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| Agenda Item | 7 |
| Report No | CIA/18/18 |

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: City of Inverness Area

Date: 31 May 2018

Report Title: Inverness West Link Stage 2

Report By: Director of Development and Infrastructure

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This paper provides Members with an update on progress with the delivery of the West Link Stage 2 project following the decision made on the Capital Programme at Highland Council in March 2018. The report explains the further information that is required to be submitted through the planning process to meet the terms of the existing planning permission for the West Link. Member agreement is sought to bring forward an additional planning application to reflect a design change on the new roundabout on the A82. The report also details and seeks agreement for proposals to take forward plans for a park and recreational trail in the short term on land being vacated by Torvean Golf Course. Finally, the report seeks approval for public consultation to be undertaken to confirm the land use arrangements in the wider area of land surrounding the road scheme.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. note progress with the delivery of the Phase 2 West Link Road project and the intention to submit further information through the planning process required under the conditions attached to the existing planning permission;
- ii. agree in principle that the detail of the proposed Jacobite Cruises building be deferred to allow further discussion with Jacobite Cruises in conjunction with Scottish Canals, subject to formal consideration under the planning process;
- iii. agree that a new planning application be submitted to enable the provision of an additional leg on the proposed Torvean Roundabout to allow vehicular access to the Canal towpath south of the new swing bridge and provide temporary overflow parking off this additional leg;
- iv. agree the proposal to deliver a recreational/fitness network on the area covered by holes 5-8 as an early project, subject to securing appropriate funding and that progress be reported back to this Committee at the appropriate time; and
- v. agree the proposals to consult on a possible amendment to the Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief in the coming months on the future use of land soon to be vacated by Torvean Golf Club.

3. Progress to Date

- 3.1 Following confirmation in March 2015 (HC/6/15) that funding for the West Link was contained within the approved capital programme, work on Stage 1, the link from Dores Road to the A82, was successfully completed and opened to traffic in December 2017. Following a Council budget review, a new capital programme was approved at committee on the 7 March 2018, and this contained the balance funding to allow the completion of the West Link including Stage 2, the capital report noting that the scheme formed part of the City - Region Deal commitment. Stage 2 is the construction of the additional swing bridge and roundabout (the golden triangle), with the associated realignment of General Booth Road. Works can only commence following the relocation of the golf course and are planned to start in Spring 2019, to be complete by December 2020.
- 3.2 Due to the requirement to relocate the golf course, it has always been envisaged that the West Link road scheme would be delivered in two phases and the existing planning permission (15/03915/S42) takes cognisance of this. The existing permission has a number of conditions which means that further information must be submitted prior to the start of the second phase of the project. These conditions relate to matters such as infrastructure provision, design, trees, walling details and construction management and are largely technical in nature.
- 3.3 Relocation of the golf course is required prior to the start of Phase 2. The current timescale for completion of the new golf course, clubhouse and maintenance facility, all currently under construction, is Spring 2019, so that is the target date for the start of construction on the second phase of the West Link. A procurement exercise will be carried out over the course of the year to appoint a contractor, so it is important that all of the necessary further information and minor amendments are resolved ahead of this.

4. In-Canal and Canal-side infrastructure

- 4.1 As set out above, the existing planning permission for the West Link project has a number of conditions which require to be fulfilled by the submission of further information. These include further details of the in canal and canal side infrastructure. Discussions have taken place with Transport Scotland, Scottish Canals and other interested parties. Scottish Canals has confirmed that there are no current major redevelopment plans in the vicinity which need to be taken into consideration in finalising West Link Stage 2 proposals. The proposed in canal infrastructure is therefore as previously indicated on initial planning application drawings.
- 4.2 Discussions have continued with Historic Environment Scotland on the detail of the Swing Bridge design and revised plans will now be submitted to purify the relevant planning condition (Condition 6).
- 4.3 Similarly, a revised design of the Control Building has been prepared and early delivery may be progressed if an access arrangement can be put in place which does not impact either the golf club or Jacobite Cruises.
- 4.4 Discussions continue with Jacobite Cruises and Scottish Canals with regard to relocation of Jacobite Cruises. Relocation is only possible after the construction of new in canal infrastructure so they will continue to operate from their existing location during the Works. A replacement building and associated car parking is therefore not required at this stage and this will be considered again later in the project. To allow these discussions to continue, it is intended to seek to vary the planning condition to

delay the required submission of detailed proposals for the design of the necessary infrastructure until nearer to when they are required. This will be achieved by following due procedure in relation to the planning application process.

5. Torvean Roundabout and General Booth Road

- 5.1 The existing planning permission (15/03915/S42) includes detailed permission for a four legged roundabout on the A82 West of the canal linking with a realigned General Booth Road to the North and leg to the new swing bridge to the South. (See **Appendix 1**).
- 5.2 Following discussions, and in accordance with the Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief, it is clear that a better solution may exist to take a fifth leg off the roundabout to allow more effective access to the canal-side, the rowing club, the new park area (see below) and any other development opportunities in the future. As this is a departure from the original planning approval, this will have to be the subject of a new planning application and it is intended to progress this in the near future, subject to Member agreement. An opportunity to provide temporary parking off this additional leg is also a possibility (by using the contractor's temporary construction compound), this could allow use and access to the area while full proposals are being developed. (See **Appendix 2**).
- 5.3 Member agreement is therefore sought for the principle of this change to the scheme, subject to the appropriate consideration of a planning application in due course.

6. Future use of former Torvean Golf Course

- 6.1 Construction of the new purpose built golf course to the north west of the proposed Torvean Roundabout will release the two areas currently occupied by the existing Torvean golf course (the areas currently covered by holes 1-8 to the south of the A82 and new West Link, and holes 10 -14 to the east of General Booth Road). The future use of these areas needs to be considered over the course of this year to ensure that a sustainable plan is put in place before the completion of the West Link project as a whole. There is a current framework set out within the Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief (TNDB), which is available on the Council web-site [here](#). Some of the content of TNDB remains fit for purpose and some would benefit from further review and community engagement.
- 6.2 **Appendix 3** is an extract from the TNDB which sets out the current land uses proposed within these areas. The area covered by holes 1-4 of the current golf course (**Area A**) is identified as offering potential for a new marina and surrounding enabling development within the current TNDB. Discussion with Scottish Canals has concluded that this is no longer a feasible or affordable option. The area covered by holes 10-14 (**Area B**) is identified in the same document as a sports hub, although with the development of the Canal Parks scheme the same scale of development may no longer be appropriate. It is therefore proposed that, subject to Member agreement, a review of the content of the TNDB be undertaken over the course of this year, involving engagement with the local community and organisations that have an interest in the area (for example, Inverness Rowing Club). This will allow a consensus view to be reached on agreed land uses that will guide future planning decisions in this area. It is intended that engagement is carried out so that a draft revision to the TNDB for these areas can be brought to the next meeting of this Committee for approval before further public consultation is undertaken.
- 6.3 The area covered by holes 5-8 of the current golf course (**Area C**) has been identified

as parkland. The existing layout, including Loch na Sanais and the mature tree coverage provides a rare opportunity to deliver a new city park within an established setting.

- 6.4 Member support is sought to progress the design and investigation of potential funding sources for this element of the scheme over the course of this year, to ensure that as soon as possible after the golf course is relocated, the opportunity offered by this area can be realised. It is proposed that a fitness trail be designed and implemented as an early phase. The benefits of doing this will be to ensure that use is made of the area immediately after it is vacated by the golf course, for it to be used for both formal and informal events. For example, some discussion has taken place as to whether the fitness trail proposed can be used for activities such as Parkrun which currently utilises Bught Park and Whin Park at various times of the year. The benefits of having a dedicated trail around the new park are many, including reducing the pressures at these other locations, promoting the benefits of running and walking for health and encouraging active use of the park. **Appendix 4** shows an initial design of what the proposed trail could look like, although further more detailed design and costing work is required. The fitness trail proposal will be brought forward under the terms of the existing planning permission in principle (Reference 14/00049/PIP) for the sports and recreation facilities in this area, subject to appropriate funding being in place. A draft layout is shown in **Appendix 4**.
- 6.5 Committee is also asked to agree that the project team continue to liaise closely with local Members, other Council Services, partner organisations and other interested groups on this element of the project and bring a further progress report in due course to this Committee.

7. Implications

7.1 Resource

- 7.1.1 The West Link Stage 2 is contained in the approved capital programme – all the minor modifications referenced in this report can be contained within the approved budget. Stage 2 will be adopted by Transport Scotland and as such future maintenance liability will rest with them.
- 7.1.2 Funding will be investigated for the ‘new city park’ in respect of paths and ongoing maintenance, prior to progression of this element.

7.2 Legal

All legal processes in respect of land have been concluded. Discussions are ongoing with Transport Scotland over the adoption process of the roundabouts, swing bridge and link roads (golden triangle) as trunk road, but noting agreement in principal has been reached.

7.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)

In regard to communities and equalities the roads and associated paths and cycleways have been designed to take account of access requirements.

7.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever

The benefits of the West Link in terms of reducing congestion improving journey times and supporting active travel will be further enhanced by the construction of Stage 2, and the city park will provide access to green space for community use.

7.5 Risk

- 7.5.1 The risk implications are managed through the Inverness West Link Project Board,

chaired by the Director of Development and Infrastructure. The issues contained within this report to not increase any existing risks with the construction of Stage 2.

7.5.2 Until funding for both the infrastructure capital investment and the revenue to provide maintenance of the park have been established – the delivery of the envisaged park remains at risk.

7.6 Gaelic

The road sign designs have been undertaken with Gaelic equivalent destinations included.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 16th May 2018

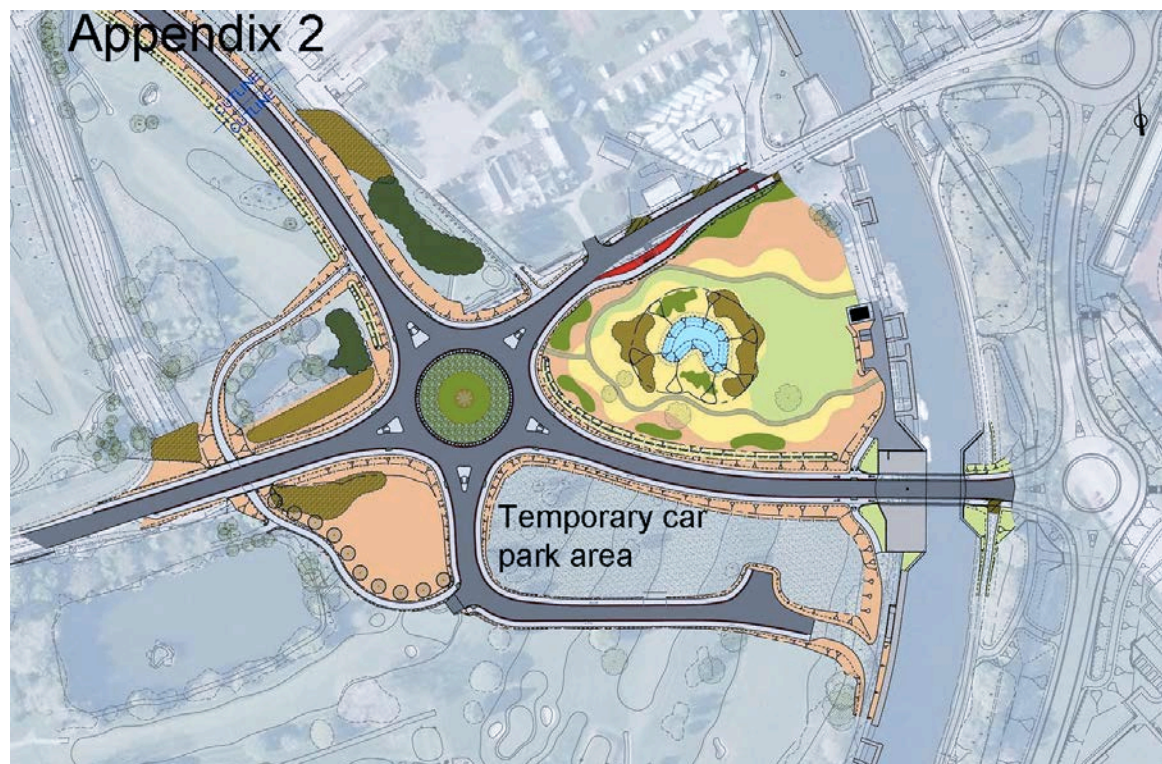
Authors: Colin Howell, Head of Infrastructure
Malcolm Macleod, Head of Planning and Environment

Background Papers: (HC/6/15), (HC 2/18) and the Torvean and Ness-side
Development Brief

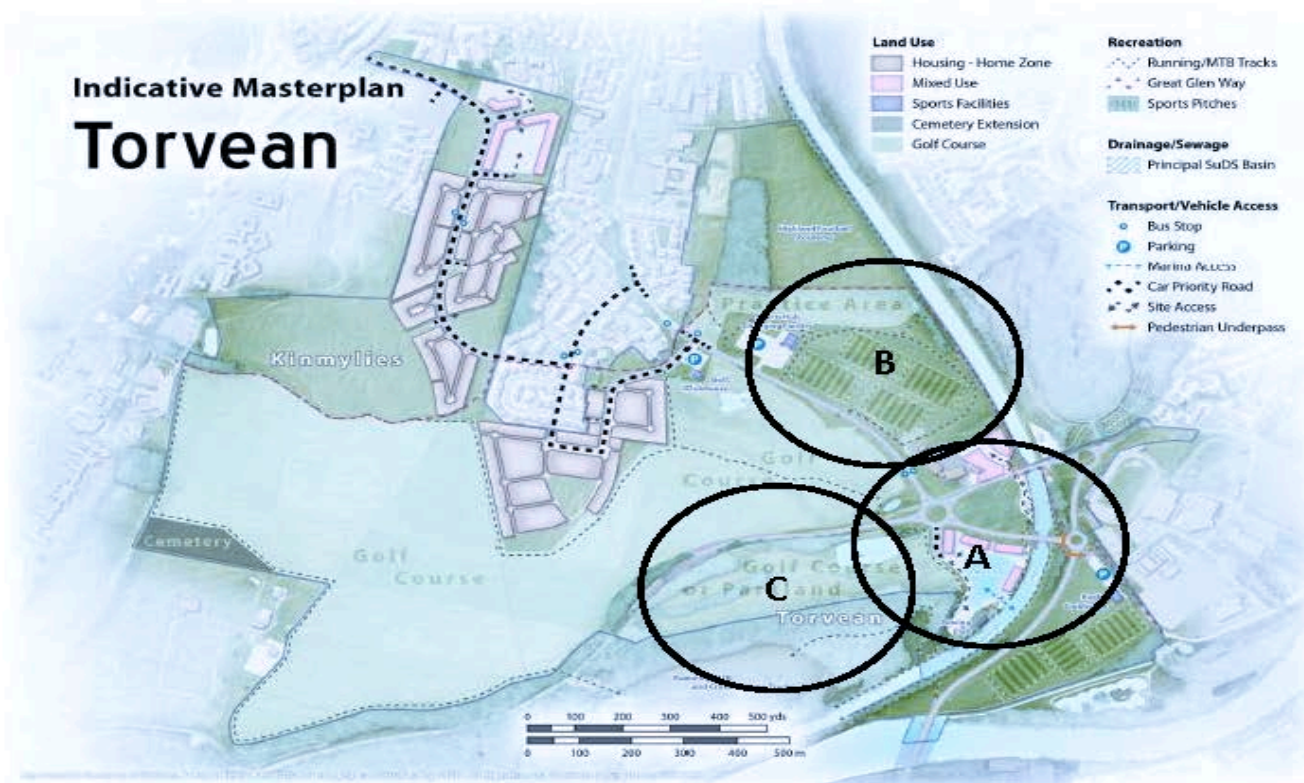
Existing Planning Approval Layout



Proposed Planning Application Layout



Appendix 3 – Extract from Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief



Map 6: Indicative Masterplan Torvean

Appendix 4 – Draft Park Layout

