



Glasgow City Region Cabinet

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Regional Economic Strategy Action Plan – Inverclyde

Purpose of report:

This report updates the Cabinet on discussions that have taken place between Glasgow City Region Programme Management Office (PMO), Intelligence Hub, and Inverclyde Council to develop new actions for inclusion in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) Action Plan that provide a specific geographic focus on addressing challenges faced in Inverclyde.

Recommendations

The Cabinet is invited to:

- a. Note the content of the report; and,
- b. approve the inclusion of the new actions relating to Inverclyde within the RES Action Plan.

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report updates the Cabinet on discussions that have taken place between Glasgow City Region (GCR) Programme Management Office (PMO), Intelligence Hub, and Inverclyde Council to develop new actions for inclusion in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) Action Plan that provide a specific geographic focus on addressing challenges faced in Inverclyde.

2. Background

- 2.1 At the meeting on 25 February 2025, the Cabinet received a presentation from the Intelligence Hub that set out the economic and social challenges faced by Inverclyde. The Cabinet subsequently agreed that Inverclyde should be identified as a regional priority and instructed the GCR PMO to engage with Inverclyde Council to identify some specific additional actions for inclusion within the RES Action Plan.
- 2.2 Following the Cabinet meeting, officers from the GCR PMO, Place Team, and Intelligence Hub have engaged with Inverclyde Council in order to identify and develop actions for inclusion within the RES Action Plan.

3. Proposed New RES Actions

- 3.1. Based upon the discussions that have taken place over recent months, a number of initial RES actions to support Inverclyde have been identified.
- 3.2. The list of proposed actions is set out below:
 1. The GCR Intelligence Hub will work with Inverclyde to **baseline existing businesses in Inverclyde** to identify those with growth potential (tourism, manufacturing etc).
 2. The GCR Intelligence Hub will **undertake a Business Engagement Exercise** to understand the growth aspirations and barriers to growth of Inverclyde businesses.
 3. The GCR Place Team will work with Inverclyde Council to **identify potential opportunities for the Inverclyde** area through the Clyde Mission Strategic Masterplan and Heat Decarbonisation Fund.
 4. The PMO will support Inverclyde Council, as the MA lead, to **develop the scope for the Maritime Skills Programme and provide employment and training opportunities Inverclyde residents**. The approach to the Maritime Skills Programme will also be used to develop the scope of the emerging Advanced Manufacturing Skills Programme within the GCR Investment Zone.
 5. Using the latest available data, the GCR PMO and Intelligence Hub will support Inverclyde Council in the co-design of **an evidence-based programme to address economic inactivity due to ill health** in Inverclyde, and support positive destinations for school leavers, and create an **evaluation framework** to sit alongside. This action will be used as a pilot project which, if effective could be rolled-out in other local authority areas.

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6. Through **the City Deal Enabling Commercial Space Project**, Inverclyde has received a boosted funding allocation to develop local projects. The PMO will work with Inverclyde to unlock capacity funding for the development of Full Business Cases for these projects.
- 3.3. The inclusion of these actions within the RES Action Plan will require the approval of GCR Cabinet. Following Cabinet approval progress will be monitored through the established GCR reporting processes for the RES.

4. Support from Regional Partners

- 4.1 On the 27 March 2025, in response to the instruction from the Cabinet, the members of the Glasgow City Regional Partnership discussed the role that their organisations can make in helping to address the challenges faced by Inverclyde.
- 4.2 The GCR PMO subsequently contacted partner organisations that sit on the Regional Partnership inviting them to describe their role or actions their organisation can take to support the prioritisation of Inverclyde within the Regional Economic Strategy.
- 4.3 **Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)** has advised that while Inverclyde benefits from business-as-usual regional programmes, such as MyBus, Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme, and investment in strategic transport assets such as Buchanan Street Bus Station and the Subway, there has been capital funding invested in local transport infrastructure including Greenock and Port Glasgow bus stations and local bus stop infrastructure including real time passenger information displays.
- 4.4 SPT funding has also significantly contributed to transport improvements as part of Greenock Town Centre Regeneration. This includes support for traffic management, enhanced access to Greenock Central Station, and improved accessibility around Port Glasgow Station. SPT is also supporting several projects in the Inverclyde region this year, including fully funding an update of the Inverclyde Active Travel Strategy, with investment in active travel in the region increasing year on year since SPT became responsible for funding through the People and Place Programme. SPT are also supporting the promotion of existing active travel routes and the installation of cycle storage infrastructure in schools across Inverclyde.
- 4.5 SPT is currently progressing development of the Clyde Metro Case for Investment (CFI). An anticipated key benefit of the Metro will be the release of capacity on the rail network, providing the opportunity to deliver a better overall level of rail service, reduce delays and bring about improved journey times across the network, including for rail services operating within Inverclyde. Furthermore, options currently being examined present the opportunity to improve the integration of Inverclyde's rail services with the wider Clyde Metro network. This will also consider improved connections with bus, building on work being undertaken as part of the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS). The SRBS will set out a vision to transform the region's bus network, promoting improved bus services and affordability and, subject to the outcome of recent public consultation, will consider the potential to introduce a bus franchising model.
- 4.6 From the **third sector representation on the Regional Partnership**, they have indicated that local third sector support structures would be well placed to support with:

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- Community Intelligence & Engagement – especially in relation to business engagement activity, and scoping of programmes seeking to address economic inactivity.
- Support for Business Growth & Innovation – identifying local social enterprises and supporting the business baselining exercise.
- Skills Development & Inclusive Employment – supporting the design of training pathways to include volunteering and supported employment routes, and brokering relationships between local employers and community organisations.
- Enabling Commercial Space & Social Enterprise Infrastructure – supporting the development of the local Inverclyde projects and helping to identify suitable third sector- or mixed-use projects, and articulating social value and impact.
- Policy Advocacy & Systemic Change – helping to advocate for policies that reflect Inverclyde’s unique socio-economic context—especially where ill health and access barriers intersect.

4.7 Skills Development Scotland shared information outlining:

- **Clyde Maritime** - The 2025/26 Scottish Government Programme for Government committed to “(Invest) up to £2m to develop engineering skills in the Glasgow City Region, designed by the Clyde Maritime Cluster in partnership with Skills Development Scotland”. SDS are working with industry and regional partners to ensure that Inverclyde residents currently economically inactive or currently in low-skilled roles have opportunities to progress to roles within Glasgow City Region’s growing shipbuilding sector.
- **Careers information, advice and guidance** offered to Inverclyde - 3,937 pupil engagements in 2024/25, 1,787 engagements for post-school customers, and 91.3% of 16-19 in education, employment, training or personal development.
- **Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE)** - SDS chairs the PACE partnership and leads on co-ordinating responses to actual or threatened redundancies such as the 2023 Amazon closure, with SDS support to the impacted staff continuing into 2025. In 2024/25 we supported two employers – EE Contact Centre and RBS Mortgage Centre – with 55 SDS PACE engagements supporting 110 individuals and 27 people receiving bespoke SDS PACE support.
- **Apprenticeships** – In 2024/25 SDS supported 313 Modern Apprenticeship starts in Inverclyde, part of a total of 530 Inverclyde MAs in training. The MA achievement rate in Inverclyde is 84.9%.
- **Skills Planning** - SDS has the lead role in ensuring that local authority and regional priorities and demonstrable industry needs are reflected in the strategic skills assessments that will inform future university, college and apprenticeship delivery and wider funding bids.
- **Business Growth and Inward Investment** - SDS operates as part of “Team Scotland” with Scottish Development International, Scottish Enterprise and others to promote UK business growth and inward investment in key strategic sites, including Inverclyde.

4.8 Public Health Scotland (PHS) responded to advise that it will build on the successfully co-produced, [prioritising child poverty resource](#) to further support health equity into decision-making, service delivery and policy development to tackling the disparities in

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health outcomes. PHS will help to strengthen the local child poverty action plan and work with local partners to capitalise and build on best practice.

- 4.9 PHS will share learning and resources from the [Collaboration for Health Equity in Scotland \(CHES\) Programme](#) on the most impactful areas for intervention to make meaningful progress in tackling health inequalities enabling action on the building blocks of health. PHS will work with local stakeholders in taking forward action on economic inactivity due to health sharing evidence and intelligence on emerging evidence of what works to contribute to healthier working lives.
- 4.10 PHS along with our partners in the territorial health board can also provide bespoke advice and support a number of areas relating to a fairer and healthier economy and have expertise across all of the major public health issues relating to Fair Work and Employability, income maximisation and poverty, community wealth building and Anchors as well as the broader health and economy links.
- 4.11 **Scottish Enterprise** has offered support to Inverclyde Council to develop their Enabling Commercial Space Project, building on lessons learned from SE's Manufacturing Property Challenge Programme and exploring opportunities for co-investment alongside the GCR Deal project. This offer of support remains open.
- 4.12 SE is actively engaged with The Inverclyde Alliance and Riverside Inverclyde (with additional involvement relating to the redevelopment of the James Watt Dock). SE is committed to supporting Inverclyde Taskforce priorities where they align with its Missions approach and delivery focus on Innovation, Internationalisation and Investment.
- 4.13 SE is also working closely with the GCR PMO on direct and indirect support to the GCR Investment Zone. Whilst not specific to Inverclyde, SE will actively engage in opportunities that arise in Inverclyde as a result of Investment Zone programme activity.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The Cabinet is invited to:
 - a. Note the content of the report; and,
 - b. approve the inclusion of the new actions relating to Inverclyde within the RES Action Plan.

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