
Report To:	Environment and Regeneration	Date:	29 August 2024
Report By:	Director, Environment & Regeneration	Report No:	ENV/054/24/SJ/JH
Contact Officer:	Jennifer Horn	Contact No:	01475 7155733
Subject:	Greenock – Levelling Up Fund		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 This report is to provide an update to Committee on the Greenock Levelling Up Fund Project.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note:

- a) the progress on the project,
- b) the revised timescales for project completion and
- c) That formal decisions on demolitions associated with the project will be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

Stuart Jamieson
Director, Environment & Regeneration

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Inverclyde Council were successful in attracting £19.39m from the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 towards our transformative £21.57m town centre regeneration project.
- 3.2 The Project objectives are to address over provision of retail capacity within Greenock town centre; to facilitate better all user connectivity within the town centre, currently constrained by trunk and non trunk roads infrastructure; and if possible create stimulus for a cultural quarter.
- 3.3 Regeneration of the town centre will make Greenock:
- more attractive
 - bring in more visitors
 - create new opportunities
 - make the town centre more accessible for residents and visitors
- 3.4 Key improvements include:
- redesigning and lowering the A78 flyover to ground level to improve access and create better connections to the town centre
 - replacing the bullring roundabout with a new low-level road, connecting different parts of the town centre.
 - developing new public spaces for the local community
 - modernising retail space in the town centre by demolishing the A78 Dual Carriageway, 40% of the Oak Mall and Hector McNeill House.
- 3.5 The funding agreement with the UK Government requires the project to be complete by March 2026. Since previous updates, work on the programme has indicated that the March 2026 deadline cannot be achieved. Conversations with the UK Government have confirmed that they would be amenable to an extension of the project timescales. The extension is required to ensure that the demolition/construction programme is aligned with governance requirements of the UK Government and the Council.
- 3.6 Design work has progressed with options regarding road alignment, that were previously presented to E&R, being approved by Transport Scotland. The preferred option is a 4 way signalised junction to replace the Bullring roundabout and demolishing the flyover across the Oak Mall to replace with a road at ground level.
- 3.7 Work has continued with the Oak Mall owners regarding the demolition of retail units. Design packages for demolition, Mechanical & Electrical works (M&E), and the temporary and permanent façade are ready to progress to building warrant and planning application.



3.8 Atkins Realis have been appointed by Inverclyde Council to provide project management and quantity surveying support. They are working alongside Ironside Farrar, who were appointed to provide support through the project bid and the initial design.

3.9 It was intended that the design and costing exercises would be complete by the end of the summer recess however this has not been possible.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 Through the SCAPE procurement framework, the project team have been engaging with prospective works contractor, Balfour Beatty, and their preferred design team, WSP, to prepare the project for detailed design. A programme has been agreed which is now in line with required governance and reporting.

Programme Milestones

4.2 The delivery timescales for the Levelling Up project have always been extremely constrained and as stated above the project programme requires a request to the UK Government for a project extension. The timescales below show that project completion dates have extended with the proposed project end date now Autumn 2026.

4.3 The key milestones for the project are:

January 2025: Detailed design complete and tender costs submitted to Inverclyde Council

Spring 2025: Demolition of Oak Mall and Hector McNeill House elements

Summer 2025: Demolition/Construction A78/A8

Late Summer 2026: Construction end

Autumn 2026: Project Completion

4.4 Current cost analysis for the project, based on a design agreed with Transport Scotland, indicates that the project can be delivered within budget, including some allowance for contingency. It is critical that as the design progresses the project costs can be monitored and, where required, value engineering of the design can be undertaken to retain cost control of the project.

4.5 Implementation of the project will have an impact on a number of revenue budgets. The demolition of Hector McNeil House is anticipated to result in an estimated saving of

£100,000. Staff currently within Hector McNeil House are anticipated to be relocated to the James Watt Building and the Banking Hall. This saving will be allocated to the asset review workstream.

- 4.6 There is anticipated to be a net reduction in income from the Bullring carpark, which will be offset by removal of cash uplifts, maintenance and reduction in rates to be paid, resulting in a total cost of £3,000.
- 4.7 Closure of the Hunter's Place public toilets is anticipated to result in net saving of £6,000.

Project Communication

4.9 This is a complex project in the heart of Greenock with many different stakeholders therefore communication is critical. A high-level communication plan has been drafted in consultation with the Council's Corporate Communication team and is appended with this report. The ethos behind the plan is to ensure that the project team are providing relevant and timely information to make people aware of the project, allow them to plan for the unavoidable disruption and promote the benefits of the project. Following consideration of this paper, key public (and operational) messaging will be delivered as follows:

- **Promotion of project:** Making people aware what the project is, the proposed design as it develops to detailed design, high-level milestones and expected outputs and outcomes of the project.
- **Pre-construction:** Providing more detailed information on timescale, expected disruption, diversion routes.
- **During construction:** Both detailed information for the community on disruption (e.g. diversions/road closures) but also updates on key progress points e.g. demolition of Oak Mall.
- **End of project:** Information on road opening, changes that have been made to the road alignment and reporting on the outcomes/outputs achieved.
- **6 months after project completion:** Information on project outcomes and project closure.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial	X	
Legal/Risk	x	
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
	Levelling Up Fund	24/25 25/26 26/27	£19.39M	N/A	Approval for LUF spend in 26/27 required

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments
	Hector McNeill House	2025	(£100k)		
	Bullring Car Park	2025	£3k		
	Hunters Place Toilets	2025	(£6k)		

5.3 Legal/Risk

Consultation has been carried out with the legal team and external solicitors on the Professional Services Contract

5.4 Human Resources

None.

5.5 Strategic

The proposal supports the Partnership Plan and the Economic Development Strategy.

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty.

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

5.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts, positive or negative, which relate to this report.

None.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

5.8 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Information was provided on LUF at the Greenock Town Hall in June 2024. Further consultation will be carried with key stakeholders e.g. Transport Scotland detailed design stage

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 High Level Communication Plan.

Greenock Central Levelling Up Fund Communications Plan

Communications overview

Inverclyde Council was successfully awarded UK Government's Levelling Up Fund in 2023 to transform the heart of Greenock town centre.

The proposals will create new civic spaces, a restructured more outward looking town centre retail offer, improve links between various parts of the town centre and the waterfront.

This is a complicated project with many elements of demolition and construction, funding and contracts with construction companies and consultants. We recognise there are a wide variety of audiences, all with a vested interest in the project's roll-out, and impact. Our communication plan will seek to ensure that engagement with all stakeholders is coordinated, inclusive and will be fully supported by the project team.

Greenock Central project will remove the A8 flyover bringing the road to ground level to increase access, remove the Bullring Roundabout, Hector McNeill House and 40% of the existing indoor retail space in the Oak Mall.

This will be replaced by a low-level trunk road which brings the town together rather than split the town centre in two, with easier access to the town centre for visitors and residents.

It will allow the Oak Mall to be restructured as an outward looking Retail and Leisure Quarter recreating a functional heart to the centre.

It will allow for the creation of a new open civic area in the town centre creating to be more welcoming to visitors and residents and improved connections between the town centre and the waterfront.

Project Overview

The project consists of the following elements:

- Demolition of the Oak Mall and Hector McNeill House
- Demolition of the Bullring and the A8 flyover
- Construction of a new trunk road at ground level
- Construction of a new entrance to Oak Mall
- Reinstatement of the land of Hector McNeill House
- Enhance the public realm around Oak Mall and Clyde Square

Our approach

As an infrastructure project, in the middle of the town, there will be a wide variety people who need to know what is happening and when.

As more detail becomes available, we will use the project milestones and status updates, as well as the identified risks, to inform our key messaging. This will ensure our communications are aligned to the outcomes of the project plan and ultimately, provide the answers to the questions of residents, visitors, stakeholders and businesses alike.

We will work closely with contractor communications teams and agencies and request we work together, to ensure we have a joined up, consistent and timely approach to our collective messaging.

A variety of channels and mediums will be used with timings and frequency mapped against the project milestones.

Our success will be interdependent on the information we receive, when we receive it and the positive collaboration between internal teams and external contractors. This will be delivered through close and regular partnership working.

Key communications points will be split into the following periods: pre-construction, during construction, end of project, 6 months after project completion.

A communication plan will be prepared once more detail is provided. It will be fluid and adapt to the feedback provided by the community themselves and any changes required by the project team directly.

Milestones

Key communications points can be split into the following periods:

- **Promotion of project:** Making people aware that what the project is, the proposed design as it develops from concept to detailed design, high-level milestones and expected outputs and outcomes of the project.
- **Pre-construction:** Providing more detailed information on timescale, expected disruption, diversion routes
- **During construction:** Both detailed information for the community on disruption etc but also updates on key progress points e.g. demolition of Oak Mall.
- **End of project:** Information on road opening but also on what has been achieved.
- **6 months after project completion:** Information on project outcomes and project closure

Reporting

There are different levels of reporting required for this project. Project updates will be prepared for the Council's Environment and Regeneration Committee. Reporting is also done in a quarterly basis for the UK Government and where required interim updates will be given.