

## Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton Cycleway Update

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### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report updates Members of the progress made to date in relation to Argyll and Bute Council's long-standing commitment to the provision of a dedicated, high quality walking and cycle route linking Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton.
- 1.2. A phased approach has been adopted to deliver this significant project, with sections of the route constructed as land and funding became available. Two substantial sections have been constructed to date totaling 2.2km, in 2013/14 linking the new Hermitage Academy/Waitrose store to Moss Road and in 2015/16 between Ferry Road and Station Road within Cardross Village.
- 1.3. In 2017/18 it is proposed to complete the route through Cardross Village from Station Road to the eastern edge of Cardross on the A814. Public consultation is planned to determine the most appropriate route for this section.
- 1.4. Council Officers continue to work toward purchasing the necessary land to allow further phases of the route to be constructed in future years.
- 1.5. To date work on the Cycleway has been funded through successful grant applications to Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT), Sustrans and from Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets (CWSS) funding received from the Scottish Government.
- 1.6. It is recommended that the Helensburgh and Lomond members:
  - 1.6.1. Note the contents of this update report including the work on this project to date.
  - 1.6.2. Support the commitment to bring a further report to Council prior to promotion of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) should land negotiations fail to be concluded satisfactorily.
  - 1.6.3.** Support the commitment to hold a public consultation event in Cardross and with the Cardross Community Council prior to decision on the route alignment from Cardross Station to the north-western edge of Cardross adjacent to the A814.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1. Argyll and Bute Council has had a long-standing commitment to the provision of a dedicated, high quality walking and cycle route linking Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton.
- 2.2. Approximately 2.2km of the route has been constructed to date. The time taken to deliver this project is mainly due to difficulty in obtaining the land required for construction of the Cycleway.
- 2.3. The Council has secured a total of £682,000 grant funding towards the project to date, including £190,000 in 2017/18 to complete construction of the route within Cardross Village and towards land purchase costs.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Helensburgh and Lomond members:

- 3.1. Note the contents of this update report including the work on this project to date.
- 3.2. Support the commitment to bring a further report to Council prior to promotion of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) should land negotiations fail to be concluded satisfactorily.
- 3.3. Support the commitment to hold a public consultation event in Cardross and with the Cardross Community Council prior to decision on the route alignment from Cardross Station to the north-western edge of Cardross adjacent to the A814.

**4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1. The provision of a safe and attractive walking and cycling route linking Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton will close a gap in the active travel network in Argyll and Bute. The route will provide residents and visitors to Helensburgh and Cardross with a safe and convenient walking and cycling route between these settlements, including school pupils attending Hermitage

Academy. Extending the route to Dumbarton links into the National Cycle Network (NCN) which signals walking and cycling routes to Loch Lomond, Glasgow, Edinburgh and destinations further afield including elsewhere in Argyll & Bute. West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) confirm they have constructed the element of the Cycleway within their boundary to link the route into the wider NCN.

- 4.2. Previous consultation with Cardross residents established the preferred option to be a route which followed the alignment of the A814 as far as possible. This was due to the proximity of the traffic on the A814 providing a level of personal security, including to school pupils who may choose to use the route to access Hermitage Academy.
- 4.3. To date the focus of this project has been on the link between Helensburgh and Cardross. This section was prioritised as the link between Cardross and Helensburgh will provide a walking and cycling link for secondary school pupils attending Hermitage Academy from Cardross and locations between.
- 4.4. A total of 2.2km of the route has been constructed to date. These sections are from opposite Hermitage Academy / adjacent to the Waitrose Supermarket to Moss Road in 2013/14 and within Cardross from Ferry Road to the Railway Station in 2015/16.
- 4.5. In 2017/18 it is planned to construct the next phase linking from Cardross Railway Station to the A814 on the edge of Cardross, beyond the entrance to Geilston Farm. It is not anticipated there will be a need for CPO powers to undertake this work in 2017/18. However, the exact route of this section will be subject to consultation with landowners and local residents. Construction costs of this section are covered by successful grant fund applications to Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and Sustrans. In order to draw on these funds all work must be complete by 31 March 2018.
- 4.6. The phases planned for construction in 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 which will complete the route between Hermitage Academy and Cardross require the Council to obtain the necessary land for these phases of the route. The Council has funding available in 2017/18 towards land purchase costs, future construction phases from 2018/19 onwards will be subject to the success of future grant funding applications. The land required for these future phases is owned by four landowners, of which three own the majority of the land required. Land negotiations have been ongoing since 2012 with mixed success. One landowner has indicated willingness to sell and relevant Council Officers are in the final stages of agreeing the land take required and the relevant payment for this land. Negotiations with the other two major landholders has been conducted via their agent but to date no agreement has been reached. Council Officers continue to seek to engage with the relevant landowners and a final offer will be submitted to landowners and their agent when details of the land-take of the route have been fully determined.
- 4.7. In the event the Council has exhausted all reasonable routes to obtain the necessary land by negotiation, there remains the option to seek to obtain the

land via the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) route. Once a CPO has been approved by the Council it requires to be advertised, notice served on the affected landowners and details of the CPO lodged with the Scottish Ministers supported by a statement of the public need for the land, relevant plans, details of efforts made to negotiate purchase of the land and other supporting documentation. Depending if objections are received, the CPO process can take between 6 and 24 months until confirmation of the CPO is received from Scottish Ministers. Council approval for development and submission of a CPO was given on 25 June 2015, however the CPO was not progressed due to changes in the design, staff changes and to satisfy landowners that all avenues to reach a negotiated land purchase had been explored. Given the time elapsed since the approval for a CPO, should a CPO be deemed necessary following conclusion of the land negotiations which is expected in late 2017, a further report asking Members to so resolve will be submitted to the Council in early 2018.

- 4.8. In the event the Council is unable to acquire any of the plots of land required for the 2018/19 to 2020/21 phases before the end of 2017/18, it is intended to continue to seek capital funding from partners to take forward other elements of the route between Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton not reliant on the purchase of these plots of land.
- 4.9. To March 2017 a total of £492,000 had been expended on the Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton Cycleway. A further £190,000 has been grant funded to the Council for planned expenditure in 2017/18. The intention is to continue to apply for external funding to complete the link over the next 6 years.
- 4.10. Historically, £3M was made available to Argyll & Bute Council and West Dunbartonshire Council for the development of Cycleways. Argyll & Bute Council's allocation from this funding was fully expended on the development and construction of the Cycleway linking Helensburgh to Arden, Loch Lomond via Blackhill.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1. The Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton Cycleway is an important piece of active travel infrastructure for Argyll & Bute that will link the settlements of Cardross and Helensburgh to a wider active travel network in the Helensburgh and Lomond area and to the central belt.
- 5.2. Progress continues to be made towards the phased implementation of this project, with future phases reliant on acquisition of the necessary land and the securing of additional external funding. A final offer will be submitted to landowners and their agent when details of the land-take of the route have been fully determined.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy Completion of this project will support the Council's SOA outcomes 2: We have infrastructure that supports sustainable growth and 5: People live active, healthier and independent lives. The project also supports achievement of the Scottish Government's objectives set out in the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (CAPS) and Let's Get Scotland Walking - The National Walking Strategy.
- 6.2 Financial To date the costs of the Cycleway have been financed by external funders, with grant funding income totaling £682,000 to date. It is intended to continue to bid for external funding to complete the Cycleway.  
There is evidence to indicate that people who are more active, for example by walking or cycling, are less likely to require social care service in later life which could result in a future saving to the Council although the value of this would be difficult to measure.
- 6.3 Legal Continued input will be required from Legal Services to support contractual agreements and land purchase, including a CPO should one be deemed necessary.
- 6.4 HR None
- 6.5 Equalities Completion of this project will provide opportunities for all in the Helensburgh – Cardross – Dumbarton corridor to travel more sustainably and actively by walking and cycling.
- 6.6 Risk There is a reputational risk to the Council if the project is not completed within a reasonable timeframe.
- 6.7 Customer Services None.

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