

**Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton Cycleway Update**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. This report updates Members of the progress made since the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee on 21 September 2017 in relation to the delivery of 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. In 2017/18 it is planned to extend the route through Cardross Village from Station Road to the eastern edge of Cardross on the A814. As identified at the public consultation event held in Cardross on Monday 19 June 2017 and supported by Cardross Community Council, the preferred route follows an alignment which requires negotiation with multiple landowners covering Geilston Park road, Cardross Playing Fields/Cardross Park and the farmland west of Geilston Burn.
- 1.3. Contact has been made with all of the identified landowners and negotiations are ongoing in order to gain the necessary permissions / ownership to construct the preferred route in 2017/18.
- 1.4. Ground investigation works and outline design work has been undertaken for the preferred route in order to quantify the work required to construct the route, including the bridge over Geilston Burn.
- 1.5. The construction of the 2017/18 phase will be funded by successful grant applications to Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and Sustrans.
- 1.6. Council Officers continue to work toward purchasing the necessary land to allow further phases of the route between Cardross and Helensburgh to be constructed in 2018/19 onward. Based on progress of these negotiations with landowners, a recommendation will be submitted to the 22 March 2018 Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee on the requirement for a new Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO).
- 1.7. Further discussions have taken place with Sustrans in order to identify potential availability of their specialist Street Design Team. The Sustrans Street Design team are experienced in community led consultation and their involvement would provide a specialist resource capable of in-depth community

orientated consultation in order to identify the requirements of the community and assist the community in developing potential solutions. Sustrans have confirmed that due to wider interest in accessing the skills of the Street Design team they have initiated a new application/'bid' process for the team. The application process starts on 22 Jan 2018 with the projects to be supported in 2018/19 expected to be announced in late March 2018. While this new process will slightly delay the start of the consultation process, the programme has sufficient flexibility to accommodate this without impact on the overall timescale.

1.8. A capital grant fund request has been submitted to SPT for £100,000 in 2018/19. If successful, this will provide 50% of the forecast costs of constructing another section of the route. It is planned to submit a similar grant funding request to Sustrans when applications for 2018/19 open in early 2018.

1.9. It is recommended that the Helensburgh and Lomond members:

1.9.1. Note the contents of this update report including the progress reported since the last report to the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee on 21 September 2017.

1.9.2. Note the Council's continued commitment to seek to purchase the necessary land by negotiation with relevant landowners between Cardross and Helensburgh prior to making a recommendation to the 22 March 2018 Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee as to the requirement for a new Compulsory Purchase Order.

1.9.3. Endorse the continued efforts of Council Officers to progress designs and land negotiations in order to construct the planned section from Cardross Station to the A814 in 2017/18.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1. Argyll and Bute Council has a long-standing commitment to the provision of a dedicated, high quality walking and cycle route linking Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton.
- 2.2. In 2017/18 it is planned to extend the route through Cardross Village from Station Road to the eastern edge of Cardross on the A814. The preferred route for this phase was identified through the public consultation event held in Cardross on Monday 19 June 2017. Design work for this phase has been developed, Council Officers have been engaging with relevant landowners to gain agreement to allow the route to be constructed.
- 2.3. The construction of the 2017/18 phase will be funded by successful grant applications to Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and SUSTRANS.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Helensburgh and Lomond members:

- 3.1. Note the contents of this update report including the progress reported since the last report to the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee on 21 September 2017.
- 3.2. Note the Council's continued commitment to seek to purchase the necessary land by negotiation with relevant landowners between Cardross and Helensburgh prior to making a recommendation to the 22 March 2018 Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee as to the requirement for a new Compulsory Purchase Order
- 3.3. Endorse the continued efforts of Council Officers to progress designs and land negotiations in order to construct the planned section from Cardross Station to the A814 in 2017/18

**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 within and between these settlements, including school pupils attending Hermitage Academy. Extending the route to Dumbarton links into the National Cycle Network (NCN) which signs 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. In 2017/18 it is planned to construct the phase linking from Cardross Railway Station to the junction with the A814 opposite the Geilston Gardens access road.
- 4.3. In order to provide the most direct route, the preferred route is via Geilston Park between Station Road and the playing fields. From Geilston Park the preferred route follows the south side of the playing fields and Cardross Park, crosses Geilston Burn in the vicinity of the railway and follows the north side of the railway to Murray's Crossing. Between Murray's Crossing and the A814 at the junction opposite the Geilston Gardens access road the route will utilise a combination of the existing farm access road, which will be upgraded to provide a suitable walking and cycling route, and separated, dedicated cycleway. Sections of the cycleway not on an existing road or track will be constructed to a minimum 2.5m width.
- 4.4. Construction of the 2017/18 phase of the route is reliant on the cooperation of the landowners, with whom the Council has initiated negotiations based on the preferred route. At present, these negotiations are ongoing with the objective of reaching agreements to allow construction work in spring 2018.
- 4.5. Construction costs of the phase to be constructed in 2017/18 are covered by successful grant fund applications to Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) for £75,000 and Sustrans for £75,000, providing a total budget of £150,000. In order to draw on these funds work must be complete by 31 March 2018.
- 4.6. The designs for the phases of construction planned from 2017/18 onwards have been updated to a minimum 2.5m wide shared-use walking and cycling path, referred to as a cycleway. This change is to allow the Council to access Sustrans funding as the previously proposed 2m wide shared-use path would not meet the minimum standards required by Sustrans to access funding. Widening the planned cycleway also improves accessibility to a safe route removed from the busy A814 for those with mobility aids including wheelchairs and to parents/guardians with a child's pram or buggy.
- 4.7. Phases of the Cycleway planned for construction from 2018/19 onwards require the Council to obtain the necessary land and future grant funding agreements to deliver these phases of the route. Council Officers continue to seek to engage with the relevant landowners and a final offer will be submitted to landowners and their agent once details of the land-take of the route have been fully determined and appropriate negotiations have taken place. The progress of these negotiations will directly influence any decision to progress a Compulsory

Purchase Order (CPO). An update on the land negotiations and a recommendation on the requirement for a new CPO will be presented to the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee on Thursday 22 March 2018.

- 4.8. Should a CPO be required to purchase any of the land required for the cycleway between Cardross and Helensburgh, a new CPO will require to be approved by the Council as design updates, such as widening the cycleway, have resulted in minor changes to the land required. The CPO approved by the Council in 2015 does not specify the land required for the updated design.
- 4.9. Consultation is planned for 2018/19 on the preferred route and design of the Cycleway between the edge of Helensburgh at Waitrose/Hermitage Academy and Helensburgh Town Centre/Sinclair St, including linking into the existing cycle routes to Rhu/HMNB Clyde/Garelochhead and via Blackhill to Arden. Holding the consultation over an extended period will allow engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including schools, community groups, community councils and significant employers in addition to traditional public consultation events. This will allow a deeper involvement with the public and key stakeholders to produce a design which will serve the needs of residents, visitors and businesses while commanding demonstrable public support.
- 4.10. It is planned to seek to draw on the specialist Sustrans Street Design Team to support the consultation. The Sustrans Street Design team are experienced in community led consultation and their involvement would provide a specialist resource capable of in-depth community orientated consultation in order to identify the requirements of the community and assist the community in developing potential solutions. Sustrans have confirmed that due to wider interest in accessing the skills of the Street Design team they have initiated a new application/'bid' process for the team. The application process starts on 22 Jan 2018 with the projects to be supported in 2018/19 expected to be announced in late March 2018. While this new process will slightly delay the start of the consultation process, the programme has sufficient flexibility to accommodate this without impact on the overall timescale.
- 4.11. In order to continue to progress the project in 2018/19, a capital grant fund request has been submitted to SPT for £100,000 in 2018/19. If successful, this will provide 50% of the forecast costs of constructing another section of the route. It is planned to submit a similar grant funding request to Sustrans when applications for 2018/19 open in early 2018

## **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. Design work on the preferred route between Cardross Station and the junction with the A814 opposite the Geilston Gardens access road has been updated and

discussions with the relevant landowners is in progress. This continues to progress the delivery of this phase of the Cycleway in 2017/18.

- 5.3. 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 and appropriate negotiations have taken place.
- 5.4. The Council will continue to seek opportunities to maximise public input to the project to ensure the Cycleway serves the needs of residents, visitors and businesses within Argyll & Bute. The plan to undertake consultation on the route within Helensburgh will progress this.
- 5.5. The Council's ongoing commitment to deliver this project is demonstrated by the grant fund application made to SPT for 2018/19 and planned funding application to Sustrans when applications open.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

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| 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  | The construction and land purchase planned for 2017/18 will be funded by grant fund awards from SPT and Sustrans.<br>There is evidence to indicate that people who are more active, for example by walking or cycling, are less likely to require social care services in later life which could result in a future saving to the Council although the value of this would be difficult to quantify. |
| 6.3 | Legal      | Continued input will be required from Legal Services to support contractual agreements and land purchase, including a CPO should this 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. The route has been designed to be DDA compliant and will provide a safe route removed from the  |

A814 accessible to those with mobility aids including wheelchairs and to parents/guardians with a child's pram or buggy.

- 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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