Item 9

17th November 2026

Glasgow City Region Cabinet

Report by Executive Director of Regional Economic Growth

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Clyde Mission Strategic Masterplan

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to present the core proposition of the Clyde Mission Strategic Masterplan for Cabinet's approval and to seek agreement to the proposed transition from masterplan preparation to delivery development.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is asked to:

- note the report, particularly the strategic masterplan development, key findings and core Strategic Masterplan proposition;
- approve the Clyde Mission Strategic Masterplan core proposition as set out in this report;
- note the delivery, governance and next steps proposals to the Glasgow City Region Cabinet;
- note that a detailed work programme for the use of the remaining Clyde Mission revenue budget to support the delivery development phase will be presented through a subsequent GCR governance paper;
- note that approval of the Strategic Masterplan would not constitute approval or funding of individual interventions, which would remain subject to proportionate appraisal, business-case, funding and governance requirements; and
- note that, subject to Cabinet approval, an official launch is proposed to mark the transition from Masterplan development to delivery development, investment and implementation.

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the outcomes of the Clyde Mission Strategic Masterplan process and accompanying Strategic Outline Case for consideration by the Cabinet and to seek the approval of the Clyde Mission Strategic Masterplan core proposition.

2. The paper sets out the case for a co-ordinated, river-first approach to the Clyde corridor; summarises the principal findings identified through the evidence and engagement process; explains the core proposition; and sets out the next steps for proposed delivery development and governance frameworks.

3. Approval of the Strategic Masterplan does not approve funding or delivery of individual interventions, which will be subject to future appraisal, business case development, funding and governance requirements.

4. The Strategic Masterplan's core proposition was endorsed by the Chief Executives' Group on 5 November 2026 and recommended to Glasgow City Region Cabinet for approval.

Background

5. Clyde Mission was established by the Scottish Government in 2020 to help the River Clyde corridor realise its potential as an engine of sustainable and inclusive growth. Its national significance is reinforced through National Planning Framework 4, which identifies Clyde Mission as a National Development focused on investment, brownfield land reuse, quality of place, employment, supporting disadvantaged communities and adaptation to climate risk. Responsibility for leading Clyde Mission transferred to Glasgow City Region and Argyll and Bute Council in 2023, with the Scottish Government remaining a key partner.

6. The Clyde corridor has been a long-term regional priority, reflected through successive regional economic and spatial strategies, regeneration activity and City Deal investment. The Strategic Masterplan was commissioned to provide a refreshed and more strategic and focussed whole-river framework, complementing existing plans.

7. It seeks to identify where a corridor-wide approach can avoid missed opportunities, align existing and future investment, address shared barriers and secure greater cumulative economic, environmental and community benefits.

Strategic Masterplan Development

8. Glasgow City Region appointed AtkinsRéalis, supported by Kevin Murray Associates and Austin-Smith:Lord, to prepare the Strategic Masterplan. The multidisciplinary team brought together expertise in strategic planning, urban design, landscape and environmental planning, economics, stakeholder engagement and delivery. The GCR Intelligence Hub and wider project team supported development of the spatial and socio-economic evidence base.

9. Development of the Masterplan has been overseen by a Short-Term Working Group comprising GCR local authorities, Argyll and Bute Council and national agencies, with regular updates provided through GCR governance structures. The Masterplan and accompanying Strategic Outline Case are now sufficiently developed to enable the Cabinet to consider the proposed strategic direction, initial priorities and pathway from Masterplan preparation to delivery development.

10. Existing national, regional and local policies, statutory plans, investment programmes and partner project pipelines were reviewed to build on established activity, avoid duplication and

reduce consultation fatigue. The process was designed not to create another layer of strategy, but to identify where plans, assets and investment pipelines could be better connected, where strategic gaps or shared barriers remained, and where Clyde Mission involvement could materially improve delivery outcomes.

11. The agreed Masterplan brief sought to re-energise partners to sustain long term commitments, with specific aims to:

    - Engage and activate stakeholders to ensure Clyde Mission is responsive and secures long term commitment to its delivery.
    - Ensure Clyde Mission is coherent and impactful by reviewing its themes and priorities and setting out a clear and compelling place-based strategy that resonates.
    - Develop a phased programme for delivery that is tangible, ambitious, viable and primed to secure investment from multiple sources.

12. The Masterplan's key findings, core proposition and delivery framework have been developed and tested through comprehensive evidence gathering and engagement with the Short-Term Working Group, member authorities, key stakeholders and communities, including:

    - 455 consultation responses.
    - 9 workshops involving over 500 people.
    - 5 field studies engaging 108 people.

13. Two tests have informed, and will continue to guide, the identification of Clyde Mission priorities and actions:

    Strategic significance: does the issue or opportunity extend to the whole corridor and require coordination at scale?

    Added value: can Clyde Mission materially improve outcomes through strategic leadership, co-ordination, investment or targeted intervention?

14. These tests are intended to focus Clyde Mission activity where it can add most value, avoid duplication and distinguish between opportunities requiring corridor-wide action and those more appropriately progressed through established local, sectoral or partner-led arrangements.

15. The Strategic Outline Case has been prepared alongside the Strategic Masterplan and provides the initial UK Treasury Green Book aligned case for action. The Strategic Outline Case does not approve or commit funding to individual interventions, which will remain subject to proportionate appraisal and the relevant governance processes.

Key Findings

<u>A nationally significant but uneven corridor</u>

16. The Strategic Masterplan covers an area of 113 square kilometres from source to sea, principally considering land within 500 metres of either side of the river. The corridor is home to more than 100,000 people, contains around 6,600 businesses and supports around 160,000 jobs.

17. The evidence confirms that the Clyde corridor is a nationally and regionally significant concentration of communities, employment, innovation, maritime activity, infrastructure, heritage, natural assets and development opportunity. However, these strengths are not evenly

distributed. High-value employment, innovation districts and nationally important assets sit alongside communities experiencing deprivation, post-industrial decline, demographic pressures, weaker housing and development markets and reduced access to opportunity. Nearly one fifth of the population live in the most deprived 5% Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) areas, with many of these also exposed to greater climate vulnerability.

Opportunities and Barriers

18. The corridor contains significant opportunities for housing, employment, regeneration, clean energy, tourism and environmental enhancement. However, progress is constrained in many locations by delivery barriers such as flood risk, contaminated land, ageing infrastructure, fragmented ownership, infrastructure constraints, severance and development viability.

19. The Masterplan process confirms that many of these barriers are experienced across the corridor and are exacerbated by a number of factors, including:

    - Effective co-ordination between authorities, agencies, infrastructure providers, landowners and investors.
    - Consistent and accessible evidence to support decisions and monitor outcomes;
    - Early investment in infrastructure, remediation and other enabling measures required to improve site and investment readiness.
    - Governance and funding arrangements capable of supporting co-ordinated action over an extended period.

20. A corridor-wide approach provides an opportunity to identify where shared solutions could address barriers across several locations, improve the viability of individual propositions and achieve greater cumulative economic, environmental and community benefits than isolated interventions.

Interdependent Benefits

21. The analysis demonstrates that interventions in one location can generate benefits elsewhere in the corridor. Transport and interchange improvements outside the immediate riverside area may improve access to employment, communities and development opportunities within it. Co-ordinated remediation, flood resilience and infrastructure investment may unlock several locations and reduce common delivery risks.

22. Fulfilling the Mission is dependent on addressing strategic corridor-wide enabling conditions. Maritime and industrial growth requires suitable land, infrastructure, connectivity, workforce access and skills. Tourism depends on connected destinations, heritage and environmental assets, active travel, public realm, events, interpretation and promotion. Clean and affordable energy opportunities depend on project development, grid capacity, demand aggregation, commercially viable delivery models and alignment with regeneration and development activity.

23. Investment and benefits will not necessarily arise in the same location. Some corridor-wide interventions may be delivered in one place while improving accessibility, resilience or economic opportunity across a wider area. The Masterplan therefore considers both the spatial distribution of investment and the equitable sharing of benefits across communities and local authority areas

Core Strategic Masterplan Propositions

24. The Strategic Masterplan places the River Clyde at the heart of the region's future by establishing a co-ordinated, river-first framework for sustainable and inclusive growth,

investment and regeneration from source to sea. The core mission of *"making the Clyde an engine of sustainable and inclusive growth"* endures.

25. The purpose of the Strategic Masterplan is to provide a clear, long-term framework for realising this mission. It seeks to champion the river and promote, accelerate and scale-up place transformation across the corridor. To do so effectively, six core principles were developed to guide the Masterplan, shaping the interventions that Clyde Mission will support across the river corridor:

    1. **Strategic Intent:** Clyde Mission will address the constraints and grasp opportunities presented all along the River Clyde in a coherent, transformative manner.
    2. **Economic Roles:** Clyde Mission will make a major economic contribution through investment, jobs, skills, visitors and gross value added (GVA).
    3. **Climate Resilience:** Clyde Mission will support climate resilience and adaptability, with interventions that are futureproofed.
    4. **Environmental Restoration:** Clyde Mission will improve the environment and contribute to nature through cleanup, decontamination, reducing dereliction and providing high-quality public realm.
    5. **Distinctive Community Impact:** Clyde Mission will support a strong sense of community identity, including better access to facilities, jobs and shared benefits.
    6. **Riverside Placemaking:** Clyde Mission will optimise positive river orientation across roles, access, design and energy networks.

26. These core principles ensure that proposals are strategic, co-ordinated and capable of delivering lasting impacts, and have guided the development of a core Masterplan proposition comprising a framework of four connected components:

    - **Growth Programmes**, which provide the corridor-wide, long-term and sectoral focus for developing strategic opportunities and investment propositions.

    - **Signature Locations**, which provide the place-based focus for co-ordinating combinations of sectoral, enabling and site-specific interventions.

    - **Supporting Themes**, which identify the shared barriers, enabling conditions and wider outcomes to be addressed across the growth programmes and Signature Locations.

    - **Design Principles**, which build from the supporting themes and translate them into expectations for quality, place and public value in future development and investment.

27. Growth Programmes provide the long-term sectoral focus; Signature Locations provide the place-based focus for co-ordinated investment and intervention; Supporting Themes address shared barriers and enabling conditions; and Design Principles build from those themes to embed quality, place and public value in future development and investment.

28. The framework responds to the agreed aims of the Masterplan, the evidence, analysis and consultation, and is intended to operate as an integrated whole. It provides a structure for assessing, phasing, developing and promoting opportunities through the appropriate business-case, funding, delivery and governance routes.

29. Three **principal Growth Programmes** have emerged through the evidence, engagement and appraisal process:

    - Maritime and River-Based Economy
    - Clean, Affordable Energy

- Tourism, Leisure and Culture

30. These programmes have been identified because they represent areas where the River Clyde corridor provides a distinctive strategic advantage, where the evidence and stakeholder engagement indicate credible growth opportunities, and where co-ordinated activity at corridor scale can add value. The table below summarises the principal growth programmes.

Growth programme	Strategic opportunity	Progress	Delivery-development focus
Maritime and River-Based Economy	Build on established strengths in ports, shipbuilding, defence, maritime engineering, advanced manufacturing, innovation and supply chains to harness major committed investment and growth opportunities.	A draft Defence and Maritime Sector Prospectus has been developed and shared with key sector stakeholders to test opportunities, locations, barriers, infrastructure requirements and potential investment propositions.	Refine demand and requirements; assess the role and readiness of potential locations; identify infrastructure, workforce, housing, skills and connectivity requirements; and progress viable propositions through feasibility, business cases, funding and investment decisions.
Clean, Affordable Energy	Build on the Clyde Mission Energy Masterplan, CM-HDF delivery experience, available heat resources and potential place-based energy opportunities.	The CM-HDF Annual Review has been undertaken, identifying improvements to the existing fund and an emerging future successor proposition.	Optimise CM-HDF; develop a staged energy development proposition; and test where heat or wider low-carbon energy infrastructure could support decarbonisation, business competitiveness, housing, development viability and regeneration outcomes.
Tourism, Leisure and Culture	Connect the Clyde's built, natural, cultural, industrial and maritime assets into a stronger visitor and place proposition supported by a co-ordinated programme of events and activation.	Academic collaboration and award-winning feasibility work have informed the evidence base, with further work focused on visitor experiences, destination development, marketing and promotion.	Develop a Clyde Mission Tourism Delivery Framework; support existing and emerging destinations, events, heritage assets and visitor experiences; and establish an evidence-led pipeline capable of supporting future funding bids and informing future strategy development, including development of a co-ordinated events programme.

31. Delivery of the three principal growth programmes will depend on co-ordinated activity across five supporting themes that represent enabling conditions required to address shared barriers, improve investment readiness and maximise the wider economic, environmental and community benefits. These are:

    - **Connectivity**, including access to employment, communities, visitor destinations and development opportunities.
    - **River and Land Remediation**, addressing contamination, dereliction, ground conditions and other barriers to productive reuse.
    - **Flooding and Climate Resilience**, supporting adaptation, investment confidence and the long-term resilience of communities, infrastructure and development.
    - **Green and Blue Infrastructure**, improving biodiversity, water quality, environmental networks, public access and wider place quality.
    - **Liveable Communities**, supporting housing, skills, health, community wealth building and equitable access to the benefits of investment.

32. A portfolio of **Signature Locations** has been identified, representing clusters where major development opportunities can be better co-ordinated to addresses challenges and multiply outcomes. Together with public engagement and technical analysis, a Multi Criteria Assessment Framework has been used to provide a consistent basis to inform prioritisation, taking account of benefits, deliverability, planning, funding potential and the opportunity for Clyde Mission to add value.

33. 150 vacant and derelict land sites (out of 219) are located within the Signature Locations, representing approximately 83% of the corridor's vacant and derelict land by area. This concentration of opportunity and constraint strengthens the case for co-ordinated remediation, infrastructure and investment planning.

34. The portfolio of Signature Locations also contains the potential to support an estimated 20,000 homes, alongside significant employment, commercial, infrastructure, visitor-economy and environmental opportunities. The following Signature locations have been highlighted as priority opportunities:

    - Govan to Kingston Bridge
    - Glasgow City Centre Waterfront
    - West Dunbartonshire Cluster
    - Inverclyde Cluster
    - GRID Cluster

35. Prioritisation reflects current conditions and will be reviewed periodically using the Multi Criteria Assessment Framework. All Strategic Locations remain part of the long-term framework and corridor-wide Growth Programmes may benefit multiple Signature Locations and other areas simultaneously.

36. The Masterplan establishes **Design Principles** to support effective delivery of the growth programmes, supporting themes and signature locations against the core principles. These principles will support development and investment that:

    - responds positively to the river and the distinctive character of individual places;
    - creates inclusive, accessible and well-connected places;
    - contributes to climate resilience, environmental restoration and biodiversity;
    - strengthens connections between communities, destinations and economic opportunities;
    - supports community participation, benefit and long-term stewardship; and

- delivers lasting public value alongside economic growth.

Delivery, Governance and Next Steps

37. Taken together, the proposed Growth Programmes, Signature Locations and corridor-wide initiatives have the potential to generate substantial long-term economic, environmental and community benefits across the nationally significant Clyde Mission area. The Strategic Masterplan (and accompanying Strategic Outline Case) provides a firm foundation from which to progress, comprising a focussed, prioritised and integrated framework for action.

38. Relevant teams across the participating local authorities and key stakeholders are involved in finalising the Masterplan document. The final documents will be circulated when this work is complete, noting this exercise is not expected to alter the core proposition or recommendations in this report.

39. Endorsement of the Strategic Masterplan core proposition enables Clyde Mission to advance to the operational phase of structured delivery development and investment. Detailed delivery responsibilities, funding propositions and individual investment decisions would continue to be developed and approved through the appropriate governance routes.

40. Initial proposed delivery development priorities include:

- Progressing delivery-ready or short-term partner activity aligned with the Strategic Masterplan.
- Developing the priority Signature Location packages.
- Advancing principal Growth Programmes.
- Developing and promoting investment propositions to support funding and delivery.

41. Governance will need to evolve from the oversight of Masterplan preparation towards delivery oversight. Detailed proposals will be developed for a Clyde Mission Programme Board, or equivalent arrangement, operating through established GCR governance. The future arrangement should provide oversight of:

- Growth Programme and Signature Location development;
- corridor-wide strategic initiatives;
- phasing and periodic review;
- investment and funding development;
- benefits and performance monitoring;
- programme risks and dependencies; and
- proposals requiring formal decisions through GCR or partner governance.

42. Delivery will continue to rest principally with the organisations holding the relevant powers, assets, responsibilities and resources. Clyde Mission's role will focus on strategic leadership, coordination, proposition and investment development, funding alignment and, where approved and resourced, targeted support to incentivise, accelerate or de-risk delivery.

43. Subject to Cabinet approval, an official launch is proposed to mark the transition from Masterplan preparation to delivery development and investment engagement. The launch will communicate the approved framework and initial priorities, mark the transition to the new phase recognise the contribution of communities and stakeholders, and begin structured engagement with prospective funders, investors and delivery partners.

44. Progress against the initial priorities will be reported through the agreed governance arrangements, with detailed propositions and funding decisions brought forward as the supporting evidence and business cases mature.

Financial

45. The Strategic Masterplan will provide the basis for developing and promoting a co-ordinated portfolio of investment opportunities. This will include engagement with the Scottish and UK Governments, national agencies, infrastructure providers, investors and other partners.

46. Depending on the proposition, this activity may include investment prospectuses, business cases, funding applications and pitches, alongside investigation of public, private and blended funding arrangements.

47. Further work will also consider whether future regional funding and fiscal mechanisms could support delivery, including relevant devolution opportunities, retained non-domestic rates, borrowing and future regional investment settlements. Any such mechanisms will require detailed examination of powers, eligibility, governance, additionality and permitted use.

48. In the immediate term, the Scottish Government provided £1.5 million of revenue funding to establish the Clyde Mission team and support development of the Strategic Masterplan. Expenditure to date is £493k, with existing commitments of £523k until the end of FY 28/29, leaving an available balance of £484k.

49. It is proposed that the remaining budget is used to support the initial delivery development phase. This may include tailored growth-programme assessments, development of the initial Strategic Location packages, feasibility and business case work, investment propositions and preparation of funding bids.

50. This work is required to convert the opportunities identified through the Strategic Masterplan into evidenced, costed and investment-ready propositions. A detailed work programme, allocation of the remaining budget and any requirement for further development funding will be presented through a subsequent GCR governance paper.

Conclusions

51. The Clyde is a nationally significant asset with substantial economic, environmental and community potential. Realising that potential requires a long-term, river-first approach capable of connecting opportunities, addressing shared constraints and co-ordinating activity.

52. The Strategic Masterplan and accompanying Strategic Outline Case provide the basis for moving into a prioritised, focussed delivery development phase. The proposed framework combines three corridor-wide Growth Programmes, place-based Signature Locations, supporting themes and design principles.

53. Subject to approval, the next phase will progress the initial Signature Location packages, Growth Programmes and corridor-wide initiatives, while supporting delivery-ready partner activity and developing investment propositions and funding bids.

54. Delivery will remain principally with the organisations holding the relevant powers, assets, responsibilities and resources. Clyde Mission will add value through strategic leadership, corridor-wide co-ordination, investment development and, where agreed and resourced, targeted support to incentivise, accelerate or de-risk priority interventions.

55. Endorsement of the Strategic Masterplan core proposition enables Clyde Mission to advance to the operational phase of structured delivery development and investment. Detailed delivery

responsibilities, funding propositions and individual investment decisions would continue to be developed and approved through the appropriate governance routes.

Recommendation

The Cabinet is asked to:

- note the report, particularly the strategic masterplan development, key findings and core Strategic Masterplan proposition;

- approve the Clyde Mission Strategic Masterplan core proposition as set out in this report;

- note the delivery, governance and next steps proposals to the Glasgow City Region Cabinet;

- note that a detailed work programme for the use of the remaining Clyde Mission revenue budget to support the delivery development phase will be presented through a subsequent GCR governance paper;

- note that approval of the Strategic Masterplan would not constitute approval or funding of individual interventions, which would remain subject to proportionate appraisal, business-case, funding and governance requirements; and

- note that, subject to Cabinet approval, an official launch is proposed to mark the transition from Masterplan development to delivery development, investment and implementation.