONT GRANT AWARD

Consideration was given to a report asking members to approve a grant offer of up to Sixty Two Thousand, Two Hundred and Thirty Six Pounds (£62,236) to the owner of the shopfront at 9 West Clyde Street, Helensburgh, as part of the Helensburgh CARS scheme – Shopfront Improvement Scheme.

Decision

The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee approved the grant offer of up to Sixty Two Thousand, Two Hundred and Thirty Six Pounds (£62,236) to the owner of the shopfront at 9 West Clyde Street, Helensburgh, as part of the Helensburgh CARS scheme – Shopfront Improvement Scheme.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth, dated 13 February 2024, submitted)

17. HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND AREA COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee workplan was before members for information.

Decision

The Helensburgh and Lomond Committee noted the contents of the workplan.

(Reference: Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee workplan, dated 12 March 2024)