**Transforming Pollok Country Park – Project Update December 2018**

**Project Summary**

Pollok Country Park is the largest park in Glasgow and was voted Best Park in Europe in 2008. As well as its importance as a green space for leisure and nature conservation, it has outstanding heritage features, including housing two of Scotland’s most important museums, both of which are Category A Listed buildings. It is owned and managed by Glasgow City Council, who recognise the potential and value of this resource and are developing the Transforming Pollok Country Park project which aims to:

* Transform the park from an asset rich but under-used historic park into a world class civic destination that is enjoyed more and more often by its citizens and visitors to the city.

The objectives of the Transforming Pollok Country Park project are to:-

* Improve the management and care of the park’s heritage assets;
* Support an integrated “day out in the park” offer;
* Remove barriers to access;
* Increase usage by the communities surrounding the park;
* Improve usage by the communities surrounding the park;
* Improve orientation of the attractions within the park and of the park within the city;
* Improve transport links

**Engagement Schedule and Scope**

As of November 2018, Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Life have been engaging with the public and other stakeholders about the Pollok Country Park Transformation project and have consulted on emerging access and orientation proposals. These proposals involve modifying private car access and vehicular routes, changing car parking arrangements, improving accessibility, promoting public transport and pedestrian links, as well as improving connectivity to local areas (see Appendix A – Access Proposals Presentation).

This phase of engagement so far has included engagement at meetings with stakeholders:

* Poloc Cricket Club
* Police Dog Unit
* National Trust for Scotland
* Scotrail

A briefing session was held where there was a presentation and engagement with:

* Elected Members

And meetings were held with the public:

* Friends of Pollok Country Park Group
* Local Community Councils:
  + Pollokshaws and Eastwood Community Council
  + Mosspark and Corkerhill Community Council
  + Pollokshields Community Council
  + Shawlands and Strathbungo Community Council
  + Dumbreck Community Council

As well as operating a pop-up information table to engage with the:

* General public in Pollok Civic Realm as part of Peat Road Medical Centre’s “Bringing the Community to You” service

**General Feedback**

We have received much support and positive feedback so far during this first phase of engagement, in addition to many questions, suggestions and issues raised.

Positive feedback has included:

* Restricting cars in the central area of the park and prioritising pedestrians and cyclists has been widely considered a good idea
* Support for a new car park at Nether Pollok due to a general need for more parking provision
* A bus route into the park and improvements to Pollokshaws West train station have been regarded as good ways to encourage public transport use and increase ease of access into the park
* Support for enhancements to main walking/cycling routes and improved access points into the park
* Support for signage on main routes to enable visitors to orientate themselves
* Support for a shuttle service connecting the car park, train station and main attractions

Issues raised during consultation relating to the access and orientation proposals included:

* Concern about ease of cyclist access to the park using current road infrastructure
* Lack of sports pitch availability in the local areas surrounding the park (as opposed to within the park environs)
* Poor access to the park from the south and south-west
* Difficulties parking at Riverside car park as it is usually full
* Questions re: changes to access for existing tenants of the park – e.g. Poloc cricket club, police dog unit etc.
* Difficulties in sharing paths between cyclists and pedestrians

General issues about the park included:

* Lack of awareness and visibility of the fort (archaeological site) in the north of the park
* Concern about the muddy state of the rhododendron walk and how this prevents people using it in the autumn, winter and spring
* Questions about development of the play area
* Poor maintenance of dwellings and other estate buildings in the park

These questions/comments were discussed at engagement events and have also been communicated to the relevant departments of Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Life. In cases where a question wasn’t fully answered during engagement, responses are provided at a later time after communication with colleagues in Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Life. All feedback from the public has been noted and will be considered in the future development of the access and orientation proposals, as well as the wider project.

**Next Steps**

This engagement forms part of the first phase of public engagement for the project and will extend into 2019, and will include attending meetings with Langside, Battlefield & Camphill Community Council and Craigton Community Council. After this phase, formal pre-planning consultation with the public will begin at the end of January 2019 which will last for a period of 12 weeks and include two public meetings in Pollok Community Centre and in Pollokshaws Burgh Hall. This consultation will specifically focus on the emerging access proposals, and will be followed by the submission of a planning application. There is a predicted site start date of August 2019 in advance of the Burrell re-opening in 2021.

**Non-User Survey**

To inform the wider park project, a survey of people living in the communities surrounding the park who do not visit the park is being undertaken by independent consultants in early January 2019. This will serve to develop current understanding on why people don’t use the park at present, and will help to further refine what can be done to increase usage of the park.