

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-

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.

- 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 Infrac

