

Greenock Town Centre Regeneration Forum (GTCRF)

Minute of Meeting

Held Wednesday 19 February 2025 at 1pm by hybrid format within the Municipal Buildings Customer Services Meeting Room 4 (CSC MR4) and via Microsoft Teams Videoconferencing.

ATTENDING

Cllr Clocherty (Chair)	Inverclyde Council - Ward 4
Cllr Armstrong	Inverclyde Council - Ward 3
Cllr Brennan	Inverclyde Council - Ward 4
Cllr Brooks	Inverclyde Council - Ward 4
Cllr Crowther	Inverclyde Council - Ward 7
Cllr McGuire	Inverclyde Council - Ward 7
E Cannon	River Clyde Homes - Senior Housing Manager
L Cushnaghan	Oak Mall - Manager
A Fox	Inverclyde Council - Heritage Coordinator
C Jewell	Trader Representative – Cradle Care
S O'Dowling	Oak mall - Duty Manager
Insp. P Thompson	Police Scotland - Inspector Community Policing
S Vernal	River Clyde Homes - Housing Services Manager
E Baird	Inverclyde Council - Regeneration Manager
C Bateman	Inverclyde Council - Greenock Town Fund Manager
E Dickie	Inverclyde Council - Team Leader, Communications and Tourism
J Horn	Inverclyde Council – Physical Regeneration Manager
G Leitch	Inverclyde Council - Team Leader, Consultancy
M McNab	Inverclyde Council - Service Manager, Public Protection
E Montgomery	Inverclyde Council - Head of Physical Assets
M Thomson	Inverclyde Council - Environment & Technical Finance Manager
AM Bagstad (Minute)	Inverclyde Council - Committee Officer

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

1.1 Cllr Clocherty welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced new members C Bateman and A Fox.

Cllr Clocherty, Cllr Brennan, Cllr Brooks, E Cannon, S Vernal and AM Bagstad present, all other attendees accessed the meeting remotely.

1.2 Apologies received from R Ahlfeld, M Coventry, A Johnston, H Kuboyama, K McGinty, N McIlvanney (E Baird and J Horn substituting), Cllr McVey and Cllr Robertson.

1.3 Cllr Brooks intimated declarations as Chair of the Licencing Board in relation to item 3.0 and as a Board member of River Clyde Homes in relation to item 5.1f.

2.0 **Approval of Minute and Matters Arising**

2.1 The draft Minute from the meeting held 28 August 2024 were ratified by Cllr Brennan and Cllr Clocherty.

The Minute from the meeting held 20 November 2024, were amended at 5.1f, removing the word excavations and replaced with investigations, and were approved and ratified by Cllr Brennan and Cllr Brooks.

2.2 Matters arising covered under today's Agenda.

3.0 **Police Scotland Update**

3.1 It was noted that the Community Policing Team are undergoing changes, moving away from the traditional Ward-Based model, towards a Local Problem-Solving Team (LPST) model. The benefits of the new LPST model, means focus, resources and partnership working are applied to tackling persistent problem and hotspot areas; that are causing the biggest concerns within communities.

3.2 Recent police activity:-

- Creating a single point of contact for the Partnership Hub, via a dedicated LPST mailbox.
- Carrying out Local Days of Action.
- Developing Police Action Plans.
- Community Engagement and attending local community meetings.
- Arranging flexible resources to targeted areas and to support major events.

3.3 **Partnership Hub** ([Link to Partnership Hub Update – Agenda item 9](#))

3.3.1 It was noted the Hub are dealing with ongoing drug dealing issues within Westburn Buildings.

3.3.2 Cathcart Street recently became another crime hotspot with the LPST being deployed to address this.

3.3.3 The Hub is investigating drug problems and a serious assault in East Shaw Street.

3.3.4 The Hub is also focusing on Tescos and Kilblain Street bus Station, which are areas of concern with antisocial behaviour, public disorders and vandalism; Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) are assisting police with gathering intelligence on these offences.

3.3.5 Multi-agency work was deployed to resolve two Cuckooing ([Link to meaning of Cuckooing](#)) drinking den incidents in Sir Michael Street.

It was noted that several of the streets mentioned above are prone to be reoccurring crime hotspots. The Forum was assured that the Partnership Hub, work extremely hard to tackle these issues in hotspot areas and are quick to respond. It was added that the Police Community Safety Network response time to reported Cuckooing incidents has been within 24/48 hours, to protect the vulnerable people involved.

3.4 **Town Centre (TC) Policing**

3.4.1 It was reported there have been Cuckooing incidents on Ann Street, and most recently on Regent Street accommodations. Officers developed a multi-

agency response team to resolve incidents or escalate situations to social work partnership agencies.

3.4.2 It was advised there is high police focus on Kilblain Street, due to drug dealing and using activities within the public toilets and nearby lanes. Users travel to the area to use local Chemists or buy drugs in the area. Extra attention and focused patrols are being carried out by LPST Town Centre Police Team and the use of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV).

3.4.3 A recent drug cultivation was discovered in a disused TC premises, a warrant was executed by LPST. All relevant partnerships have been made aware of this incident to assist the Police with gathering ongoing intelligence and evidence.

It was noted this was the third cultivation incident within the TC and it was requested that any activity witnessed around empty/vacant properties, are reported to the Police/Crime Stoppers immediately. It was added that cultivation crimes are very labour intensive due to the investigation stage, warrant stage and evidence gathering and cleanup stage, which impacts available resources dealing with day-to-day crime within the TC.

3.4.4 The recent incident at the Mosque in Laird Street is also receiving additional patrols, with TC Officers providing reassurance to the Mosque committee.

3.4.5 Officers have been visiting traders who sell vape paraphernalia to raise awareness of any offences they could be committing, carrying out monitoring and where necessary referring shops to IC for licencing issues.

3.4.6 It was advised that the Community Wardens and LPST carried out enforcement work on those responsible for parking on the Cycle Lane on West Blackhall Street (WBHS). Ongoing focus will be applied to rectify these behaviours.

3.5 It was advised that TC shoplifting is a large challenge to TC Policing and can exhaust police resources whilst dealing with these incidents.

It was highlighted that some traders are better at reporting incidents than others, with one shop taking 8 days to report, which negatively impacts the police's ability to arrest/charge offenders. Therefore, the police are liaising with traders to encourage and highlight the benefits of early reporting.

It was noted that retail premises who experience high levels of alcohol thefts and fail to take measures to deter/prevent this, are reported to the Licencing Services for not meeting licensing legislation requirements.

3.6 **CCTV**

A written request for additional TC CCTV was disseminated prior to the meeting.

IC's Public Protection Service Manager advised IC are in the second year of a two-year contract and propose to carry out a full review of the current CCTV network in Autumn 2025. The review would take into consideration the TC changes from the WBHS and Levelling Up Fund (LUF) works as well as identifying current cameras that do not meet requirements. IC Officers would consult with Police Scotland during the review and a report will be brought back the Forum's November 2025 meeting for

consideration. Thereafter, the report will be submitted to Committee for consideration.

It was cautioned that the CCTV Service has been subject to budget cuts over the last few years, adding the revenue costs can be substantial depending on which company is awarded the contract, the software and required subscriber identity module (SIM) cards. Due to ongoing budget pressures and uncertainty with funding it was requested that Police Scotland also consider contributing to an upgraded system.

Decided/Action:-

- **IC's Public Protection Team in Partnership with Police Scotland, carry out a full review of Greenock's TC CCTV system and submit a report to the Greenock TCRF meeting in November 2025.**
- **It was requested Police Scotland consider contributing to an upgraded TC CCTV System**

4.0 Greenock TCRF Budget Update

- 4.1 A budget snapshot as of February 2025, was disseminated prior to the meeting.
- 4.2 It was noted that the Place Based Funding (PBF) for 2024/25 was cut, however, Finance Officers have been advised that PBF will be reinstated for 2025/26 and may filter back into the TC Regeneration Forums.
- 4.3 It was advised that projects emerging from the TC Action Plans and other suggested projects, were earmarked against the 2024/25 funding and agreed at the Environment and Regeneration (E&R) Committee on 2 November 2023 ([Link to Item 9 of E&R meeting](#)).

IC Officers advised they would review the previous list and bring back an updated list to the next Forum meeting in the next financial year.

Decided:-

- **IC's Regeneration Officers to bring back an updated list of PBF Projects to next Forum meeting.**

5.0 Inverclyde Council (IC) Project Updates

5.1 REPORT UPDATES

An Inverclyde Council and Partnership Project Updates report was distributed prior to the meeting with updates on the following projects:-

a) Custom House Square Phase 1&2

In addition to the report, it was noted that 2023/24 PBF Phase 1 and Clock restoration works were completed in September 2024.

Phase 2's 2024/25 PBF which was reduced; however, the remaining funds are in place until September 2025, therefore Officers are currently scoping to progress Phase 2 works.

Decided:-

- **IC Officers to provide ongoing update(s) with Phase 2 works.**

b) Wellpark Cenotaph (Reinstatement of Number 5)

In addition to the report, it was noted that a Mould has been made for the missing number, which will be sent to the identified contractor to create a new number in the same materials.

c) West Blackhall Street (WBHS)

- In addition to the report, it was advised that works are substantially complete, and the road is fully open to traffic and pedestrians.

The Contractor is undertaking snagging and tidying up works whilst also removing their compound from site. Roads Officers are doing another site visit on 20 February 2025, to gauge progress.

Once the cycle phase and stub pole at the WBHS and Grey Place junction has been installed, the timings of the lights will be re-designed and changed.

Some remedial works on planters are also to be finalised.

It was noted the current single flow for the Cycle Lane will need to be changed to a bidirectional flow, so that cycles are not riding on existing cobbles. Roads Officers will raise a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in due course.

- It was asked if the required rendering works to the gable end property on Argyle Street would be delayed.

It was advised that the current WBHS contractor needs to reinstate the compound area to its original condition. Currently external temperatures are not suitable to carry out rendering works however, Officers will procure quotes for the rendering and engage a contractor for the works once the compound is cleared.

- Several discussions took place praising the Roads Team for the project, stating WBHS feels safer, nicer and a much more welcoming street. The following were requested:
 - Roads Officers to ensure all snagging works are identified and fixed by the contractor before project sign off.
 - Roads Officers to identify any uneven paving's and rectify.
 - Roads Officers to look at paving materials, as reported they are slippery in wet weather.
 - Directional road markings to be made clearer.

It was further noted that a request has been submitted to IC's E&R Corporate Director and River Clyde Homes (RCH) to look at improving the street appeal at the corner of Dalrymple Street and Westburn Street.

- Roads Officers confirmed the two parking spaces on Dalrymple Street would be removed as agreed and apologised for them being reinstated.
- Trader representatives will look at holding events on WBHS, to encourage more footfall and will liaise with Regeneration Officers for funding and support.

- Roads Officers praised the WBHS traders who have made improvements to their shop fronts, adding this made a vast enhancement to the street. Asking other traders and residents to also look after their properties, as falling moss and broken guttering impacts the look of the street.

The Chair asked IC Officers if there were any funding streams the Forum could recommend as grant or match funding to support traders to enhance their shop frontages.

IC's Regeneration Officer advised there is a limited Property Assistance Scheme ([Link to Scheme](#)). Additionally, the Forum can look at PBF or similar funding, when it becomes available, to support commercial businesses and officers can provide some recommendations/proposals.

Decided:-

- **IC's Roads Services to change Cycle Route to a bidirectional flow.**
- **IC's Property Officers to conclude gable end rendering works in due course.**
- **Roads Officers to carry out the following:**
 - Roads Officers to ensure all snagging works are identified and fixed by the contractor before project sign off.
 - Roads Officers to identify any uneven paving's and rectify.
 - Roads Officers to look at paving materials, as reported they are slippery in wet weather.
 - Directional road markings to be made clearer.
- **IC's E&R Corp Director and RCH to consider improving the street appeal at the corner of Dalrymple Street and Westburn Street.**
- **Roads Officers to remove the two parking spaces as agreed.**
- **WBHS Traders to hold events on WBHS to encourage more footfall and liaise with Regeneration Officers for funding and support.**
- **Regeneration Officer to provide recommendations and proposals for the development of a grant/funding scheme to support commercial traders with improving their shop frontages on WBHS.**

d) Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Transforming the 'Heart of the Town'

In addition to the report, it was noted that Balfour Beatty submitted prices to IC Officers in January 2025. Project management consultants are analysing the prices and programme to determine next steps, which will then be submitted to IC's E&R Committee for consideration.

Further site investigation works will take place in March 2025, which will cause disruptions to traffic. However, Officers will try to minimise the impact of this and release comms in due course.

The UK Gov gave verbal assurance, in December 2024, that an extension has been granted, and Officers await written confirmation. The next reporting period to the UK Gov is April 2025.

Decided:-

- **IC Officers to release comms to raise awareness of possible traffic disruptions during investigation works.**
- e) Towns Board (TB)
- Further to the report, it was noted the Towns Fund Manager came into post in January 2025.

The New UK Government (Gov) confirmed, in October 2024, there would be continued support for the Towns Fund. Although official government guidance is still to be released, the funding profile is expected to remain as 75% Capital and 25% Revenue.

It was advised the established Greenock TB will remain in place to oversee the plans, with Inverclyde Council (IC) as the accountable body for the administration of funds and as an Advisor to the Board.

The next step is the creation of a ten-year vision and initial investment plan, to identify how the first £6m will be spent over the first three years. Therefore, there is still time for the Board to identify opportunities to support the Town Centre regeneration. Both documents need to be submitted to the UK Gov for approval in late 2025.

From the five Board meetings held to date, the Board's priorities focus on TC Place Making, Connectivity and supporting Business and Enterprise.

It was advised the new TCRF Action Plan consists of community identified projects that could be delivered via the IC's Capital Programme and Scottish Gov Placed Based Funding, when funds become available, in consultation with the Forum and requiring Committee approvals.

However, the Towns Fund is a windfall for Greenock alone. Projects can be realised and decided/agreed quicker. All IC Regeneration Officers will work in collaboration to ensure the investment impact has synergy with all Forum TCAP regeneration projects for Greenock.

- Cllr Brennan, who is a member of the Towns Board highlighted that Greenock's TB has set clear plans with input from the full Board with support from Ironside Farrar, adding it is key that both the TCRF and TB feed into each other. It was advised that tackling Anti-Social Behaviours is one of the TB priorities and has requested senior officers to arrange additional walkarounds for the Board, to give a physical sense of the challenges Greenock faces.

- f) Partnership Working – RCH & ICDT
Additional verbal update given under item 5.2c.

5.2 VERBAL UPDATES

- a) Greenock TC Action Plans
Officers' apologies were given for the delay with finalising the Plans. Officers are aiming to get them published in the next couple of weeks and a link will be sent to all forum members. However, a presentation with high-level information can be reshared with the forum in the meantime ([Appendix 1](#)).

Decided:-

- **IC Officers to publish final TCAP and distribute link to Forum members.**
- b) West Stewart Street Underpasses
Officers advised the decorative panels are extremely expensive to replace and propose to get cost for the following:-

- Price to replace current like with like.
- Price to replace with plain panel.
- Price for a structural safety inspection.

The Chair advised that if the prices can be covered under the Forums current available funding, previous approvals have been given for Officers to take these to IC's E&R Committee for consideration.

It was noted that the whole area has a lot of graffiti, as well as a broken bench and it was agreed Council Officers will liaise with Oakmall with regards to graffiti and identify who the bench belongs to, with a view to remove or fix.

Decided:-

- **Prices to be fed back to Forum and E&R Committee in due course.**
- **IC Officers to liaise with Oakmall re graffiti and identify who owns broken bench, with a view to remove or repair.**

c) Partnership Working - River Clyde Homes & ICDT

- It was advised that several TC back court and gardening works had been identified in December 2024. RCH and ICDT Officers will meet to take these works forward.

ICDT requested the use of an RCH flat for welfare facilities, which has been granted.

RCH Officers are also keen to continue the good partnership working with ICDT and will arrange a meeting to discuss possible projects for the next financial year.

- It was asked had any tenant raised concerns about paying for a tenement service and then the works being paid for again from public funds via the RCH and ICDT partnership.

RCH Officers advised there are no tenemental service agreements in place for any of the properties they have identified who receive this partnership support.

Decided:-

- **RCH and ICDT Officers to provide ongoing updates on partnership working.**

d) RCH Town Centre Properties Update

A presentation covering the bullet points on the agenda was given to the meeting by RCH Officers ([Appendix 2](#)).

- It was noted that the 13 unlettable properties are usually due to structural work requirements and high-level of costs to repair.
- The 33 low demand areas tend to be areas that experience anti-social behaviours and alcohol and drug behavioural activities.
- RCH Officers are currently working on 18 live anti-social complaints in partnership with the Hub.
- It was advised that Gov Legislation prevents Officers from being able to pick and choose who they can let too.

- It was highlighted there is a severe problem with dog fouling across Inverclyde, but more prevalent in Greenock TC tenemental properties. RCH and IC Officers, in partnership, have developed a publicity campaign and an App to enable anonymous reporting of dog fouling. The next partnership meeting is in March 2025 ([Link to IC's reporting page for Dog Fouling](#)).
- RCH Officers are arranging for a full tenemental deep clean from 59 to 89 Cathcart Street.
- It was noted that some areas also require a two person visit due to individuals or incidents in certain areas.
- It was advised RCH tenants in Cathcart Street and West Blackhall Street are being balloted to gauge the level of interest and possible uptake of a caretaking service. Outcome feedback will be given to the next Forum meeting.
- RCH Officers have submitted a budget proposal to continue to fund the Anti-Social Behaviour Partnership programme which increases patrols in hotspot areas as the intel they receive from the Police and Wardens is vital to help them act and resolve anti-social incidents.
- It was suggested that a Roving/Mobile (Community) Skip Scheme is looked at to try and deter or deal with the reported issue of fly tipping ([Link to example of Community Skip Scheme](#)).

Decided:-

- **RCH Officers to provide update on partnership working tackling TC dog fouling issues.**
- **RCH Officers to provide feedback on Caretaking consultations.**
- **RCH to provide feedback on funding outcome to continue support for the Anti-Social Behaviour Partnership programme.**
- **IC and RCH Officers to look at the implementation of a Roving/Mobile (Community) Skip Scheme for the TC ([Link to example of Community Skip Scheme](#)).**

6.0 Any Other Competent Business (AOCB)

6.1 No further business was discussed.

7.0 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 21 May 2025, by Hybrid format, (within Customer Services Meeting Room 4 and via Microsoft Teams Videoconferencing).

Chair Signature Date