



**design  
erskine**  
town centre charrette



final report  
May 2016

Thanks to the residents, community groups, businesses, organisations and Renfrewshire Council officers involved in the charrette.

Their enthusiasm and participation were vital to the success of the charrette, and will remain so to deliver the improvements that it promises.

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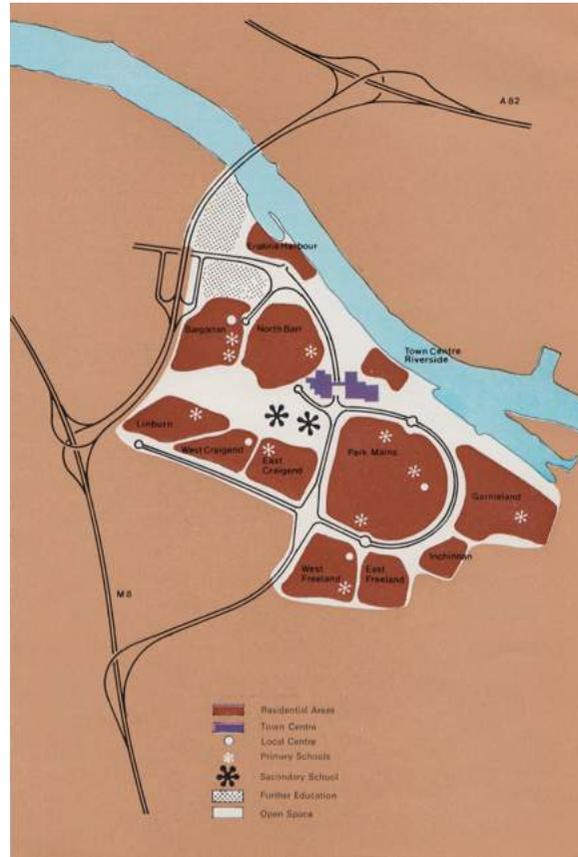
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

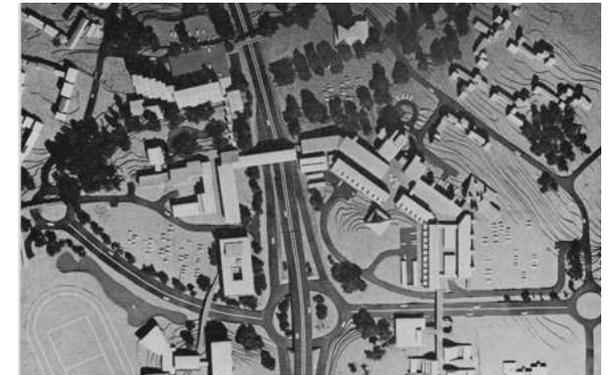
The “new community” of Erskine, built since 1970, was originally conceived to have 30,000 residents with schools, community facilities, businesses, a harbour and a town centre. Forty-five years after the first houses were built, many elements of the original plan have materialised; but like every place Erskine needs to continue to evolve to meet the needs of the local community.

As with any plan, circumstances change over time. Today, the population has reached approximately half that forecast in the early 1970s. Although most of the planned area of the town has been built out and the town is a popular place to live, opportunities for additional development remain in the town centre and along the riverside.

The 2016 Erskine town centre ‘charrette’<sup>1</sup> was commissioned by Renfrewshire Council as planning authority and main landowner in the town centre and riverside area, with Scottish Government support. Its purpose was to consider future sustainable growth of Erskine town centre, strengthening the role and function of the centre and providing an appropriate range and quality of facilities for the local population. A key outcome sought was to present future actions which inform the Council’s Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan.



Images from 1972 brochure for Erskine New Community



The Council wishes to ensure that the town centre is fit for purpose and, where possible, can adapt to changing markets, needs and demands. The aim is to identify proposals for future change that make the most of these areas’ development potential in ways that deliver positive physical, social and economic outcomes for the town.

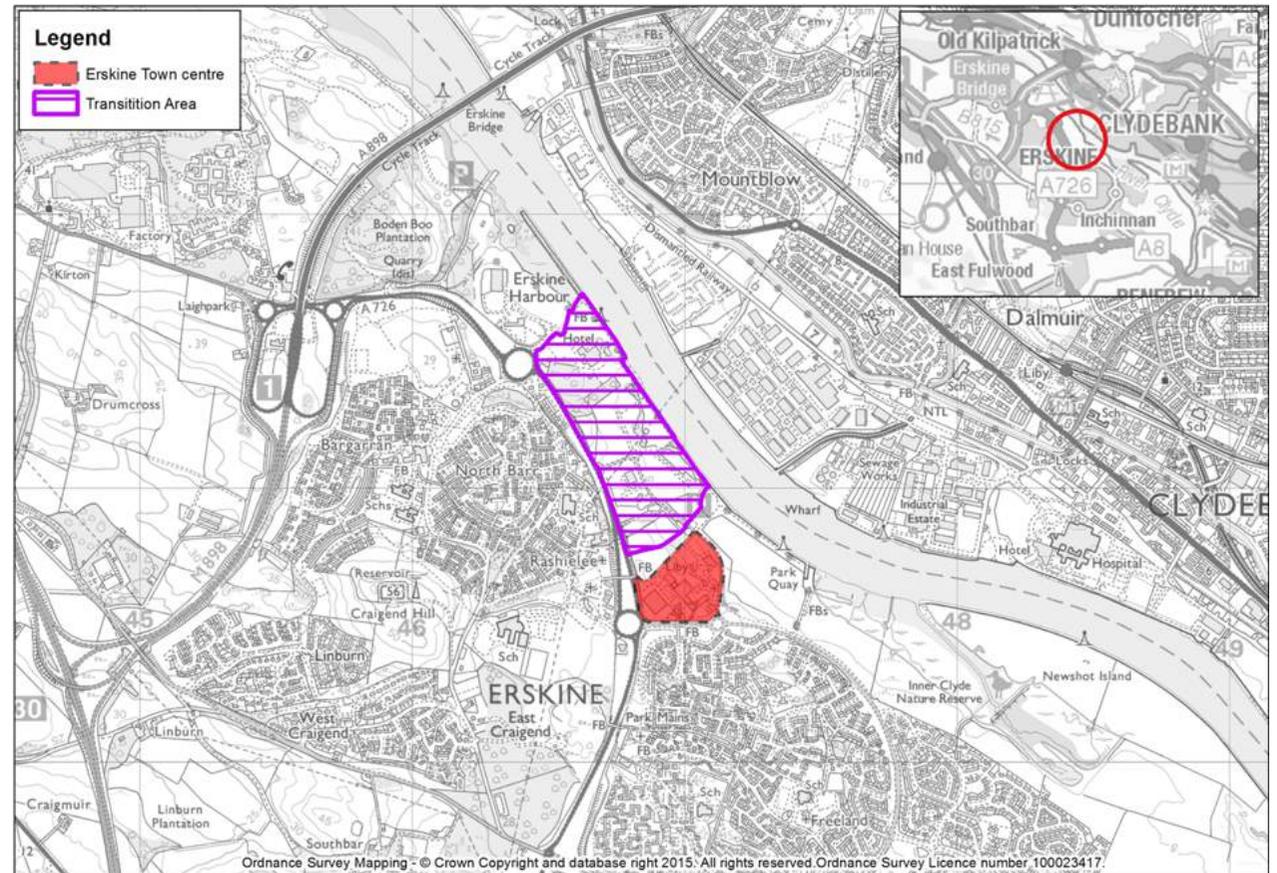
From an economic perspective, Erskine town centre has performed well as a retail centre in recent years, experiencing relatively few vacancies. The town centre is however affected by a fragmented urban form, including pockets of underused vacant brownfield land in the town centre and significant areas of development land in the adjacent riverside area.

<sup>1</sup> An intensive series of discussions where citizens, designers and other local stakeholders collaborate to produce a vision and proposals for how a place should develop and change in the future. It provides a collaborative forum for planning and design which enables participants and designers to develop and test proposals together.

Opportunities exist to improve the quality of public spaces, particularly by strengthening connections between the River Clyde and the town's green network. In addition, the Council is aware of local community aspirations for an improved range of retail and other town centre uses such as offices, residential and community facilities.

The purpose of this charrette was to help the local community realise these aspirations and unlock the potential of undeveloped land to make Erskine an even better place. This report summarises the charrette's background, process and outputs in the following sections:

- **Current context:** a summary of Erskine now, opportunities in the town centre and riverside area, policy context, the property market and development constraints in relation to the town centre and riverside area (section 2).
- The **charrette process** which took place during January and February 2016, particularly the intensive series of design and testing workshops in the first week of February 2016 which resulted in a set of outline proposals (section 3).
- **Outline proposals** to guide future change in the town centre and riverside area, based on those that emerged during the workshops in the first of week of February 2016 (section 4).
- **Next steps** for the Council to inform the final Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan, as well as the next local Development Plan (section 5).



Study area: Erskine town centre and riverside ('Transition Area' in planning policy; see section 2)

## 2 CURRENT CONTEXT

### Erskine now

Erskine is located on the south bank of the River Clyde, 6 miles north of Paisley and 12 miles west of Glasgow. It is close to Scotland's strategic road network, accessed either via the Erskine Bridge linking the M8 and A82, or via junction 29 of the M8 near Glasgow Airport. There are frequent bus services to Paisley and Glasgow, but no direct rail services. The closest railway station is at Bishopton 2½ miles from Erskine town centre, which is served by frequent trains between Glasgow and Greenock.

The town has a population of just over 15,000 people. From 2011 census data, the demographics of the town largely reflect those of Scotland as a whole. The key differences from national averages are that Erskine has:

- More residents aged 5-16 (Erskine 14.4% of people, Scotland 11.8%).
- Fewer residents aged over 60 (Erskine 20.7% of people, Scotland 23.2%).
- More one-family households (Erskine 62.4% of households, Scotland 52.3%).
- Fewer one-person households (Erskine 26.4% of households, Scotland 34.7%).

Appendix 1 contains selected demographic data which was on display throughout the charrette as background information.

### The town centre

The town centre is the main retail location in Erskine, focussed on Morrisons supermarket and Bridgewater Shopping Centre. A number of community facilities are located in the town centre including Sports Centre, swimming pool, library, medical centre and Salvation Army. There are also workshop units.

Erskine also has smaller neighbourhood centres offering commercial premises. The most significant are at Bargarran and Mains Drive, each of which also has some community facilities (particularly Bargarran) and medical premises.

### Opportunities

In recent years Erskine has performed well as a retail centre, experiencing relatively few vacancies.

The town centre and adjacent riverside area however have a fragmented urban form, including pockets of vacant brownfield land and opportunities for greenfield development.

Opportunities exist to enhance the quality of public spaces, particularly to strengthen connections between the town centre (and the wider town) and the River Clyde.

In addition, the local community aspires to an improved range of retail and other town centre uses such as offices, residential and community facilities.

The riverside area offers extensive areas of high quality serviced land with development potential.

The charrette's responses to these opportunities are shaped by a number of factors: planning policy, the property market, development constraints and community aspirations. The first three of these factors are explored in the rest of this section. The fourth factor, community aspirations, is explored in section 3.

# Legend

-  Erskine Town centre
-  Transition Area



## Planning policy

The planning policy context for Erskine is contained in a suite of three documents:

- Renfrewshire Local Development Plan (2014).
- Erskine Riverfront Transition Area - Development Guide (2015).
- draft Erskine Town Centre Strategy (2015).

Taken together, the policy context aspires to develop available sites in the town centre and in the riverside Transition Area, and to broaden the range of uses which would be acceptable in the Transition Area. A key purpose of the charrette was to consider how to translate these policy aspirations into deliverable development proposals.

Relevant content from each of the three policy documents is summarised below.

The **Local Development Plan** (LDP) identifies the town centre as a 'Core Town Centre'. Policy seeks to strengthen the role and function of the town centre, improve its public spaces, and improve its connections to the waterfront.

The riverside area is identified as a 'Transition Area' where acceptable uses include business and industrial uses, residential, hotels, residential institutions, educational facilities, nurseries, leisure and restaurants (but not retail uses). The LDP also notes the opportunity to transform the waterfront area creating a sense of place, increasing connectivity with the town centre and enhancing the green network.



Study area: Erskine town centre and riverside

The Proposals Map (see page 8) shows policy designations for the town centre, riverside area and other parts of the town.

**Erskine Riverfront Transition Area - Development Guide** was produced after the LDP was adopted. It suggests three indicative options for residential, commercial, offices, small scale industrial use and offices in the Transition Area (see page 9).

These indicative options were included in the **draft Erskine Town Centre Strategy** (2015) for

consultation with the local community and key stakeholders.

The charrette aimed to inform the final strategy and future action plan for the town centre, in order to deliver multiple benefits for community and stakeholder engagement, place making and design, and achieve a range of physical, social and economic outcomes.

# Renfrewshire Local Development Plan: Proposals Map (extract)

## Economy

-  Renfrewshire's Economic Investment Locations
-  E1 - Strategic Economic Investment Locations
-  E1 - Local Industrial Areas
-  E3 - Transition Areas
-  E5 - Glasgow Airport Operational Land

## Centres

-  Renfrewshire's Network of Centres
-  C1 - Core Town Centre
-  C1 - Local Service Centre

## Infrastructure

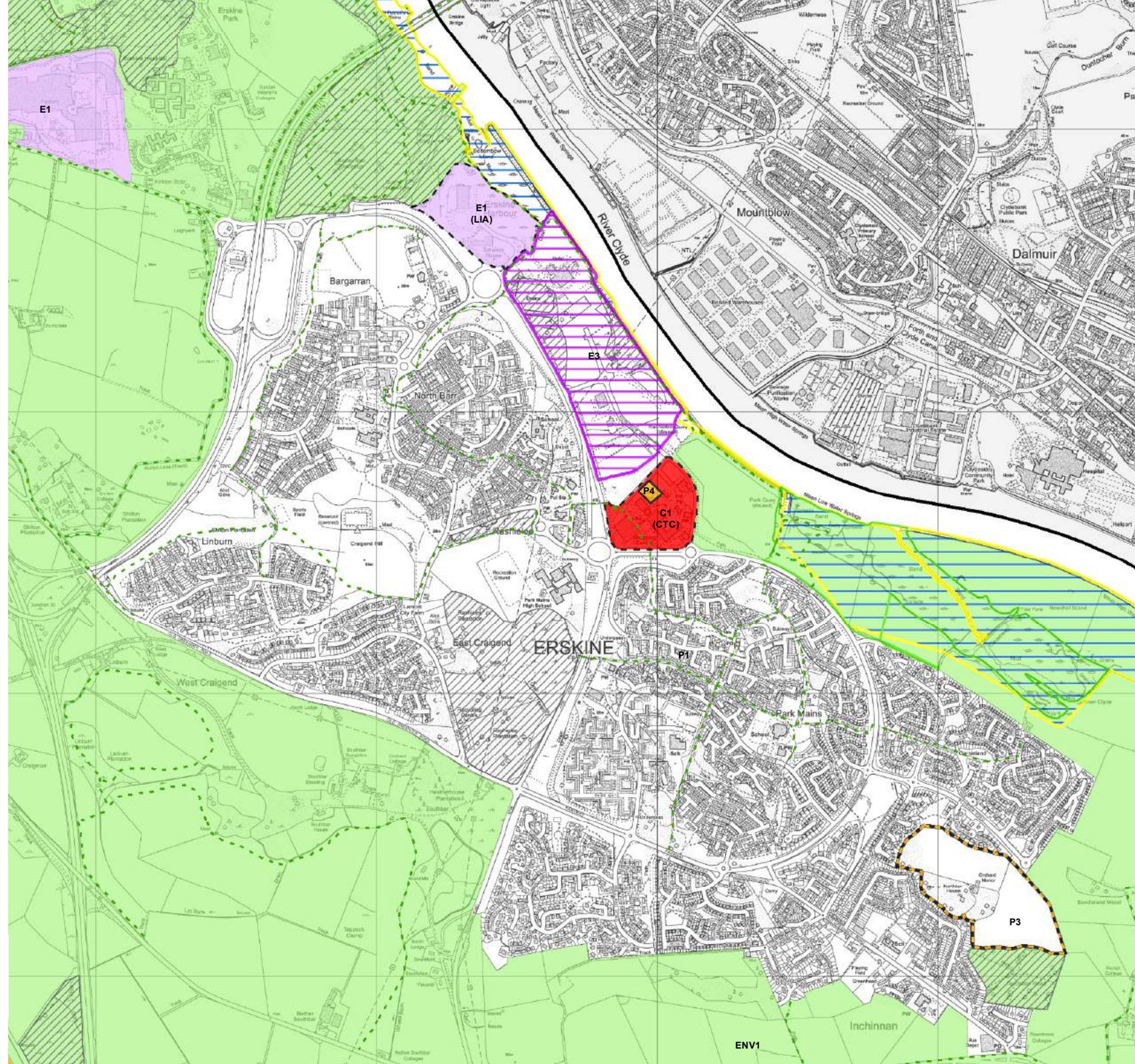
-  I3 - Potential Transport Improvements

## Places

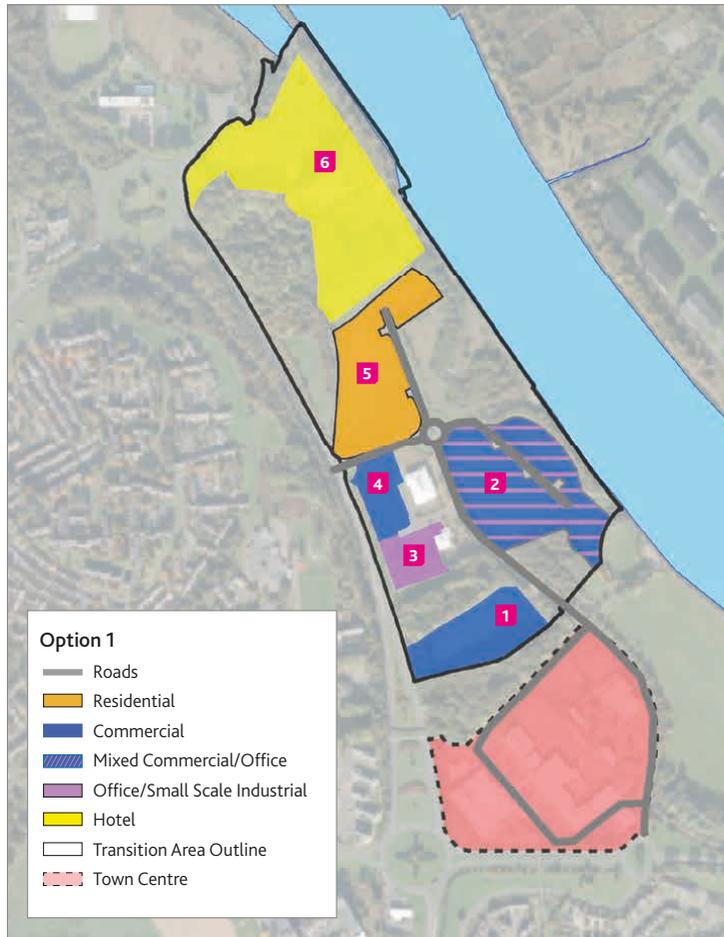
-  P1 - Renfrewshire's Places
-  P3 - Additional Housing Sites
-  P4 - Housing Action Programme Sites
-  P5 - Community Growth Areas

## Environment

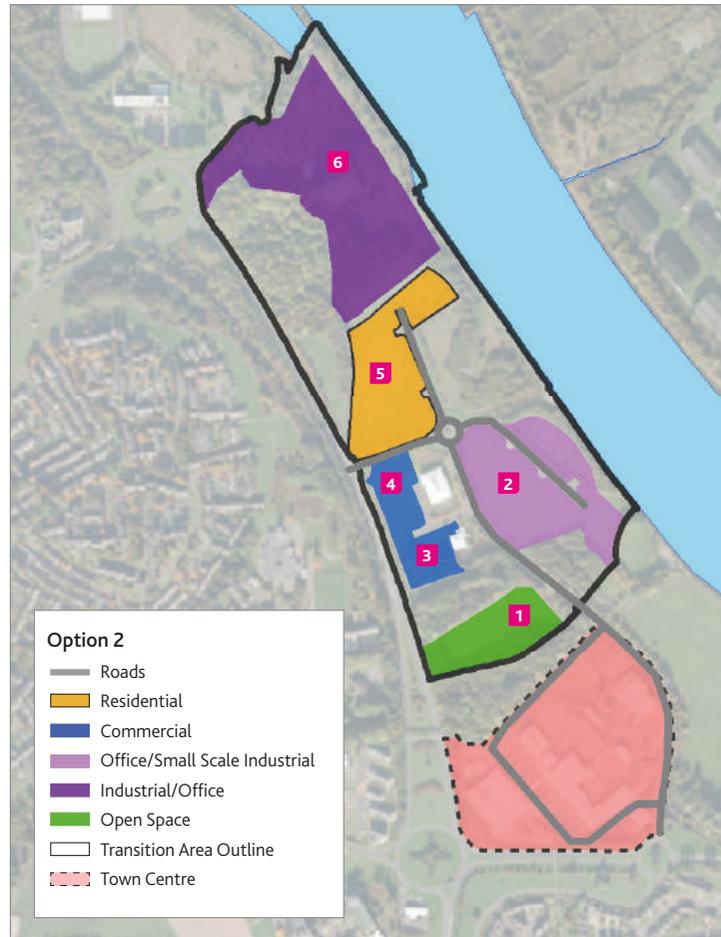
-  Core Paths
-  ENV1 - Green Belt
- ENV2 - Natural Heritage**
  -  International Designations (Special Protection Area / RAMSAR)
  -  National Designation (SSSI)
  -  Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
  -  Local Designation (SINC)
- ENV3 - Built Heritage**
  -  Gardens and Designated Landscapes



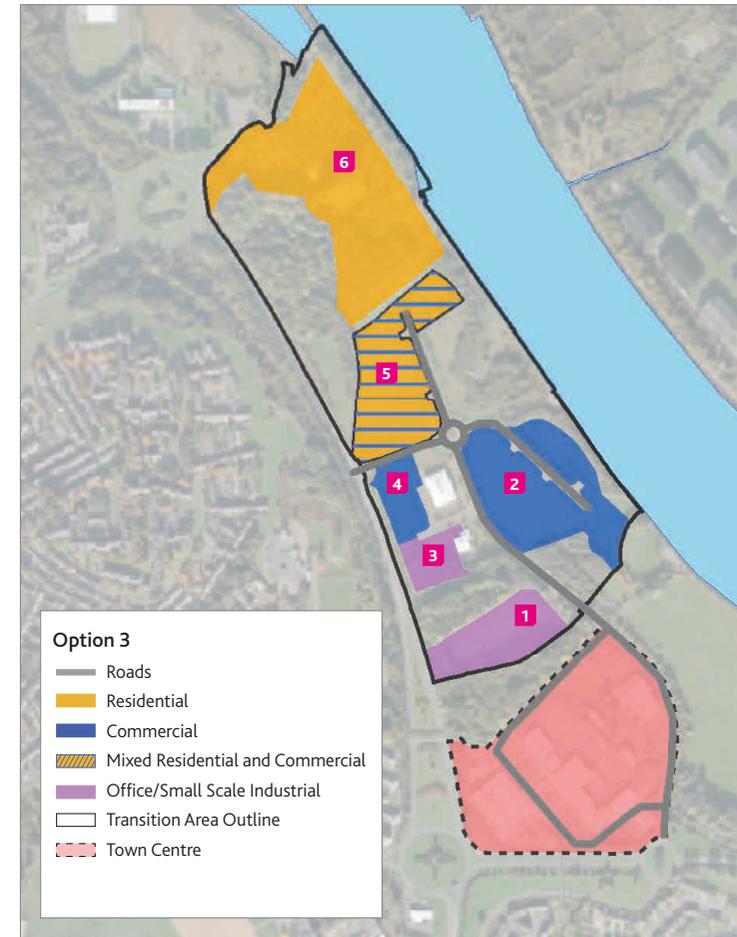
Erskine Riverfront Transition Area - Development Guide: extract showing indicative development options



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## Property market

A fundamental requirement of this study was to produce a set of proposals which would be deliverable.

Ensuring 'deliverability' is of course easier said than done. No-one really knows until finance, land and all the necessary consents are in place – a series of agreements which would be impossible to achieve within the timeframe of a charrette.

The charrette team's 'next best' solution was to analyse the local development market and approach local landowners and developers to (a) better understand the market opportunities and constraints in the area, and (b) identify realistic future development scenarios for the town centre and riverside area. We considered residential and commercial uses.

In terms of **residential** use, asking prices for housing in Erskine have declined across all housing types since the 2008 recession, in line with the national picture. Information from the Council suggests that there is however good demand from housebuilders in Erskine.

Erskine is well located and situated in a good environment to generate higher housing demand than the data currently suggests. The charrette team's informal discussions with house builders were positive.

An essential ingredient in ensuring deliverability and good placemaking will be how Erskine's development proposition is communicated. The town is a good place to live which is well

connected to Glasgow (note that improved connections to Bishopton rail station emerged as an aspiration from the charrette). Development propositions need to be led, managed and co-ordinated to maximise demand interest, ensure deliverability, and achieve good quality design and placemaking. Thanks to its land ownerships in Erskine, the Council is in a good position to use its assets effectively to promote delivery and development quality. There is more information on this concept of 'place promotion' in Appendix 2.

It should be noted that public engagement during the charrette showed an aspiration for more smaller, lower cost homes (see section 3 of this report). Because these types of homes tend to generate lower land values, developments are likely to incorporate them within a range of house types in order to be financially viable and deliverable. This will also help to ensure that new areas of housing have a social mix.

In terms of **business** use, there is a significant amount of land already available in Erskine. Ready-to-occupy business units are however in short supply in Erskine; indeed, the charrette team received enquiries from businesses looking for space during the charrette engagement. This is not unusual. Throughout Scotland, the public sector now has a very limited role in creating business or workshop space, and the private sector inevitably struggles to develop affordable and profitable small-scale speculative space except in major centres of population.

### 3 THE CHARRETTE PROCESS

Good engagement with the local residents, businesses and community groups is the lifeblood of a charrette. Their involvement is essential to ensure that the charrette outputs are rooted in local aspirations and ideas, and are deliverable.

The charrette had two phases of engagement. Initial pre-charrette engagement happened during January 2016. The charrette workshops and exhibition took place from 2nd to 6th February 2016.

#### Pre-charrette engagement

In the month preceding the charrette workshops, the charrette team spent time contacting local community groups, businesses and residents. Engagement included:

- One-to-one contact with local organisations, community groups and businesses based in the town centre or riverside area.
- Dedicated Facebook page during the month leading up to the charrette, with 275 'likes' and a maximum post of 3,264 (see Appendix 3).
- On-street presence in the town centre involving around 60 individual conversations.
- Group discussions at Park Mains High School and with elderly tenants of Bridgewater Housing Association.
- Publicity including press releases, posters and distribution of 5,000 flyers via local schools,

organisations, businesses and community groups.

The purposes of this 'pre-charrette phase' were three-fold:

1. To raise awareness of the charrette.
2. To enable the charrette team to understand local context, concerns, aspirations and projects already in the pipeline.
3. To allow the charrette workshops to be tailored local issues and aspirations.

The pre-charrette phase revealed a number of issues and opportunities from the local community's perspectives. In summary, the charrette team heard:

- Erskine is a great place to live, especially for families, but it needs a better town centre with more facilities and infrastructure (for example it lacks a Post Office, dry cleaner, charity shops and generally a choice of shops or places to eat).
- People like the fact that there are few vacancies in the town centre - although some businesses did point out that the lack of business floorspace at different sizes is a constraint for firms wanting to set up or grow.
- There's no obvious central meeting place for the local community, either indoor (like a town hall) or outdoor (like a central square, bandstand or war memorial with benches and event space).



Lunchtime on-street engagement in the town centre

- The town centre has the basic essentials but is regarded by many as drab ("70s-80s vibe") and not particularly attractive, with poor access around the town centre and a disjointed layout.
- The town centre is quite isolated, particularly for those without a car.
- Young people say there isn't much for them in the town centre beyond the sports centre. They'd like somewhere to go in the evening like a cafe or a restaurant, more greenery in the town centre, and better links to Bishop railway station and better buses to other places.
- Many people expressed a desire for smaller homes for young people to move into and older people to downsize to.
- There are a lot of trees and paths in Erskine, but no 'town park' (Robertson Park in Renfrew was regularly quoted by local people as an excellent model). The riverside was seen as a good place for a park close to the town centre.
- The challenges of maintaining woodland and paths in the town were a major focus of discussion, including the absence of footways along some roads (many people young and old were not comfortable walking on remote footpaths, particularly after dark).

These discussions during the pre-charrette phase, combined with the focus of the charrette on future development of the town centre and riverside areas, informed the sequence of charrette workshop topics (see next page).

Appendix 4 contains a selection of representative quotes from the pre-charrette phase.

Lunch

- Subway
- Morrisons
- Greggs
- Chippy
- Hub
- Nazarene

Aesthetics & Use

- dated
- visited for necessity
- nothing for younger generation

Access:

- walk from school
- bridges
- new paths
- good for school kids
- good cover round shop fronts
- centre is isolated

**PARK MAINS (56)**

Bridgewater

- Not easily accessible 80's/70's vibe
- During winter poor icy conditions. Needs redeveloped.
- Only one route
- Congested
- Not much variety in shopping facilities
- Sports centre is isolated
- Poor one way system

blond  
more greenery / less dull  
No Totebags  
Plenty options at lunch

ONIONS

- Suburb - which attract young people
- Another route to the centre
- More greenery (big plants)
- Clutter shops nearby
- More jobs available in the close vicinity
- Modern indoors for young people to chill

11-5

- No night time in neighbouring town
- Coffee shops for young people
- No train link to anywhere. Nearest station is Bishopston and it's a hassle to get there from Erskine.
- More sporting facilities as the Sports Centre is lacking.



- Sports Centre / Gym - cov
- Morrisons (Bus Stop) - walk
- Subway
- Greggs
- Pool
- Bank
- Doctor's
- Chip Shop

- Attracts an older age-group of customers

Train Station  
Better Links to Bishopston  
Townhall

What we would like to have

- \* train station. (Better links to other towns)
- \* Dominos Pizza
- \* Restaurants (fancy)
- \* Starbucks/costa
- \* Ice cream /dessert place.

## Charrette workshops

The public charrette workshops took place on four afternoons from Tuesday 2nd to Friday 5th February, leading to a staffed exhibition of proposals on Saturday 6th February. The charrette team also hosted public drop-in sessions after each workshop until 7pm.

The series of workshops is shown on the flyer (right). The topics were developed in response to the issues and opportunities identified in the brief and through pre-charrette engagement. The sequence through the week was designed to progress from gathering information to developing and then testing proposals.

Attendance at each workshop averaged between 25 and 35 participants. They included local residents, businesses, community organisations, public agency staff and local authority officers.

Charrette flyer showing programme of workshops



# design erskine

town centre charrette

**Tues 2nd - Sat 6th  
February 2016**  
Erskine Community  
Sports Centre

## Do you think your town centre should be better? This is your opportunity to make that a reality!

Come and join a team of planners and designers in Erskine Community Sports Centre in early February to work out a new plan for the town centre and riverside area in 2025. Your input is vital to make a good plan – we need to know what local people, businesses and community groups want.



Come along to any of these public workshops to help plan the future of Erskine. All workshops will be held in Erskine Community Sports Centre, Kilpatrick Drive, Erskine, PA8 7AF.

### Tuesday 2nd February 1:30pm Town centre

- How should we improve the town centre?
- How can businesses and community groups generate more buzz and activity?

### Wednesday 3rd February 1:30pm River, parks and greenspace

- How can we make more of the river and greenspace?
- Have you got ideas for events or projects?
- How can we support community ideas?

### Thursday 4th February 1:30pm Land and property

- What are your ideas for vacant sites in the town centre?
- What's viable and realistic?

### Friday 5th February 1:30pm Putting it all together

- How should all the ideas fit together?
- What should the priorities be?
- How do we make things happen?

### Saturday 6th February 1pm-4pm Exhibition

- Come and see the ideas generated during the week.

You can also drop in to the Community Sports Centre for a chat between 2nd and 5th Feb from 1pm-1:30pm or 5pm-7pm.

Share your thoughts, ideas and keep up to date via:



[www.facebook.com/ErskineCharrette](https://www.facebook.com/ErskineCharrette)

## Day 1: town centre

The focus of the first workshop was the town centre itself. How should it be improved? How might local businesses and community groups generate more buzz and activity?

The group outputs from the workshop are shown overleaf, with a sample of images to the right.

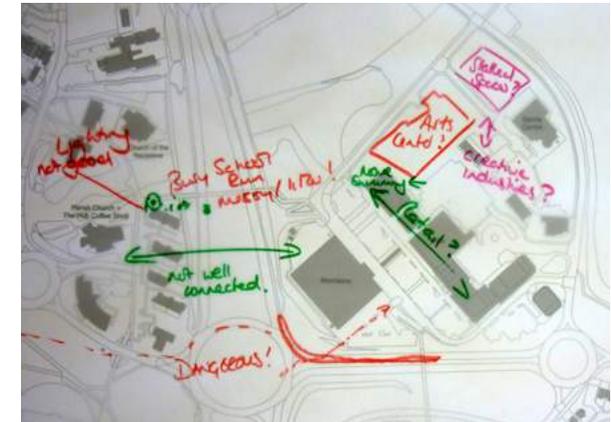
Key points that emerged from the workshop:

- Smarten up the town centre, put in some outdoor seating and greenery, better signage and wayfinding.
- Create a central hub for community activity - possibly including arts, culture, youth, public services.
- More things to do in the evening in the town centre, more places to eat.
- Organise more local events and activities.
- Improve transport between Erskine and Bishopton railway station (buses, footpath and cycling links, lighting).
- More business floorspace for startups and existing firms to expand. Improve footpath and cycle connections, lighting.
- Make more of the riverside for recreation (e.g. cafe, water sports) and transport.
- Improve collaboration between community groups, Housing Association and the Council.
- Make sure proposals are achievable.

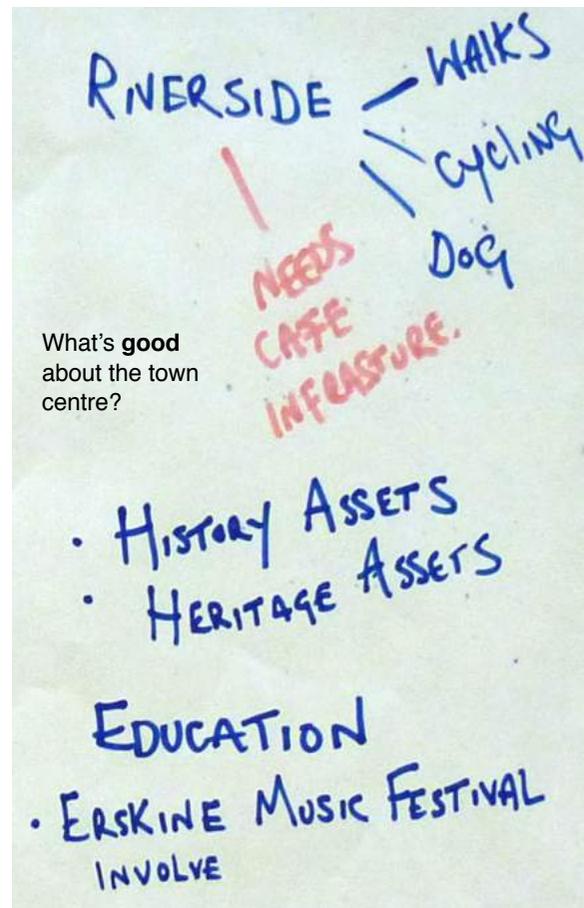
These ideas were merged with those from day 2 and began to form an outline strategy for the town centre and riverside area.



images from charrette day 1



Mapping issues & opportunities in group discussions





## Day 2: river, parks and greenspaces

The focus of the second workshop was the river, parks and greenspaces. How can more be made of the river and greenspace? What events or projects could be organised? How might community ideas be supported?

The group outputs from the workshop are shown overleaf, with a sample of images to the right.

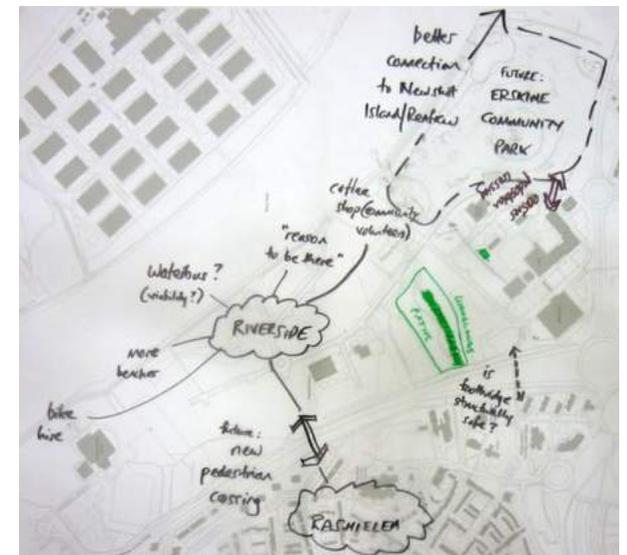
Key points that emerged from the workshop were:

- Make more of the riverside (see sketch plan on right) - create more reasons for people to go there (e.g. cafe, play park, bmx, benches, toilets, outdoor gym, bike hire), improve path connections from town centre and town, link up with riverside paths up and down stream, repair revetments.
- Improve maintenance of paths and open space, perhaps by focussing on those which are critical - for example to the town centre, to schools and to neighbourhood centres.
- Create better balance towards buses, pedestrians and cyclists, and address missing links in the walking and cycling network - for example footways along key roads, connections to Bishopton railway station and other towns.

By the end of day 2, a number of strategic themes had begun to emerge from the first two days of discussion:

- The plan for the town centre and riverside needs to be manageable and deliverable.
- Create civic space in the town centre for people to gather.
- Make more of the riverside by improving the recreational space alongside the river, and connections to it.
- Create a community hub as a focus for arts, culture and community activity.
- Improve town centre accessibility and environmental quality.
- Address the challenging issue of maintenance of paths and open space.

These outputs were then taken forward on day 3, thinking about how development and change might look on the ground (see page 19). They were then developed into the themed proposals presented at the exhibition (see page 23).





## Day 3: land and property

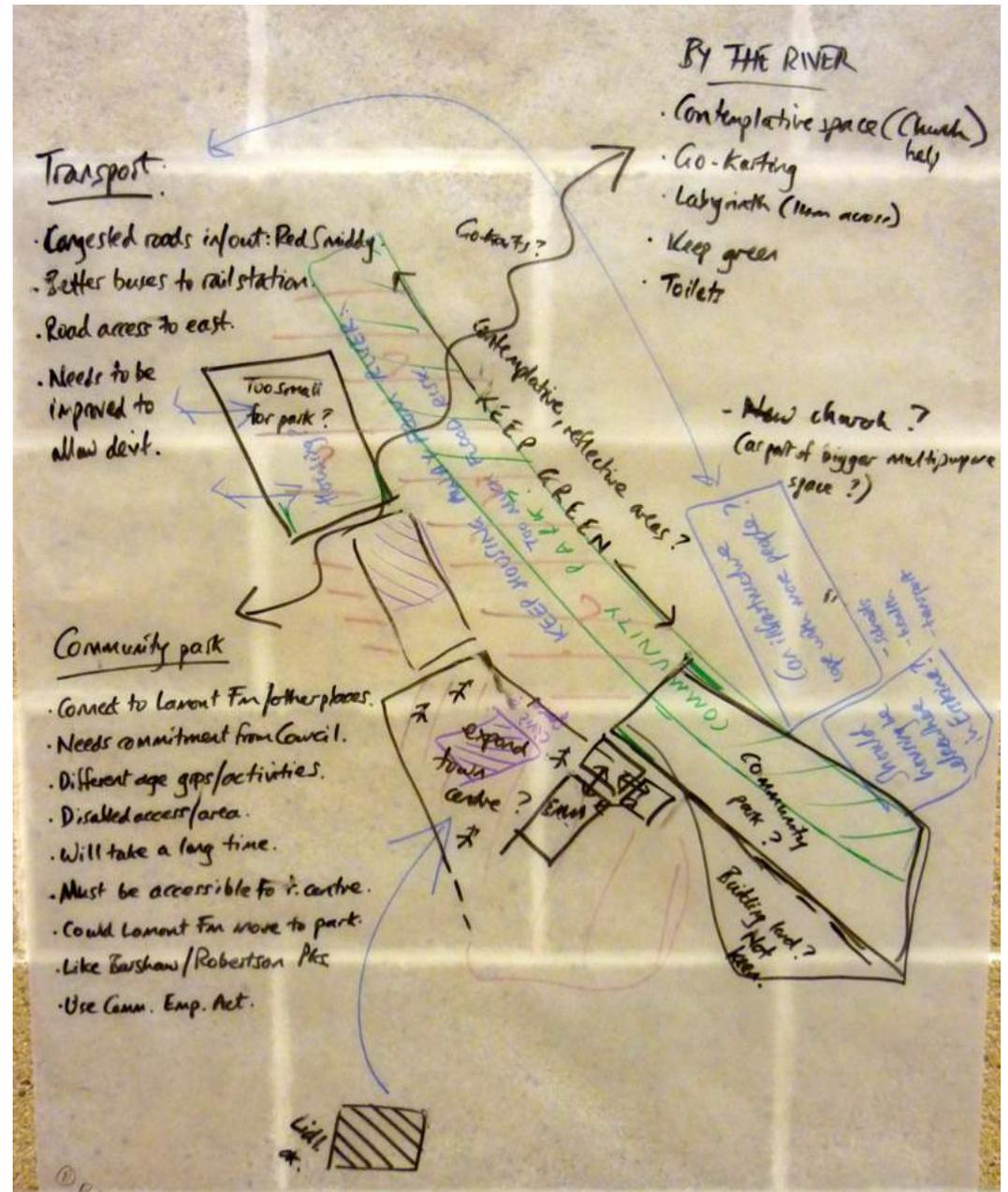
The purpose of the day 3 workshop was to consider land and property issues. In other words, future development in the town centre and riverside area, aiming to produce realistic proposals that flesh out the policy context described in chapter 2 of this report.

Participants worked in five groups to produce sketch plans of how the ideas developed on the first two days might 'land on the ground'. The outputs from each of the five groups are shown on this page and overleaf. Each has a slightly different focus, such as the town centre, the riverside area or greenspace.

The charrette team then pulled these outputs together on day 4 (see page 21).

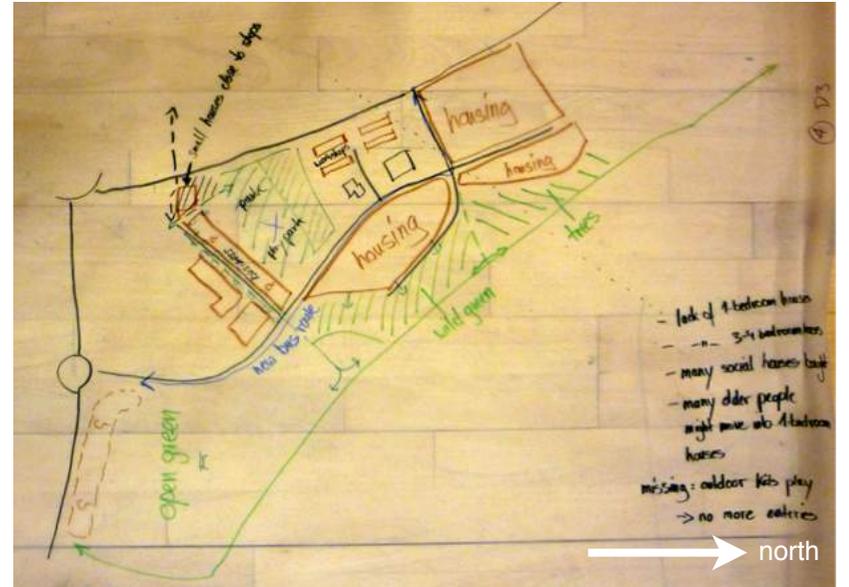
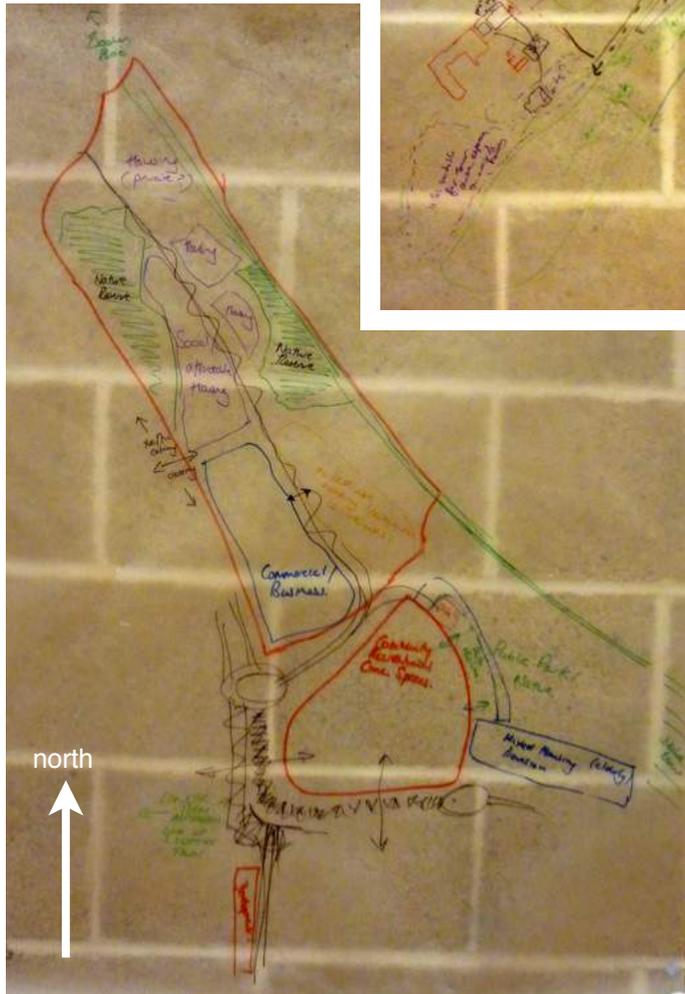
On the evening of day 3, Erskine Community Council kindly gave over much of its monthly evening meeting to a charrette discussion attended by around 25 people. The charrette team talked through the emerging proposals and got reaction to gauge whether they were going in the right direction, from the Community Council's perspective. This offered a valuable additional opportunity to test the emerging proposals.

Discussion focussed mainly around any new housing needing to be affordable and accompanied by investment in infrastructure and facilities; and questions around the future maintenance of any new buildings and public space.



Group output from day 3

Group outputs from day 3



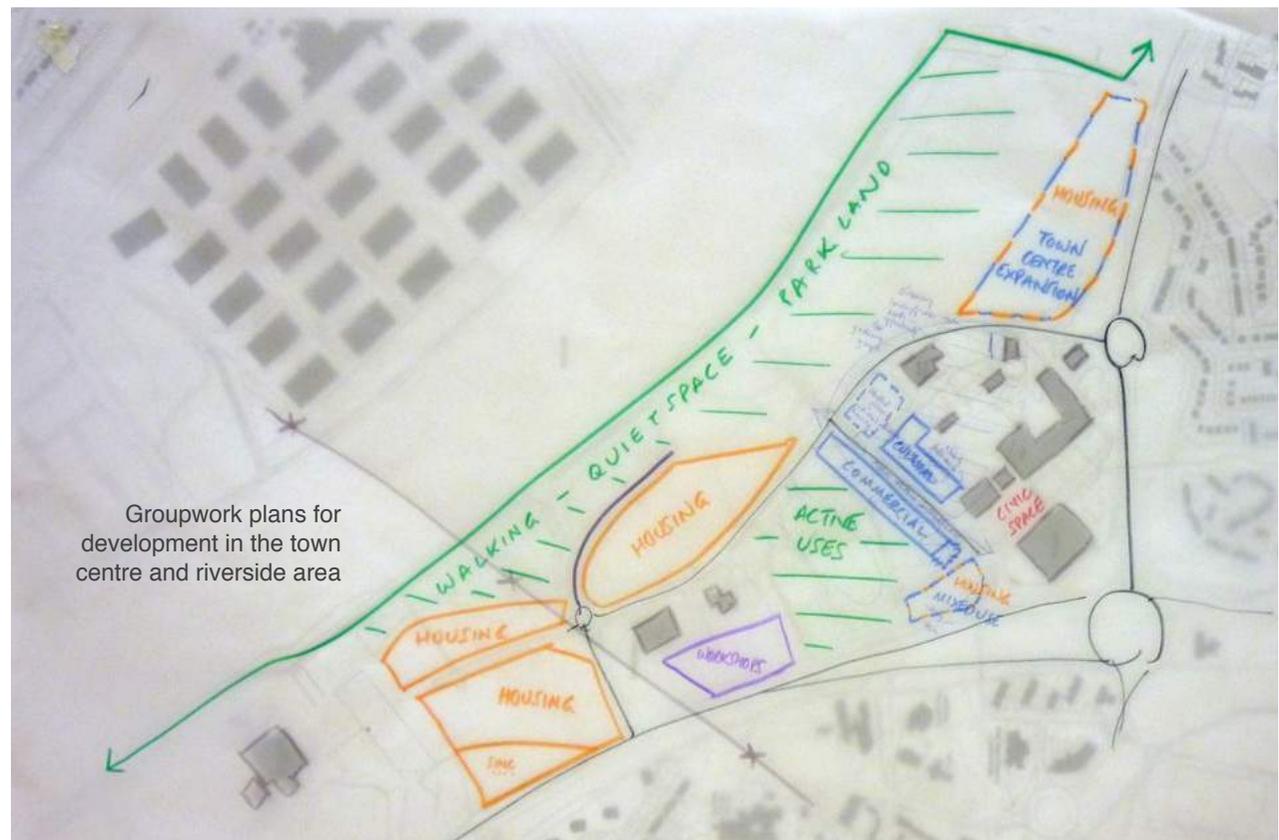
## Day 4: putting it all together

The purpose of the day 4 workshop was to bring together the threads of the previous three days - town centre, greenspace, property development - into a coherent strategy for the future. How should all the ideas fit together? What should the priorities be? How do partners make things happen?

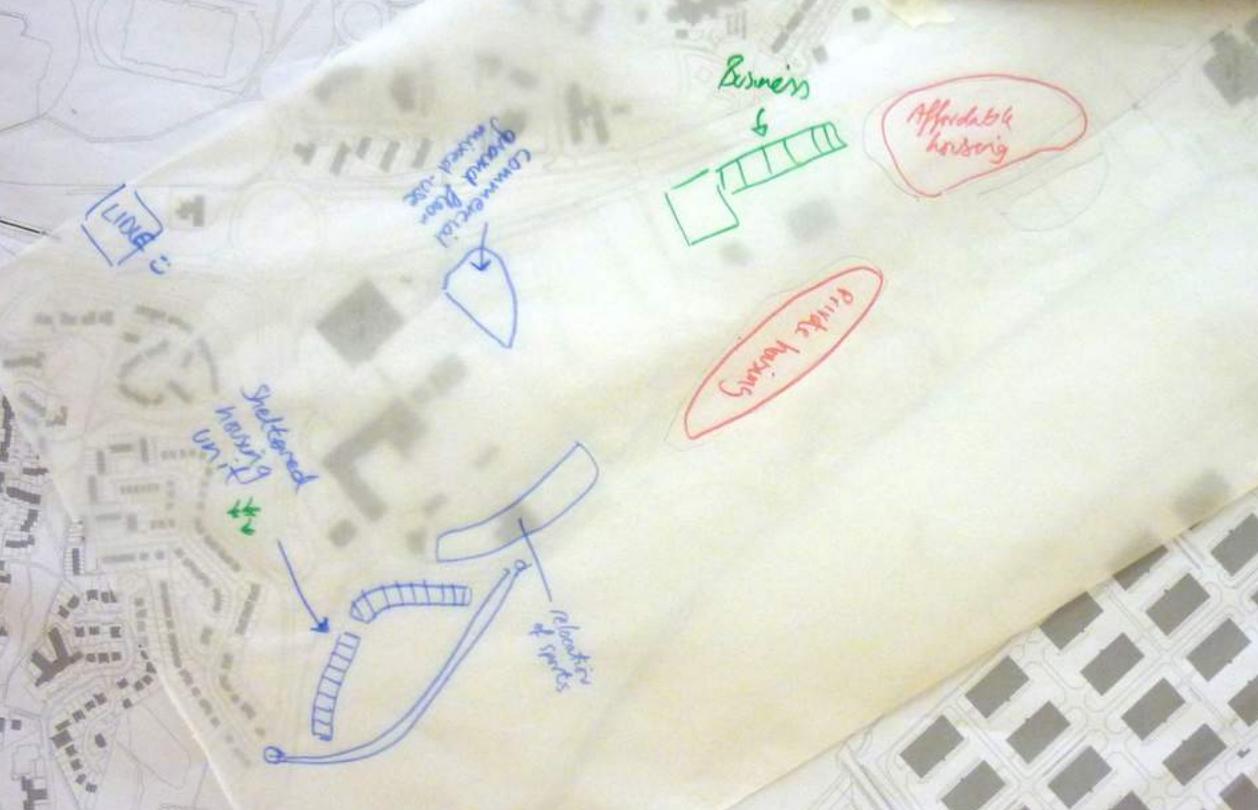
The challenge for the workshop was to create a deliverable and realistic package of actions from the outputs of the first 3 days, working through tensions like (for example) community aspirations for better path and woodland maintenance against a backdrop of ever-reducing maintenance resources.

In reality, much of this work had already been done on days 1 to 3. This meant that the day 4 workshop were able to focus more on testing and refining the outputs.

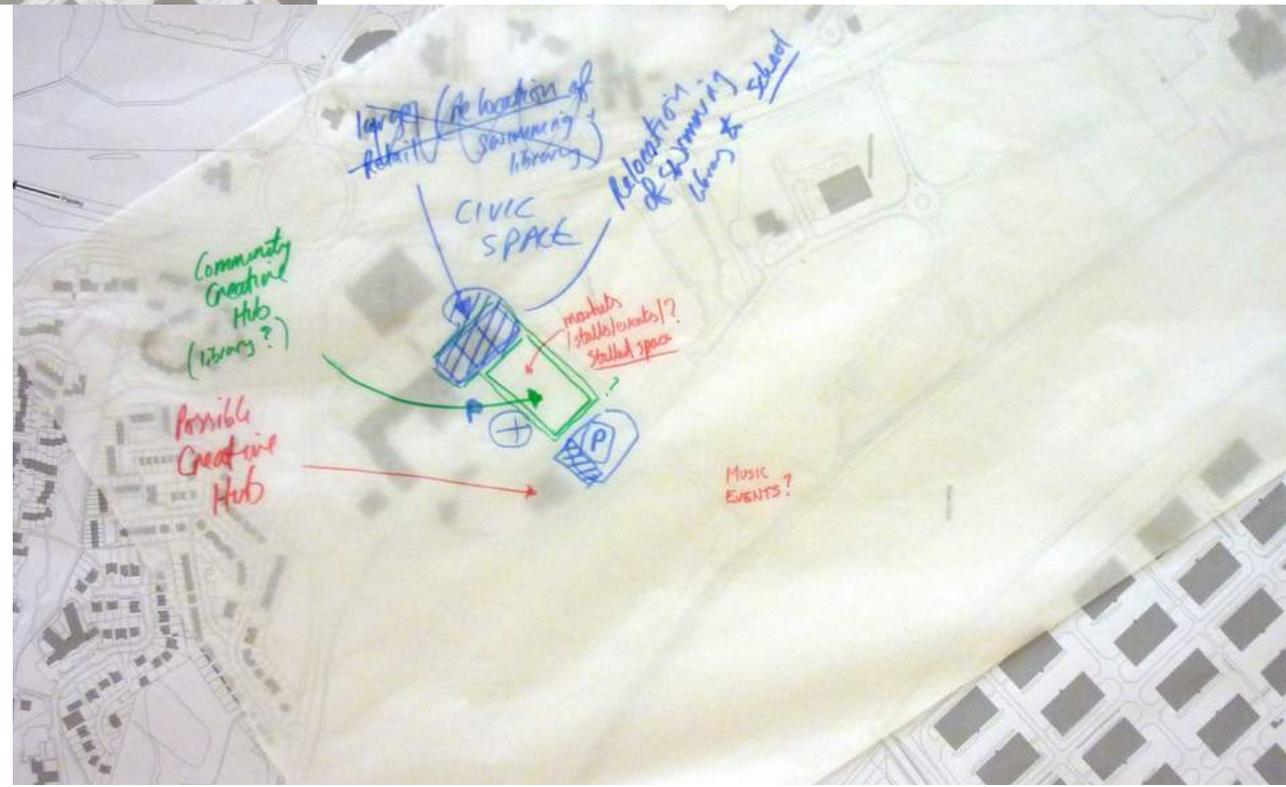
A session was also held with Council officers on the morning of day 4, to ensure that the proposals emerging through the charrette process were deliverable from their perspective. One of the main points was to emerge related to the community aspiration for a hub for arts, culture and community activity. The aspiration was of course acknowledged, and officers noted that this proposal should properly involve an appraisal of existing assets/buildings and potential opportunities in and around the town centre to ensure that the most effective solution is achieved.



Groupwork plans for development in the town centre and riverside area



Groupwork plans for development in the town centre and riverside area



## Day 5: exhibition

Between the end of the day 4 workshop and the exhibition the following day, the charrette team drew up plans and display posters portraying the proposals that had been designed during the charrette.

The exhibition contained:

- Pre-charrette engagement outputs that had been on display throughout the charrette (the outputs from Park Main High School shown on page 13, plus the selected comments from the public shown in appendix 4).
- Outputs from each day's workshops (see images on pages 15-22 above), almost exclusively prepared through groupwork within the workshops.
- The emerging proposals (see below).
- An opportunity for people to use the Scottish Government's Place Standard to assess how Erskine currently 'performs' (see page 24).

The proposals were grouped under 6 themes, developed from those identified on day 2 (see page 17):

1. Community hub
2. Civic space
3. Riverside
4. Looking after Erskine
5. Places to live
6. Places to work

The proposals presented at the exhibition form the basis of chapter 4 of this report, refined in response to feedback at the exhibition and worked up in a little more detail.

Between 45 and 50 people attended the exhibition. Members of the charrette team were on hand throughout the exhibition to explain the process, discuss the proposals and take feedback verbally and in writing.

Comments on the exhibition content and proposals were overwhelmingly positive. Much of the discussion with visitors focussed on how local stakeholders could work together to implement the proposals, suggesting a desire to get on with the business of implementation.

images from charrette exhibition



## The Place Standard

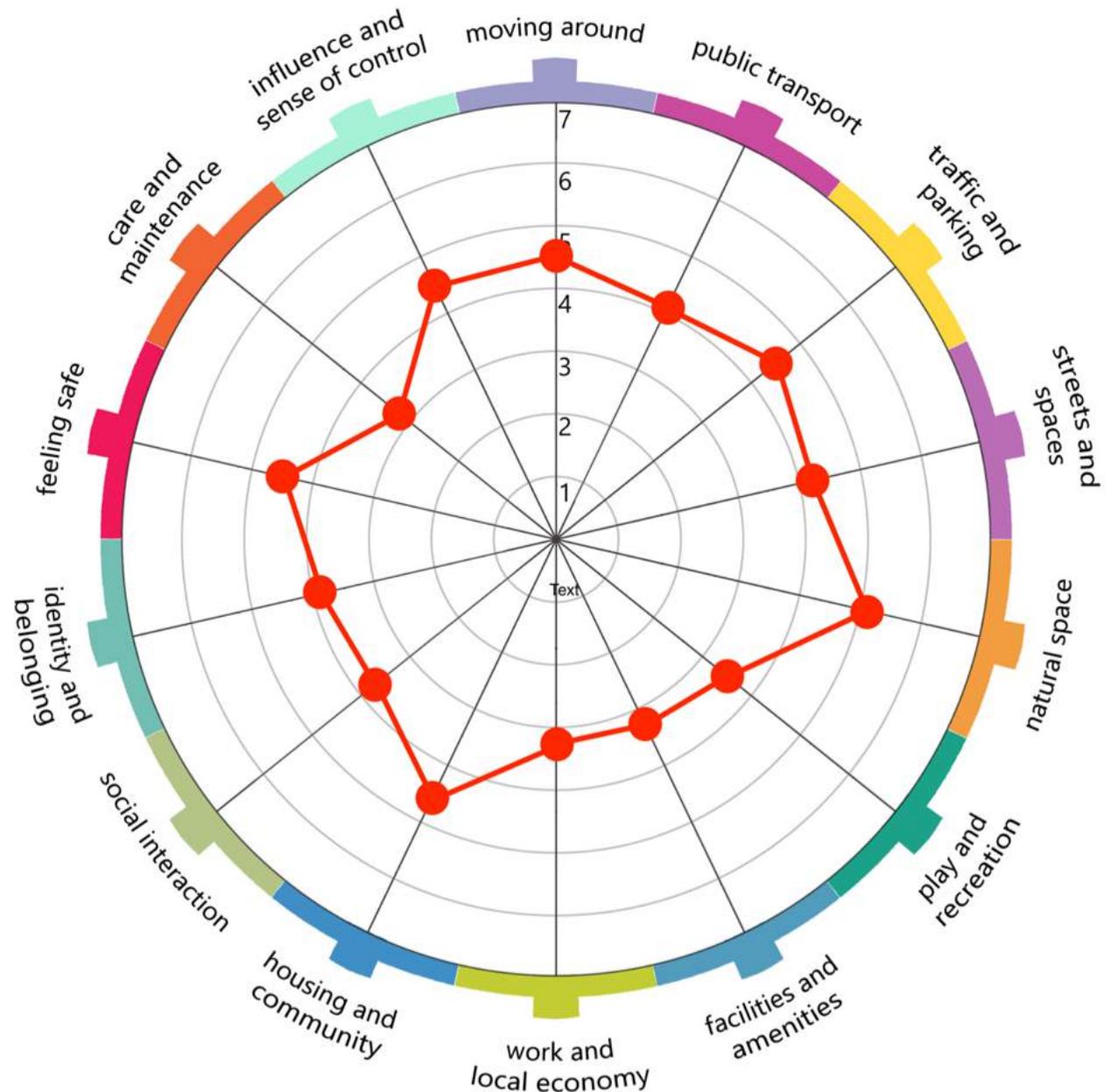
The charrette team also took the opportunity to ask individuals to give their personal views on how Erskine currently performs as a place, using the Scottish Government's recently launched Place Standard tool ([www.placestandard.scot](http://www.placestandard.scot)). The Place Standard tool was recently launched by the Scottish Government. It provides a simple framework to structure conversations about place. It allows people to think about the physical elements of a place (e.g. its buildings, spaces, and transport links) as well as the social aspects (e.g. whether people feel they have a say in decision making).

The tool was designed to provide prompts for discussions, allowing people to consider all the elements of place in a methodical way. It pinpoints the assets of a place as well as areas where a place could improve.

Eleven members of the public kindly completed the Place Standard graphic, individually, at the final exhibition of the charrette on 6th February 2016. They were asked to score how Erskine performs **now** as a place. The higher the score, the better it performs.

The red dots on the adjacent graphic show the average of everyone's scores.

More information about the Place Standard can be found at [www.placestandard.scot](http://www.placestandard.scot).



## 4 PROPOSALS

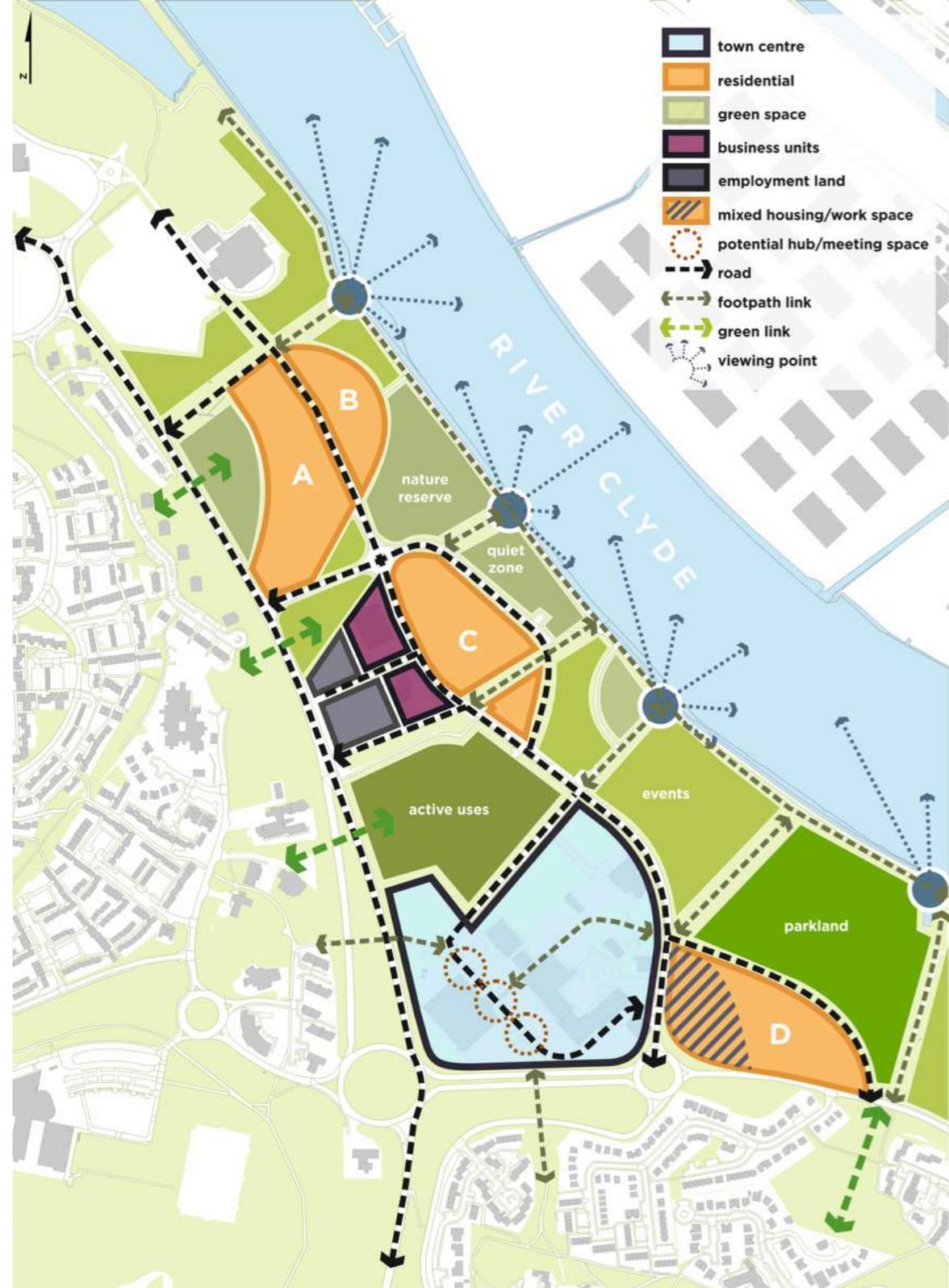
After the charrette exhibition, the proposals were refined in preparation for this report, taking account of feedback at the exhibition.

This chapter contains the final version of the charrette proposals as a design based development framework, in two forms:

- **Framework plan** showing the proposed distribution of future development in the town centre and riverside area, shown on the right. This shows what development would happen and where.
- **Themed proposals** which contain more details what will be involved to implement that framework plan. The proposals are grouped into five themes which emerged from the charrette (see chapter 3). These themes are shown below and the proposals explained in the rest of this chapter. The five themes are a refined version of the six themes presented at the charrette exhibition (see page 23); theme 1 'civic heart' combines two exhibition themes (community hub and civic space).

Theme 1	Civic heart
Theme 2	Riverside
Theme 3	Looking after Erskine
Theme 4	Places to live
Theme 5	Places to work

It is very difficult to give a clear indication of phasing of proposals without detailed discussion of each potential project with delivery partners. However, 'quick actions' and 'long term goals' are identified under each set of themed proposals in chapter 4 to help focus these discussions and move quickly to action.



# Theme 1

## Civic heart

### Why?

“There’s a shortage of community space for arts, culture, music and young people”

“We lack a focal point: other towns have a war memorial, a fountain, some greenery - just a nice place to sit”

“We need somewhere for everybody, all ages”

“We need somewhere for outdoor events like the Christmas tree or farmers’ markets”

“The town centre is shabby and there’s not enough choice of shops”

### What’s proposed?

Civic space for outdoor events, performance and as a place to meet.

Indoor community space with space for arts, culture, classes, training, nursery, youth activity, community groups.

Build new retail/business space (see theme 5).

Housing for elderly people (see theme 4).

Additional parking as required.

(see graphics on pages 27-29)

This set of proposals responds to community aspirations for a stronger civic heart in the town centre, both outdoor and indoor. The “Why?” box on the left contains quotes from the local community during the pre-charrette engagement which the proposals seek to address.

The proposals include a **central public outdoor space** which could be used for civic events and activities, as well as simply allowing people to sit and meet. This should be between Morrisons and Aldi, and could be achieved through simple initial interventions (see plan and visualisations pages 27-28).

Delivery would involve between collaboration between the Council and County Properties. It offers opportunities for local businesses, schools and community organisations to be involved, for example in design, sponsorship, maintenance of greenery, and programming of activities and events.

**Indoor community space** also emerged from the charrette as a clear aspiration, with space for arts, music, youth and community activities. There are various ways that this could be delivered - for example, making better use of existing buildings, refurbishment or new build. An appraisal should be undertaken of existing assets in Erskine to assist in accommodating community uses. In the longer term, a potential opportunity site exists if any existing Sports Centre uses are relocated to Park Mains High School for public use (unknown as yet).

In terms of future development, the plan on page 29 shows opportunities for **new commercial floorspace and housing** in and near the town

centre. These respond to community aspirations for more facilities in the town centre, more business space, and small lower cost homes. Commercial development is anticipated to be south of Kilpatrick Drive initially, with the potential to extend north of Kilpatrick Drive onto the area shown as mixed use in the overall framework plan (see page 25). These developments would largely be on Council-owned land, and would be dependent on market conditions, finance and viability. They should be considered in co-ordination with development in the riverside area.

A diagram showing stepping stones to delivery for each of these projects is shown on page 31, together with a note of who should be involved. Delivery of retail and business space is covered under themes 4 and 5.

### Who should be involved?

Bridgewater Housing Association  
businesses  
churches  
County Properties  
developers  
Engage Renfrewshire  
Erskine Community Events  
Erskine Music and Media  
Renfrewshire Council  
Renfrewshire Leisure



**Public space between Morrisons and Aldi:  
simple initial interventions**

left: proposed plan

overleaf: visualisations

continue pedestrian surface across carriageway

replace existing shelter with larger structure, resurface pedestrian area

benches

popup stalls & activities on parking spaces next to pedestrian area

moveable planters

new hedges

continue pedestrian surface across carriageway



**Public space between Morrisons and Aldi:  
simple initial interventions**

top left: existing situation

bottom left: proposed visualisation

previous page: proposed plan





The plan on the left shows how the various development components could take place in the town centre:

- a new civic space between Morrisons and Aldi (see pages 27-28)
- public realm improvements throughout the town centre, to improve connections and the quality of the environment
- additional business units on vacant land adjacent to the existing workshop units
- new housing for older people on vacant land behind the swimming pool
- potential future opportunity for community use in the Sports Centre, subject to options appraisal for additional community indoor space

If further town centre expansion is required, this could take place across Kilpatrick Drive to the east (as shown on the overall framework plan on page 26).

# Actions



## Theme 2 Riverside

### Why?

“We need to make more of the river, it’s a great asset. But we need more reasons to go there.”

“The town lacks a park, for people of all ages.”

“It’s difficult to get down to the riverside on foot and by bike.”

### What?

Parkland along river edge including quiet contemplative space, children’s play, outdoor gym, woodland pockets, community growing areas.

Better walking connections across A726 and Kilpatrick Drive between town centre / Bargarran and riverside.

Opportunity for community cafe and even relocation of Lamont Farm if they wished.

Activity area for low impact mountain biking in woodland/field between Kilpatrick Drive and A726.

Reduce river bank erosion.

More water-based recreation at ferry & beach.

(see plan on page 32)

This set of proposals responds to community aspirations to make more of the riverside. The “Why?” box on the left contains quotes from the local community during the pre-charrette engagement which the proposals seek to address.

The proposals include **parkland and activities along the river edge** as shown on the plan overleaf. The intention is to offer a range of reasons to go down to the river - including quiet contemplative space, children’s play, outdoor gym, woodland pockets and community growing areas. If funding is available, there may be opportunities to develop a cafe, water sports and other activities.

Improvements to walking and cycling connections from the town centre and the wider town should be an integral part of proposals, particularly across the A726 from Rashielea. Like all proposals for the riverside, this is in response to community aspirations.

precedent images

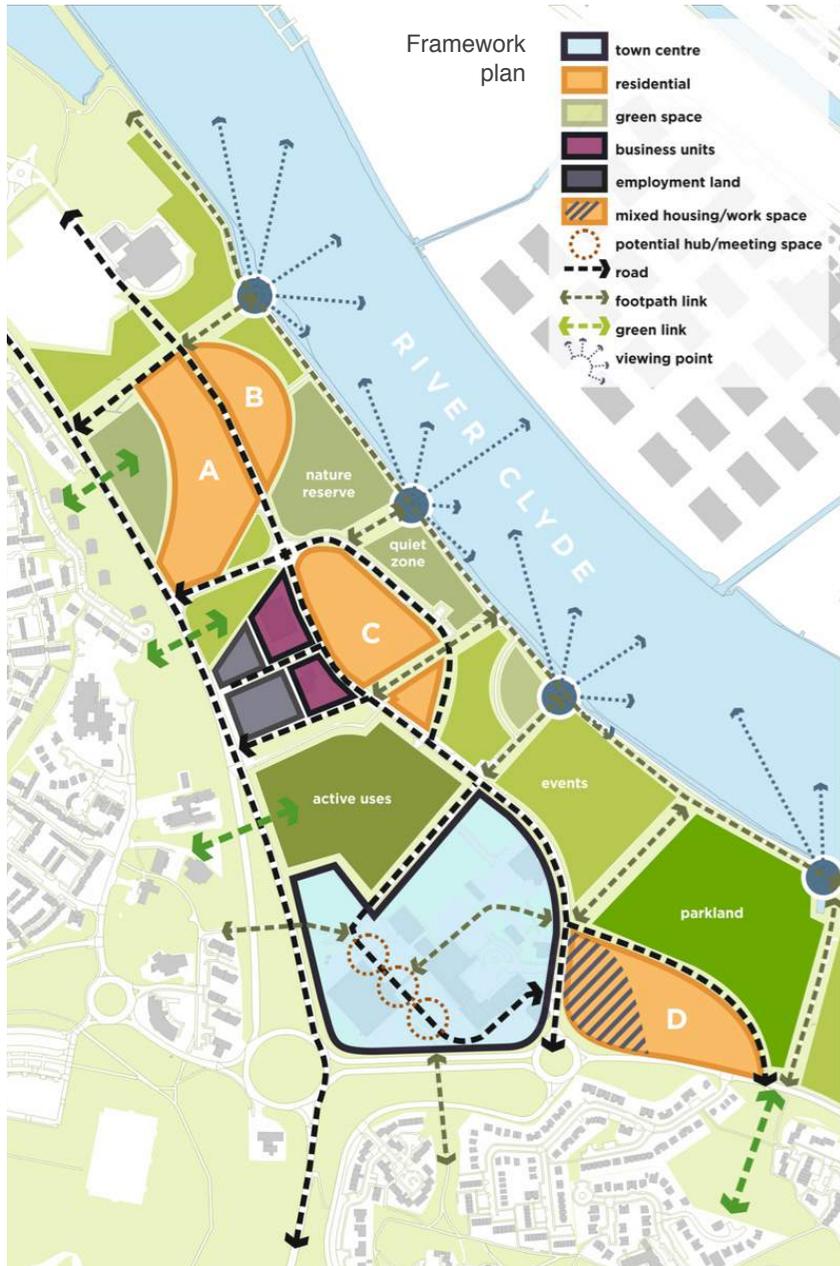


Whilst some improvements could be implemented relatively quickly, others are likely to rely on various funding resources and streams to enable future development.

The plan overleaf shows how the area could be transformed, and the precedent images illustrate good relevant examples from other places.

The first step will be preparation of a masterplan involving all necessary stakeholders. A diagram showing stepping stones to delivery is shown on page 33, together with a note of who should be involved.





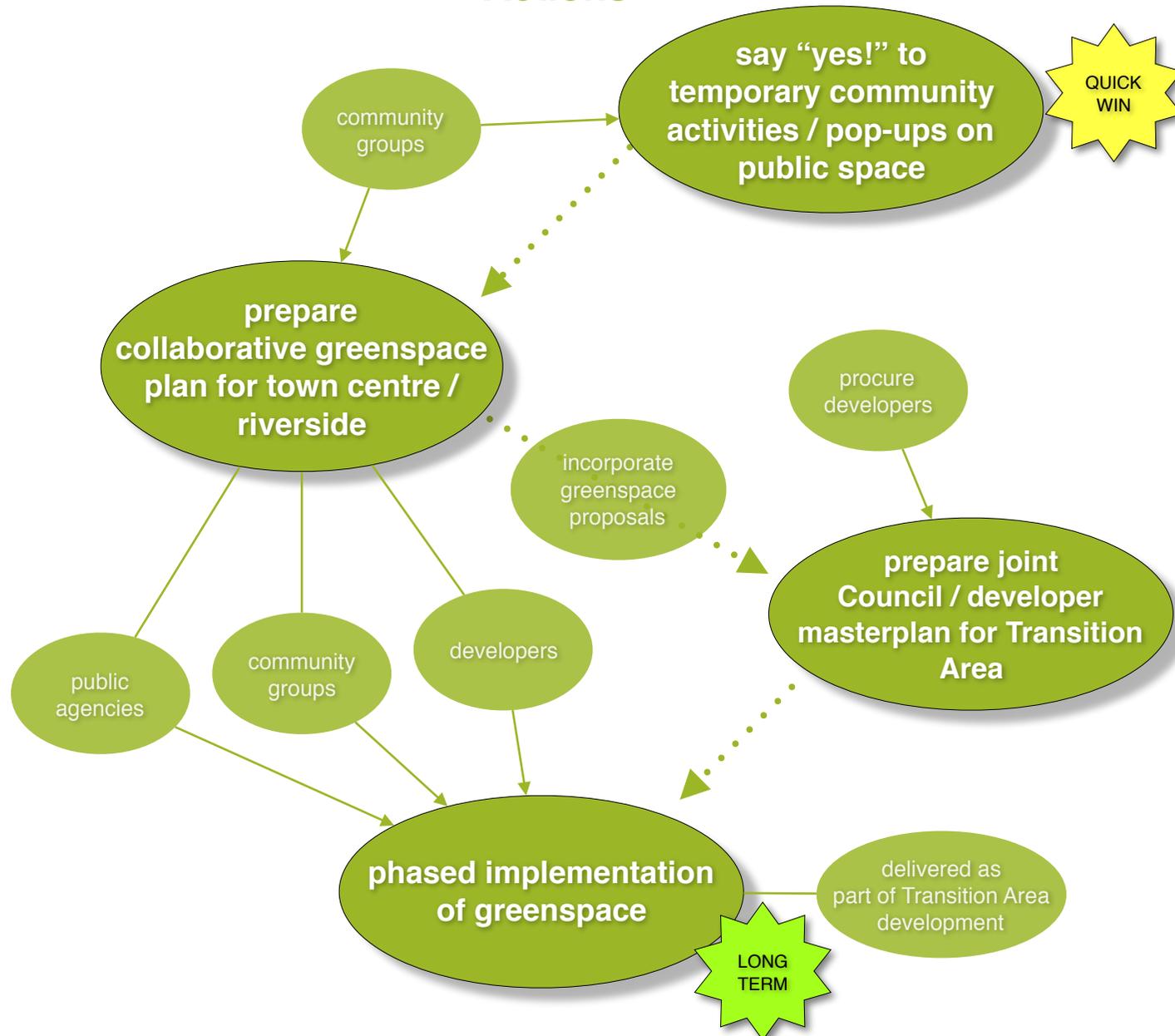
precedent images



## Who should be involved?

Clydeport  
 developers  
 Engage Renfrewshire  
 Forestry Commission Scotland  
 Erskine Community Council  
 Erskine Community Events  
 Erskine Community Park Group  
 Erskine Music and Media  
 Renfrewshire Council  
 Renfrewshire Leisure  
 Sustrans

## Actions



## Theme 3 Looking after Erskine

### Why?

“There is no money to sort out the maintenance backlog of paths and trees, let alone improve things.”

“Add footpaths close to some roads where they do not exist. The paths in the estate are great during the day, but spooky at night - and walking on the roads is dangerous.”

### What?

Recognise there isn't enough money to maintain all paths, woodland and open space.

Focus resources on main paths into town centre.

Identify key missing links for future investment.

Neighbourhood associations or equivalent can generate additional funds and be a focus for voluntary action (linking with health, wellbeing and employability).

Social enterprise opportunities like Community Safety Glasgow, Stalled Spaces.

Generate income from appropriate use of spare publicly owned land e.g. biomass cropping or sale for development.

This set of proposals responds to community aspirations to improve path and open space maintenance in Erskine, and to fill 'missing links' in the path network where appropriate. The “Why?” box on the left contains quotes from the local community during the pre-charrette engagement which the proposals seek to address. Although negative, they accurately represents the tone and content expressed by charrette participants.

Tackling these issues is a huge challenge, as was discussed during the charrette. Finding practical ways to address the maintenance burden with reducing public sector resources is difficult, let alone create new routes where they are missing.

Nonetheless, the focus of the charrette on the town centre and riverside offers an opportunity for those responsible for maintenance (not least the Council and Bridgewater Housing Association) to begin to address the issue by focussing on key routes and spaces which link to the town centre and riverside.

There was not sufficient time during the charrette to agree priority paths and spaces for future maintenance, but this could be an early action - undertaken collaboratively by the Council and Housing Association with the local community, ideally by joint working with the Community Council. Undertaking the prioritisation on a collaborative basis will help to ensure that the most important paths and spaces receive attention, will help raise awareness of the resource issue, and potentially encourage local groups (such as neighbourhood associations or their equivalent) to share responsibility.

A diagram showing stepping stones to delivery is shown overleaf, together with a note of who needs to be involved.

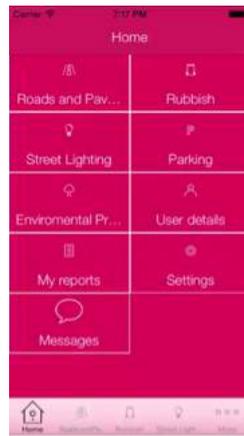
precedent images



# Who should be involved?

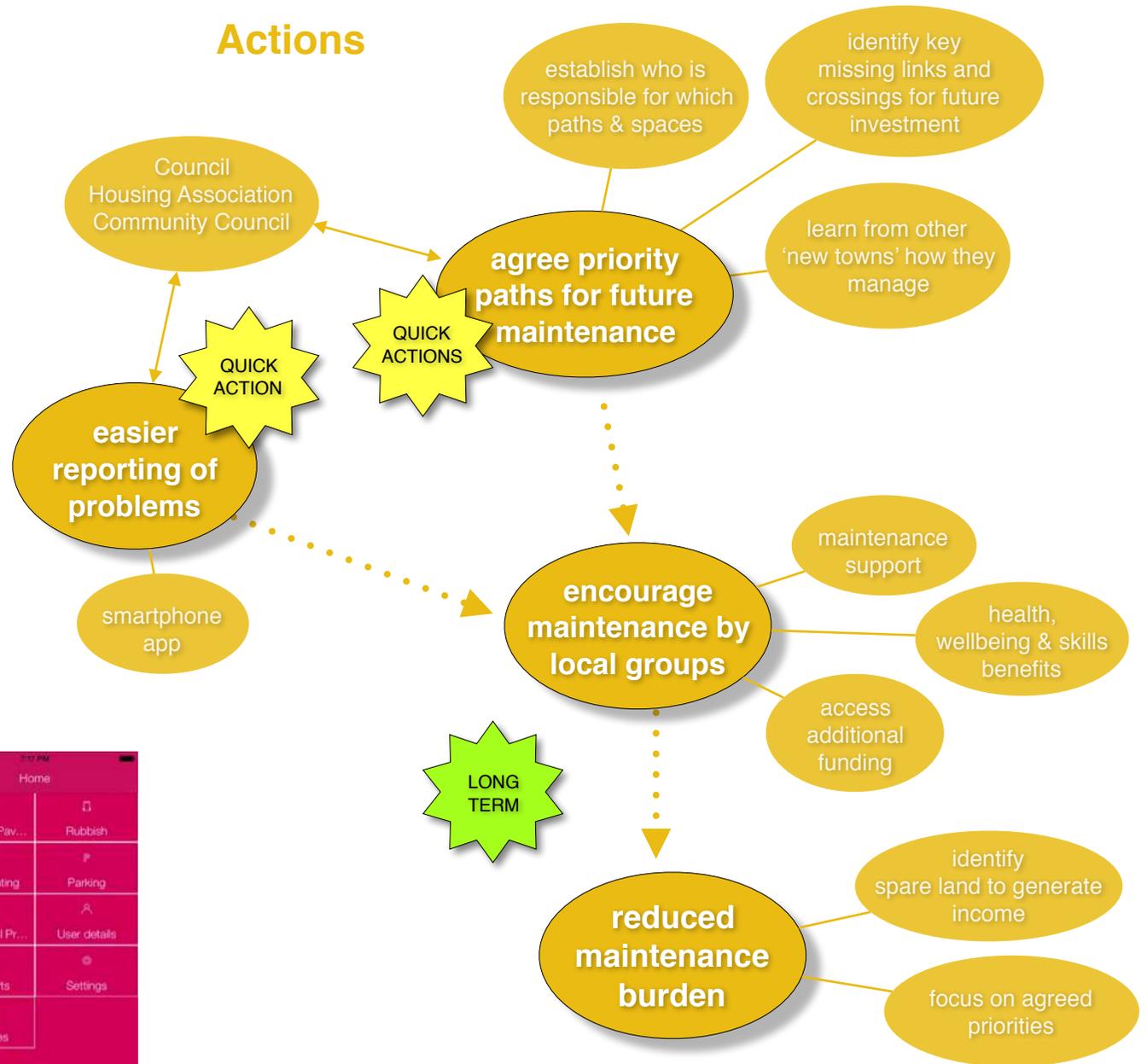
- Bridgewater Housing Association
- businesses
- churches
- County Properties
- developers
- Engage Renfrewshire
- Erskine Community Events
- Erskine Music and Media
- GCV Green Network
- NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
- Renfrewshire Council
- Renfrewshire Leisure

precedent images



My Glasgow app by Glasgow City Council

# Actions



## Theme 4 Places to live

### Why?

“I’ll never be able to afford to move out of my parent’s house.”

“I can’t downsize to a smaller home.”

### What?

Affordable housing close to town centre.

Smaller homes for older people close to town centre facilities and amenities.

Housing in landward part of riverside area to meet a range of needs, focussing on low-cost homes.

Approximately 500 new homes phased over a number of years.

Council potentially acting as “place promoter”.

precedent image



This set of proposals responds to community aspirations expressed during the charrette for a greater range of housing.

Erskine is a popular place to live. Many residents would like to stay in the town as their life circumstances change: from young adults who want to leave the family residence and set up their own home, to older folk who want to downsize. The common story was that lots of good larger housing has been built in recent years, but relatively few smaller homes. Residents would like to see more of that.

The story of Erskine being a popular place to live was borne out in the charrette team’s housing market analysis. Although there are relatively few opportunities in Erskine for house builders beyond sites already allocated, the town’s location and popularity means that housing developers are likely to be interested if the sites are made available at appropriate terms. There is also a local registered social landlord, Bridgewater Housing Association, with a waiting list and an aspiration to build more homes.

The Council’s land ownership assets in Erskine mean that it is in a good position to lead development. The charrette focussed particularly on sites around the town centre and riverside, where there are significant areas of developable land. Using a ‘place promoter’ role and approach (see below and appendix 2) would help the Council to secure delivery of high quality homes and associated facilities and infrastructure.

Clearly, supporting investment in infrastructure (n transport, drainage, utilities etc) and community

facilities would be required to support additional development. The extent, nature and delivery of such supporting investment would be defined as the project moves forward; the ‘place promoter’ approach offers an effective way of managing that supporting investment.

Appendix 2 contains more information about the ‘place promoter’ role. The Scottish Government publication “*Delivering Better Places in Scotland: a guide to learning from broader experience*” ([www.gov.scot/resource/doc/336587/0110158.pdf](http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/336587/0110158.pdf)) offers more guidance and examples from elsewhere on how to take forward development initiatives using the ‘place promoter’ approach.

The plan and table on page 37 show the potential overall housing capacity of the various areas under consideration in the charrette. These numbers are estimates and would need to be refined in collaboration with developers.

Stepping stones to delivery are shown on page 38, together with a note of who needs to be involved.

precedent image



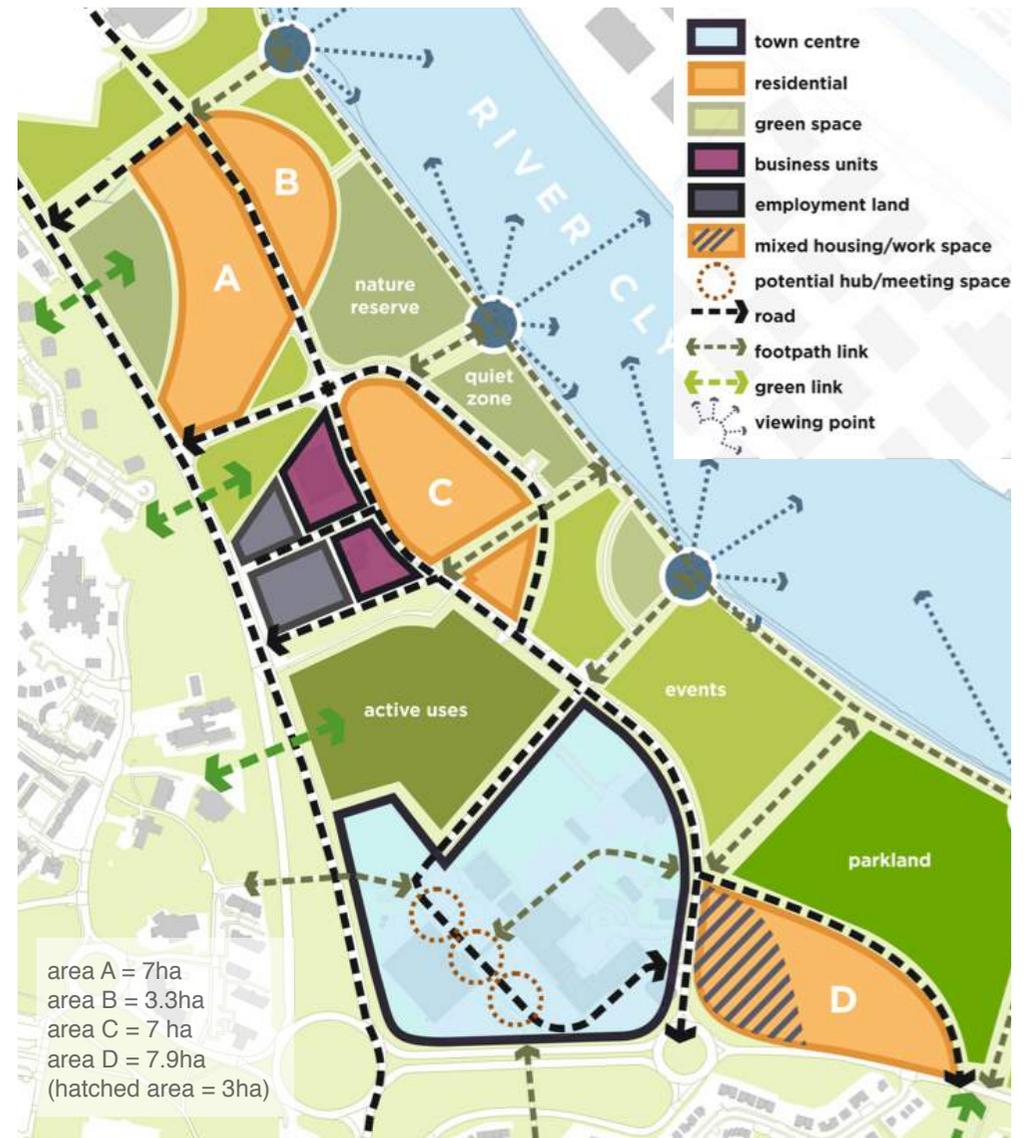
Potential housing capacity  
(sites refer to framework plan on right)

Site	Tenure	Gross area (ha)	Net area (ha @90%)	Net area (acres @90%)	Density (units/acre)	Indicative capacity
A	Mixed private ownership & low-cost	7.0 ha	6.3 ha	15.6 acres	10	150 units
B	Mixed private ownership & low-cost	3.3 ha	3.0 ha	7.3 acres	10	75 units
C	Mixed private ownership & low-cost	7.0 ha	6.3 ha	15.6 acres	13	200 units
D	Mixed private ownership & low-cost	nominal 3.0 ha of 7.9 ha total	1.5 ha	3.7 acres	20	75 units
<b>Total</b>		20.3 ha	17.1 ha	42.2 acres		<b>500 units</b>

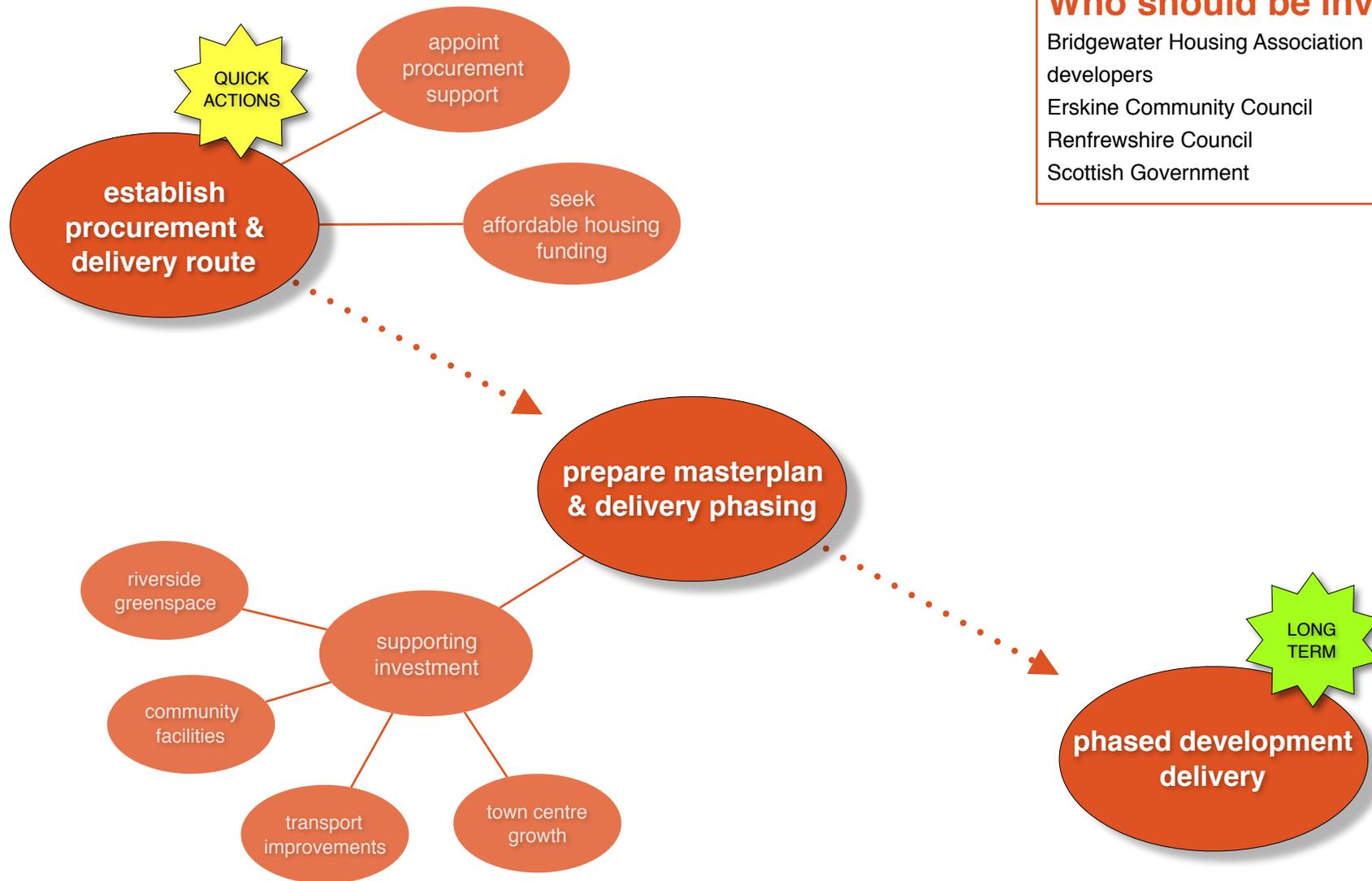
The table and plan show the extent and capacity of the various development areas identified during the charrette. Please note that:

- Area D could be utilised for a mix of housing and or workspace (i.e. an expansion of town centre uses across Kilpatrick Drive, if required in the future). It would be sensible to regard Area D as a later phase so that the uses can respond to demand after other opportunities in the town centre/riverside have been implemented.
- There is potential for housing for older people within the town centre (coloured light blue), as indicated in the town centre plan on page 29.

Extract from framework plan  
(full version on page 25)



# Actions



## Theme 5 Places to work

### What?

A greater range of business floorspace, developed on the area between Pandamonium and the A726, including affordable workshop units for private and social enterprises.

In the longer term, expand town centre beyond the A726 footbridge with new business units.

Council acting as “place promoter”.

### Why?

“We need space for start-up businesses, small businesses, and then bigger units for them to grow into as they expand.”

“The town centre needs to be bigger, with more shops and businesses.”

“Young people need more jobs locally, rather than having to travel out to work.”

This set of proposals responds to community aspirations expressed during the charrette for more employment opportunities locally and a greater supply and range of business floorspace for start-ups and growing businesses to move into.

The charrette teams’ property market analysis suggests that land value in Erskine for Class 5 industrial space is low. The general picture throughout most of Scotland outwith the main cities is that new business floorspace cannot be created at affordable rental levels unless some form of subsidy is provided.

The Council’s land ownership assets in Erskine mean that it is in a good position to lead overall development of the town centre and riverside area, incorporating a measure of employment use.

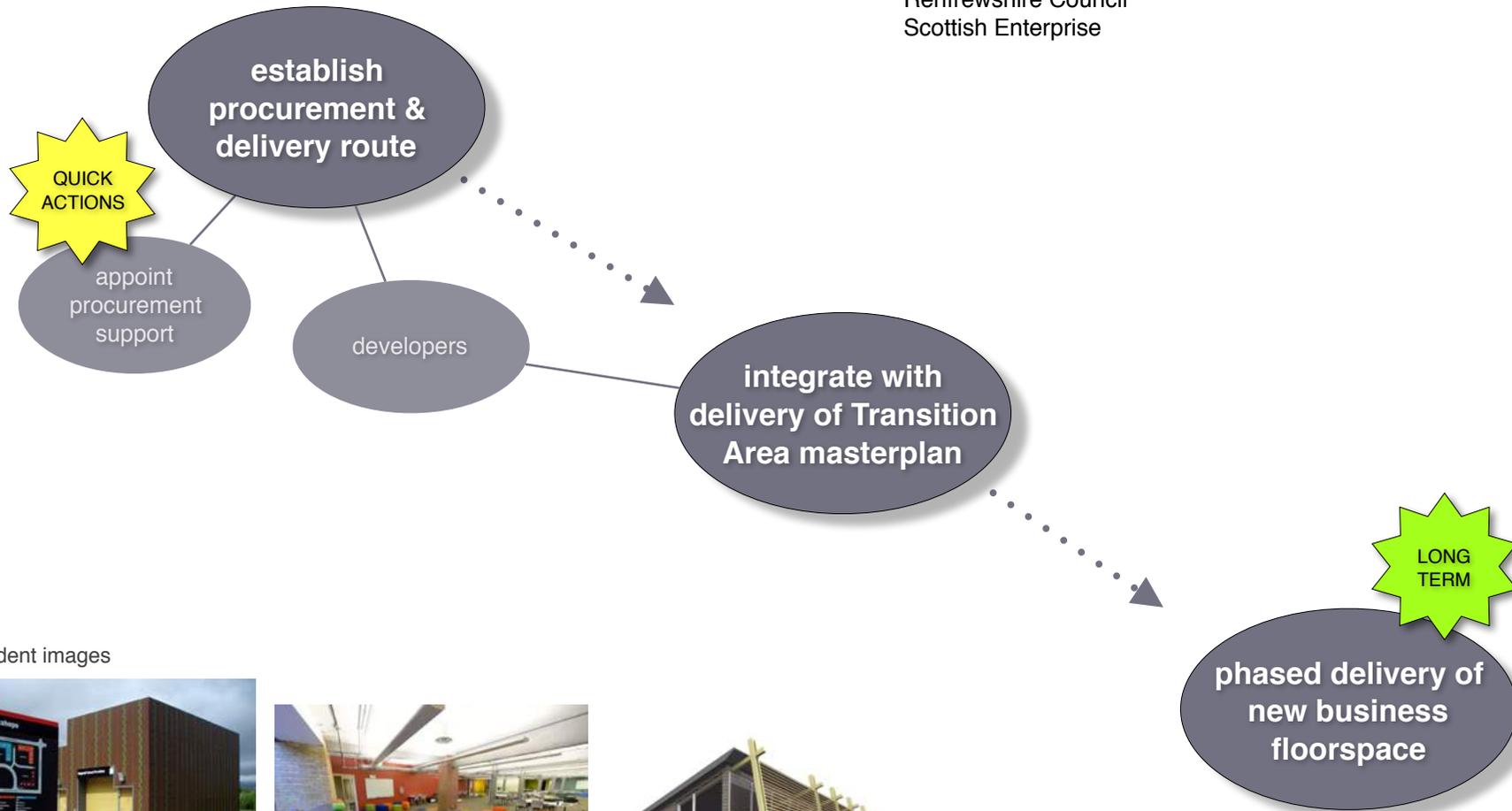
Although this Theme, Places to Work, is identified as a separate theme in this report, its delivery should therefore be integrated with Theme 4, Places to Live. The ‘place promoter’ approach on page 36 and in appendix 2 is equally relevant for Places to Work.

Stepping stones to delivery are shown on page 40, together with a note of who needs to be involved.



precedent images

## Actions



## Who should be involved?

- businesses & social enterprises
- developers
- Engage Renfrewshire
- Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce
- Renfrewshire Council
- Scottish Enterprise

precedent images



# 5 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this charrette was to identify proposals for future change that **make the most of the potential of the town centre and riverside ‘Transition Area’**. The intention has been to create a design based development framework for the future sustainable growth of Erskine town centre, strengthening the role and function of the centre and providing an appropriate range and quality of facilities for the local population. A key outcome was to present future actions to inform the Council’s Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan.

Through engagement with local residents, community groups, businesses and public agencies, **a range of proposals has emerged which will bring new life to the area**. These proposals encompass giving the town centre more of a civic heart; making more of riverside greenspace; a potential way forward to address the issue of footpath and open space maintenance; and - last but not least - delivering new homes and business space. This package was tested at charrette sessions to ensure that it is as viable and deliverable as it can be.

This report has outlined the charrette **context** (chapter 2), **aspirations and issues** (chapter 3), and how aspirations and issues have led to the **package of proposals** developed collaboratively during the charrette and subsequently worked up to form chapter 4.

It is very difficult to give a clear indication of **phasing of implementation** without detailed

discussion of each potential project with the relevant partners. However, ‘quick actions’ and ‘long term goals’ are identified under each set of themed proposals in chapter 4 to help focus these discussions and move quickly to action.

To help guide the discussions on phasing and delivery, the charrette team suggests an **indicative timescale** of key actions:

<b>Short term</b> 0-2 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic space between Morrisons &amp; Aldi</li> <li>• Options appraisal for additional indoor community space</li> <li>• Co-ordinate use of existing community spaces</li> <li>• Agree procurement approach, developers &amp; masterplan for riverside, town centre &amp; greenspace</li> <li>• Agree maintenance priorities for existing paths &amp; open spaces</li> </ul>
<b>Medium term</b> 2-5 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin phased development of riverside, town centre &amp; greenspace</li> <li>• Deliver additional indoor community space</li> </ul>
<b>Long term</b> 5-10 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete phased development of riverside, town centre &amp; greenspace</li> </ul>

**Collaborative action** between the public, private and community sectors will be absolutely essential in delivering the transformation change outlined in this report. No-one party has the ability of resources to do everything alone. As outlined under each set of themed proposals in

chapter 4, a range of stakeholders will need to be involved.

The local authority’s role will be critical in driving forward that collaborative action; not only as the lead agency for ensuring that the development proposals in this report are realised (i.e. themes 4 and 5), but also to champion the package as a whole and maintain momentum of all necessary players.

Resources will be tight for every organisation involved, the local authority included. Nonetheless, the local authority’s powers and assets (as the major landowner in the Transition Area means) that it will have a critical role in facilitating everyone to work together to deliver the promise outlined in this report. Clearly, there will be a resource implication for the Council in taking on this role, particularly in terms of staff or external resourcing for the facilitating/ championing role that will be necessary (including for the ‘place promoter’ role outlined on page 36 and in appendix 2).

Finally, the engagement undertaken during the charrette should be viewed as the **beginning of a sustained period of action-focussed engagement and collaboration** over the coming years involving residents, community groups, businesses, organisations and the local authority - all to deliver a better town centre and riverside, in line with the aspirations of the citizens of Erskine.