

Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton Cyclepath Progress Report

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report updates Members on the progress made since the previous report to this Committee on 09 September 2025 in relation to the delivery of a high-quality walking and cycle route linking Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton.
- 1.2. Surveys: initial topographical and ecological surveys have been completed. Winter birds surveys necessary due to the proximity of the project to the Inner Clyde SSSI are ongoing and are forecast to be completed by spring 2026.
- 1.3. Phase 1: The design consultants, Connected Transport Planning (CTP), are undertaking a deliverability review re-considering both the route adjacent to the inland side of the railway line and a route adjacent to the A814 road. This deliverability review considers a range of relevant factors including construction works, drainage, land take, maintainability, landowner support and ecology. The team are working towards concluding the deliverability review of Phase 1 route options this calendar year. At time of writing, the review indicates that a route following the southern (seaward) side of the A814 would be more deliverable compared to a route following the inland side of the railway as well as offering additional benefits for future maintainability and personal safety perspectives. Therefore, at the time of writing the emerging preferred route for phase 1 is adjacent to the A814.
- 1.4. As part of the deliverability review of Phase 1, Officers and consultancy staff working collaboratively have continued to meet with landowners to seek their support for a single route. All landowners have provisionally stated support for a route following the A814 subject to localized design considerations. It is expected that having landowner support for a single route will enable faster development and delivery of the route and is a consideration in the route deliverability review process.
- 1.5. Phase 2: Following the deliverability review of the section of the route linking Cardross and Dumbarton, some amendments have been made to the concept design. The most significant amendment identified is to improve the design for the Ferry Road/Craigend Road/A814 junction. Realignment of Craigend Road improves the sightlines and access for the farms located on the private Craigend Road and has enabled the design for the junction of Ferry Road/A814 to be revised, with an updated design for a signalised pedestrian crossing in lieu of the previously promoted signalised junction. This updated design for Ferry

Road/A814 is forecast to be fully accommodated within the road corridor, therefore there is no requirement for any space from residential gardens. The design reduces the visual impact compared to the previous proposal to fully signalise the junction of Ferry Road/Craigend Road/A814. The changes are also forecast to improve visibility for drivers exiting from Ferry Road.

- 1.6. Landowners on the Phase 2 section linking Cardross and Dumbarton have agreed in principle to an outline design. The consultant's civil engineering team are now detailing the outline design up to developed design stage, suitable for future public engagement planned for spring/summer 2026.
- 1.7. The engineering team are working to define the ground investigation surveys required to enable the full engineering design, and will be engaging with relevant landowners to seek their agreement to undertake these surveys in the coming weeks. It is anticipated that surveys could be completed early in the new year, subject to securing landowner agreement.
- 1.8. Phase 3: Officers are working to tender for a new design team to progress the designs for Phase 3 linking Helensburgh Waterfront to Morrison's Supermarket from the current concept stage through developed and technical stages, subject to securing funding in future financial years.
- 1.9. Funding: Officers have continued engagement with colleagues in Transport Scotland and now expect to receive a funding offer for 25/26 in early December. Transport Scotland have confirmed that this funding offer can be backdated to cover costs incurred across the full financial year 25/26. Transport Scotland has also commenced the funding application process for 26/27, as active travel funding is only awarded for a single financial year at a time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.10. It is recommended that the Helensburgh and Lomond members:
 - 1.10.1. Welcome the continued positive engagement of landowners.
 - 1.10.2. Support the updated layout for the junction of A814 / Ferry Road / Craigend Road.
 - 1.10.3. Instruct Officers to progress the Phase 1 route on basis of the one which is identified as the most deliverable following conclusion of the deliverability review.
 - 1.10.4. Support efforts of Officers, subject to receiving suitable tender returns, to seek to appoint a design team to complete development of Phase 3 designs through Developed Design and Technical Design stages.

Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton Cyclepath Progress Report

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. This report updates Members on the progress made since the previous report to this Committee on 09 September 2025 in relation to the delivery of a high-quality walking and cycle route linking Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton.
- 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. Welcome the continued positive engagement of landowners.
- 3.1.2. Support the updated layout for the junction of A814 / Ferry Road / Craigend Road.
- 3.1.3. Instruct Officers to progress the Phase 1 route on basis of the one which is identified as the most deliverable following conclusion of the deliverability review.
- 3.1.4. Support efforts of Officers, subject to receiving suitable tender returns, to seek to appoint a design team to complete development of Phase 3 designs through Developed Design and Technical Design stages.

4.0 DETAIL

Funding

- 4.1. Officers have continued engagement with colleagues in Transport Scotland and now expect to receive a funding offer for 25/26 in early December. Transport Scotland have confirmed that this funding offer can be backdated to cover costs incurred across the full financial year 25/26.
- 4.2. Transport Scotland have commenced the funding application process for 26/27, as ATIF funding is only awarded for a single financial year. It is understood that previous applications will require to be updated and will be reconsidered against all other projects applied for in 26/27, but a new full application form will not require to be completed as most of the information will not have changed.

Landowner Engagement

- 4.3. Landowner investigation for Phase 1 (Moss Road, Colgrain to Cardross) has identified the land is held by 5 landowners. Phase 2 (Ferry Road, Cardross to Dumbarton) has a total of 6 landowners identified.
- 4.4. Phase 1: Officers and staff from the design consultants have continued to meet with landowners on Phase 1 of the route between Cardross and Helensburgh individually and as a group to seek landowner support for a single, deliverable route. All landowners have provisionally stated support for a route following the A814, subject to localized design considerations. It is expected that having landowner support for a single route will enable faster development and delivery of the route and is a consideration in the route deliverability review process.
- 4.5. Phase 2: Following some amendments to the concept design, landowners on the Phase 2 section linking Cardross and Dumbarton have agreed in principle to the outline design.
- 4.6. It is planned to continue dialogue with landowners as designs are developed to capture landowner views within the design development process.

Design

Phase 1 Colgrain to Cardross

- 4.7. Following securing the agreement of landowners, the initial non-invasive ecology and topographical surveys have been completed. Winter birds surveys are programmed to continue until spring 2026.
- 4.8. As a number of changes have occurred since the current preferred route alignment was selected in 2019, a deliverability review re-considering the route adjacent to the inland side of the railway line and a route adjacent to the A814 road is being undertaken by the design consultants, Connected Transport Planning (CTP). The purpose of this review is to identify the most deliverable alignment, considering a range of relevant factors including construction works, drainage, land take, maintainability, landowner support and ecology. The team are working towards concluding the deliverability review of Phase 1 route options this calendar year. At time of writing, the review indicates that a route following the southern (seaward) side of the A814 would be more deliverable compared to a route following the inland side of the railway. Both routes are forecast to provide a similar level of end-user benefits with the road route offering additional advantages in terms of natural surveillance and user safety. Therefore, at the time of writing the emerging preferred route for phase 1 is adjacent to the A814.
- 4.9. As part of the deliverability review of Phase 1, Officers and consultancy staff working collaboratively have continued to meet with landowners to seek their support for a single route. All landowners have provisionally stated support for a route following the A814. It is expected that having full landowner support for a single route will ultimately enable faster development and delivery of the route by avoiding compulsory purchase. Landowner support is therefore a consideration in the route deliverability review process.

- 4.10. Following conclusion of the deliverability review, and any decision required on route alignment to be developed, to continue to make progress with this project; it is proposed that the consultant's civil engineering team should progress to developing designs for the route identified as the most deliverable up to developed design stage, suitable for future public engagement in spring/summer 2026.
- 4.11. The engineering team should also define the ground investigation surveys required to enable the full engineering design and commence engagement with relevant landowners to seek their agreement to undertake these surveys early in 2026.

Phase 2 Cardross to Dumbarton

- 4.12. Following securing the agreement of landowners, the initial non-invasive ecology and topographical surveys have been completed. Winter birds surveys are programmed to continue until spring 2026.
- 4.13. The Ferry Road/Craigend Road/A814 junction design has been recast to realign Craigend Road thereby improving the sightlines and access for the farms located on the private Craigend Road. This has enabled the design for the junction of Ferry Road/A814 to be revised with an updated design for a signalised pedestrian crossing. This updated design can be fully accommodated within the road corridor, therefore there is no requirement for any space from private gardens, and reduces the visual impact compared to the previous proposal to fully signalise the junction of Ferry Road/Craigend Road/A814 while improving sightlines for drivers existing Ferry Road. The concept general arrangement drawing for the revised design is included as **Appendix 2**.
- 4.14. The consultant's civil engineering team are now detailing the outline designs up to developed design stage, suitable for future public engagement in spring/summer 2026.
- 4.15. The engineering team are also working to define the ground investigation surveys required to enable the full engineering design and will be engaging with relevant landowners to seek their agreement to undertake these surveys in the coming weeks. It is anticipated that phase 2 ground investigation surveys could be completed early in the new year, subject to securing landowner agreement.

Phase 3 Helensburgh Town

- 4.16. Officers are working to tender for a new design team to progress the designs for Phase 3 from the current concept stage through developed and technical stages, subject to securing funding in future financial years.

Land Acquisition

- 4.17. Previous discussions with landowners have confirmed they wish to provide the least land practical to deliver the path. As such, progression of land acquisition requires designs to be further developed to firmly identify the necessary land.

Once the design process has been completed, the Council's Estates Team will require to engage with landowners in a timely manner to progress land acquisition.

Construction

Cardross Rail Station to Geilston Burn

- 4.18. Cardross Rail Station to Geilston Burn. The Council's Roads and Infrastructure Service have completed most elements of the cyclepath through Cardross Park, with only a small amount of fencing still to be installed. It is expected that the costs for the remaining fencing work will require to be covered from a yet to be identified internal Council budget.
- 4.19. To protect the public, the bridge over the Geilston Burn will remain fenced off until access is agreed to land on the west side of the Burn to construct the path through to an accessible destination.

Maintenance

- 4.20. It is a requirement of the external funders that a written maintenance plan including confirmation of how this will be funded and delivered is developed as part of the design process. At present, the Council does not receive any funding for the maintenance of cyclepaths and none of the current external funding sources secured through competitive bidding for active travel include maintenance as an eligible cost. This anomaly has been repeatedly raised by Officers with Transport Scotland Officials and it is recognised to be inconsistent with the Scottish Government's commitments regarding capital funding for active travel projects.
- 4.21. The Roads and Infrastructure Service are the single service within the Council which includes infrastructure maintenance teams appropriately trained and qualified to undertake maintenance of cyclepaths. The Traffic and Development Officer for Helensburgh and Lomond is a member of the officer project group for the cyclepath and is providing input from Roads and Infrastructure Service on the designs to ensure these meet Roads and Infrastructure Service requirements for adoption.

Programme

- 4.22. **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.

Risk

- 4.23. Risk refers to events which have not yet happened but which could impact on the project if they were to happen. A risk can be negative or positive to the project. Risks are identified through the lifetime of the project and, where possible, mitigation is planned to minimise negative impacts or maximise positive impacts.

As risks evolve relatively slowly through the lifetime of a project, it is not expected that the tables below will alter significantly within the current stage of work.

4.24. Project risks relate to risks which could affect the overall project. Table 1 provides the top 5 identified project risks and planned mitigation.

Table: Selected Project Risks

Risk	Risk Description	Risk Impact	Mitigation
Land access	Inability to secure agreement for temporary access to land required to undertake surveys.	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positively engage with landowners to seek voluntary access agreements. 2. Consideration of Council's statutory powers if necessary.
Land acquisition	Inability to secure agreement for land required within an acceptable timescale and cost.	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engagement with landowners to gain acceptance of design. 2. Use of Council's Estates Team to lead land acquisition. 3. Consideration of option of a CPO.
Programme	Inability to meet challenging programme timeline.	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular review of programme. 2. Work with key stakeholders to understand programme drivers and barriers. 3. Establish realistic timescales for each package of work.
Funding	Inability to secure necessary funding to pay of either (a) design work; and/or, (b) construction costs.	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engagement with external funder(s) to ensure project meets their design and funding requirements. 2. Review funding options regularly to ensure funding sought/secured is most appropriate to the project. 3. Early engagement with Members to identify potential sources of construction match funding.
Community support	Loss of community support for the project.	Low	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consult community on key design decisions at appropriate time. 2. Seek to deliver project which meets community's key requirements. 3. Keep community informed via project updates at appropriate times, including area committee reports.

4.25. Design risk refers to risk that the design fail to meet the required standards and/or design conditions imposed by external factors, for example environmental requirements. Design risks, if allowed to occur, can become issues which may mean the project design has to be changed, which can cause delays and cost increases. Defects or failures in the design can also result in an increase in future maintenance costs. Table 1 provides the top 5 identified design risks and planned mitigation.

Table 2: Selected Design Risks

Risk	Risk Description	Risk Impact	Mitigation
Ecological Impacts	Working adjacent to the Inner Clyde SSSI and RAMSAR site results in	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage with regulators, e.g. NatureScot, at early stage in design.

	additional ecological requirements which the designs must meet.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Undertake comprehensive ecological surveys to inform design. 3. Develop full Habitat Regulations Appraisal to ensure ecological requirements taken into account in design.
Proximity to railway	The majority of the route is in proximity to the live railway and requires to ensure the designs do not negatively impact on the railway.	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Early engagement with Network Rail to understand their safety and operational requirements. 2. Seek to agree 'standard' approach to mitigating safety and operation requirements which can be applied to all or most of route. 3. Review of designs to ensure railway safety and operational risk is mitigated appropriately.
Ground Conditions	Lack of Ground Investigation (GI) limits understanding of the ground conditions the route will be constructed over.	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design route to be as robust as practicable. 2. Undertake Ground Investigation works at earliest practicable date.
Drainage	The design will require to cater for run-off and drainage, while satisfying regulatory requirements.	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop drainage designs through design process. 2. Engage with regulators, e.g. SEPA, at early stage in design. 3. Engage with landowners, as repository of knowledge of existing conditions, during design development.
Flood Risk	The route is close to and, in locations, within areas identified as at risk from 1 in 200 year flood events.	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop flood risk assessment at early stage in design process to identify key areas of risk. 2. Keep flood risk assessment under review through design process. 3. Design of cyclepath to take account of flood risk where appropriate.

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 design and construction of further sections of the cycleway as and when land acquisition has been concluded.
- 5.2. The delivery of the Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton Cyclepath is dependent on completing the design work, 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 Outcomes Improvement Plan outcomes 1: Transport Infrastructure and 3: Community Wellbeing. 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. External funding is not currently available to cover maintenance costs. To date, 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.
- 6.4. HR
None.
- 6.5. Customer Service
None.
- 6.6. Risk
There is a reputational risk to the Council if the project is not completed within a reasonable timeframe.
- 6.7. 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.
- 6.8. Fairer Scotland Duty
The route, once completed, will offer residents and visitors the opportunity to choose to travel actively, which is 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, thereby increasing opportunities to reduce socio-economic disadvantage.
- 6.9. 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.

6.10. 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.

6.11. Islands
Communities

There are no adverse impacts.

6.12. The Rights of the
Child (UNCRC)

Active travel is the most accessible mode of travel to young people, as it does not have any minimum age limits, does not require any form of licence, is free to use and is not tied to any fixed timetable.

All new active travel infrastructure is designed to be utilised by an unaccompanied 12 year old.

Engagement feedback demonstrates even stronger support for the delivery of the Helensburgh – Cardross – Dumbarton Cyclepath from younger members of the community than the already high overall level of community support. Wider engagement with school pupils indicates that the vast majority of pupils strongly support the provision of new active travel infrastructure, even where it would adversely impact other modes of transport.

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

Policy Lead: Cllr John Armour

28 November 2025

For further information contact: Colin Young
Strategic Transportation Delivery Officer
Colin.Young@argyll-bute.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Helensburgh, Cardross & Dumbarton Cyclepath Programme

Appendix 2: Revised Concept General Arrangement Drawing for Junction of A814 /
Ferry Road / Craigend Road.