



Glasgow City Region City Deal: Update on East Dunbartonshire Council's Place and Growth Programme

Committee Strategy & Programmes

Date of meeting 19 February 2021

Date of report 2 February 2021

Report by Assistant Chief Executive

1. Object of report

To update the Committee on EDC's Place and Growth programme, a collaborative project between East Dunbartonshire Council, Glasgow City Council and SPT, incorporating Bus infrastructure improvements on the A803 Corridor.

2. Background

Members may recall a previous report to the Committee on 22 November 2019¹, which outlined plans to integrate the Strathclyde Bus Improvement Programme (SBIP) as a pilot within East Dunbartonshire Council's Place and Growth Programme, as part of the Glasgow City Region City Deal Programme.

Further to this, the Glasgow City Region Cabinet approved the Strategic Business Case (SBC) for the project at its meeting on 11 February 2020.

The estimated cost of the project is £35 million in total, with Glasgow City Region City Deal contributing £30 million and the balance of £5m being funded by EDC.

Throughout the Covid 19 pandemic, officers from EDC, GCC & SPT have continued to support the development and delivery of the project through input to the project Collaborative Group and Working Group respectively. In particular SPT have provided support and advice in relation to the bus infrastructure aspects of the project.

In respect of the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund, Glasgow City Council has recently extended invites to other Glasgow City Region Local Authorities, including EDC, to participate in the Glasgow Bus Partnership initiative in preparation of a submission to the fund in April 2021.

3. Outline of proposals

Scope of works

The project scope as outlined in the SBC is based around the following key elements:

¹ http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP221119_Agenda10.pdf

- Delivery of phase 5 of the Bishopbriggs Relief Road;
- Improvement to Sustainable Transport on the A803 Route Corridor; and
- Bishopbriggs Town Centre Regeneration.

EDC believe that progressing the Place and Growth Programme on this basis could improve the delivery of the economic benefits of the original business case presented to the City Region Cabinet, as well as highlighting the links of the project to public transport improvements, particularly bus travel and a key bus route corridor. Specific focus in this regard will be given to:

- improvements in journey time (including bus priority measures);
- service reliability;
- quality of infrastructure;
- integration with other modes (including active travel and park and ride);
- accessibility;
- information (including real-time);
- demand management (reducing reliance on private car trips);
- delivering the high level project objectives including economic growth and improved access to employment opportunities; and
- supporting behavioural change to make public transport a more attractive option for people in both East Dunbartonshire and Glasgow.

Impact of the Covid 19 pandemic

Following approval of the SBC in February 2020 and as planning was beginning for the Outline Business case (OBC stage), the Covid 19 crisis began in March 2020 creating a number of challenges for the project partners involved, as well as for many other City Deal projects across the region. In the short to medium term, there was a challenge relating to capacity within Councils to undertake work on City Deal as Covid 19 response related activity is prioritised. Recruitment was generally paused for a period of time, delaying recruitment of core resource within partner organisations. Consultant availability and capacity of suppliers to prepare and submit tenders have also been affected.

It was recognised that the issues outlined above pose a risk to the overall Project programme. The SBC provided a high level indicative timeline which estimates completion and handover of all project elements by the end of 2025. The SBC states the programme will require to be further developed and confirmed at Outline Business Case (OBC) stage.

Early detailed programming work, undertaken by EDC as Lead Partner, indicates the overall completion programme will move out by an estimated 12 months, taking the overall estimated completion date to December 2026. It is expected that not all elements in the Project will complete at the same time, and some could complete earlier than the overall final completion date.

EDC officers have advised the Glasgow City Region City Deal Programme Management Office (PMO) of the above risk to programme, and are due to submit a Change Request to the Glasgow City Region cabinet for approval in due course. No budget or scope impacts

have been identified at present. Any potential impacts which emerge in relation to scope or budget will be examined through the development of the OBC, and identified and reported through normal PMO reporting channels.

Project Progress

Despite the challenges experienced since March 2021, a number of elements of the project have been progressed, including the following;

- EDC have successfully recruited for 4 key posts to support the delivery of the project including a City Deal Team Leader;
- SPT have appointed a Technical Project Co-ordinator to support EDC & GCC on delivery of the Bus Infrastructure elements of the project;
- Initial project planning and initiation work has been carried out for undertaking the OBC stage;
- Preparatory work is underway to support future OBC procurement activity;
- EDC Officers are formalising a contract with an economist to undertake an initial economic assessment of proposals outlined in the SBC;
- The 'Collaborative Group' which consists of project partner organisations (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and Glasgow City Council) resumed in May 2020, and meets regularly;
- Engagement with external statutory agencies, for example Transport Scotland as part of scoping work to inform the required technical assessments is ongoing;
- Engagement with local bus operators on the project plans and benefits is ongoing;
- Engagement continues with key landowners and businesses for example in the Westerhill area; and
- Consultation with statutory partners is underway in relation to the Strategic Environment Assessment scoping exercise for the Westerhill Masterplan element.

Next Steps

In terms of next steps, EDC working with SPT and GCC will lead the development of an Outline Business Case (OBC) for the project following guidelines developed by the PMO. It is anticipated the OBC will be submitted to the City Region Cabinet for consideration and approval between Q4 2021/22 and Q4 2022/23. Further progress updates will be provided in due course.

In addition, EDC will continue to work with GCC and other City Region Local Authorities on developing a bid to the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund, due for submission in April 2021. It is anticipated that the EDC elements of the bid will seek to build upon the benefits of the Council's Place and Growth Programme, in particular seeking to deliver lasting and sustainable improvements for local bus passengers.

4. Conclusions

Following the approval of the project SBC by the City Region Cabinet, East Dunbartonshire Council's Place and Growth Programme has faced a number of significant challenges owing to the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic. Whilst it is estimated that the impact of the pandemic

on the project programme represents a 12 month slippage overall, considerable progress has been made on recruitment, procurement of consultancy support, engagement with statutory partners, land owners and local bus operators. Considerable planning and initiation work has also been advanced ahead of the OBC development & future submission. Discussions are ongoing between EDC & GCC on a collaborative City Region bid to the Bus Partnership Fund, building on the aims and objectives of this project. As we emerge from the Covid 19 pandemic it is increasingly clear that sustainable transport projects such as this will form a vital part of the wider regional recovery.

5. Committee action

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None directly.</i>

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