

Screening Workshop Report: **Crossmill Business Units** (Enabling Commercial Spaces Programme)

This Screening Workshop Report is part of a series of pilot reports prepared following the completion of a Capital Investment Health Impact Assessment (CHIA) screening workshop.

The CHIA, developed by Glasgow City Region and Public Health Scotland, through the Health Foundation's Economies for Healthier Lives programme, is a toolkit to be used in the development and delivery of capital infrastructure projects that ensures that decisions made at every level – from design, to build and operate – focus on reducing health inequalities.

1 Background Information

The Crossmill Business Units project, located in Crossmill Business Park, Barrhead, aims to deliver two key outputs:

- The creation of new, flexible commercial space for lease to market at land within the Council's ownership at Crossmill Business Park, known as Plots G and H; and
- The development of further commercial stock through land remediation and servicing of Plot D.

Aiming to serve small to medium sized commercial interests, the flexible and adaptable design of the space will be configured in a modern format to suit business needs from the Foundational Economy or for established businesses to grow and expand.

The project seeks to offset property market failure in East Renfrewshire, and well recognised across most authorities in the Region, whereby developing new commercial space is not a viable commercial proposition for the private sector and generally requires public sector stimulus.

The project's objectives include the following:

- Create additional business incubation space for new start-up businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by 2028.
- Create flexible working space capable of accommodating variety of business needs including offices, advanced manufacturing space, light industry, general industry and storage.
- Generate additional Gross Value Added (GVA) from the business park.
- Improve access to related employability and skills programmes for local people including those from disadvantaged or protected characteristic groups.
- Removal of Plot D from the vacant and derelict land register.
- Support the continuing regeneration of Barrhead and the development of employment support.

The proposal includes the following deliverables:

- 25,000sqft/2,323sqm of business space split into approximately ten units (exact details to be confirmed during the design phase).
- The development will be constructed in a terraced format capable of being sub-divided in varied ways to meet business requirements.
- Creation of a new car park capable of supporting the new business space.
- Clearance of Japanese Knotweed from Plot D (if sufficient budget is available following construction of the business units).

2 Workshop Summary

This is a report of a workshop held on 6th May 2025 to discuss the potential impacts on health and equity of Crossmill Business Units. Workshop participants are set out in Section 7 of this report. They included representatives from East Renfrewshire Council planning, business support, City Deal, economic development, health and social care partnership, strategic services team, community organisations, community council and local businesses currently based in the business park.

Following on from an overview of the proposals provided by the project manager, participants used a health and equity impact checklist in a facilitated discussion to identify how the Crossmill Business Units project was likely to affect different populations and health determinants.

The group's discussion went beyond the scope of the project and the additional business units to include the wider area around the Business Park and potential impacts beyond the commercial space, to include development planning, transport planning and economic development priorities in the area.

This report details **potential** impacts identified by workshop participants. Further evidence is needed to investigate these potential impacts identified and discussed in the workshop. The report includes:

- A summary of key points.
- Suggestions made during the discussion to enhance the impacts.
- Research questions to explore and understand impacts.
- A detailed workshop discussion.

3 Summary of Key Points

The workshop participants identified the following key issues or potential impacts associated with the proposed project approach:

- Volume of traffic in the local area is a challenge, with roundabout and road junctions busy. This affects existing Crossmill businesses (e.g. McDonald's, Popeyes, Lidl), their staff and customers, as well as other road users – particularly Dunterlie residents who experience increased traffic as a result of vehicles using the area as a shortcut. Knock-on impacts on air quality potentially affect the very young, very old and those with underlying health conditions disproportionately.
- Limited access to public transport, pedestrian or cycling infrastructure exacerbates the issue for local residents and users of the business park, Include Me 2 service users, Waterworks visitors, families, local school children and other groups using the Waterworks facilities.
- This could be exacerbated by future new housing development residents, future Shanks development site users and new business unit users/visitors.
- Waterworks and green space around the business park is well used by the local community, particularly families and young people who have additional support needs (Include Me 2), however it needs improved access – maintenance of the spaces is a challenge.
- In designing and operating the new business units, it will be important to consider existing community and business needs, particularly around active travel, safe pedestrian access, maintenance of community and leisure spaces and availability of public transport.

- The design and construction of the new business spaces must be sensitive to local community and business needs and both the design of the space and procurement contracts, including community benefits, should support the development and maintenance of a pleasant local environment to enhance perceptions of safety and reduce anti-social behaviour.
- There is a Travellers' site near the business park and access may be impacted by increased traffic and disruption during construction. It will be important to consider engagement and additional signage to this community.
- There are high levels of multiple deprivation in the area, e.g. in Dunterlie, and new businesses have the potential to provide paid and unpaid employment opportunities for local community.
- Increased traffic and limited active travel or public transport provision may exacerbate existing safety concerns for residents and visitors, particularly those who don't have access to private vehicles and rely on affordable/reliable public transport.

4 Suggested Actions

During the discussion, the group suggested some actions to enhance the impacts of Crossmill business units. These are summarised below:

- Traffic management and improved access to residents, customers and businesses:
 - Roundabout and roads junctions currently busy with traffic, with impact on community in Dunterlie estate and safe access to pedestrians, would benefit from a new traffic management system and from being upgraded for any additional traffic.
 - Introducing dual pavements would be an effective way to accommodate cycling and walking.
- Improve access to the new business units and enhance the facilities to attract high quality businesses – supporting the employment and retention of highly skilled workforce within East Renfrewshire, known for its high education attainment, but also considering the other end of the spectrum and providing opportunities for those with low attainment/low numeracy and literacy.
- Communication and engagement with the local community, including existing businesses, is essential prior to more construction works and the operation of the new business units.
- There is the potential for community art space to be considered, engaging local young people. It is important, however, to consider how existing and potential anti-social behaviour in the greenspace in and around the business park may have a negative impact on any community or art space.
- Consider how developers' contributions and community benefits can be used to fund a social enterprise that would maintain the outside spaces, reduce vandalism and littering and provide opportunities for paid and unpaid work for the local community.

- Consider how construction contracts and new business spaces can be made available to cooperatives of smaller micro and Small Medium Enterprises.
- Engage closely with East Renfrewshire Education department, Work East Ren, Business Gateway and third sector organisations to join up and align employment opportunities, supporting community wealth building approach and principles, while also ensuring wealth circulation in the local area.

5 Research Questions

The group also identified several questions about the impacts. Below is a suggestion on how these may be used going forward by the project team and other relevant partners. **It is noted that some of these questions are beyond the remit of this project but will be signposted for consideration in wider plans:**

- What is the level of use of the surrounding open space and green space? Who uses the space and who is excluded – including older people, disabled people and people in different ethnic groups?
- How will the new business units impact on traffic in area - during the week and at weekends?
- What is the level of car use and car ownership in people with different characteristics living in the area or accessing the businesses – including older people, disabled people and people in different ethnic groups?
- What is the level of latent demand for active travel and for public transport in the area? Who has access to a car? Who doesn't? Who are these groups; are they disadvantaged groups?
- What is the impact of the new Crossmill Business Units on traffic in surrounding areas – e.g. Glasgow Road, current access to retail park (McDonald's etc.)?
- What is the evidence of the impact of new units on local businesses? Existing businesses?
- What elements of the new business units have the most positive impact on businesses? And the community? Open space?
- What is best practice in community engagement in commercial space planning and delivery?
- What are local businesses and residents' perceptions of the impacts of Crossmill Business Units? What influences these perceptions?
- How do local authority responses and social marketing influence community responses?

6 Detailed Discussion

The group identified that the new Crossmill Business Units were most likely to affect the following groups of people:

- Local residents, including elderly people more reliant on public transport and pedestrian access.
- Families, particularly those with young children (accessing the retail park and Waterworks open space nearby).
- School children (walking to and from school and with limited active travel infrastructure).
- Young people, particularly those with disability or additional support needs, some of which already use the space as service users of community organisations, but may be negatively affected by increased traffic and movement, without appropriate maintenance of the space or provision of safe, welcoming open spaces.
- Existing businesses, including local businesses along Glasgow road, the retail park and business park.
- Retail park customers and staff – particularly access and traffic management but also access to flexible working contracts and conditions.
- Staff employed by businesses in new units, potentially including the local community if access to new job opportunities is facilitated and supported.
- Future housing residents.
- New Shanks development users and visitors.
- Women and other vulnerable groups such as LGBTQ+ who may experience safety issues when accessing the surrounding area to the business park.
- Local people in low income, poverty and long-term unemployment.

A more detailed summary of the cumulative impacts on each population group is set out on the next page.

6.1 Impacts by Population Group

The group discussed the populations on the checklist as follows:

Children and Young People

- Children and young people could potentially be negatively impacted by increased traffic on roads and poorly maintained/overgrown pedestrian pathways.
- Conversely, young people might benefit from increased jobs and training opportunities depending on future business tenants.

Working Age Population

- Long term unemployed could benefit from paid or unpaid job opportunities, if they are supported through skills development and targeted recruitment practices.

Older People

- Older people could be further negatively impacted by increased traffic on roads and this may lead them to use poorly maintained or overgrown pedestrian pathways.
- Older and disabled people are also worst impacted by the limited public transport provision, including reduced bus timetable now in operation.

Women and Men

- Women may experience vulnerability and higher safety concerns in accessing the area, especially where pathways are not well maintained.

Disabled People

- Young people who have additional support needs and LGBTQ+ attend groups at the neighbouring IM2C and ERA Waterworks projects may be disproportionately impacted by increased traffic and poor pedestrian access to the area/pathways not being maintained.

Minority Ethnic Populations

- The Travellers community have a site in the vicinity of the business park and have previously used the proposed site. The new units and their construction could impact the movement of HGVs by increased traffic and affect access to the traveller's site.
- The non-English-speaking community living and visiting the area may be negatively impacted by poor information on bus timetables/travel routes.

- All groups have the potential to be positively impacted by the use of the previously vacant and derelict site, improved lighting and CCTV could make the area safer, potentially leading to reduced antisocial behaviour.

People in Receipt of Low Income

- The neighbouring Dunterlie area is within the 5% most deprived communities in Scotland according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).
- The new units have the potential to provide jobs and training opportunities for those in the local community, but also the risk of further exclusion and marginalisation, for example being priced out of the area, if this isn't considered in the wider activity of all key stakeholders operating in the area.
- It is difficult to ascertain without knowing the type of business to be based in the new units, but it will be important to facilitate more sustainable and health beneficial businesses. It will be important to consider these issues during the development and implementation of the letting policy.
- The fact the council will own these units could be a benefit for local communities, ensuring that their interests are better protected.

Carers

- Carers usually rely on good transport provision and may be impacted by increased traffic and limited public transport provision.
- There is the potential for positive impacts of improvements in the area and enhanced spaces for active travel, leisure and socialising.

Staff

- Staff employed by existing local businesses and new units have the potential for being negatively impacted due to the limited public transport and active travel provision, as well as traffic congestion.
- There is also the potential for benefits if care is taken to improve and maintain access and traffic management, as well as encouraging fair work practices such as real living wage.

6.2 Health Determinants

The group then discussed the health determinants on the checklist as follows:

Economic Environment

There is a potential benefit associated with the site being owned by the Council, therefore ensuring Community Wealth Building practices.

There is potential for local communities experiencing poverty and on low income to benefit from the new business units in terms of employment, apprenticeships, targeted recruitment and fair work practices.

For these benefits to be maximised and any potential risks of further disadvantage and exclusion, as well as impact of increased traffic in the area to be minimised, it is important to include community benefits clauses both at construction and end use stage to obligate businesses to provide local training and job opportunities, as well as wider social value benefits for local community.

Other important policies to be considered and included during construction and when letting out the new units are the promotion of real Living Wage practices.

It will also be important to support the growth of local supply chain opportunities promoted to construction contractors – for example use of local SME contractors.

Social Environment

In order to ensure the new commercial space provides additional value for the community, it will be important to consider social value when determining the units' end uses.

Furthermore, when designing the new units, it is important to consider the users – employers and their families – and to make the space more welcoming, including, for example, the potential for social spaces. There was discussion about comparison to the Barclays campus in Glasgow and its wider facilities, including its approach to targeted recruitment.

Some of the business representatives suggested that East Renfrewshire Council could achieve longer/more sustainable and, potentially, more profitable leases if the units and surrounding business park facilities were well equipped/fully fitted out.

Community involvement and engagement was suggested as key to maximising benefits but also for securing support for the new development. Some suggestions included a community art piece or mural focused around local heritage, or involving the local community in the design of the gateway building.

External space in and around the business park is important and should facilitate business cooperation and collaboration – e.g. informal space for businesses to meet outside.

There are a number of community organisations already active in the local area and it will be important to strengthen relationships with Dunterlie Action Group, ERA and M2C to better understand local needs and maximise wider benefits.

Place and Physical Environment

It is important to recognise impacts of climate change ensure the units adapt to the impacts of climate change such as increased flood risk and increased temperatures. They should also be future proofed e.g. broadband and digital connectivity.

It will be important to consider the design of the new units and the materials used are aligned with the transition to net zero and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Wider area transport planning should support and prioritise both active travel and public transport, improving the look and feel of the area while also increasing its climate resilience.

The wider green space around the site is already well used and considered to be an asset to the local area, so being mindful of this in the design of the new spaces will support an enhanced quality of natural environment, for example making most of the outside space as welcoming as possible, providing pleasant seating and green spaces, and supporting their maintenance.

Access to and Quality of Services

There are issues around public transport provision being limited and this has further been exacerbated by a reduced bus timetable currently operated with the potential to negatively impact those already most vulnerable and without access to a car, such elderly and very young residents. Improved bus services and infrastructure as part of the wider site planning will help address these challenges and potentially improve access to services for those who need them most and who may be at a higher risk of isolation or exclusion.

It was also suggested that it would be important to maximise connections and access to council partner services for employability, training and education, supporting local communities to better access potential opportunities for the new business units.

Commercial and Environmental Influences on Physical and Mental Health

It was difficult to assess or identify impacts on commercial determinants of health without yet knowing the potential businesses to be letting the space, however the application will be for businesses in use classes 4, 5 and 6 – Business, General Industrial and Storage and Distribution. Some participants expressed concerns about the impact of fast food and other ‘unhealthy’ use of the premises and suggested developing and implementing the leasing policies to ensure that the negative impacts of more fast food/alcohol/gambling-focused businesses is taken into account.

7 Workshop Participants

- Bryan Dando (+ 2 colleagues), Barrhead Housing Association
- Craig Menzies, Health and Social Care Partnership, East Renfrewshire Council
- Elaine Rodger, East Renfrewshire Council
- Joe Stewart, Qualifire (local business located within business park units)
- John Wilson, East Renfrewshire Council
- Julia Whitaker, East Renfrewshire Council
- Lorna Wallace, East Renfrewshire Council
- Mark Brand, East Renfrewshire Council
- Marie Mullen, East Renfrewshire Council
- Megan McIntyre, East Renfrewshire Council
- Michael Gardiner, East Renfrewshire Council
- Neill McIntyre, CORRA Foundation
- Oonagh McKinnon, ERA Waterworks Group
- Rena McGuire, Barrhead Community Council and Dunterlie Community Activist
- Sharon Currie, Public Health Scotland
- Sonia Milne, Glasgow City Region
- Steven, Include Me 2 Club
- Zofia MacFarlane, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde