

Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton Cyclepath Update

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report updates Members on the progress made since the previous report to the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee on 14 March 2023 in relation to the delivery of a dedicated, high quality walking and cycle path linking Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton. The delivery of this path is a stated Council Priority.
- 1.2. Officers have approved one (1) change request from WSP, resulting in a cost increase of £6,479.51 taking the total cost of WSPs work to £259,907.47. This additional cost can be accommodated within the secured external funding from Transport Scotland's Places for Everyone (PFE) Programme, administered by Sustrans, and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport's (SPT) Capital Programme.
- 1.3. WSP did not complete their work package by the previously agreed deadline of 31 March 2023. WSP have submitted an updated programme and, subject to agreement, now expect to complete their work for end-July 2023. This timescale is dependent on securing landowner agreement to enable survey access and on continued positive engagement with other key stakeholders.
- 1.4. In March 2023, WSP sent land access requests for the purpose of non-invasive ecology surveys to the 15 affected landowners. Of these, 7 have agreed to allow access, 3 rejected the request but asked for direct contact from the Council, 3 rejected the request for access, and, at time of writing, WSP were unable to reach 2 landowners. The primary reasons for rejection of access appear to be around a loss of trust in WSP and the wider design process, exacerbated by the delay in providing feedback to landowners following initial meetings caused by the nearly 18 month pause in work by WSP. One landowner stating they opposed the selected route alignment and any proposals to cross their land, while another stated that the path crossing their land was not part of their revised business plan. The responses clearly indicate the need for the design team and the wider project to seek to rebuild trust with landowners if we are to progress this project in a cooperative approach.
- 1.5. Subsequent to WSPs work, Officers are working to identify further elements which will require to be undertaken following completion of WSPs work to complete the design package required for construction. This includes ground investigation (GI) surveys, ecology surveys which can only be undertaken during

summer months, a quality review of the design work undertaken by WSP and submission of planning application and related statutory permissions.

- 1.6. Following completion of the full design package, the Council's Estates Team will lead the land acquisition process with landowners in order to secure the land necessary to construct the designed route.
- 1.7. Officers are working to award a contract to a design contractor by end-June to identify the preferred route linking the existing cyclepath at Morrisons Supermarket / Hermitage Academy to Helensburgh Town Centre and the new section of segregated cycleway under construction at Helensburgh Waterfront, and to develop the preferred route to concept design stage. The outline programme for this work forecasts completion of design stages 0-2 (Feasibility, Route Alignment and Concept Design) by the end of 2023/24. This work is being funded via successful competitive applications to SPT's Capital Programme and Transport Scotland's PFE Programme.
- 1.8. While funding has been secured to complete the design stages of the project; based on current funding models, to pay for construction of the route further competitive applications will be required to a range of programmes including the SPT Capital Programme and the Transport Scotland PFE Programme. The PFE Programme requires a minimum of 30% of total construction costs are secured from non-Transport Scotland derived sources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.9. It is recommended that the Helensburgh and Lomond members:
 - 1.9.1. Note the agreement of one change requests from WSP at an additional cost of £6,479.51, taking the total cost of WSPs work to £259,907.47. This additional cost is covered by externally secured funding.
 - 1.9.2. Note amended completion date submitted by WSP of end-July 2023.
 - 1.9.3. Note that some elements of work will require to be completed separately following completion of WSPs work to finalise the full package required for construction.
 - 1.9.4. Welcome the progress towards the award of contract for the section of route linking Morrisons Supermarket/Hermitage Academy to Helensburgh Town Centre/Waterfront, and development of this to Concept Design stage.

Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton Cyclepath Update

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. This report updates Members of the progress made since the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee on 14 March 2023 in relation to the delivery of a dedicated, high quality walking and cycle path linking Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton. The delivery of this path is a stated Council Priority.
- 2.2. Full details of the project, including previous progress is available in the project update reports previously presented to this Committee.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Helensburgh and Lomond members:
- 3.1.1. Note the agreement of one change requests from WSP at an additional cost of £6,479.51, taking the total cost of WSPs work to £259,907.47. This additional cost is covered by externally secured funding.
- 3.1.2. Note amended completion date submitted by WSP of end-July 2023.
- 3.1.3. Note that some elements of work will require to be completed separately following completion of WSPs work to finalise the full package required for construction.
- 3.1.4. Welcome the progress towards the award of contract for the section of route linking Morrisons Supermarket/Hermitage Academy to Helensburgh Town Centre/Waterfront, and development of this to Concept Design stage.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1. The Council's Active Travel Team (1.7 FTE) is part of the Strategic Transport Team within the Development and Economic Growth Service. No Council funding is currently received by the Active Travel Team. All project costs, including internal staff costs, have to be funded via successfully securing highly competitive external challenge funds.
- 4.2. In 2022/23, the Active Travel Team secured £3.03M external funding for the development and delivery of a total of 32 projects across Argyll and Bute, including the Helensburgh – Cardross – Dumbarton Cyclepath. This required 22 separate competitive funding applications, to 8 separate funds.

Match Funding

- 4.3. Transport Scotland's Places for Everyone (PFE) programme, administered by Sustrans, requires a minimum of 30% of total construction cost is secured by the Council from alternative, non-Transport Scotland derived, sources. As the requirements placed upon the project by the Places for Everyone funding criteria and additional demands of Sustrans PFE Officers around elements of the design result in a premium design, and therefore expensive to construct, the 30% construction match funding requirement is forecast to be in excess of £2M. Phasing construction over a number of financial years will enable maximization of suitable external match funding, however this will result in a longer construction programme. Accelerating the construction programme will require additional match funding to be secured, from internal and/or external sources, which could prove challenging.

Design

- 4.4. Transport Scotland's PFE programme is structured around 8 project stages with a competitive challenge fund submission for the next stage(s) of funding which require approval from the Sustrans Project Board at the end of Stage 2 (Concept Design) and Stage 4 (Technical Design) to progress to the next stage. The project stages are (0) Strategic Definition, (1) Preparation and Brief, (2) Concept Design, (3) Developed Design, (4) Technical Design, (5) Construction, (6) Handover & Close Out and (7) In Use.
- 4.5. **Phase 1 Colgrain to Cardross & Phase 2 Cardross to Dumbarton**
- 4.5.1. Officers have approved one (1) change request from WSP, resulting in a cost increase of £6,479.51, taking the total cost of WSPs work to £259,907.47. This additional cost is for completion of design for the signals proposed at the junction of Ferry Road/A814, Cardross and can be accommodated within the externally secured funding for this work.
- 4.5.2. WSP did not complete their work package by the previously agreed deadline of 31 March 2023, with Ecological Appraisal, Technical Designs and Monitoring & Evaluation Plans outstanding. WSP have stated this was due to longer than forecast timescales for Network Rail, Scottish Water and landowners to respond to enquiries. Officers had previously identified that WSPs timescales for expecting responses from external organisations and individuals were extremely optimistic as part of a challenging programme they had set out. WSP have submitted an updated programme and, subject to Officer agreement, now expect to complete their work for end-July 2023. This timescale is dependent on securing landowner agreement to enable survey access and on positive continued engagement with other key stakeholders.
- 4.5.3. Land access requests for the purpose of non-invasive ecology surveys were sent by WSP in March 2023 to the 15 affected landowners. Of these, 7 have agreed to allow access, 3 rejected the request but asked for direct contact from the Council, 3 rejected the request for access, and, at time of writing,

WSP were unable to reach 2 landowners. The primary reasons for rejection of access appear to be around a loss of trust in WSP and the wider design process, exacerbated by the delay in providing feedback to landowners following initial meetings caused by the nearly 18 month pause in work by WSP. One landowner stating they opposed the selected route alignment and any proposals to cross their land, while another stated that the path crossing their land was not part of their revised business plan. From the responses received, there is a clear need for the design team and the wider project to seek to rebuild trust with landowners if we are to progress this project in a cooperative manner.

4.5.4. Due to the nature of ecological investigations, it is necessary for these to cover a wider area than the land directly occupied by the path. As such, 4 of the landowners contacted do not have land which the path will require to pass over.

4.5.5. Subsequent to completion by WSP of their work package further elements will require to be undertaken to complete the design package required for construction. This includes ground investigation (GI) surveys, ecology surveys which can only be undertaken during summer months, a quality review of the design work undertaken by WSP and submission of planning application and related statutory permissions.

4.5.6. Funding for the design development has been secured from the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) Capital Programme and Transport Scotland's PFE programme. The Transport Scotland PFE programme, funded by the Scottish Government, is a highly competitive challenge fund which requires projects to closely comply with the ever evolving design requirements set by the paid administrators of the funding, Sustrans.

4.6. **Phase 3 Helensburgh Town**

4.6.1. Officers are working to award a contract to a design contractor by end-June to identify the preferred route linking the existing cyclepath at Morrisons Supermarket / Hermitage Academy to Helensburgh Town Centre and the new section of segregated cycleway at Helensburgh Waterfront, and to develop the preferred route to concept design stage. The outline programme for this work forecasts completion of design stages 0-2 (Initial Business Case, Feasibility & Route Alignment and Concept Design) by the end of 2023/24. This work will include community engagement to ensure the route links the most appropriate locations and best serves community needs.

4.6.2. This work is being funded via a successful competitive application to the highly competitive Transport Scotland PFE Programme and to the SPT Capital Programme. Future stages of work will be subject to Officers successfully securing future competitive challenge funding.

Construction (stage 5)

4.7. **Cardross Rail Station to Geilston Burn**

- 4.7.1. Cardross Rail Station to Geilston Burn. The Council's Roads and Infrastructure Service have completed installation of most elements of the cyclepath through Cardross Park, with only a small amount of fencing still to be installed. This work has been funded by the SPT Capital Programme and the Scottish Government's Cycling, Walking and Safer Routes (CWSR) fund.
- 4.7.2. To protect the public, the bridge over the Geilston Burn has been fenced off until access is agreed to further land on the west side of the Burn to construct the path through to an accessible destination.

Maintenance

- 4.8. Consideration requires to be given the maintenance of the cyclepath, including sections of route already in place. At present, the Council does not receive any funding for the maintenance of cyclepaths and none of the current external funding sources for active travel include maintenance as an eligible cost. This anomaly has been repeatedly raised by Officers with Transport Scotland Officials and it is widely acknowledged to be inconsistent with the Scottish Government's commitments regarding capital funding for active travel projects.
- 4.9. The Roads and Infrastructure Service are the single service within the Council which possesses infrastructure maintenance teams appropriately trained and qualified to undertake maintenance of cyclepaths, however it is acknowledged these teams are already at capacity delivering the Roads and Infrastructure Service commitments. The Roads and Infrastructure Service has previously stated they will not adopt sections of cyclepath remote from the public road.

Programme

- 4.10. **Appendix 1** provides the current programme of the key stages and forecast timescales for each section of the Phase 1: Helensburgh to Cardross section of the Cyclepath; Phase 2: Cardross to Dumbarton; and, Phase 3: Helensburgh: Hermitage Academy to Town Centre.
- 4.11. **Appendix 2** provides an update with regard to the current position on landowner negotiations. **[EXEMPT]**

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1. Completion of the Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton Cyclepath will provide a dedicated, high quality, accessible walking and cycle route linking Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton. This route will provide opportunities for all in the Helensburgh – Cardross – Dumbarton corridor to travel more sustainably and actively by walking and cycling. This will provide a safe alternative to having to use a private car to travel between these communities and help lower Argyll and Bute's carbon footprint. Funding for these works has been secured from our key active travel partners with further bids being developed to enable the construction of further sections of the cycleway following completion of design work and as and when land acquisition has been concluded.

- 5.2. The delivery of the Helensburgh – Cardross – Dumbarton Cyclepath is dependent on securing highly competitive external challenge funding, committing appropriate match funding and securing access to private land for the route.

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** The design, construction and land purchase will be funded by external competitive funding applications. The Council has not contributed any funding to design or capital costs. There is strong evidence that people who are more active, for example by walking or cycling, have been physical and mental health and are less likely to require social care services in later life which could result in a future saving to the Council or HSCP.
- 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. **Fairer Scotland Duty:**
- 6.5.1 Equalities Completion of this project will provide opportunities for all in the Helensburgh – Cardross – Dumbarton corridor to travel more sustainably and actively by walking, wheeling and cycling.
- The route has been designed to be DDA compliant and will provide a safe and accessible route for those with mobility aids including wheelchairs and parents/guardians with a child's pram or buggy.
- 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty The route, once completed, will offer residents the opportunity to choose to travel using active travel, which are lower cost than alternative modes of transport. The route will also improve access to essential services, retail, leisure and employment

opportunities for residents living along the route, with studies demonstrating those who travelled actively had a higher monthly spend in local businesses than those who travel via motorised transport.

The path will also offer opportunities for individuals to travel for leisure, again encouraging spend in local businesses along and connected by the route.

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| 6.5.3 Islands | There are no adverse impacts. |
| 6.6. Climate Change | Active Travel is the least carbon intensive mode of travel. Providing the opportunity for residents and visitors to consider an alternative to having to use a private car to travel between these communities will help lower Argyll and Bute's carbon footprint. |
| 6.7. Risk | There is a reputational risk to the Council if the project is not completed within a reasonable timeframe. |
| 6.8. Customer Services | None. |

Executive Director with the responsibility for Development and Economic Growth: Kirsty Flanagan

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Appendix 1: Helensburgh, Cardross & Dumbarton Cyclepath Programme
Appendix 2: Update on Land Negotiations for Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton Cyclepath [EXEMPT]