

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CROSS PARTY GROUP ON TOWNS AND TOWN CENTRES

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 11TH SEPTEMBER, 2013 AT 18:00

LOCATION: COMMITTEE ROOM 1, SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

AGENDA ITEMS

1. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

1.1 Margaret McCulloch (MMcC) welcomed members to the meeting and thanked Scotland's Towns Partnership for supporting refreshments.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING & MATTERS ARISING

2.1 The Minutes were accepted by Karen Whitefield and seconded by Ian Fowell.

3. REPORT FROM STUDY VISIT

3.1 The Study Visit was well-attended. See outline in Appendix 3. MMcC highlighted just some of the elements that stood out for her personally as being the café developed by the Trust in Neilston; the good branding work in Clarkston; and a huge amount of regeneration and impressive buildings in Paisley; and a good final discussion session in Barrhead.

3.2 Those who had taken part agreed that Paisley in particular had been more impressive than anticipated, though all appreciated that there is still much to do. Karen Whitefield (KW) believes that the Council could promote its successes and good work more.

3.3 MMcC tabled the idea that student flats could utilise an empty office block in Paisley centre. Hugh McMahan (HMMcM) welcomed MMcC's comment on student accommodation, as the BID is meeting with the University to discuss greater engagement between the University and the town. However, the issue of absentee landlords is a problem – often from outwith the area, they are out of touch with affordable rent prices for local businesses. There's also an issue with neglect of their buildings and derelict land – the BID has called on Scottish Government to push for change.

3.4 MMcC acknowledged these points and also highlighted that the cost of renovation is high. Mike McKenzie MSP (MMcK), Alison Johnstone MSP (AJ) and Neil Bibby MSP (NB) introduced themselves. In response to HMMcM, MMcK highlighted that Scottish Government was ceasing business rates relief on empty property, to help encourage owners to sell or use it. The Community Empowerment Bill also hopes to create an opportunity for urban communities to have the right to buy for vacant land or buildings.

3.5 Dennis Rodwell (DR), observes that people have a negative attitude to Paisley, but there is great pride amongst its people; who have tremendous knowledge and understanding of the area. There would seem to be a mismatch between civic enthusiasm and what's happening in Paisley. Relating to that cultural identity, interestingly, you can't

buy a Paisley-patterned, Paisley-produced tie, in Paisley. DR too has concerns over absentee landlords, and believes community ownership is to be encouraged. He would like to reproduce the energy of Paisley's Anchor Mill regeneration project. Especially as there is a lack of space in the community for businesses. HMCM added that although there is space in town, it is quite possibly too expensive.

3.6 Sunil Varu (SV), who is manager of the developing Paisley First BID, commented that the Visit participants' surprise at seeing Paisley in a positive light, is mainly due to perceptions – it's likely that they haven't visited recently, if at all. Negativity doesn't help footfall. SV and the BID intend to build on that civic energy DR describes and tell the good story of Paisley. They're not pushing the retail but the living, such as the night-time and student economies. DR also referenced Dundee in similar vein. SV added that outside of the main cities, Paisley has the largest arts culture in the country. There has been about £20 million invested in Paisley but there is a perceptions-barrier to get over.

3.7 Ian Fowell (IF) was also very impressed by Paisley and welcomes SV's intentions to develop the night-time economy, and student sector. He felt that the buildings needed a lot of investment. IF also praised the Neilston bank project – noting that it has great community energy behind it.

3.8 Ross Martin (RM) commented on the variety of towns chosen for the Visit had successfully demonstrated the differing ways of regenerating towns, driven by different groups.

3.9 MMcC believes businesses have a key role to play. The Stonehouse community council worked closely with Boots for example.

3.10 James Trolland (JT) commented that having previously seen the Neilston bank development, he took that back to Drumchapel but they didn't have the capacity to drive things in the same way. JT went on to say how Drumchapel has now got young people involved, providing alternative thinking. Given that Drumchapel has a population of 15,000, perhaps a town centre manager in such a housing association should be a consideration.

3.11 Acknowledging JT's remarks, MMcC stated that we should encourage young people to be actively involved locally and also to join the Cross Party Group. NB met Paisley BID, and the student union, and agrees we should involve young people more through obvious routes such as music and student unions. MMcC called for the CPG members to email ideas to the [Secretary](#) for young groups that the CPG could engage with and potentially hold CPG meetings with. JT extended an invite to Drumchapel.

4. NATIONAL REVIEW OF TOWN CENTRES REPORT: COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE IN SCOTLAND'S TOWN CENTRES – MALCOLM FRASER, CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL REVIEW OF TOWN CENTRES EXTERNAL ADVISORY GROUP

4.1 Malcolm Fraser (MF) as background to the report, said that the External Advisory Group (EAG) agreed that towns should be good places to trade, local authorities need to locate there, and must engage communities – the EAG members all understood there's a problem - and an opportunity. We need to coalesce around place, these places at the heart of work, civic and social lives. There are still a number of things the Review doesn't do because it can't cover everything and also other people are doing work too.

4.2 Out of the Review we should not be looking for primary legislation, eye catching initiatives portals, but rather a focus on the art of the possible. Minister for Local Government and Planning, Derek Mackay, has taken on the Review and sees it as something he can do something with. Something to be delivered. The ground is prepared because of the work of the Town Centre Review, the Cross Party Group and Scotland's Towns Partnership.

4.3 The following key points were made during Malcolm Fraser's presentation -

- Why do towns matter? MF emphasised that places must be sustainable.
- Themes:
 - Town Centre Living – involving Housing Associations, Shelter and private finance to develop residential above shops. Finance Minister, John Swinney has identified £2m to support this.
 - Vibrant Local Economies - consider businesses getting 100% rates refund for locating there.
 - Enterprising Communities - link up community groups who have 'the know' with local surveyors, and also work with Development Trusts to make a variety of groups work together in a vacant property. Where do they borrow money? TCR suggests the government endow a development fund. There are places to borrow money but we need to signpost people to them. It could be a fund that would grow; communities would pay back as their businesses grow.
 - Accessible services - must think about where we put public services, so everyone can access them. Hoping the Community Empowerment Bill will address that and work with Scottish Futures Trust so that good decisions are always made on where public services go.
 - Digital towns - referencing Wigtown - a fear of digital. Actually, if it was digitalised people would find all the book shops.
 - Proactive planning - more relaxed about change of use, can't bring primary legislation. Nick Wright trying to work with local authorities and planning agencies. Use sequential testing for all uses; use brownfield before going out to greenfield. Architecture and Design Scotland is drawing up a 'toolkit for communities', to help them figure out e.g. designing streets again, car clubs, bike clubs, trees, and how the theme comes together to develop their town.
- Not talking about VAT! MF now takes questions.

4.4 Keith Irving (KI) is enthusiastic about Town Centre First principle. Unless compulsion, how do we tackle the people who've always done things one way? Transport engineers need to buy in. MF said that the answer is that these public servants answer to elected politicians. We need to embolden our politicians to tell council officers to do it the way that policy demands and it is for the better of our towns.

4.5 SV - regeneration led not planning led approach needed. MF - regeneration is a good word but there's also the approach that regeneration blitzes everything and gives into developers. Planning though spends too much time in the detail of building. It should be there to make sure there's spaces for community, and not be the architect. SV questioned what a lot of old buildings can be used for. MF - a lot could be used for what they were originally intended! It would be great if councils enabled groups to use and take responsibility. DR - asked why there aren't powers to arrest old buildings out of the hands of absentee landlords. Is there a need for community consultation with council to have

information about what they can do, and negotiate with landlords? Banks are also sitting on a lot of properties. The more Govanhill Baths and CraftTowns, the better.

4.6 Thomas Glen (TG) – set real challenges on how local authorities take decisions. The default is to slash and burn, sell off properties because of council finance challenges, but not take cognisance of long term effects. For example, a lot of road engineers won't do things because it's too expensive. Town Centre First presumption is critical - must start to make decisions that aren't knee jerk, and are long term.

4.7 MMcC – lots of one man businesses setting up - could they have pop up shops, experiment and see if their business idea works? As soon as they consider it, the rates stop them. Towns are putting temporary panels up to make windows look better so owners are loathed to release unit temporarily. MF- town centre investment zones being considered; giving local council discretionary powers to reduce or give free rates. Great shame that rates revaluation didn't happen. However, MF believes pop up shops are not necessarily a long term solution. Longer, slower more subtle transitions would be better. The market needs to help us a bit here; there should be more producer-retailers. DR added that he still believes we must have more stringent planning to bring us more in line with Europe.

4.8 KW – the Community Empowerment Bill - how central is it to success of community empowerment and is it too much to put on community when some people in the most deprived areas would just like someone to do what they believe they should. MF agrees – without wishing to sound dismissive, we must empower people who do want to take some control. Westerhailes is case in point. Tom Sneddon (TS) represents 200 Development Trusts - KW thinks there should be recognition for communities who do take responsibility.

5. SCOTLAND'S TOWNS CONFERENCE – ROSS MARTIN, POLICY DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR SCOTTISH PUBLIC POLICY

5.1 RM highlighted the key dateline in Scotland's towns calendar in the next few months, giving everyone present and in towns all over Scotland, the opportunity to promote and take part in all things towns. Firstly, October sees the government's response to the review and hopefully broadly, their sign up to it - empowering people to deliver.

5.2 Then media interest will begin to do the compare and contrast storyline. Most local papers take a pride in talking up the town they report on, so it's a great opportunity for all to start making a noise about reconnecting people and place. Some people may use it in terms of the independence debate, in which towns play a strong role.

5.3 November launches Scotland's Towns Week (18 – 24 November) which seeks to identify and promote activity across Scotland's towns. Scotland's Towns Partnership will support promotion and branding of any type of activity that is happening during that time.

5.4 The Week's headline event for all things towns, is Scotland's Towns Conference (22 November) – the key event in Scotland for everyone with a role or an interest in our towns. The conference will be about sharing stories of 'good stuff' that's working; it is a marketplace for ideas, and everyone should attend! Details from [Scotland's Towns Partnership](#).

5.5 Into December and Christmas; with a huge retail focus but also the opportunity for people to spend time in their town and reflect on how they relate to their town.

5.6 RM challenges members of the CPG and anyone linked to the group, that in those three months, to get involved and make a big noise about our towns. It's time for towns to celebrate the central role they play. The conference is the focal point for that activity and RM looks forward to seeing everyone there.

5.7 Alastair Mitchell (AM) pledges to do something around *all* of the activities Ross mentions! AM also stresses the importance of the evening economy.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Living Streets have published a report on the pedestrian pound: the business case for better streets and places. This new report, prepared by research company Just Economics, shows that well planned improvements to public spaces can raise footfall and trading by up to 40%. Following publication of Scotland's Town Centres Review this summer, the report is calling for action in three areas:

- Investment in the public realm
- Local community powers to help the high street
- Making town centres accessible & enjoyable

The report also highlights the importance of strengthening the Town Centre First planning policy, developing Business Improvement Districts and investigation of an internet sales tax. Further details and a summary report are available from:

<http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/pedestrianpound> and the full report is available here: http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/sites/default/files/content/library/Reports/PedestrianPound_fullreport_web.pdf

The Living Streets Conference – Walking and the Urban Environment takes place on 6th November in Edinburgh. Free places maybe booked at www.mackayhannah.com. Information will be circulated separately by STP.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.1 Dates for the next and subsequent meetings will be circulated to the Group.

APPENDIX 1 – AGENDA

Cross Party Group on Towns and Town Centres

6 pm – 8 pm, Wednesday 11th September 2013

Committee Room 1, Scottish Parliament

Agenda

1. Light refreshments kindly supported by Scotland's Towns Partnership
2. Welcome & Opening Remarks – Margaret McCulloch MSP, Convener
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting & Matters arising
4. Report from Study Visit
5. National Review of Town Centres Report: Community & Enterprise in Scotland's Town Centres – Malcolm Fraser, Chair of the National Review of Town Centres External Advisory Group
6. Scotland's Towns Conference – Ross Martin, Policy Director, Centre for Scottish Public Policy and Adviser to Scotland's Towns Partnership.
7. Any Other Business
8. Date of Next Meeting - to be agreed

APPENDIX 2 – APOLOGIES AND LIST OF ATTENDEES:

APOLOGIES

Garry Clark, Scottish Chambers of Commerce
Alex Close, Federation of Master Builders
Scott Davidson, CH2M HILL
Ian Davison Porter, Business Improvement Districts Scotland
Graeme Dey MSP
Annabelle Ewing MSP
Laura Forster, Centre for Scottish Public Policy
Barry McCulloch, FSB Scotland
Craig McLaren, RTPI
Margaret McDougall MSP
Nikola Miller, RTPI
Maggie Mitchell, Dunfermline Delivers
Fiona Moriarty, Scottish Retail Consortium
Alasdair Morrison, GVA
Leigh Sparks, University of Stirling
David Stewart, Highland Retail Academy

ATTENDEES

Margaret McCulloch MSP (Convener)
Gordon Bell, The Retailer Group
Neil Bibby MSP
Elaine Bone, Scotland's Towns Partnership/Economic Development Association Scotland
Colin Brown, McClure Naismith LLP
Callum Chomczuk, Pagoda PR
Sheena Cleland, Parliamentary Researcher to Roseanna Cunningham MSP
Joe Fagan, Scottish Parliament
Robert Ferguson, Fife Council
Vicky Ferrier, Alliance Boots
Ian Fowell, Scottish Small Towns Group
Malcolm Fraser, TCR External Advisory Group/Malcolm Fraser Architects
Thomas Glen, East Dunbartonshire Council
Keith Irving, Living Streets Scotland
Alison Johnstone MSP
Stephen Leckie, Crieff Hydro/Scottish Tourism Alliance
Mike Mackenzie MSP
Ross Martin, Centre for Scottish Public Policy
Hugh McMahon, Paisley BID
Phil Matthews, Transform
Alastair Mitchell, Falkirk Delivers
Phil Prentice, East Renfrewshire Council
Dennis Rodwell, Dennis Rodwell Architecture and Planning
Matt Ronan, Scottish Business Resilience Centre
Douglas Scott, Scottish Borders Council
Tom Sneddon, DTAS

James Trolland, Space Consulting
Sunil Varu, ATCM
Karen Whitefield, USDAW
Ross Williams, Pagoda PR

APPENDIX 3 – CPG STUDY VISIT:

Cross Party Group on Towns & Town Centres Study Visit Neilston ,Clarkston, Paisley , & Barrhead - Wednesday, 17th July 2013



Itinerary

- 9.30- 10.00 Meet for coffees at East Renfrewshire Council ,Barrhead HQ , Civic Room 1
- 10.00 Bus departs for Neilston
- 10.10 – 10.35 Presentation at The Bank by Neilston Development Trust. Walk about.
- 10.35 – 10.55 travel to Clarkston Car park
- 10.55 – 11.30 Presentation/walk about led by East Renfrewshire BID co-ordinator
- 11.30 – 11.50 Travel to Paisley ,Renfrewshire Council HQ
- 11.50 – 12.30 Guided walk led by Paisley Town Centre Manager
- 12.30 – 12.45 Travel to Barrhead
- 12.45 – 13.15 Guided walk led by ERC Regeneration Team around Barrhead town centre
- 13.15 – 14.00 Networking lunch at East Renfrewshire Council ,Barrhead HQ , Civic Room 1

Participants

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|--|----------------------|
| <i>Margaret</i> | <i>McCulloch</i> | <i>MSP</i> | <i>Convener</i> |
| <i>Graeme</i> | <i>Dey</i> | <i>MSP</i> | <i>Vice Convener</i> |
| <i>Neil</i> | <i>Bibby</i> | <i>MSP</i> | |
| <i>Sarah</i> | <i>Kettles</i> | <i>Angus Council</i> | |
| <i>Steven</i> | <i>Henderson</i> | <i>Shopkeeper, Arbroath</i> | |
| <i>Tom</i> | <i>Sneddon</i> | <i>DTA Scotland</i> | |
| <i>Brian</i> | <i>Patterson</i> | <i>East Dunbartonshire Council</i> | |
| <i>Elaine</i> | <i>Murray</i> | <i>MSP</i> | |
| <i>Matt</i> | <i>Ronan</i> | <i>Scottish Business Resilience Centre</i> | |
| <i>Heather</i> | <i>Sim</i> | <i>Space Unlimited</i> | |
| <i>Dennis</i> | <i>Rodwell</i> | <i>DennisRodwell Architect-Planner</i> | |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------|
| <i>Dr Beria</i> | <i>Bayazitlioglu Rodwell</i> | | |
| <i>Ian</i> | <i>Fowell</i> | <i>Scottish Small Towns Group</i> | |
| <i>Pamela</i> | <i>McCreadie</i> | <i>East Dunbartonshire Council</i> | |
| <i>Pauline</i> | <i>Gallacher</i> | <i>Neilston Development Trust</i> | |
| <i>Cllr Jim</i> | <i>Fletcher</i> | <i>Leader, East Renfrewshire Council</i> | |
| <i>Cllr Tony</i> | <i>Buchanan</i> | <i>Convener, East Renfrewshire Council</i> | |
| <i>Cllr Alistair</i> | <i>Carmichael</i> | <i>Provost, East Renfrewshire Council</i> | |
| <i>Cllr Gordon</i> | <i>McCaskill</i> | <i>Shadow Convener, East Renfrewshire Council</i> | |
| | | | |
| <i>Daniel</i> | <i>McKendry</i> | <i>East Renfrewshire Council</i> | <i>Co-Host</i> |
| <i>Justyna</i> | <i>Krupinska</i> | <i>East Renfrewshire BIDs Co-Ordinator</i> | |
| <i>John</i> | <i>Hamilton</i> | <i>President, East Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce</i> | |
| <i>Sunil</i> | <i>Varu</i> | <i>Renfrewshire Council</i> | <i>Co-Host</i> |
| <i>Hugh</i> | <i>McMahon</i> | <i>Paisley Developing BID</i> | |
| <i>Tom</i> | <i>Stewart</i> | <i>Paisley Developing BID</i> | |
| <i>Robert</i> | <i>Ferguson</i> | <i>Fife Council</i> | |
| <i>Sharon</i> | <i>Ward</i> | <i>Fife Council</i> | |
| <i>Ross</i> | <i>Martin</i> | <i>CSPP/STP</i> | |
| <i>Karen</i> | <i>Whitefield</i> | <i>USDAW</i> | |
| | | | |
| <u>Meeting us in Paisley</u> | | | |
| <i>Amanda</i> | <i>Molson</i> | <i>Renfrewshire Council</i> | |
| <i>Mary</i> | <i>Crearie</i> | <i>Renfrewshire Council</i> | |
| <i>Mark</i> | <i>McMillan</i> | <i>Leader, Renfrewshire Council</i> | |
| | | | |
| <u>Meeting us in Barrhead</u> | | | |
| <i>Lorraine</i> | <i>McMillan</i> | <i>Chief Executive, East Renfrewshire Council</i> | |

Information on East Renfrewshire Towns

Neilston - Scotland's First Renaissance Town

The renaissance town approach has been used in the US, Australia and in Yorkshire, but Neilston is the first time it has been used in Scotland. It involves, community-led activity that empowers local people to lead the regeneration of their town via a Town Team. While it was led by the community, significant support was provided by key national partners

including East Renfrewshire Council; Barrhead Housing Association; Glasgow Urban Lab of the Mackintosh Glasgow's School of Architecture; Architecture and Design Scotland; Urban Design Skills; and the Development Trust Association Scotland.

A Charrette format was adopted that brought different groups of people together in a collaborative approach. The aim was to design solutions for the village on a shared basis, rather than people making representation based on their own interests and needs. [The Neilston town charter](#) was launched in January 2009. One of the first activities was to issue all households with a postcard and red ribbon to be tied to their favourite places. This was a very empowering approach for residents, businesses, agencies and councillors, and was a clear visual sign of the priorities that people wanted to see addressed.

From this initial start, the Charrette approach was adopted which incorporated a series of meetings site visits to key buildings/places across the town and an array of informal discussions. Ideas were then brought back to the Town Team Group which had been established to oversee progress. Sessions were also held with young people, to get their views and input into the vision for Neilston.

The charter was formally handed over to East Renfrewshire Council's leader at the national conference on Scottish Renaissance Towns Initiative in June 2009. The document was signed by a wide range of local stakeholders, including residents and community representatives, and presents a 20-year vision for the regeneration of the town.

Projects are ranked in timescale and set against the Scottish Government's five aims (wealthier and fairer, smarter, healthier, safer & stronger, greener). The charter is recognised by the council as being a key strategic document and will feed into the preparation of the local development plan.

What next?

[The Neilston town charter](#) is a mandate and manifesto for the community. Everybody who was involved in the process has signed up, creating strong buy-in to the future regeneration of the town. The process itself has built significant community capacity, including skills, knowledge and expertise, but more importantly has created enthusiasm and developed commitment to create a better place to live and work.

Neilston Development Trust is now planning to take forward the Town Charter, the 20-year development strategy to regenerate the community in a self-sustaining way. It has entered into partnership with developer, Carbonfree developing a local wind farm. The trust has promised to direct a substantial element of the income from this to the projects outlined in the charter.

Clarkston Business Improvement District

Clarkston BID was established in East Renfrewshire in summer 2010. It was the first BID on the western coast of Scotland and one of the smallest BIDs in the UK. The company comprises of 137 businesses located around Clarkston Town Centre. Four local churches are also included in the BID, although they do not pay the levy. Schools and Police are not included, although the BID cooperates closely with them. Due to the BID's size and project ambitions, businesses decided to pay a considerably high levy: 3.5% of NDR which gives an annual budget of about £60-65,000.

here is the 'general' list of BID's achievements:

- Branding of the whole area and establishing its identity as Clarkston: Town Centre entrance signs, I love Clarkston banners, 7 information stands around Clarkston, Clarkston dedicated website, facebook and twitter pages.
- The 'I love Clarkston' brand has been used since the launch of the BID in all BID's advertising materials, newspaper features, poster and street advertising banners. The BID has raised Clarkston's profile on the map of the Southside and the authority included the BID as separately designated area in the Local Development Plan.
- Christmas Lights - ERC would not fund them and it is mistake to think we would get them from the Council. There was no budget for it.
- Christmas Lights launch events - last year's event, Extravaganza with Strong Men competition and fireworks display, was extremely successful and we have surveys to support that. They are 100% positive on retail and customer side.
- I love Clarkston branded benches and bins - they were brought in by ERC thanks to the good relationship with the BID Management Committee.
- I love Clarkston loyalty scheme - more than 2000 customers signed up, showing us their support. All of them shared their email addresses for further correspondence. Community has been very responsive to messages sent by the BID to this database and Community's interest in the scheme must be further investigated. If we lose the BID we lose this link and the valuable customer database.
- I love Clarkston bus and newspapers promotional campaign in April and May 2012 and wide local promotion in November 2012 and April 2013.
- Good working relationship with local press and preferential advertising rates
- Good and on-going working relationship with the Council, free help for our events, their venues hired on preferential rates.
- Close working relationship with ER Roads dealing with the parking revision. If we lose the BID we lose the local, independent, representative body that ERC is now willing to consult the revision with.
- Business Forum organised quarterly in Clarkston to enable networking discussion of all current issues in Clarkston.
- Finally, a dedicated, independent Coordinator, employed by the ERCC - a one stop shop for all BID enquiries, well linked to local media, Council offices, BIDs Scotland. In her post and working closely with the Chamber, BID Chair and ERC, she got 45000 pounds cash influx from the Scottish Gvmt to Clarkston and the total of 7000 pounds from various sponsors for the Cycling Event organised in April 2013. She also secured a graduate marketing intern funded by BIDs Scotland who will help to completely revamp the website and information stands in Clarkston in Summer 2013.

...and plans for the nearest future:

- Replacement of all information stands in collaboration with Adrian McMurchie in summer 2013
- New website for late summer 2013
- Christmas lights (a new, much cheaper contract renegotiated for Clarkston by the BID)
- Christmas event with the sponsorship for fireworks display already secured (collaboration with the Farmers Market and Arts Club - already secured)
- Most importantly: all roads and pavements resurfaced in the BID during this year's school holidays and BID as a unified voice in parking consultation.

Barrhead, East Renfrewshire – A Place to Grow

While the UK slowly works its way out of the deepest recession since the 1930s, East Renfrewshire Council is forging ahead with the 10 year, £100M + regeneration of the town of Barrhead.

Town Centre

The £18M Health Centre, a partnership between the NHS and East Renfrewshire's Community Health Care Partnership, is celebrating its first birthday, already having attracted significant footfall to the town centre of Barrhead. This landmark building has helped to transform the appearance of Barrhead, and the eye-catching sculptures have become iconic within Barrhead

As a vivid demonstration of change taking place and using a grant from the Town Centre Regeneration Fund, £1.8M was invested in the public realm, buildings and fabric of Barrhead's town centre. The enhancement has provided a welcoming environment for both pedestrians and car drivers and has already resulted in substantial private investment in the town.

Designs have just been unveiled for the new £3.8M Barrhead Hub – a new Library and Learning Centre to be housed in a modern extension to the centrally located Leisure Centre. The Hub will deliver a state of the art library, café, conferencing, business support, space to meet, and employability zones. The delivery of the Hub during 2013 will provide a major step forward in not just the physical regeneration of Barrhead but also its social, cultural and community regeneration

Major investment in the town centre will come from Asda during 2013/2104 will develop the 4,000 sq m supermarket next to the Hub, providing Barrhead with modern and, crucially for the vitality of the town, centrally located foodstore. The superstore development has achieved planning permission, with which also comes an £800,000 investment in the town centre including the creation of a town centre resilience fund to foster confidence amongst existing retailers and help them compete.

Industry/Business

Looking beyond the town centre, a priority for East Renfrewshire Council is to bring jobs back into Barrhead and to promote Glasgow Road Corridor as "A Place to Grow Business".

Leisure/Recreation/Greenspace

An attractive feature of Barrhead is the Levern Water and surrounding greenspace that runs through the town centre, stitching the town centre together and providing access to surrounding neighbourhoods, to Cowan Park, and ultimately to Dams to Darnley Country Park.

A masterplan for the improvement of the greenspace was endorsed by Barrhead Regeneration Board in 2010. Implementation of the masterplan is underway, with a £150,000 modern play having been created within the greenspace.

CPG Study Visit Press & Social Media Coverage

<https://www.facebook.com/#!/media/set/?set=a.10153014775335635.1073741844.50907980634&type=1>

<https://www.facebook.com/eastrenfrewshirecouncil#!/media/set/?set=a.10153014775335635.1073741844.50907980634&type=1>

<http://www.glasgowsouthandeastwoodextra.co.uk/news/local-headlines/east-ren-welcomes-cross-party-group-1-3010290>

<http://www.paisleydailyexpress.co.uk/renfrewshire-news/local-news-in-renfrewshire/paisley-news/2013/08/03/cross-party-group-visits-paisley-on-fact-finding-mission-87085-33684548/>