

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee: 3 December 2008

Subject: Strathleven Corridor Initiative

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the intention to develop an outline business case for the Strathleven Corridor for submission to the Scottish Government. This submission would form an application to attract development funding to progress the project to a detailed development design stage.

2. Background

- 2.1** A report to Council on 27 February 2008, recommended bids for the Council's General Services Capital Plan 2008/2009, which was approved. This included a total allocation of £250,000 for the Strathleven Corridor Canal Development.
- 2.2** The Committee will be aware of the work that has been undertaken to date by West Dunbartonshire Council and its key partners - Strathleven Regeneration Company, Scottish Enterprise, and British Waterways - to establish the Strathleven Corridor as a major development opportunity. The Strathleven Corridor is an area of West Dunbartonshire which has experienced prolonged economic decline.
- 2.3** The Strathleven Corridor has experienced a number of instances of flooding in the past which frequently affects Dumbarton town centre, the National Cycle Route south of Renton, and various residential areas along the route of the Leven. Large areas within the corridor are also at a 1 in 200 year statistical risk of flooding, including significant areas of Dumbarton.
- 2.4** The Strathleven Corridor has to date been formed from a number of individual projects. These include:
- Bowling Harbour;
 - the Esso site;
 - the A82 link road;
 - Dumbarton town centre;
 - Alexandria town centre;
 - Lomondgate;

- the New Lomond Canal; and
- the West Riverside at Balloch

These projects are at various stages of development, ranging from pre-development brownfield sites, to others at masterplanning stage and some undergoing phased construction work.

3. Main Issues

3.1 As part of the submission to the Scottish Government, West Dunbartonshire Council and its partner British Waterways have to prepare and make the case for development funding support for the “Strathleven Corridor”. As part of the Council’s submission additional studies have to be carried out on the following issues:

- flooding;
- waterflow and the route of the Lomond Canal; and
- impact appraisals.

British Waterways have given a commitment to match funding of the project with the Council.

3.2 The central component of the Strathleven Corridor project is the flood mitigation measures that would result from the development of the Lomond Canal and additional flood infrastructure. There is an underlying duty on the Council to promote flood mitigation work on the Leven and there would be significant benefits to the various projects and surrounding areas from the flood prevention measures.

3.3 For 2008/2009 there are various pieces of work that will have to be undertaken to advance the production of the outline business case that will incur spend from the £250,000 budget contained in the General Services Capital Plan. More specifically these include:

- Revisit the flood modelling and cost model (original by Babbie 2004);
- Investigate flood risk aspects of canal project as part of general feasibility/deliverability of the canal proposals;
- Survey of river bed in Dumbarton Harbour area;
- Land ownership search of riverside; and
- Appraisal of the socio-economic and environmental impact of the projects.

It is anticipated that the total expenditure this current financial year on these works, including the production of the outline business case document, would amount to circa £150,000.

- 3.4** The pieces of work listed above would contribute to the production of an outline business case. The business case would ensure that each of the projects listed in paragraph 2.4 are presented as part of a single strategic proposition. Rather than approaching the Corridor as a number of separate projects in the same area, a 'plan of plans' is proposed to be developed to join the projects up in a coherent manner which will help realise greater benefits for the area and prevent a fragmented approach. As stated, the flood prevention measures would form a central part, and common element of this overarching cohesive programme.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** Provision has been made for these projects within the approved General Services Capital Programme. The benefits to West Dunbartonshire Council and the wider area of the continuing work to the Strathleven Corridor would be significant.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** Failure to submit an outline business case to the Scottish Government could jeopardise the ongoing economic development benefits the redevelopment of the Strathleven Corridor could generate within the local authority boundary and surrounding area.

The work included in the Strathleven Corridor development will deliver on the Council's duty to promote flood mitigation works within the area.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1** There is an opportunity for the Council to take forward an outline business case to the Scottish Government to attract development funding to progress the project to a detailed design phase.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1** It is recommended that the Committee:

- **note the intention to progress towards the submission of an outline business case to the Scottish Government as a basis to attract development funding to progress the project to a detailed development design stage;**

- note the project programme as detailed on paragraph 3.3 required to be undertaken to produce the outline business case and agree the allocation of funds to the identified projects; and
- delegate authority to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to ensure the most robust outline business case be prepared for submission to the Scottish Government.

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Date: 7 November 2008

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: Report to Council of 27 February 2008 entitled General Services Capital Plan 2008/2009

Wards Affected: 1, 2 and 3