

Screening Workshop Report: East Kilbride Masterplan

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 East Kilbride Masterplan project consists of three workstreams, namely:

- The Demolition of the existing Centre West shopping centre including the multi-storey car park and the creation of a new facade/interface to the retained Plaza Mall and Car Park. The project seeks to transform the Centre West site into a residential led neighbourhood complete with a new Civic Hub, a significant cultural and community facility for East Kilbride. To achieve this, the existing shopping centre and multi storey car park require to be demolished.
- A new residential layout of a massing and tenure mix to be agreed with South Lanarkshire Council which will include the required level of car parking and public/private amenity space.
- A new civic building containing a multitude of functions to be agreed with South Lanarkshire Council including theatre/creative arts, community spaces, council offices and spaces for partner organisations. It is a key ambition of the project that this new facility be a significant landmark and a new symbol of the positive transformation of East Kilbride town centre.

2 Workshop Summary

This is a report of a workshop held on 13 May 2025 to discuss the potential impacts on health and equity of the East Kilbride Town Centre Masterplan – Centre West. Participants included Healthy & Active East Kilbride, NHS Lanarkshire, Public Health Scotland, South Lanarkshire Council, Glasgow City Region plus project consultants contracted as part of the project management and delivery. Participants used a health and equity impact checklist in a facilitated discussion to identify how the East Kilbride Town Centre Masterplan – Centre West was likely to affect different populations and health determinants.

This report details **potential** impacts identified by workshop participants. Further evidence is needed to investigate these potential impacts identified and/or 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 group discussion identified that a range of businesses, residents, visitors to the town centre, as well as staff/users of community-facing services would all be affected by the proposals.

East Kilbride Locality has a total population of **92,205** people, where **48.4%** are male, and **19.7%** are aged over 65. Over the last decade demographics have changed to a more diverse population, which would indicate a new approach to services, culture, access, and mobility is required.

Opportunities for local training and employment, alongside a new residential development and civic hub would impact positively on a wide demographic. Active travel, greenspace, and civic space were all seen as important for all population groups, and particularly older people who may find it more difficult to access the town centre if active travel options, safe walking and seating spaces were perceived as limited.

Many of the key points were shared as a common theme across participants and the group discussion, with an emphasis on the creation of a new neighbourhood which should deliver on mixed community spaces, integration across the range of population groups promoting tolerance, true community participation, and a sense of identity and civic pride.

Workshop participants felt that a range of population age groups would be impacted most by this development including older people, young people and the working age population. The key impact for these groups is further detailed in section three (3), with key impacts as follows:

- a) Active Travel – walking, wheeling and cycling opportunities.
- b) A civic heart within the development including a new community facility, safe/green space, and public realm.
- c) Access to local training and employment opportunities throughout the period of works and beyond.
- d) Proactive and meaningful community engagement with key messaging in various formats which is accessible to all.
- e) The need for accessibility, good connectivity, and a range of services throughout the development – the new civic hub should also consider appropriate pricing to encourage use which reflects a diverse population.
- f) A mix of private and minimum 25% social housing for the new neighbourhood.

4 Suggested Actions

In the discussion, the group suggested actions to enhance the impacts of the East Kilbride Masterplan. These are summarised below:

The new Civic Hub has the potential to facilitate connections, safe space and a range of learning and education opportunities for the range of population groups. Access to a range of quality services within the Hub delivered via third sector, public and business should be baked into the design and operation.

The group noted the need for proactive engagement on the overall plans to ensure people are informed and consulted on the plans throughout, and to ensure public spaces, the community hub and housing developments all had stakeholder input and investment – instilling a sense of civic pride in this new neighbourhood. Accessibility, affordability and active travel are all key to deliver positive impacts across the population groups and impact positively on health determinants.

In addition to the contractual requirements as part of tendered work, procurement should include a range of community benefits that deliver targeted recruitment and training, employment and learning community benefit outcomes. This can come not only from the Centre West Development but also from other private sector developments in the town centre, such as the new supermarket, which can benefit all age groups and families with employment opportunities and affordable essential goods.

To ensure positive impact on place and community environment, the range of local amenities including retail and the Hub should consider the mix of provision and number of outlets and Licensing, prioritising availability of fresh healthy options and affordability – particularly relevant to minimising the number of takeaways and alcohol retail provision. Business Support should be targeted into the town centre and a range of models including cooperatives and community owned assets should be explored as a community wealth building approach to the development of East Kilbride Town Centre.

The underpasses in and around the town centre are not perceived as safe or inviting places. Careful consideration for an improved walking and wheeling access route, greening and civic space will make the town centre more inclusive, inviting and a more vibrant area, potentially reducing safety concerns.

5 Research Questions

The group identified the following research questions about the impacts, which included:

- The need for further research on plans for asylum seekers housed at Bruce Hotel, near the town centre. The new Hub development (although some way off) may be able to deliver targeted services. There is a need to consider the cultural differences and language needs.
- Homeless accommodation nearby has ceased operation. There will be some implications and impact of pockets of hidden deprivation in an affluent area (East Kilbride).

6 Detailed Discussion

The group identified that East Kilbride Masterplan was most likely to mostly affect the following groups of people:

- **Age:** older people, children and young people, and adults of working age.

6.1 Impacts by Population Group

The group discussed the populations on the checklist as follows:

Age: Older People

- Older people, particularly those struggling with isolation, mobility issues etc. find it more difficult to access the town centre if active travel and access is poor/absent. The need for safe walking space and seating/canopy areas would benefit and encourage older people in the town centre.
- The need for accessibility of housing – at least 25% social housing.
- Carers and Elderly people's needs to be considered and used to inform opportunities for improving connectivity and accessibility.

Age: Children and Young People

- Children and Young People would be able to thrive with the provision of suitable housing, leisure and recreation options. The environment should be child friendly and safe for young people. Young people should have access to good quality apprenticeship and job opportunities arising from the overall development.

Age: Adults of Working Age

- There is a need to maximise the potential for adults of working age to access employment opportunities locally in new businesses during construction and later when new businesses establish themselves.
- Accessibility of housing – focus on who needs homes/affordable housing.

People Living in Poverty caused by socio-economic disadvantage: Low Income

- Focus should be on who needs a home / affordable housing – at least 25% social housing.
- Accessibility to Hub activities – pricing structure should ensure access for people on low incomes and include services targeting low-income population group.

Minority Ethnic populations

- ESOL classes at the Hub and targeted services could deliver positive impact for Asylum Seekers/ Refugees. Communication and engagement on the East Kilbride Masterplan should consider key messaging and how this is conveyed in a culturally/language sensitive format.

6.2 Health Determinants

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

Economic Environment

The opportunity to maximise community benefits into future procurement would help deliver on targeted recruitment and fair work practices in all stages of the works programme from demolition to construction and beyond, providing access to employment and reducing economic inactivity locally. Young people and the working-age population living locally should be supported through the development to secure volunteering, training and employment opportunities and fair work. Business Support should be targeted to start up enterprises to establish and thrive, supporting the circulation of wealth locally.

Social Environment

The development of the Centre West site into a new neighbourhood should consider culture, community connectedness and cohesion, building on existing community assets and ensuring the

overall design and build helps to facilitate social interactions, environmental improvements and improved walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure. Collaboration with Education, Housing, local Foundational Economy and Health would further inform the response to the increased population in the town centre and the impact on surrounding areas – including the demand on current local services and local capacity.

Place and Physical Environment

The existing plans have set out and considered delivery of an accessible, inclusive, inviting and better-used town centre, potentially reducing safety concerns. Connectivity could be improved for people with reduced mobility to access services and goods more easily by better connecting existing green spaces in and around the site.

Whilst bus services and public transport were perceived as limited, there was recognition that the new train station at Hairmyres was a positive addition. The addition of a new civic hub and civic greenspace would enhance local amenities to cater for different ages and needs, and to good digital connectivity throughout.

Access to and Quality of Services

The development of the current centre west site to include residential, a new civic hub and civic greenspace should continue to prioritise better leisure and active travel opportunities for all abilities. The minimum 25% social housing included in the residential element of the plans was welcomed as well as opportunities for prioritising new businesses into the wider East Kilbride Masterplan town centre developments providing affordable, healthy options (new supermarket).

Equalities/Public Sector Equality Duty

It was recognised in the group discussion that there is a diverse population in East Kilbride with different needs, and housing types / availability needs to reflect this and help advance equality of opportunity between diverse groups. There is an opportunity to work closely with the Third Sector on a range of integration initiatives to promote good relations between groups.

Commercial and Environmental Influences on Physical and Mental Health

The build and infrastructure should ensure active travel as a priority and promote access to targeted services and activity via the new hub. The retail mix within the new neighbourhood should prioritise the availability of fresh healthy options and affordability – particularly relevant to minimising the number of takeaways and alcohol retail provision.

7 Workshop Participants

- Ann McLaughlin, Public Health Scotland
- Chris Kelly, EKOS Consultancy
- Conchi Manso-Duffy, The University of Edinburgh
- David Carter, South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture
- Fiona Wallace, Public Health Scotland
- Fraser Jack, South Lanarkshire Council
- Gerry Grams, 360 Architects
- Gillian Lindsay, NHS Lanarkshire
- Helen Hassell, Public Health Scotland
- Iain Ross, South Lanarkshire Council
- Jennifer Kerr, South Lanarkshire Council
- Jennie Smith, Turner & Townsend
- Jonathan Read, South Lanarkshire Council
- Julie Pepper, South Lanarkshire Council
- Justine Docherty, South Lanarkshire Council
- Lesley McIntyre, Healthy & Active East Kilbride
- Sharon Currie, Public Health Scotland
- Sonia Milne, Glasgow City Region
- Victoria Nelson, South Lanarkshire Council
- Yvonne McBride, South Lanarkshire Council