

## Greenock Town Centre Regeneration Forum (GTCRF) Minute of Meeting

Held Wednesday 15 May 2024 at 1pm by Hybrid Format in Boardroom 2, Greenock Municipal Buildings and via Videoconferencing Microsoft Teams.

### ATTENDING

Cllr J Clocherty (Chair)	Inverclyde Council - Ward 4
Cllr F Brennan	Inverclyde Council - Ward 4
Cllr G Brooks	Inverclyde Council - Ward 4
Cllr J Crowther	Inverclyde Council - Ward 7
Cllr P Armstrong	Inverclyde Council - Ward 3
M Coventry	Trader Representative - Wee Crafty Owl Shop
C Jewell	Trader Representative – Cradle Care
C Kincaid	Trader Representative - Spec Savers
A Crawley	Greenock Central Residents Action Group
C Fleming	Inverclyde Tourist Group (ITG) - Chair
Insp. P Thompson	Police Scotland - Inspector Community Policing
L Cushnaghan	Oak Mall - Manager
S O'Dowling	Oak Mall - Duty Manager
S Arkinson	Oak Mall Retail Consultant - Property Management - Reith Lambert
R Ahlfeld	Inverclyde Community Development Trust - Chief Executive Officer
E Cannon	River Clyde Homes - Senior Housing Manager
S Vernal	River Clyde Homes - Housing Services Manager
R Orr	River Clyde Homes - Head of Asset and Regeneration
N McIlvanney	Inverclyde Council - Head of Service, Regeneration, Planning and Public Protection
E Montgomery	Inverclyde Council - Head of Physical Assets
M McNab	Inverclyde Council - Service Manager, Public Protection
R Braddick	Inverclyde Council - Service Manager (Corporate Policy, Performance and Communications)
J Horn	Inverclyde Council - Physical Regeneration Manager
M Thomson	Inverclyde Council - Environment & Technical Finance Manager
G Leitch	Inverclyde Council - Team Leader, Consultancy
S Christie	Inverclyde Council - Cultural Services Manager
E Dickie	Inverclyde Council - Team Leader, Communications and Tourism
A Johnston	Inverclyde Council - Business Development Officer, Town Centres
AM Bagstad (Minute)	Inverclyde Council - Committee Officer

### 1.0 **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interests**

1.1 JC welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Cllr Clocherty, Cllr Brennan, Cllr Brooks, J Horn and AM Bagstad present, all others accessed the meeting remotely.

1.2 Apologies received from C Elliott, Cllr Robertson, H Kuboyama, JA Wilson and E Baird.

1.3 There were no declarations intimated.

## **2.0 Approval of Minute and Matters Arising**

2.1 Minute of the meeting held 14 February 2024, were distributed prior to the meeting.

2.1.1 It was noted the minute had the month of March instead of February and will be amended.

2.1.2 Minute approved by JC.

2.2 Matters arising will be covered under the Agenda.

## **3.0 Police Scotland Update**

3.1 PT advised that Town Centre (TC) Officers are dealing with a significant level of shop lifting especially at Tesco.

3.2 Officers are also dealing with bogus/scammer calls, where victims think the police is calling them to ask them to take money from their accounts for police forensic reasons and they are currently investigating these incidents.

3.3 It was noted that Oak Mall traders have been notifying Mall security of any criminal incidents.

Oak Mall Traders are requested to make best use of radio Link system to alert other shops and Town Centre patrol officers to known shoplifters being in the vicinity, so they can all be on the lookout and to ensure instances of shoplifting are reported at the time when an incident happens by calling 101 or 999.

3.4 It was highlighted that cars are stopping/getting trapped in the middle of the signalised junction at the end of West Blackhall Street (WBHS), leading to Grey Place and Dalrymple Street and it was suggested that a box-junction is put in place.

It was noted the issue has been raised with IC Road Officers who are monitoring the situation. Once WBHS has been changed to a one-way system, a decision will be made on whether a box-junction is required.

3.6 It was noted that apart from one camera on WBHS, which is awaiting a new pole, the Council's TC Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system is fully operational.

3.7 Insp Thompson reiterated the importance of reporting all incidents to the police, as it helps them with building intelligence. He added there are various methods for reporting crime and more information can be found at [link to Police Scotland contact page](#) and [link to an online form for reporting incidents to Police Scotland](#).

3.8 It was advised that Chief Inspector DK has left K division and has been replaced by Acting Chief Inspector DD.

### **Decided:-**

- **IC Officers to keep a watch and brief on the Signalised Junction at WBHS, Grey Place and Dalrymple St, to alleviate congestion.**
- **Oak Mall Traders requested to operate the Radio Link system to alert other shops and Town Centre patrol officers to known shoplifters being in the vicinity.**
- **All TC Traders requested to consistently report all criminal incidents to Police Scotland, to help with building intelligence.**

#### **4.0 Greenock TCRF Budget**

4.1 A Greenock TCRF Budget report up to April 2024, was disseminated prior to the meeting.

4.2 It was highlighted that no proposals were received in relation to the unallocated funds of £149k. However, Chair and Senior Officers agreed to earmark some of these funds, for projects that are identified from the TC Action Plan.

JC added that if there are any further WBHS works that arise out with the scope of the current works, these funds may also be considered for those projects.

4.3 It was highlighted that two previous funding requests had been made as follows:-

1. Engagement of a Promotional Management Company to arrange/manage street activities on WBHS.
2. The installation of Across Street Wires for advertising/marketing/Christmas decoration use.

It was noted owner's authorisation is being sought in relation to item 2 however, it was again requested that funding is earmarked for these two requests.

4.4 The report showed that £94k has been allocated for TC Signage and it was noted that traders have been consistently asking for improved directional signage at the new Cruise terminal, to direct passengers towards WBHS and the Town Centre.

4.4.1 It was highlighted, that since COVID and the move of the Cruise Terminal, footfall on WBHS has plummeted and the only method of advising passengers how to get to WBHS is via the Tourist Group.

4.4.2 It was requested that a digital and interactive sign is erected at the Cruise Terminal as soon as possible.

IC Officers advised appraisal works had been carried out, to identify the type of signage and possible locations to erect signage, which is still to be concluded. It was further advised that this item would be merged into the TC Action Plan project, for a more coordinated roll out.

Officers will look at possible digital signage.

4.4.3 JC requested the Signage Project is added to the next meeting's Agenda.

4.4.3 It was also requested that consideration is given to providing appropriate directional traffic flow signage for tourists, to enable safe navigation when crossing roads in a foreign country.

4.4.4 A discussion took place with regards to the vandalised West Stewart Street (WSS) underpass and how unsightly this is for the TC. It was noted that a considerable amount of money had been spent to upgrade the underpass in 2023, shortly thereafter, it was severely vandalised.

4.4.5 It was further noted that the WSS Underpass area is also strewn with litter and leaves and IC Officers committed to ensuring the cleanliness of the area is better maintained.

**Decided:-**

- **£149k unallocated funds to be earmarked for expediated projects resulting from the Action Plan, WBHS, WSS and any other TC projects.**
- **Senior Officers to earmark funds for the two Trader requested projects.**
- **TC signage item to be added to next meeting's Agenda.**
- **IC Officers to expediate signage project and consider possible digital signage.**
- **IC Officers to consider appropriate traffic flow signage for safe navigation of tourists.**
- **WSS Underpass' cleanliness to be maintained more frequently.**
- **Chair and IC Officer to visit WSS area and Underpass to identify regeneration projects for improving the look of the TC.**

## 5.0 Inverclyde Council and Partnership Updates

### 5.1 REPORT UPDATES

A short Inverclyde Council Projects update report was distributed prior to the meeting.

#### a) **Customhouse Quay Clock Restoration**

It was noted that the Custom House Clock scaffolding has been removed. Some detail works are being carried out, but the project is near to completion.

#### b) **Customhouse Quay Square Road Works**

It was noted Cobble works are ongoing.

### 5.2 VERBAL UPDATES

#### a) **Stewart Centre**

Stewart Centre (SC) improvement works were carried out in 2023 utilising the TCRF Placed Based Funding allocations.

Chair and Senior Officer plan to meet to assess any outstanding SC works and also look at addressing the WSS Underpass vandalism and will bring this back to the next Forum meeting.

**Decided:-**

- **Chair and IC Officer to meet and assess outstanding SC works and possible Underpass Vandalism resolution.**

#### b) **Greenock Town Centre Action Plans - Shared Prosperity Funding (SPF) and Unlock Your Highstreet**

Officers advised that the Unlock Your High Street request was identified as a project that would be best placed to be merged under the Greenock TC Action Plan project, for taking forward.

TC Action Plan consultation dates for Greenock have been provisionally scheduled for the last week of June 2024. Officers will issue an email confirming the date in due course.

It was requested that everyone takes the time to be involved in the consultation process, to gather as many views and ideas as possible.

Consultation feedback will be provided in due course.

**Decided:-**

- **Unlock your High Street request to be carried out under the TC Action Plan project.**
- **IC Officers to confirm and send date for TC consultation events.**

**c) Towns Fund (Levelling Up Fund)**

A Towns Fund presentation was shown at the meeting ([Appendix 1](#)).

It was noted the newly formed Towns Board has recently gathered to discuss long-term plans.

The composition of the New Towns Board was announced as follows:-

- Lord (Baron) William Haughey (Chair)
- Ronnie Cowan (MP)
- Stuart McMillan (MSP)
- Elizabeth Robertson (Inverclyde Council - Ward 4 Councillor)
- Francesca Brennan (Inverclyde Council - Ward 4 Councillor)
- Damian Kane (Chief Inspector - Police Scotland)
- Dr Poonam Gupta (OBE, CEO of PG Paper)
- Keith Wilson (Director of RC Smiths & Company Ltd)
- Elizabeth (Lizzy) Todd (President, Inverclyde Chamber of Commerce)
- Charlene Elliot (CEO of Communities and the Voluntary Sector CVS Inverclyde)

The UK Government provided guidance which sets out the Greenock area of focus and Boundary (slide 3), which the Towns Board have adopted.

The guidance also set out key themes to drive interventions (slide 4), but it was noted that more bespoke interventions can be identified by the Towns Board. Bespoke interventions would require the submission of a full project business case.

Slide 5, highlighted Key Deadlines, Funding style and possible borrowing. However, it was noted that an extension to the Submission Plan date is being sought, to meet Council Committee approval cycle.

Slide 6, sets out the next steps for the Towns Board.

It was noted that the guidance also sets out the demand for effective consultation and engagement with the wider public.

Officers' next steps are the development of a website for providing updates and posting papers.

**Decided:-**

- **Development of an information website/section for New Towns Board**

**d) Levelling up Fund (LUF) Transforming the ‘Heart of the Town**

A LUF presentation was shown at the meeting ([Appendix 2](#)).

It was noted that Officers and Consultants are moving closer towards a detailed design phase.

It was advised the new road layout and junction has been principally approved by Transport Scotland.

Public Realm design works are close to appointing a demolition contractor.

Slide 6, set out the Next Steps for Officers and it was noted that the Engagement Strategy will be coordinated together with the TC Action plan consultation events in June 2024.

A media strategy is also being developed to ensure key information is communicated effectively.

1. It was noted from a previous meeting, that a designated shop/area within the Oak Mall would be used for the engagement/consultation process and was this still the plan.

Officers confirmed there will be a permanent location within the Oak Mall for the public to visit and engage in the consultation process.

2. It was noted that an update on the King Street Carpark would be provided at a later meeting.
3. It was requested that an information section on the IC Website could be made available to provide updates and progress on all TC projects.

Officers advised there is a section on the Council Website for this project, but the page requires an update. Once updated, a link to the page will be shared.

4. Concerns were raised due to the current level of traffic congestion on the roads within Inverclyde. Officers were requested to take note of this and ensure the new signalised junction and pedestrian crossings that replaces the Bullring Roundabout do not exasperate traffic congestion.

Officers advised that the pedestrian crossings will be phased to change with traffic flow. However, officers also highlighted that new Highway Code legislation came into effect in 2022 and they need to be cognisant of pedestrian priorities. ([Link to Updated Highway Code](#))

Officers further confirmed that Transport Scotland are aware of the wider traffic congestion issues and are phasing in solutions.

**Decided:-**

- **Media strategy for effective communication of project.**
- **Designated area within Oak Mall to be identified for consultation and engagement events.**
- **King Street carpark update to be given at future meeting.**

- **IC Website Section to be created/updated for communicating project progress/stages.**

**e) Inverclyde Taskforce**

The next Taskforce meeting is scheduled for 16 May 2024.

Items for discussion as follows:-

- Towns Fund
- EE Sub-group
- Investment Zones
- Local Employability Partnership and Business Status

**f) West Blackhall Street Update**

Potential Funding

It was noted that an Inverclyde Council Committee Paper is being presented to the Environment and Regeneration (E&R) Committee tomorrow (16 May 2024), seeking financial support (£100k) for a special intervention, to provide business support through grants to businesses in West Blackhall Street and surrounds, who have been affected by the increased costs of doing business and by recent road works. ([Link to E&R Committee Papers – Item 2, subsection 3.6](#))

1. It was advised, that if this intervention is approved, the distribution of funds/grants will be managed by the Regeneration, Business Development Team.

It was further advised that Regeneration will also link in with Corp Comms to ensure that any available grants are widely promoted.

2. It was requested that IC's Corporate Communications Services, provide communication support and raise public awareness that WBHS is still open and it is businesses as usual, during the current roadworks.

Corp Comms advised there has been a push on all platforms regarding WBHS works, however, they will pick this up and push out a refreshed message.

**Decided:-**

- **If interventions agreed, IC Officers to widely promote the Scheme.**
- **Corp Comms to raise awareness/promote that WBHS is still open for business during the road works.**

WBHS Road Works Update

1. The following was noted:-
  - Works commenced at the end of January 2024, with footways being completed and the reopening of two sections.
  - Works are progressing well, but some minor issues with other utility Services.
  - Extra drainage channels are being added along the footways.
  - Phase 1 works are scheduled to be completed by July/August 2024.
  - The current road tie-ins are temporary and will be fixed in due course.

- If 2<sup>nd</sup> phase funding is approved, all remaining works will be completed under phase 2.
2. It was noted that the delineation between the road and pavement in WBH street was difficult to identify and could lead to possible pedestrian accidents.

Road Officers stated that the whole intention of the project is to give priority to pedestrians and the detail and layout of the street has been designed to align this with the updated Highway Code legislation. Furthermore, the design passed three external road safety audits. Nevertheless, once the project is complete, the situation will be monitored.

It was noted that the speed limit will be reduced to 20mph upon completion.

It was suggested that pedestrian priority signage is erected to remind drivers it is a pedestrian priority area.

3. Concerns were raised, that drivers are entering WBH from Grey Place/Dalrymple Street and due to the works are going up Jamacia St the wrong way.

Roads Officers stated they had been made aware of this, in addition to reports of drivers moving cones and reminded the group that these actions are road traffic offences and the responsibility of all drivers.

4. It was reported that some residents had stated they knew nothing about the WBHS works prior to the works starting.

IC's Road Services Officers advised that they sent letters and schedules of works to every resident and every business prior to the works starting. It was further stated that IC held drop-in information sessions as well, which were very poorly attended.

5. It was noted there are too many benches and that they are facing into shops, which has made some traders, especially financial institutions and jewellers concerned that this is a security risk.

Roads Officers highlighted the intention to include street seating was to encourage footfall into the area, as well as a possible increase in spend and requested that tolerance is given until the project is completed, to gauge public/trader opinions thereafter.

6. It was noted that Phase 2 road works (lifting and relaying of cobbles and installation of cycle lane) will affect road users, but the pedestrian footways will be completed.

7. It was also noted that due to the lack of reinstated dustbins, pedestrians have started to use the decorative planters as rubbish bins.

Roads advised they are aware of this and will reinstate bins and reposition the planters so that they cannot be used as bins.

8. It was noted that if Phase 2 Funding is granted, the works will restart at Westburn Street to give those in Grey place a bit of time to use the street again.



9. The following were further discussed:-

- Cycle lane could prevent undertakers from being able to park their vehicles outside their premises without being ticketed.
- Request for more Disabled parking spaces.
- Request to remove some parking spaces from Dalrymple Street, outside Tesco.
- It was noted that all drivers should be aware of changes in the Highway Code, as any violations may be dealt with under Section 3, driving with undue care and attention.
- It was noted the WBHS works are a significant piece of work, that will make a positive impact on the street and that it has been well run.
- It was noted that WBHS traders do want the changes, but the process has been tough on businesses, who have had to lay off staff or put staff onto holidays, some owners not taking wages and some businesses gone out of business.
- Concerns were raised that Cruise Ship excursion buses are using the carpark across from the Waterfront and therefore reducing possible parking for WBHS workers.
- It was noted there are circa 44 parking spaces within the TC.
- Noted there is new flooding outside one of the businesses.

**Decided:-**

- **If the cycle lane impacts the funeral directors, Road Officers will consider a parking bay.**
- **Road Officers confirmed a couple of parking bays will be removed from Dalrymple St, to alleviate congestion.**
- **Road Officers will investigate claims of Cruise buses using carparks they are not meant to use.**
- **Officers had been advised of flooding and will address these, but stated that this new flood had not been caused by any contractor works.**

## **6.0 River Clyde Homes (RCH) Update**

- 6.1 It was advised that the Cathcart Street residents and owners meetings are well attended and since the last meeting, and with the support of Police Scotland, there has been a decline in the antisocial behaviours in that area. One serious case is still being progressed with.

RCH Officers are planning to sensitively re-let any vacant properties.

Cathcart Street property ownership is approximately 50% privately owned and 50% owned by RCH. The majority of current lets are within privately owned properties.

It is intended to arrange another tenants and owners meeting around the end of July 2024.

It was noted that it is difficult to fully deal with antisocial issues and that moving them from one area, can result in the problem moving to another area within the town.

It was noted that RCH had noticed a reduction in antisocial behaviour not only within Cathcart Street, but also within Anne Street and Sir Michael Street too.

**Decided:-**

- **RCH to confirm date for next tenant and owner meeting.**

- 6.2 It was noted that RCH in partnership with Inverclyde Community Development Trust (ICDT) are continuing to progress with the TC environmental works. EC has had a meeting with Home Fix Colleagues to discuss their Summer Maintenance programme and will provide an update on this going forward.

It was noted that RCH's Corporate Working In Neighbourhoods (WIN) day, is on the 21 June 2024. In order to ensure there is a good spread of projects supported across all wards, RCH requested that suggested Community Projects are sent to RCH for consideration. ([link to RCH WIN day page and contact number and email address](#))

**Decided:-**

- **RCH and Home Fix Summer Maintenance programme to be submitted at next forum meeting.**
- **Forum members to submit community project suggestions to RCH for WIN day.**

- 6.3 ICDT in partnership with IC and RCH are planning for the Lot 4 environmental works and are currently recruiting trainees. There are many Inverclyde wide projects, but they are committed to addressing the quick fix projects, such as the TC back courtyard works.

Sir Michael Street and East Shaw Street works are complete and once the schedule is complete, they will provide a copy of this to the next forum meeting.

**Decided:-**

- **ICDT to provide a schedule of works to next forum meeting.**

- 6.4 It was advised there is no immediate planned investment works for the TC and RCH will follow the lead of IC's Housing Strategy for progressing future investment plan and delivery.

However, it was noted that considerable financial investment is required within the Cathcart Street area, and partnerships conversations will consider the longevity of the buildings, low demand levels, levels of private ownership and where they foresee the long-term outcomes of the area.

## **7.0 Any Other Competent Business (AOCB)**

- 7.1 Corp Comms stated that Discover Inverclyde are creating a digital magazine for the summer with editorials on retail and general leisure activities.
- 7.2 It was highlighted that IC are investing £45k, to replace the surface of the Sir Michael Street Play Area, under the 2024/25 Play Area Strategy. ([Link to E&R Committee Paly Area investment paper – item 11](#))

**9.0 Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 28 August 2024, **Customer Services Meeting Room 4.**

Chair Signature ..... Date .....

APPENDIX 1



Official Classification

**Greenock**  
Long Term Plan for Towns Board

## Long Term Plan for Towns Board

- Lord Willie Haughey (Chair)
- Ronnie Cowan MP
- Stuart McMillan MSP
- Elizabeth Robertson, Councillor
- Francesca Brennan Councillor
- Damian Kane, Police Scotland
- Poonam Gupta OBE, PG Paper
- Keith Wilson, Smiths
- Lizzy Todd, President Inverclyde Chamber of Commerce
- Charlene Elliot, CVS Inverclyde

Official Classification

# Greenock Boundary

**Greenock**  
Long Term Plan for Towns Board





# Town Themes



## Safety & Security

- Enhancing safety
- Reducing crime
- Enhancing place perceptions
- Improving connectivity
- Pedestrian crossings
- Local policing
- CCTV
- Town Centre Management
  
- Other



## High Streets, Heritage & Place

- Placemaking
- Enhancing Commercial Core
- Supporting Business investment
- Celebrating heritage
- Boosting footfall
- Developing the destination
- Improving connectivity
- Creating civic space
- Enhancing listed buildings
- Developing tourism attractions
- Improve public realm
  
- Other



## Connectivity & Transport

- Improving connectivity
- Bus Station upgrade
- Railway Station enhancement
- Addressing severance
- Supporting Active Travel
- Access & Parking
- Servicing & Deliveries
- Digital connectivity
  
- Other

Classification

**Greenock**  
Long Term Plan for Towns Board

## Funding and Key deadlines

- 1<sup>st</sup> of April – Town Board set up
- 1<sup>st</sup> of August – Submission of Plan
- Long Term Plan for Towns (10 year vision) and 3 year development plan
- Endowment style funding over 10 years
- Can roll over funding to future years but cannot bring funding forward
- Local authority may seek to borrow against future funding if they wish to front load investment



Official Classification

**Greenock**

Long Term Plan for Towns Board

## Next Steps

- Finalisation of governance paperwork – Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest policies.
- Next meeting 31<sup>st</sup> of May
- Development plan for the Long-Term Plan for Towns Vision and Action plan
  - incl consultation strategy.

APPENDIX 2



# Greenock - Transforming the 'Heart of the Town'

Regenerating Bullring & Oak Mall



Existing - Note road aligned over Oak Mall roof

Classification : Official

# Greenock - Transforming the 'Heart of the Town'

Regenerating Bullring & Oak Mall



Concept - Regraded A78 at grade with restructured Oak Mall



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Classification: Official



Classification: Official

## Next Steps

- Engagement strategy – finalise, incl events.
- Move to final design and cost
- Programme
- Report to E&R committee

**End of Document.**