



# Agenda

## Special Meeting of Planning Committee

**Date:** Monday, 26 February 2018

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**Time:** 10.00

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**Venue:** Council Chambers,  
Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank

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**Contact:** Craig Stewart, Committee Officer  
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Dear Member

Please attend a special meeting of the **Planning Committee** as detailed above. The business is shown on the attached agenda.

Yours faithfully

**JOYCE WHITE**

Chief Executive

Distribution:-

Councillor Jim Finn (Chair)  
Bailie Denis Agnew  
Councillor Jim Brown  
Councillor Gail Casey  
Councillor Karen Conaghan  
Councillor Diane Docherty (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Douglas McAllister  
Councillor Marie McNair  
Councillor John Mooney  
Councillor Lawrence O'Neill

All other Councillors for information

Date of Issue: 21 February 2018

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**MONDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2018**

**AGENDA**

**1 APOLOGIES**

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are invited to declare if they have an interest in the item of business on this agenda and the reasons for such declarations.

**3 PLANNING APPLICATION DC17/177: ERECTION OF BRIDGE OVER RIVER CLYDE, WITH NEW ACCESS ROAD, UPGRADING AND WIDENING OF DOCK STREET, JUNCTION IMPROVEMENTS ON GLASGOW ROAD AND FORMATION OF NEW SHARED FOOTWAY/CYCLE WAY TO YOKER RAILWAY STATION, BY RENFREWSHIRE CITY DEAL TEAM 5 - 25**

Submit report by the Strategic Lead – Regulatory on the above application which has been referred to the Scottish Ministers for determination.

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## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

### Report by Report by Strategic Lead – Regulatory

Planning Committee: 26 February 2018

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**Subject:** Planning Application DC17/177; Erection of opening bridge over River Clyde, with new access road, upgrading and widening of Dock Street, junction improvements on Glasgow Road and formation of new shared footway/cycle way to Yoker railway station, by Renfrewshire City Deal Team

#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 To agree the Council's position on an application which has been referred to the Scottish Ministers for determination.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee agree to **object to the proposal** for the reasons set out in the conclusion below, and such further reasons as may arise from the completion of the review of the transportation assessment, which shall be reported to the Committee verbally.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Renfrewshire City Deal Team has applied for planning permission for the erection of a new swing bridge over the River Clyde and the construction of new and improved access roads and other associated works. Collectively these works are known as the Clyde Waterfront Renfrew Riverside project (CWRR), and they are part of a wider package of related proposals largely within Renfrewshire, which are part of the City Deal project. Renfrewshire Council is also considering two separate applications for the Glasgow Airport Investment Area (GAIA) and for the construction of a new cycleway and cycle bridge over the Black Cart River at Inchinnan. Those two applications do not have any direct impacts upon West Dunbartonshire. The CWRR proposals are subject to an extensive range of supporting information, including an Environmental Impact Assessment, a Retail and Economic Impact Assessment, and a Transportation Assessment.
- 3.2 The application site straddles the boundaries of three local authorities (West Dunbartonshire, Glasgow City and Renfrewshire Councils) and

therefore three identical applications were made to the retrospective authorities. The Scottish Ministers have issued directions to each of the three planning authorities calling in the three applications for the CWRR for determination by the Ministers themselves. Accordingly, West Dunbartonshire Council is not the determining planning authority for this application. This report therefore seeks agreement of the Council's view of the proposal, which the Scottish Ministers would take into consideration in their determination of the application.

- 3.3** The proposed bridge would span the Clyde immediately to the east of Rothesay Dock, and would be a cable-stayed structure accommodating a 7.3m wide carriageway flanked by a 2m footway on its east side and a 3m shared foot/cycleway on the west side. It would have a minimum vertical clearance of 5.5m above high water level, and to allow the passage of larger vessels the bridge would swing open with each leaf rotating to the left (when viewed from the respective approach road). A small plant room building would be constructed on the north side of the river to the west of the bridge, and a larger two-storey building containing both plant room and control room would be built on the south bank. It is estimated that the bridge would open for ships approximately 4 times per day, with each of these events closing the bridge to road uses for approximately 40 minutes.
- 3.4** To the north of the bridge, Dock Street would be upgraded and extended to become the bridge approach road. The section of Dock Street between the Glasgow Road junction and the entrance to Rothesay Dock oil terminal would be widened to accommodate four lanes of traffic and a widened footway/cycleway on its west side (the existing footway on the east side being unchanged). This would involve encroachment into the car park of Holm Park stadium and an existing commercial yard. The junction with Glasgow Road would be remodelled to incorporate traffic signals and pedestrian crossing facilities. The junction into the oil terminal would also be signalised and would include a cycle crossing for National Cycle Route 7 which crosses Dock Street at this point. To the south of the oil terminal access, a new section of Dock Street would be built accommodating three lanes of traffic with footway and shared cycleway as above. This would lead to a new roundabout at the eastern end of the Rothesay Dock basin, with which the new two-lane bridge approach road and access roads to Rothesay Dock and an adjacent residential development site (within Glasgow) would connect. In addition to providing access into neighbouring sites the roundabout would also allow vehicles to turn around in the event of the bridge being closed to traffic, however variable message signs would be provided at various locations on main roads leading towards the site in order to forewarn drivers of bridge closures. The other significant works within West Dunbartonshire would comprise widening of the existing footway on Glasgow Road and Mill Road to become a shared foot/cycleway to Yoker railway station.

- 3.5** South of the bridge all of the proposed works would be within Renfrewshire. It is not necessary to describe these works in such detail, but the main element of the proposal is a new road connecting the Inchinnan Road (A8) with King's Inch Road (Braehead). This new road (referred to as the Renfrew North Development Road) would open up the western end of Renfrew riverfront for new residential development, as well as relieving traffic congestion in Renfrew town centre. The road from the proposed new Clyde bridge would join the Renfrew North Development Road at a roundabout near the centre of the existing Meadowside Street.
- 3.6** The Scottish Ministers have appointed a Reporter to consider the applications and make a recommendation to Ministers. Although the Council had requested a longer period to allow it to fully consider its position on the proposal in the light of certain supporting documents which were submitted late in the application process, the Reporter has intimated the Council must provide its comments on all aspects of the proposal other than roads/traffic issues by 26 February, and its comments on roads/traffic issues by 5 March.

#### **4. Main Issues**

##### Consultations

- 4.1** The application has been subject to extensive consultation and neighbour notification. Consultees included the Civil Aviation Authority, Glasgow Airport, Glasgow City Council, the Health and Safety Executive, Historic Environment Scotland, Marine Scotland, the Northern Lighthouse Board, Renfrewshire Council, the Royal Yachting Association Scotland, the Scottish Rights of Ways and Access Society, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage, the West of Scotland Archaeology Service and the Council's Environmental Health Service. All of these consultees are either supportive of the proposal or have no objection subject to various technical issues being addressed. These matters will be considered by the Scottish Ministers in their determination of the application and in the formulation of any conditions if permission is granted.
- 4.2** West Dunbartonshire Council Economic Development Service note that notwithstanding extensive engagement with partner authorities and consultants there are a number of areas in which the Retail and Economic Impact Assessment is not definitive. In particular the suggestion that the bridge may trigger retail investment at Clydebank to compete with Braehead is by no means certain. The likely absence of public transport over the bridge and its regular closure to traffic at unpredictable times both

mitigate against the probability of economic and social benefits for West Dunbartonshire.

- 4.3** West Dunbartonshire Council Roads and Transportation Service has advised that following discussions with Renfrewshire Council and the submission of a Variable Message Signs report and Transport Assessment in support of the planning application, they took the decision to seek external, independent professional advice to review and model the traffic flows and implications thereof. The process to complete this has been protracted as some of the base line data required verification, and they anticipate that a final draft will be submitted to Council officers on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018. It is therefore not possible to include this in the present report, and a verbal update on the outcomes of the analysis will be given at the Special Planning Committee.
- 4.4** Notwithstanding the outcome of this report, the Roads and Transportation Services have indicated that they have a number of concerns about this project that have yet to be fully addressed, specifically the lack of clarity on public transport provision, the additional loadings on the West Dunbartonshire road network and the resultant increase in journey times, queue lengths and associated congestion. Once a full review of the independent report has been undertaken the Roads Service will be in a position to provide their observations and recommendations on the application as submitted.
- 4.5** Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) offers comments on various aspects of the proposal, notably:
- Whenever the bridge is opened to allow river traffic through it would be closed to road traffic for over 40 minutes, which would disproportionately inconvenience pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. It is therefore essential that a comprehensive communications strategy is in place to alert bridge users of impending closures well in advance;
  - Waiting shelters should be provided for pedestrians and cyclists;
  - SPT consider that due to the nature of the wing bridge (with its lengthy and unpredictable closures to traffic) it is extremely unlikely to be suitable for use as a bus route. Nevertheless, road infrastructure should be designed to allow such use in the future;
  - The traffic modelling indicates that the bridge should have minimal impact on existing bus journey times, however some clarification of the methodology of the trip modelling is required;
  - Disruption to existing bus corridors during construction should be kept to a minimum.

#### Representations

- 4.6** Nine representations have been received in relation to this application, of which two support the proposal and seven object to it. The two



representations of support are from local residents who commute over the River Clyde to work, and who welcome the proposal for the following reasons:

- the bridge would be preferable to the existing ferry service which is expensive and unreliable, and the replacement minibus provided when the ferry is not operating does not cater for cyclists;
- the bridge would avoid long detours to reach the Erskine Bridge or Clyde Tunnel using congested and polluted roads;
- the bridge would provide a lifeline between communities on opposite banks of the Clyde and create opportunities for cross-river economic growth;
- the development would allow environmental improvements to the existing derelict land at the site of the bridge. Landscaping should provide appropriate wildflowers and habitat improvements

**4.7** The six objections are from five local residents and two agents acting on behalf of the owners of the Clyde Shopping Centre and the housing development land at Rothesay Dock East. The objections from the residents are summarised follows:

- the bridge would adversely impact on the economy of Clydebank town centre;
- the bridge would enable the Braehead Shopping Centre to have the same impact on Clydebank Town Centre that it has already had on Paisley Town Centre;
- Clydebank requires a new waterfront shopping centre to rival Braehead rather than a bridge to Braehead;
- the projected job creation figures appear to be an exaggerated guess to justify the project;
- the bridge would benefit Renfrewshire and Glasgow far more than Clydebank;
- if an additional Clyde bridge is to be built it should be built at Dumbarton to benefit tourism;
- traffic estimates understate the amount of traffic which would use the bridge;
- severe inconvenience would arise when the bridge is opened for ships;
- through traffic from parts of Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire would overload local streets;
- there would be traffic chaos on Glasgow Road and Mill Road at peak times;
- consultation with local residents has been poor and more people would have objected if public engagement had been better.

**4.8** The representation on behalf of the Clyde Shopping Centre objects for the following reasons:

- the bridge would result in significant leakage of retail expenditure from Clydebank to Braehead, resulting in shop closures, job losses and lack of investment in Clydebank Town Centre;
- the bridge proposal threatens the renewal and recovery of the town centre and conflicts with regional and local policies on regeneration;
- the bridge proposal would not provide any benefits for Clydebank Town Centre and would undermine the benefits arising from recent investment and from the Queens Quay development;
- the proposal is contrary to national and local Town Centre First policy;
- the supporting information fails to adequately consider policies relating to town centres, employment and regeneration

- 4.9** The representation on behalf of the owners of the housing development land to the east of Rothesay Dock objects on the basis that the proposal does not give due recognition to the fact that Glasgow City Council has already decided it is minded to grant planning applications for housing on that land.

#### Development Plan Policies

##### Clydeplan

- 4.10** Policy 3: Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal, in support of the Vision and Spatial Development Strategy supports the Member Authorities in the development of the City Deal Programme and related projects. The Renfrewshire Council's City Deal project, in principle, is supported by Clydeplan. Paragraph 4.8 of Clydeplan indicates that the Infrastructure Fund will be used to improve public transport. Proposals for the bridge do not include public transport provision at present and, as a result, it can be argued that the proposed bridge will not improve public transport access to West Dunbartonshire and Renfrewshire. Arguably, if the bridge closure periods increase traffic delays it could actually be to the detriment of existing public transport. Therefore, it could be considered that the Bridge does not technically comply with the Spatial Strategy of Clydeplan as it does not provide Sustainable Transport nor will it minimise carbon footprints.
- 4.11** The main focus of Clydeplan's Spatial Development Strategy is the 'Development Corridor, which includes the Clyde Waterfront. The corridor provides opportunities for a range of co-ordinated actions of which the following are applicable to the consideration of the Bridge:
- reconnect the adjacent communities with the River Clyde and connections across it; and
  - generate large-scale economic activity maximising the opportunities for sustainable travel between work and home.

Although the Bridge will connect the communities of Clydebank and Renfrew, it does not at present maximise the opportunities for sustainable travel between work and home. As the REIA acknowledges, car ownership is significantly lower in Clydebank than it is in Renfrew; therefore, for people to maximise opportunities for jobs, for example in Renfrewshire or within the Glasgow Airport Investment Area, they will need access to a car as there are no current proposals to provide public transport provision across the bridge.

**4.12** It can therefore be argued that the Bridge, although expanding the economic development opportunities on the South of the river for both communities, also restricts the access to these opportunities to the relative detriment of populations on the North of the river by not providing, within the current proposals, public transport provision which is at odds with the Spatial Development Strategy of Clydeplan. Simply put, public transport on the South of the river to opportunities on the South will be better than public transport from North to South. Should public transport be provided as part of the proposals for the Bridge then it would accord fully with Policy 3 and the Spatial Development Strategy.

**4.13** Policy 4 – the network of Strategic Centres are the hub of the city region's communities supporting a range of economic and social activities. It is recognised that the economic and social significance of Glasgow City Centre and its diverse range of core functions sets it apart from all other strategic centres. To support the Vision and Spatial Development Strategy all strategic development proposals should:

- protect and enhance the development of the network of strategic centres in line with their role and function, challenges and future actions set out in Schedule 2;
- protect and enhance the long term health of Glasgow City Centre to ensure there is no detrimental impact on its role and function, as set out in Schedule 2 and in support of Joint Strategic Commitment – Glasgow City Centre; and
- recognise that whilst the Network of Strategic Centres is the preferred location for strategic scale development, such proposals are subject to the sequential approach set out in Scottish Planning Policy and the assessment of impact on the other Strategic Centres in the network and town centres to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on their role and function.

**4.14** Clydebank Town Centre is recognised as a Strategic Town Centre for retail, leisure, employment, business, public transport hub, community. Clydeplan recognises that the town centre faces a series of challenges, in particular, the quality of retail offer compared to similar sized/format town centres and the quality of evening/leisure offer. Clydeplan also recognises that development of key sites and buildings to enhance retail and leisure

offer is required. It is noted that Braehead is identified as a commercial centre in Clydeplan, rather than a town centre.

- 4.15** Policy 4 of Clydeplan also confirms that the Sequential Approach, set out in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), applies to the network of strategic centres, and therefore that investment is directed firstly to town centres ahead of other centres, and that protecting the role and function of town centres is the paramount policy concern. In this regard, as set out below, there are concerns that the proposal could have significant detrimental impacts on the function and vitality of Clydebank Town Centre, in favour of the sequentially lower priority Braehead commercial centre.

**Policy 17: Promoting Sustainable Transport**

- 4.16** Policy 17 promotes Sustainable Transport and consideration should be given to the potential strategic options set out in Schedule 13. It is noted that a bridge between Clydebank and Renfrew is not specifically mentioned in Schedule 13. However, “cross-river links” are referred to as one of the “potential options” for ‘radial corridor 11: Glasgow Airport/ Bishopton/Inverclyde’ and ‘non-radial corridor A: Barrhead to Renfrew, Glasgow Airport and Riverside North’. As these are set out as potential sustainable transport interventions for Local Authorities and transport providers to consider taking forward, it is clear that the promotion of such projects should be balanced against the strategic protection of town centres set out in Policy 4 of Clydeplan.

- 4.17** Policy 19 relates to Glasgow Airport and Sustainable Transport Access and the Bridge is part of the package to improve connectivity to Glasgow Airport and the Glasgow Airport Investment Area. However, the proposal does not provide a sustainable transport solution which underpins the Spatial Development Strategy of Clydeplan, as there is no provision made for public transport over the bridge within the current proposals. Those residents in Clydebank, who do not have access to a car, will not be able to access Glasgow Airport or the job opportunities in the investment area due to no public transport provision being made within the proposal at present. Therefore, without the provision of public transport the proposed Bridge is the most appropriate solution to increase access to Glasgow Airport.

**Adopted West Dunbartonshire Local Plan (2010)**

- 4.18** The overarching Development Strategy of the Local Plan identifies the following aims:
- to promote sustainable development and communities;
  - to create economic well-being and a sustainable and competitive place through the development of strategic locations; and
  - to maintain and enhance the natural and built environment.

- 4.19** Policy RP1 strongly promotes the regeneration of key vacant and underused sites in West Dunbartonshire to drive the sustainable economic development of the area. Clydebank Riverside is an identified regeneration area, including Queens Quay, and the future success and benefits of redeveloping this area are closely tied to its links with Clydebank Town Centre and vice versa. The redevelopment of Queen's Quay is now proceeding and is doing so without the requirement for a bridge. If the Town Centre was to suffer significant decline, there may also be an impact on the recent success of developing Queen's Quay.
- 4.20** Policy LE6 identifies Clydebank and Clydebank Riverside as strategic business and industrial centres and a Core Economic Development Area to support the economic competitiveness of the metropolitan area. The finger quay at Rothesay Dock is located within this area and is designated as an Existing Industrial/Business Use site, and the sliver of land along the boundary with Glasgow City as an Industrial and Business Use Opportunity site. The latter designation corresponded with an industrial use designation for the former Rothesay Dock railway sidings land within a previous Glasgow City Local Plan, but subsequently that land has been allocated for housing and planning permission has been granted for such use. It is considered that the proposed bridge would accord with this Policy.
- 4.21** Policy SUS 1 sets out that development proposals that meet social and economic needs will only be supported if they do not compromise the area's future well-being and environment. It is not clear that the proposal does meet a social need but could be argued that it would contribute to a wider economic need for West Dunbartonshire as part of the city region and overall city deal; however, it is considered that the proposal could compromise the area's future well-being as discussed below.
- 4.22** Policy RET1 requires new retail, commercial leisure, cultural and public service developments and other key town centre uses should adopt a sequential approach to site selection with first preference should be for town centre sites, then edge of town centre sites, generally adjacent to the town centre boundary and then third preference should be Commercial Centres. Although this policy is technically not applicable to the consideration of a Bridge, the proposed Bridge would allow a competing commercial centre to be accessed potentially at the expense of a town centre. Therefore, the sentiment and principle of the policy is directly relevant in this instance.
- 4.23** The Local Plan Policy acknowledges that shopping remains the primary activity in town centres and therefore it is important to retain this core function. Therefore, by providing access to a directly competing

commercial centre, such as Braehead, could significantly affect the primary activity of Clydebank Town Centre.

- 4.24** Policies E 2A and E 2B - The proposal is in close proximity to the Inner Clyde Site Special Protection Area and an Environmental Impact Assessment has been submitted alongside the proposal. It is not envisaged that there will be adverse impacts arising from the construction and operation of the bridge, in terms of disturbance or pollution, on the Redshank which are the qualifying interest of the Special Protection Area which cannot be addressed by applying appropriate conditions.
- 4.25** Dock Street was identified in Schedule T3 as part of a Transport Scheme site for the development of the North Clydeside Development Route (NCDR) and Clyde Fastlink busway, which were at the time regarded as short-term projects that would have been delivered within 5 years of the plan. These projects have since been indefinitely postponed or altered so that they do not enter West Dunbartonshire. The proposal would involve upgrading of Dock Street in a manner similar to that which might have been expected had the NCDR gone ahead.

**West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan: Proposed Plan (2016)**

- 4.26** Chapter 7 of the Proposed Plan sets out the Council's belief that "Town centres are at the pinnacle of the network hierarchy. They are a key element of the economic and social fabric of West Dunbartonshire, at the heart of communities and centres for commercial and civic activity.
- 4.27** Policy SC1 - Although this policy is technically not applicable to the consideration of a Bridge, the proposed Bridge would allow a competing commercial centre to be accessed. Therefore, the sentiment and principle of the policy is directly relevant in this instance. The policy affirms the Council's commitment to supporting the network of centres and not supporting development that has an unacceptable impact on sequentially preferred centres. Table 5 of the Proposed Plan states that the role and strategy for Clydebank is that it serves as a destination town centre for West Dunbartonshire as a whole and the north-west Glasgow conurbation (western parts of Glasgow, Bearsden and Milngavie).
- 4.28** The step-change in ease of access from Clydebank and its catchment to the larger centre at Braehead particularly for car owners who are likely to have higher average incomes, means that significant diversion of trade and investment away from Clydebank Town Centre is a realistic prospect. The harmful impact that would result to the town centre would be contrary to this policy.

#### Clydebank Town Centre – Our Changing Place

- 4.29** The Proposed Plan's Strategy for Clydebank Town Centre recognises that Clydebank is the largest of the three town centres in West Dunbartonshire. It serves the whole of West Dunbartonshire, western areas of Glasgow and beyond, particularly for non-food shopping. The enhancement of the town centre is a key strategic outcome for the Proposed Plan. In particular, the Strategy for Clydebank is focussed on maintaining the Clyde Shopping Centre as an attractive retail core; to support the redevelopment of the Playdrome Leisure Centre and to support the evening economy and leisure offer of the town centre. The Strategy recognises that the town centre has a fairly limited evening and leisure offer with only a cinema and limited food and drink venues open into the evening. Increasing this offer would improve the overall attractiveness of the town centre as a place to visit and Clydebank as a place to live. The redevelopment of Queen's Quay, which is now underway, is designed to increase population and thus demand in Clydebank Town Centre with exactly that end in mind.
- 4.30** The proposed bridge is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the strategy of the Proposed Plan as it will increase the ease of accessing retail and leisure offerings at Braehead, particularly for those not dependent on public transport. It is therefore considered that the proposal is contrary to the retail policies and development strategy of the Proposed Plan.
- 4.31** The site is allocated as an Existing Business/Industrial Area and proposals for alternative uses are assessed against the criteria contained in Policy GE2. It is considered that the proposed bridge would promote economic development of adjacent land and is therefore considered to accord with this Policy.
- 4.32** The proposal is in close proximity to the Inner Clyde Site Special Protection Area and SSSI in terms of Policy GN5. An Environmental Impact Assessment has been undertaken and submitted alongside the proposal. It is not envisaged that there will be adverse impacts arising from the construction and operation of the bridge, in terms of disturbance or pollution, on the Redshank which are the qualifying interest of the Special Protection Area and the SSSI which cannot be addressed by applying appropriate conditions.

#### Regeneration and Economic Benefits

- 4.33** The Glasgow City Region City Deal Economic Strategy's ambitious vision for 2035 is: "A strong, inclusive, competitive and outward-looking economy, sustaining growth and prosperity with every person and business reaching their full potential". According to the Renfrewshire Council Strategic Business Case from April 2016 the Clyde Waterfront

Renfrew Riverside project (CWRR) project is ranked 1st in the City Deal infrastructure project list in terms of gross value added (GVA) and is expected to deliver £634 million of GVA towards the overall City Deal programme at a time when the project costs were estimated as £78.29m. The budget for delivering the project at outline business case has since increased to £90.677m. Although the proposal does not directly create permanent employment opportunities it is estimated that the improved connectivity will help to will generate an additional 600 jobs within the City Region.

- 4.34** Rothesay Dock and Dock Street includes several pockets of vacant and underused land which are allocated for industrial use (and which are unsuitable for other uses due to proximity to the Rothesay Dock oil terminal and/or noise levels under the Glasgow Airport flightpath). The development of a bridge providing convenient access across the river to major employment areas such as Glasgow Airport and Braehead and also to the M8 motorway, would undoubtedly increase the attractiveness of these sites for industrial and/or business uses. The proposal would therefore make a positive contribution to the regeneration of the Dock Street area. However this has to be seen in the context of the proposals in the overall CWRR proposals to create significant amounts of new less constrained development land South of the river, closer to the airport and M8.
- 4.35** The proposed bridge would also have wider economic and regeneration impacts throughout Clydebank. It is possible that locations such as the Clydebank Business Park may become slightly more attractive for commercial uses due to the improved cross-river access. Additionally, the bridge would improve access to employment on the opposite side of the river, giving Clydebank residents better access to jobs in Renfrewshire and conversely making jobs in Clydebank more accessible to residents of Renfrew.
- 4.36** Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire Councils jointly commissioned a Retail and Economic Impact Assessment from independent consultants, which seeks to quantify the economic and retail impacts of the proposal. In terms of employment, it concludes that the bridge will not affect population levels within Clydebank and Yoker (which are projected to increase as a result of Queen Quay and other developments regardless of whether the bridge is built). However, improved access to job opportunities as a result of the bridge is expected to increase employment levels in the long term (from 56% to 59%). In the event of public transport being provided over the bridge there would be an increase in the proportion of working age residents classified as “highly skilled” (from 31% to 33%), but this benefit would not arise if no public transport is available.



### Town Centres

- 4.37** The proposal has the potential to give rise to significant shifts in retail expenditure patterns, due to the proximity of the proposed bridge to both Clydebank Town Centre and the Braehead shopping centre / retail park. Although Clydebank is a strategic town centre and is a preferable location for retail development to Braehead in terms of national and regional Town Centre First strategies and the sequential approach to the siting of retail development, in practice Braehead is a much larger centre than Clydebank. As a result of its position close to the M8 and its extensive provision of free parking Braehead already has a large catchment area and draws expenditure from the surrounding wider area. In contrast, Clydebank's role as a regional shopping destination has declined in recent years, in part due to shoppers from Dumbarton and beyond having been lost to Braehead. Nevertheless, Clydebank town centre remains an important retail centre for its immediate catchment area of Clydebank and parts of western Glasgow, as well as retaining some of the expenditure from communities further west.
- 4.38** There is therefore an obvious concern that the development of a bridge at this location would result in the further abstraction of retail and leisure spending from Clydebank town centre to Braehead. Braehead already features a greater range of shops and leisure uses than Clydebank, and permission has been granted for a significant expansion of the centre. It is therefore a more attractive destination for comparison retail and leisure trips, due to the number and range of retail and leisure facilities available. The proposed bridge would increase the accessibility of the centre decreasing journey time significantly, at least for those customers who have access to a car. If the bridge is built the distance from Braehead to Clydebank town centre would be only 2.6 miles. For comparison, Paisley town centre is 3.8 miles from Braehead and has experienced a marked reduction in retail expenditure since the Braehead shopping centre opened.
- 4.39** The Retail and Economic Impact Assessment (REIA) attempts to quantify the impacts on Clydebank and other retail centres. It details estimated expenditure for the years 2020 and 2035 under the following possible circumstances:
- "Counterfactual". No bridge is built, but projected population increases (notably from Queens Quay) result in a modest increase in expenditure;
  - "Scenario 1". The bridge is built and public transport links are established across it, linking Clydebank directly with Braehead and other locations south of the river;
  - "Scenario 2". The bridge is built but it is not used by public transport (for reasons discussed further below);

Scenarios 1 and 2 are further broken down into “reduced investment” and “continued investment” estimates. In the reduced investment situation retail operators would limit further investment in Clydebanks Town Centre due to its proximity to Braehead, whereas in the continued investment situation the current projected level of investment would remain. The estimated figures for Clydebanks Town Centre relative to the counterfactual are as follows:

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2035</b>
counterfactual (no bridge)	£223.7m	£232.8m
public transport over bridge, continued investment in Clydebanks	-£0.34m (0.2%)	+£0.71m (0.3%)
no public transport over bridge, reduced investment in Clydebanks	-£0.37m (0.2%)	+£0.71m (0.3%)
no public transport over bridge, continued investment in Clydebanks	-£0.37m (0.2%)	-£0.77m (0.3%)
public transport over bridge, reduced investment in Clydebanks	-£0.67m (0.3%)	-£1.4m (0.6%)

- 4.40** If these figures are accepted as accurate then the impact of the bridge upon Clydebanks Town Centre would be relatively minor, with even the “worst case” scenario of reduced investment and no public transport producing only a 0.6% reduction in expenditure within the centre in the long term compared to the counterfactual scenario, and due to population growth the total expenditure in the centre would still have increased by almost 4% over the period.
- 4.41** However, following extensive engagement with our partners at Renfrewshire Council and the consultants engaged by both parties to complete the Retail and Economic Impact Assessment report there remain a number of factors that have not been made sufficiently clear in the final report. Due to limitations in the time the REIA was based on existing retail expenditure data and it was not possible to undertake extensive new survey work. Consequently the REIA is technically focussed on quantitative data and has not had the advantage of the breadth of qualitative measures which would normally be identified through a comprehensive survey of shopping habits and behaviours. As a result of these limitations, it is not considered that the projections in the REIA can be accepted as definitive, and they do not take sufficient account of the likely changes in shopping habits. Such changes are notoriously difficult to predict accurately, but it is not accepted that opening up access to a retail centre approximately 3 times the size of Clydebanks town centre through greater accessibility and within such a short distance of it could produce such minimal impacts upon expenditure patterns, and the evidence of the Braehead shopping centre’s previous impact upon other nearby town centres does not support such a conclusion.

**4.42** The REIA figures are also questionable in other respects. For example, both of the scenarios suggest a slight positive impact on expenditure levels in Clydebank if existing levels of retail investment were maintained after the bridge was built. Even then, the REIA does not predict any significant variation in population levels between the scenarios, so increased expenditure within Clydebank could only arise from a substantial increase in incomes within the Clydebank catchment as a result of the bridge (i.e. sufficient to outweigh the increased leakage of expenditure to Braehead) or from a net spending benefit to Clydebank as a result of the bridge (i.e. people from Renfrew spending more money in Clydebank than people from Clydebank would spend in Braehead, relative to the counterfactual situation). These assumptions are not considered to be realistic.

**4.43** Therefore, whilst it is difficult to estimate the impacts, it is reasonable to assume that the construction of a bridge would result in a significant loss of comparison and leisure expenditure from Clydebank town centre to Braehead. There would therefore be a likelihood of existing retail and leisure operators closing units in Clydebank either because of duplication with branches in Braehead or because of loss of footfall, and it would become more difficult to attract new operators to Clydebank. The impact on convenience spending would be likely to be less significant as leakage to Braehead would probably be lower and it is theoretically possible that some residents in Renfrew may choose to shop at Clydebank supermarkets. However, it is considered that overall there would be a significant adverse impact upon the vitality and viability of the town centre.

#### Walking, Cycling and Public Transport

**4.44** The proposed bridge includes provision for pedestrians and cyclists, along with upgrading of routes leading to the bridge including cycleway connections to Yoker railway station and to employment destinations within Renfrewshire. It would therefore create opportunities for cross-river journeys by sustainable means. At present, such trips are possible using the Renfrew Ferry at Yoker, but as this is subject to fares and timetable restrictions a bridge would doubtless be more attractive to many users. On the other hand, the bridge itself would be subject to relatively frequent and prolonged closures to allow ships to pass, and this would cause more inconvenience to pedestrians and cyclists than to motorists (who would have the option of and be able to more quickly divert to the existing alternative routes). It would be possible to mitigate this somewhat by providing shelters for people waiting to cross the bridge in inclement weather.

**4.45** In terms of public transport, the bridge would seem to be of limited benefit. While it would allow pedestrians to cross the bridge on foot to reach public

transport services on the opposite side (e.g. giving residents of Renfrew access to Yoker station), it is considered unlikely that the bridge would be able to support regular bus services. As the bridge would be closed to traffic for prolonged periods and at irregular times to allow the passage of ships, it would be impossible to operate a reliable timetabled bus service across it. The likely lack of public transport across the bridge would limit the benefits for residents without access to a car, and car ownership within Clydebanks is significantly below the national average. Nevertheless, if the bridge were to go ahead it would be desirable to provide infrastructure for bus services on its approach roads so as not to preclude the provision of innovative forms of service or of services terminating on either side of the bridge.

- 4.46** It is likely that the proposed bridge would result in the cessation of the Renfrew to Yoker ferry. While it is not within the West Dunbartonshire Council boundary it is used by West Dunbartonshire residents and the ferry is of some cultural significance as the last survivor of the many ferry services which once linked communities along the upper Clyde.

#### Environmental

- 4.47** The application is subject to an environmental impact assessment, which seeks to identify the impacts of the CWRR project both in itself and cumulatively with the GAIA project. As the application has been referred to the Scottish Ministers, whether the assessment results are accurate and that the mitigation proposals would be sufficient to ameliorate any adverse environmental impacts arising from the construction or operation of the bridge would be determined by the Scottish Ministers.

#### Residential Amenity

- 4.48** The proposed bridge and its new / upgraded access would not be adjacent to any existing houses within West Dunbartonshire, although it would border a housing development site within Glasgow City immediately over the Council boundary. It is understood that Glasgow City Council will be submitting separate comments on the relationship of the bridge to the existing and proposed residential development within their Council area.
- 4.49** The proposed improvements to the footway and cycleway leading to Yoker railway station would not have any significant impact on residential amenity. This route borders the high flats at Yoker which are largely vacant and are intended to be redeveloped in the future, so any new development on the site would take account of the widened footway/cycleway.
- 4.50** In the wider area, the bridge would give rise to changes in traffic patterns which would result in increased traffic on some streets. The estimated increases in peak hour traffic on selected residential streets north of the

Clyde is set out in the EIA as follows (note that these figures may be subject to revision following the independent review of the Transportation Assessment):

- Yoker Mill Road (Clydebank/Yoker) + 48%
- Dumbarton Road (Yoker) + 20%
- Glasgow Road (Clydebank) + 14%
- Alderman Road (Knightswood) + 18%
- Kelso Street (Yoker) + 13%
- Argyll Road (Clydebank) + 9%
- Kilbowie Road (Clydebank) + 8%

- 4.51** Of the streets affected within West Dunbartonshire, most are already busy through roads and it is not considered that the additional traffic using Glasgow Road or Kilbowie Road would significantly affect the amenity of residential properties fronting these streets. However, Yoker Mill Road is primarily a residential street and although it currently carries some through traffic it is not designed for this purpose and is already subject to congestion. The proposal would result in a significant increase in traffic using Yoker Mill Road and it is considered that this would adversely affect the amenity of local residents.

#### Design

- 4.52** The application is supported by a design and access statement which sets out the design concept for the bridge. In addition to the technical requirements associated with an opening bridge over a commercial waterway, the design has been informed by the desire to create a visually iconic crossing as befits such a significant new piece of infrastructure. The bridge would consist of two opening leafs which would swing open horizontally in opposite directions, with each leaf being supported by twin towers splayed outwards from the bridge base, with parallel cables supporting the deck. It is considered that the bridge would become a significant new landmark on the river.

#### Conclusions

- 4.53** In principle, the improvement of transport links across the River Clyde is to be strongly encouraged. In addition to strengthening links between neighbouring communities and giving local residents increased access to employment and other facilities, the proposal would contribute to the regeneration of the Clyde waterfront on both sides of the river.
- 4.54** However, it is considered that the construction of a bridge at this location brings a real risk of a significant abstraction of retail and leisure expenditure away from Clydebank town centre, to the serious detriment of its vitality and viability due to the increased accessibility of the Braehead shopping centre. The proposal would therefore create significant

problems for Clydebank Town Centre. While for many residents the reduced retail/leisure offer and employment within Clydebank may be offset by access to the Renfrewshire area, the impact would disproportionately disbenefit people who do not have the use of a car, for whom the increased distance and lack of public transport would make it difficult to take advantage of these new opportunities.

- 4.56** Regrettably, it is considered that the negative impact of increasing the influence of Braehead on Clydebank town centre would outweigh the economic and social benefits of the bridge, and would potentially undermine the benefits to Clydebank of the investment in the Queens Quay regeneration. In addition to this, the proposal would give rise to a loss of residential amenity in streets near the bridge, notably Yoker Mill Road.
- 4.57** The outcome of the independent Roads report is awaited and will be reported verbally to the Committee together with the Roads and Transportation Service's observations and recommendations, which may include further grounds for objection. The Roads and Transportation Services have provisionally indicated that they have a number of concerns about this proposal specifically the lack of clarity on public transport provision, the additional loadings on the West Dunbartonshire road network and the resultant increase in journey times, queue lengths and associated congestion.
- 5. People Implications**
- 5.1** There are no people implications.
- 6. Financial Implications**
- 6.1** There are no financial implications for the Council in terms of this report.
- 7. Risk Analysis**
- 7.1** There are no known risks to the Council.
- 8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**
- 8.1** None.
- 9. Consultation**
- 9.1** The application was subject to statutory pre-application consultation by the Renfrewshire City Deal Team, with a series of events held on both sides of the River Clyde. A total of 149 comments were received in relation to

the pre-application consultation, of which 121 supported the project and 14 did not. The application was subject to normal neighbour notification and publicity, and representations received are detailed in Section 4.6- 4.9 above.

## **10. Strategic Assessment**

**10.1** This proposal has implications for the following Council strategic priority:

- **A strong local economy and improved job opportunities.** The proposal would increase access to employment south of the River Clyde and may make some sites within Clydebanks more attractive for investment, but this would be offset by a likely decline in employment within Clydebanks town centre;

**Peter Hessett**  
**Strategic Lead- Regulatory**  
**Date: 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018**

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**Appendix:** None

**Background Papers:**

1. Application forms and plans.
2. West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010
3. West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan Proposed Plan 2016
4. Consultation Responses
5. Representations
6. Environmental Impact Assessment
7. REIA Report

**Wards affected:** Ward 6 (Clydebanks Waterfront)





