



Glasgow City Region Cabinet

Report by Director of Regional Economic Growth

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Item 14

26th May 2026

Clyde Mission

Purpose of Report:

- To update the Cabinet on the progress of the Clyde Mission Strategic Masterplan; and
- To update the Cabinet on the grant award/s under Heat Decarbonisation Fund.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is invited to:

- note the progress of Clyde Mission Strategic Masterplan; and
- note the first grant award under Clyde Mission Heat Decarbonisation Fund.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to update the Cabinet on the progress of the Clyde Mission programme, including the development of the Strategic Masterplan and the approval of the first grant award through Heat Decarbonisation Fund (CM-HDF).

Background

2. Clyde Mission was launched by the Scottish Government in 2020, with the intention of: *“making the Clyde an engine of sustainable and inclusive growth for the city, the region, and for Scotland”*. It has been described as the greatest development opportunity in western Europe.
3. In August 2023 the Scottish Government, while remaining a key partner, transferred lead responsibility for Clyde Mission to the Glasgow City Region (GCR) and Argyll and Bute Council, with £25 million capital funding for a Heat Decarbonisation Fund and £1.5 million revenue funding for a dedicated team and to develop a Strategic Masterplan.
4. In August 2025 a dedicated Programme Manager within the GCR Place team was appointed to lead the Clyde Mission programme. Subsequently in November 2025 a consultancy team was appointed to develop the Strategic Masterplan and supporting delivery programme and strategic case for investment.
5. Clyde Mission Heat Decarbonisation Fund (CM-HDF) is a targeted investment programme established by GCR and funded by Scottish Government under the Clyde Mission programme. Its purpose is to accelerate the replacement of fossil fuel heating systems with low and zero carbon alternatives across the Clyde Mission corridor, in line with local, regional and national policy objectives. The aims of the CM-HDF are to:
 - Stimulate capital funding for high impact heat decarbonisation projects in the Clyde Mission corridor.
 - Provide necessary funding to support district heat decarbonisation projects in both the public and private sectors, ensuring economic viability for installation and operational phases.
 - Offer targeted supplementary funding to bridge funding gaps and enhance the viability of eligible projects.
6. CM-HDF complements national initiatives like the Heat in Buildings Strategy but is distinct in its place-based focus. By concentrating resources in the Clyde Mission corridor, the fund seeks to generate wider benefits: reducing emissions, lowering energy bills, addressing fuel poverty and stimulating local economic activity through jobs and supply chain opportunities.
7. On the 18th of November 2025, GCR Cabinet approved the CM-HDF implementation framework and delegated the final approval of grant awards to Chief Executives’ Group.
8. On the 10th of December 2025 the fund was officially launched with a budget of £5 million for the financial year 26/27 to be allocated via three rounds of applications across the year.

Progress to Date

Clyde Mission Strategic Masterplan

9. The first phase of the development of the Clyde Mission Strategic Masterplan has now been completed. Intensive foundational activities have included walking the ground with local authority partners, reviewing existing plans and strategies, mapping constraints and opportunities and conducting focused discussions with area stakeholders. These activities have promoted joined-up thinking and helped identify realistic investment opportunities.
10. Comprehensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders has been coordinated across the member authorities by the Short Term Working Group. This engagement has been central to ensuring that the Masterplan reflects shared priorities for the Clyde corridor. The first phase of engagement specifically targeted stakeholders with a vested interest in the study area, including key agencies, policymakers, regulators, local authority partners, educational institutions, landowners, operators and investors. In total, 357 unique participants were engaged through six thematic online workshops and five area-specific field studies along the Clyde corridor. Recognising the need for deeper insight, additional individual and targeted group conversations with key stakeholders were incorporated into the Phase 1 programme. This adaptive approach extended the overall programme by approximately 4–6 weeks but significantly strengthened the evidence base and ownership of the emerging findings. A summary engagement report is provided in **Appendix A**.
11. Phase 1 engagement and foundational analysis have identified a clear set of shared priorities and strategic principles:
 - Need for clear strategic added value that does not duplicate existing activities
 - Safeguarding key riverside locations for development where a river location is essential
 - Coordinating, unlocking and accelerating role for Clyde Mission
 - Focus on derisking complex strategic locations and enabling delivery
 - Need for interventions to reflect Clyde's unique assets and character
 - Need for unified stewardship across the entire corridor
 - Strong case for long-term governance, funding and delivery structures
12. Engagement has reinforced the Clyde's multi-scale role:
 - **Everyday River** – local (everyday access, community use, local placemaking)
 - **Regional River** – metropolitan / national (40% of the GCR economic output, 15% of GCR population, media hub, third largest cluster of defence/maritime jobs in the UK)
 - **International River** – global (largest shipping management hub in Europe, world-class conference/events destination, international air and maritime gateways)
13. A number of significant risks and constraints have been identified that must be addressed to unlock the potential of the Clyde corridor. These include flooding, contamination and water quality issues, as well as financial/viability challenges, global economic/geo-political uncertainties and relevant policy considerations (e.g. NPF4 Policy 22 has been highlighted as a barrier to some development). Perceptions of the river as a physical and psychological barrier were also frequently observed and noted.
14. At the same time, the process has revealed a compelling portfolio of successful projects/places and future opportunities. A long list of over 20 potential signature locations, growth drivers and priority projects has been identified across the estuary, urban and rural sections of the Clyde corridor. These opportunities are supported by two tiers of emerging programmes:
 - Foundational priorities - essential enabling interventions required to address major risks, remove barriers and unlock future investment and development feasibility across the corridor. These include flooding and climate resilience, river and land decontamination, green and blue infrastructure (including nature-based solutions and biodiversity) and improved connectivity;

- Priority programmes - the transformative initiatives that will drive the continued renaissance of the river corridor, economic activity and growth. These include the maritime and river-based economy, cleaner and cheaper energy, signature development locations and tourism/culture.
15. The Clyde Mission is positioned to act as the coordinating, unlocking and accelerating framework for these interventions, tackling strategic challenges and de-risking investment. By adopting a river-first approach, it will serve as the river's champion and a place-mending promoter, advocating for high-quality environments, experiences, jobs, design and places, while leading, supporting, convening and coordinating regenerative activities in partnership with stakeholders across the corridor.
 16. These findings will directly inform the masterplan with a strong, evidence-based foundation for the next phase of scenario development, multi-criteria assessment and prioritisation.

Clyde Mission Heat Decarbonisation Fund

17. The deadline for applications submissions to the first round of CM-HDF was the 27th of February 2026. Two applications were received:
 - CM-HDF-262701 from North Lanarkshire Council for Strathclyde Country Park Watersports Centre;
 - CM-HDF-262702 from Clyde Gateway Developments Limited for Clyde Gateway Community Energy Project – DHN Thenu Extension;
18. Initial screening concluded that CMHDF2627-02 requires some further development and it has been deferred to the next round (deadline 31 July 2026).
19. CM-HDF-262701 was assessed internally and passed on to the Independent Assessment Panel (IAP) with recommendation to award the full amount applied for - £1,182,510. The project will install a 400 kW closed-loop Water Source Heat Pump (WSHP) system, utilising Strathclyde Loch as the heat source, together with a supporting 60 kWp solar Photo Voltaic (PV) array. This will fully replace the existing end-of-life gas boilers and decarbonise heating and domestic hot water at the Watersports Centre. The project is proposed to start in June 2026 and be completed in December 2026.
20. The IAP accepted the assessment recommendation to refer the application for final approval of the Chief Executives' Group (CEG). GCR Cabinet has previously delegated authority to CEG to approve individual grant awards. On the 13th of May 2026 CEG approved the recommendation to award. GCR Place are now progressing to complete the technical assessment and issue the grant award to the successful applicant.

Budget

21. The Clyde Mission revenue budget from the Scottish Government is £1.5 million over five years, subject to annual grant awards. To date three claims have been submitted to SG and the remaining balance is £1,269,512.
22. CM-HDF has an overall budget of £25 million sourced from the Scottish Government over three years. Annual budget allocations are subject to approval through the Scottish Government budget process and facilitated by a standard Grant Offer Letter approach. The budget for financial year 26/27 is £5 million. Following approval of the above noted application, the remaining budget for 26/27 is £3,817,490.

23. To maintain efficiency and financial oversight, GCR Place undertakes consolidated quarterly reporting and claims to the Scottish Government covering all Clyde Mission related activities.

Recommendation

24. The Cabinet is asked to:

- note the progress of Clyde Mission Strategic Masterplan; and
- note the first grant award under Clyde Mission Heat Decarbonisation Fund.

APPENDIX A:
Clyde Mission Strategic Masterplan Stage 1 Engagement Summary Report