

HELENSBURGH WOODEN PIER - UPDATE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee with an update following the decision to remove Helensburgh Wooden Pier from the project options within the Rural Growth Deal Tourism and Place Programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:-
- a) Accept the Consultants findings, particularly that a berthing facility at Helensburgh Pier cannot be operated on a revenue neutral basis, particularly where long-term capital replacement costs are accounted for, and that officers will no longer devote resources to pursuing a Council funded berthing facility; and
 - b) Agrees that the Head of Development and Economic Growth engages with Helensburgh Community Council and any other appropriate community group(s) who may express a wish to pursue options, including a potential asset transfer of Helensburgh Wooden Pier.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 Helensburgh Pier is a masonry structure with a timber extension, projecting 245m from the shoreline. It is a Grade C listed structure however, lack of operational use and vandalism has resulted to a deterioration of the condition of the pier and the berth at the pier head has also been subject to siltation. This culminated in the Council issuing a 'Notice to Mariners' in October 2018 advising that the pier is closed to all vessels.
- 3.2 Helensburgh waterfront has been a significant focus of regeneration activity in recent years, culminating in the opening of the new £25 million leisure centre and associated public realm improvements in September 2022. The leisure

centre development completed the long-running programme of regeneration of the esplanade, creating an attractive waterfront, which complements the wide range of independent, and chain retail and leisure facilities in the town.

- 3.3 **Figure 3.1** below, presents an overview of Helensburgh Pier and surrounding structures.

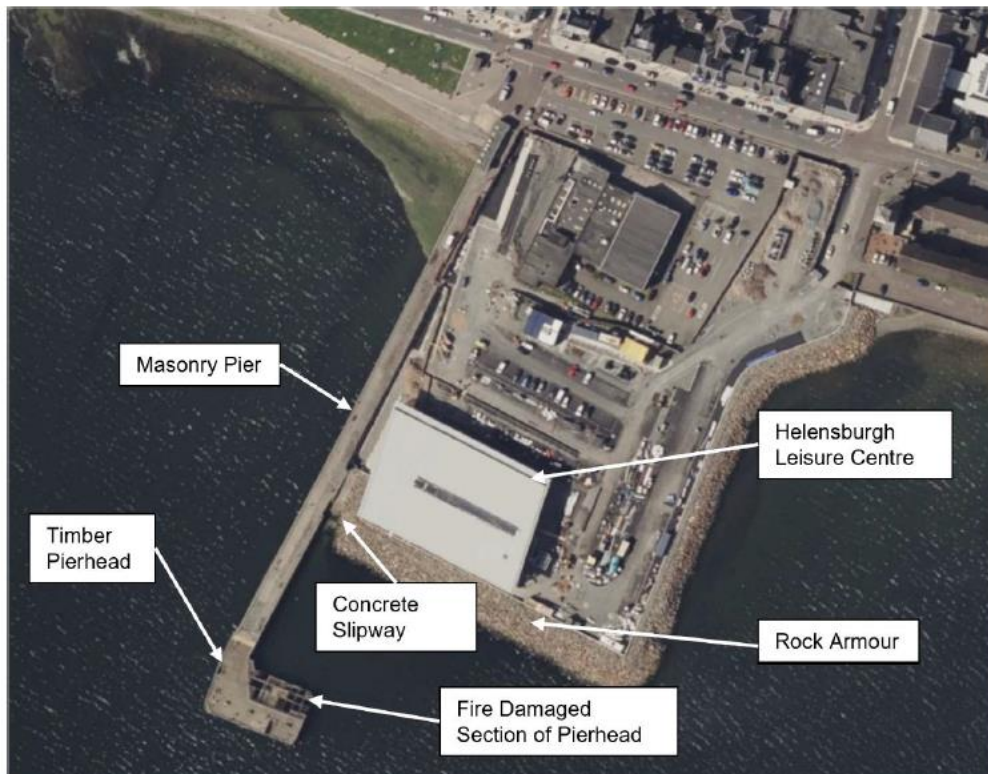


Figure 3.1: Helensburgh Pier Overview.

STANTEC MARKET SCOPING STUDY

- 3.4 The Council's Rural Growth Deal Programme Management Office (RGD PMO) were asked to consider redevelopment of Helensburgh Wooden Pier as part of the emerging RGD "Tourism – Creating a World Class Visitor Destination" programme. In particular, the feasibility of constructing a commercial pontoon / berthing facility to replace the current Wooden Pier head.
- 3.5 Argyll & Bute Council (A&BC) commissioned Stantec UK Ltd and partners Mott MacDonald to undertake a market scoping study exploring the market for using Helensburgh Pier and the design and costs of different options for upgrading the structure. The study is attached in the following link [Helensburgh Pier - Market Scoping Study](#)
- 3.6 The purpose of Stantec's scoping study was to identify whether there was a case for developing a more comprehensive business case for public sector investment in a commercial berthing facility at Helensburgh Pier, building on initial work by members of the local community. This included desk-based

research and 16 stakeholder interviews to determine the extent of the prospective market across key sectors.

3.7 The study considered the construction of a pontoon facility that would extend 100m in a south-south-west orientation (the same as the existing masonry pier) with a 41m access gangway in order to comply with the Equality Act (2010). A dredged channel would likely be required to allow vessels to navigate onto the pontoon berths at all states of the tide.

3.8 The following organisations took part in stakeholder interviews and research:-

- Argyll & Bute Council
- Destination Helensburgh
- European Cruise Services
- Firth of Clyde Boat Tours
- Glasgow City Boats
- Greenheart Wood Traders
- H.M Naval Base Clyde
- King’s Harbour Master
- Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park
- Northern Lighthouse Board
- Peel Ports Limited
- Transport Scotland
- Visit Scotland
- Waverley Excursions
- You & Sea

3.9 Stantec considered a number of key user groups and a summary of key points relating to each user group is below-

User Group	Key points:
Ferry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is absence of demand for a ferry service to use the Pier which would give a regular source of revenue income to support the running costs of redeveloped facility • Transport Scotland have discounted the option of establishing a cross-Clyde ferry service as part of STPR2. • HMNB Clyde have ruled out the possibility of ferry transport for staff from HMNB Clyde to Helensburgh Town Centre.
Cruise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large cruise liners dock at Greenock and prefer to use coaches to transport passengers to attractions and towns. Tendering is not seen as an attractive option for cruise ships due to resources required. • Limited demand from smaller domestic cruise ships at “bookends” of season. Demand would be insufficient to cover operational costs.
Marine Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Firth of Clyde is well served by commercial marinas, a number of which are in close location to Helensburgh. There is a significant risk that if a berthing facility were to be developed by Argyll and Bute Council, there would be a risk of market distortion and

	potential non-compliance with Subsidy Control Regulations.
Tours/Excursions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is limited demand from operators such as PS Waverley however due to not-for-profit status, they do not pay dues at Council ports. • The limited demand would be seasonal and would therefore not provide a regular revenue stream.
Operational Vessels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This user group have well established facilities currently in place and would be unlikely to use a redeveloped facility with any regularity therefore could not be relied on to provide a revenue stream.

4.0 CAPITAL COSTS OF A NEW BERTHING FACILITY

4.1 Stantec and Mott MacDonald considered high-level costs associated with a number of development options at Helensburgh Pier, which are detailed in the Market Scoping Report. Stantec considered four high level options for redevelopment with costs ranging between £517,500 for a lighter touch scheme to £3m for a scheme which would bring the wooden pier back into operational use. Further details are set out in **Table 4.1** below:-

Table 4.1 – Helensburgh Pier Cost Estimates

Option	Estimated CAPEX	Estimated Capital Dredging Costs	Allowance for design and consents (15%)	Total
Option 1: Demolish timber pierhead and make good end of masonry pier	£750,000	-	£112,500	£862,500
Option 2: Remove damaged section of timber pier and make good remaining	£450,000	-	£67,500	£517,500
Option 3: Remove damaged section of timber pier and repair / upgrade timber pierhead for re-use	£950,000	£1,675,000	£393,750	£3,018,750
Option 4: Remove timber pierhead and construct new pontoon facility	£2,050,000	£250,000	£345,000	£2,645,000

4.2 Capital costs of a new berthing facility would be in excess of £2.6m and it is anticipated that a functional berth would accrue operational costs of circa £100k per annum to cover staff costs, insurances, inspections and overheads such as power, lighting and service charges. This figure does not include an allowance for capital replacement or uninsured accidental damage, for which it is recommended that 20% of income is set aside in a bond / contingency fund.

4.3 On the basis of the costs identified and the lack of a regular, year round user such as a ferry service, it is considered unlikely that **a berthing facility at Helensburgh**

Pier could be operated on a revenue neutral basis, particularly where long-term capital replacement costs are accounted for.

- 4.4 The Rural Growth Deal Programme Board made the decision in May 2023 to remove Helensburgh Pier from consideration for funding under the “Tourism – Creating a World Class Visitor Destination” Theme of the RGD and re-profile funding to other projects. It is considered unlikely that a berthing facility at Helensburgh would satisfy the requirements of a Treasury 5 business case and as such, it will not be possible for this project to be considered for RGD funding. RGD tourism funding will now focus on the Rothesay Pavilion and Kintyre Seaports projects. This decision was endorsed by the Councils Policy & Resources Committee in August 2023.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee are asked to note that there remains an aspiration from a sub-group of Helensburgh Community Council to replace the current wooden pier with a berthing facility.
- 5.2 On the basis of the costs identified and the lack of a regular, year round user such as a ferry service, it is considered unlikely that a berthing facility at Helensburgh Pier could be operated on a revenue neutral basis, particularly where long-term capital replacement costs are accounted for. As such, at present, a viable business case cannot be made for a commercial berthing facility in Helensburgh.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – Helensburgh Wooden Pier was considered during the options appraisal process for the Rural Growth Deal.
- 6.2 Financial – It is unlikely that a berthing facility at Helensburgh Pier could be operated on a revenue neutral basis.
- 6.3 Legal – Subsidy control implications would require to be considered for a berthing facility at Helensburgh Pier.
- 6.4 HR – None at present.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
- 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – Equality Impact Assessments would be required as part of any future project proposals.
 - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – This would require to be considered as part of future business cases.
 - 6.5.3 Islands – No impact.

- 6.6 Climate Change – Environmental impact assessments might be required for future redevelopment schemes at Helensburgh Pier, particularly where capital dredging is required.
- 6.7 Risk – Risk associated with further deterioration of Helensburgh wooden pier sits with the Council.
- 6.8 Customer Service – None at present.

Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth

Policy Lead for Strategic Development: Councillor Robin Currie

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For further information contact:

Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth

fergus.murray@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Jonathan Welch, Rural Growth Deal Programme Manager

jonathan.welch@argyll-bute.gov.uk