Lochgilphead Front Green to Crinan Canal

Community Engagement

Stantec

Background

Stantec have been appointed to undertake a project which will identify the best option for an active travel route linking the Lochgilphead Front Green with the Crinan Canal and produce a concept design for the best route option linking Lochgilphead Front Green (town centre) and the Crinan Canal (NCN 78).

The new route would also tie in with the design for a new active travel route between Lorne Street and the Lochgilphead Joint Campus thereby creating a safe and direct active travel link between Ardrishaig, the Canal, Lochgilphead and the Joint Campus, the Sports Centre, Kilmory Industrial Estate and Argyll and Bute Council HQ.

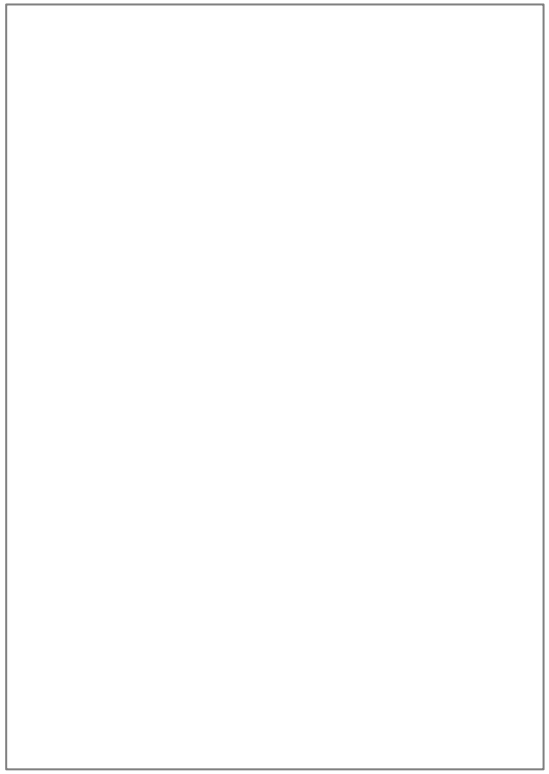
The proposal was first identified in the 2016 Rethink the Link Charrette and is strongly supported by the Lochgilphead Phoenix Project, a local not-for-profit charitable organisation which was set up to help regenerate the town.

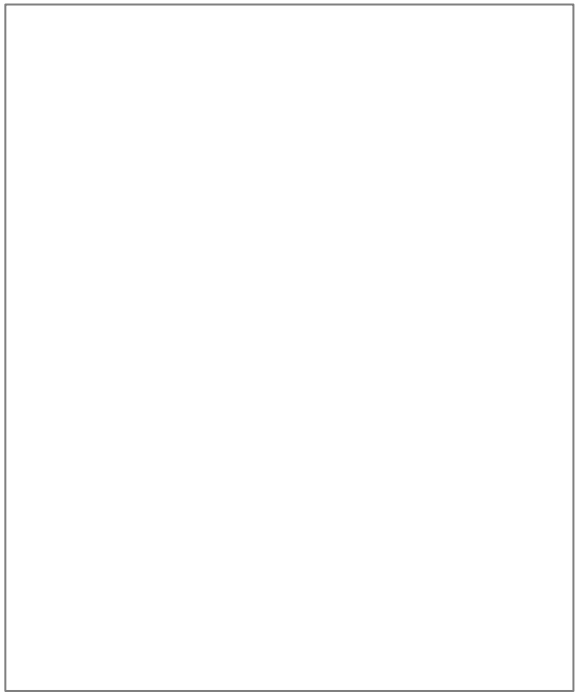
A concept design was produced in 2020; however due to

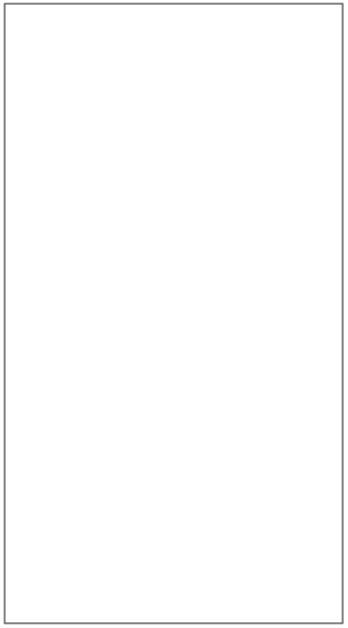
Extent of Engagement

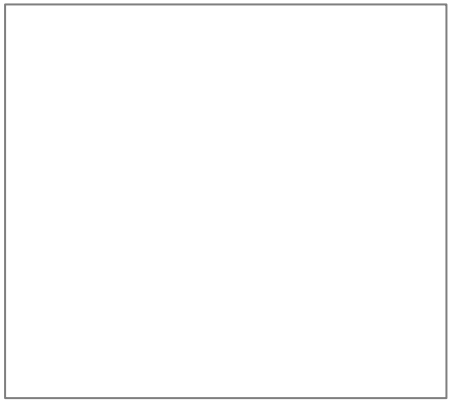
In 2023 the following stakeholder and community engagement events were undertaken:

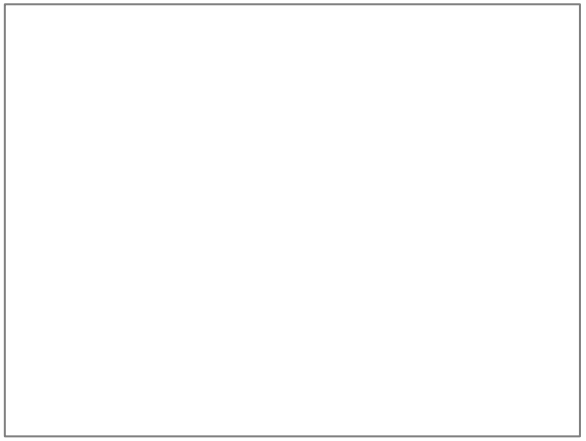
- Preparation of Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) in parallel with stakeholder mapping
- Preparation of Community Engagement and Communications Plan
- Initial site visit with wider project team (including Stantec, Argyll and Bute Council Officers and Sustrans)
- Online survey (live from 25th January to 28th February 2023)
- Public event at Lochgilphead Baptist Church on 9th February 2023
- Stakeholder workshops:
    - Initial constraints workshop with key stakeholders











Community Engagement

Online Survey

- 128 responses (equivalent to around 4% of the population of Lochgilphead and Ardrishaig)
- 51% live in Lochgilphead, 29% Ardrishaig and 24% elsewhere
- 116 are local residents and 63 use the area for leisure activities. Responses were also received from people who work in the area, play sports in the area or whose children attend school or nursery in the area.

Walking

- 33% of respondents walk or wheel every day and 39% more than once per week. The most common reasons are for exercise (82 respondents) or to get to the shops (75 respondents).

Cycling

- 11% of respondents cycle every day and 15% more than once per week. The most common reasons are for exercise, with 43 respondents citing this, or to get to the shops in Lochgilphead or another town centre (29 respondents).
- 52% of respondents never cycle as their mode of travel.

Safety and directness

- The survey asked respondents to rate the safety and directness of the existing access to the Crinan Canal from Lochgilphead. The mean average rating for safety was lower (2.4) than the average rating for directness (2.9). The median rating for safety was 2, as opposed to 3 for directness.

Reactions to general route proposal

- Overall, 85% of respondents were in support of the general proposal to create a segregated route for both cyclists and pedestrians between the Front Green and the Crinan Canal. This result consists of 75 respondents (59%) who Strongly Support the proposal, and 33 respondents (26%) who Support the proposal.
- Many respondents felt that they would use the route more if a segregated route was created. In total, 44

Very dangerous trying to cross from Corran to canal towpath due to traffic speed and volume. Maybe pedestrian crossing with lights and reduce speed limit to 20mph at this location?

The approach for pedestrians to the canal is on a narrow (ish

The Canal is a perfect cycling / walking route but crossing the main roads in Lochgilphead especially in tourist time is a nightmare. I am 73 so am not as agile as I used to be and am frightened to use the road at all or cross the roundabout. I sometimes go to Riverside to avoid it which is less complex but on either access I have to get off my bike.

Along the Front Green

‡ 41% of respondents have a preference for the extension

A path shared by pedestrians and cyclists would be hazardous for the pedestrians and slow wheelers (wheelchair users, baby buggies etc) as well as dogs being walked on a leash.

I don't think there would be enough cyclists using the path to warrant option 2, I say this as a cyclist myself, I feel most people cycling in the area wound rather use the road, and the few that wouldn't be to overwhelming for option 1.

Not segregating bikes and pedestrians would be a wasted opportunity. Option 2 is also better as the buffer between the road and the walkway is greater and therefore safer.

I think we need to reclaim this area of Lochgilphead for people over motor vehicles and therefore would like to see the speed limit reduced to 20mph and emphasis being given to pedestrians and cyclists.

I like the proposal to improve the parking area and make it into a picnic venue but the noise of traffic would need to be reduced to make it comfortable. The area is a bird haven and a hide should be made available.

Prefer Option 2 as if the footpath is right next to the road, the liklihood of getting splashed in wet weather, as is current5 (9.297 (asrhnt)3.00q 0 0 780 xt)1o3-8..80 xt curree

Option 2 is problematic for elderly, wheelchair users and children. I walk regularly on the Crinan Canal towpath, I am bit deaf and some cyclists come up behind you with no warning, some are courteous and slow down and even ring their bell to warn you. Others don't bother.

River Crossing

Respondents were provided with two concept designs to

Option 1 ² Along the Road

Keeping pedestrians away from mini - roundabout and bridge would be my preferred option but if not possible, at the very minimum a proper pedestrian crossing and more secure footpath round the side of the mini roundabout and over the bridge would be the bare minimum required

Option 1 seems the least intrusive and lowest cost, but that footbridge will need a lot of work if it's to accommodate cycles and foot traffic safely and would certainly expect to see thoss initial cost to at least double.

This is a good option and we also need access onto Corran grazings .

This is probably the better option, cost and time -wise

Easy and safe answer. Hopefully a zebra or pelican crossing created to allow access to the canal?

I appreciate that the proposed widening would bring the proposed route up to spec for want of a better phrase. However, this is a busy junction, and it is highly probable that drivers will be focused on vehicles coming from other directions as they approach the roundabout which does not bode well for safety.

It seems like this would be a slight improvement, but would not be enough to change people's behaviour

Getting rid of hedge at the Corran B&B would be great improvement as it encroaches on the whole pavement when in growing seasons.

Option 2 ² Structure / Causeway and Bridge over Corran

About the Respondents

Of the 126 respondents who filled out the demographic section of the survey, 68 identified as female and 51 as male, with one identifying in another way and six preferring not to disclose this information.

The majority of respondents (63) were in the 45 to 64 age range, with 30 between the ages of 25 to 44 and 23 aged 65 to 74.

Disabilities

When asked whether an individual had a disability, 12 said that they did. Of these 12, eight had a physical disability (a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, lifting or carrying) and five had a long-term illness, disease of condition.

Public Event

A public drop-in event was held at Lochgilphead Baptist Church from 3.30pm until 7.30pm on 9th February 2023.

The event was publicised with posters displayed around the town, in Council social media posts, and shared on social media by various stakeholders including the Lochgilphead Phoenix Project and the two Community Councils.

Format

The Stantec project team attended the event along with Argyll and Bute Council Officers. Five A0 boards were displayed to present similar information to the online survey. Attendees were encouraged to provide feedback on the options presented by using sticky notes or sticky dots to show and explain their preferences.

In addition, large-scale maps were distributed on tables to allow attendees to mark up areas and explain to the team where there were particular concerns within the study area. These were drawn on directly and added to with sticky notes. The maps provided a constructive structure to support conversations between attendees and the project team.

An iPad was provided for attendees to complete the online survey, and paper copies of the survey were available on request. A contact sheet was provided to allow attendees to leave their details to be contacted about further developments to the project.

Approximately 30-35 people attended the event throughout the afternoon and evening.

Comment on Board 3 - Extension of shared path

No strong feelings either way but money saved here can be better spent elsewhere

Comment on Board 4 ²Along the road / Structure over Corran Grazings

Option 2 looks like the safest crossing for cyclists and walkers and access but as it is also significantly the most expensive [&] land will need high maintenance it might not be feasible.

Comment on Board 5 ²Historic Access Ramp

The disused ramp to the canal is much preferable to the existing road due to the better gradient. BUT people will not use it if they still have to negotiate the roundabout, they will use the existing road.

Online workshops

Two online workshops were held [2] one which invited internal stakeholders (i.e. relevant Council officers), and another which invited external stakeholders (i.e. interested

Summary and Next Steps

Summary

The engagement exercise has:

- Provided a reasonable level of engagement with the local community, especially given the relative size of the communities of Lochgilphead and Ardrishaig
- Secured inputs from most of the key stakeholders,

Appendix A

Appendix A ² Online Survey

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Appendix B

Online Survey Responses

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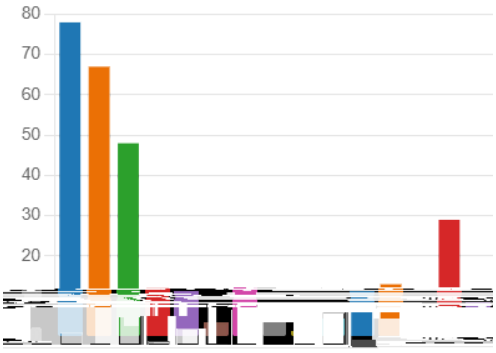

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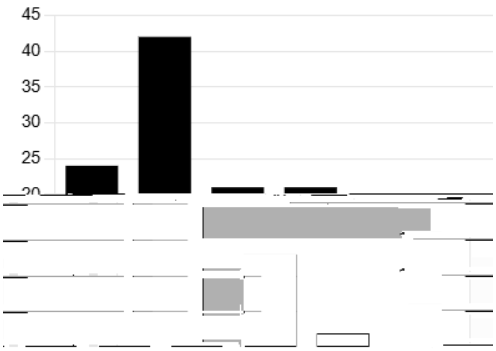

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Appendix C

Public Event Display Boards

LOCHGILPHEAD FRONT GREEN TO CRINAN CANA ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTE

Community engagement for the development of concept designs

Some members of the local community may remember that an engagement exercise was carried out concerning this same link around two years ago.

During the previous engagement, the main options presented were based on a path across the Corran Grazings (over Loch Gilp and south of Crinan B&B).

Recently, Stantec has undertaken:

- A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA)
- Work by civil and structural engineers on the creation of a causeway / structure / path
- A ground investigation report by geotechnical engineers
- Studies by hydrologists to understand flood risk
- Traffic counts, which give us vehicle flows and speeds by type of vehicle

The emerging findings from this work have identified a number of challenges to delivering this route:

- **Cost** ^ costs are a major contributing factor in determining the deliverability of the route, and must be taken into consideration through the options appraisal process. To deliver a route across the Corran Grazings able to withstand flood risk and deliver an appropriate design life, the costs will be significant.

- **Visual and ecological impact** ^ visual and ecological impact must also be taken into account as part of the options appraisal. Creating a route of this scale across the Corran Grazings would be a significant visual intrusion and is likely to impact the current wetland ecosystem. The Corran Grazings are also affected by Japanese Knotweed, which is likely to increase delivery timescales.

Front Green Options^ Options have been developed for access is likely

LOCHGILPHEAD FRONT GREEN TO CRINAN CANAL ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTE

Community engagement for the development of concept designs

Front Green Option 1
Extension of shared path

‡ Existing A83 unchanged.

‡ Recently created shared path on Front Green merges into existing footway to create a 4.0m wide shared path with a 0.5m buffer from the road.

‡ Indicative cost: £220,000.

Let us know what you think!
Add a sticky dot if you prefer Option 1

Front Green Option 2
Segregated walking / cycling links

‡ Existing A83 unchanged.

‡ 3.0m wide bidirectional segregated cycle lane adjacent to the road (with 0.5m buffer) as recommended by Cycling by Design (Transport Scotland design guidance).

‡ 2.0m footway separated from the cycle lane by a 1.0m buffer.

‡ Indicative cost: £440,000.

Let us know what you think!
Add a sticky dot if you prefer Option 2

LOCHGILPHEAD FRONT GREEN TO CRINAN CANA
ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTE

Community engagement for the development of concept designs