

## Sighthill TRA

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### Environmental update

This paper provides a brief update on some of the environmental aspects of the Sighthill Transformation Regeneration Area (TRA) project.

#### **Project history**

In 2009 Sighthill was identified as one of eight key areas in the City, known as Transformational Regeneration Areas (TRAs); a city-wide initiative that is led by Transforming Communities: Glasgow (TC:G), a partnership which brings together Glasgow City Council, the Scottish Government and Glasgow Housing Association. In 2011, the site was selected as a potential Athletes Village as part of Glasgow's bid for the 2018 Youth Olympic Games, with this a games and 'legacy' masterplan was developed. As you know, in July 2013, it was confirmed that Glasgow's bid was unsuccessful for the 2018 Youth Olympics. Since then the project, with its 'legacy' masterplan, has continued as the 'Sighthill TRA' project; progressing through its extensive design programme and detailed analysis for its procurement and site delivery. This includes the submission of a Planning Permission in Principle (PPP) application in July 2013, and the subsequent PPP approval of the masterplan in April 2014 (with Matters Specified in Condition). Since the planning stage the design team have been evolving the masterplan into detailed design packages.

#### **Key objectives and the masterplan vision**

The project's primary objective is to regenerate the physical environment of the Sighthill area, which has suffered increasing levels of physical and social deprivation for many years, with much of its current site now existing as derelict land and in need of remediation works. The regeneration will build on the site's positive values and introduce countless more, while driving the future evolution of adjacent areas of Port Dundas and Cowlands. The project will involve the regeneration of some 50 hectares of land, with works including large scale remediation (to address the widespread marks of its industrial past), new infrastructure works (to address the site's connections and permeability across the site) and new high quality public realm, streetscapes and green space. All of which will create a new urban fabric with platforms for a new residential led development; including a new education + community facility.

Informed by the principles of technical, social and economic sustainability the masterplan provides a vision for the regeneration of Sighthill. The masterplan aims to create a new active, safe, accessible, inclusive urban neighbourhood – with well-considered features (including the new parkland and public realm) creating the backbone to the future development – all in close proximity to Glasgow city centre. The quantity, quality and articulation of the proposed masterplan will identify Sighthill as a new destination within the wider Glasgow context. In all, the project ambitions and its ultimate delivery are unique, to Glasgow and to Scotland and within Europe, due to the scale of development and location: it is the largest development within Scotland and one of the largest sited adjacent to a European city centre. With such a task at hand, the creation and development of the masterplan design involves detailed analysis, follows best practice in urban and landscape design; all undertaken over a number of years. Throughout the life of the project delivery, the DRS design team will remain involved to ensure that the objectives established from the outset are ultimately delivered - ensuring that the new development knits and enhances the social fabric of the site and existing community.

## **Sighthill Park**

Focusing on the green space, the proposed redevelopment at Sighthill will include the repositioning of Sighthill Park for the betterment of the area's overall urban, social and green network fabric. It is recognised that the existing parkland suffers from poor soil quality, steeply sloping topography, poor drainage and with the surrounding infrastructure it is physically separated from the existing community – presenting issues in accessibility, social and safe use for its visitors.

Through the regeneration, Sighthill Park will be transformed from an under used landscape into a new enriched expansive and multi layered parkland; spanning the entire site and embracing a connection with every new development component. In quantity terms, the new parkland will be equal to the existing designated parkland, but in quality it will be of far greater value. On a functional level the new park will provide opportunities for recreation and environmental education thanks to the fundamental design concepts; based on the presence of native landscapes and natural systems, integrated storm-water management, soil improvement and landscape sustainability. Whilst also creating a cherished aesthetic and safe ('secured by design') experience for the local community and wider area.

The landscape for the new development (meadow land, vegetation, suds features, growing spaces and specimen planting in the public realm) will have a positive impact on the ecological integrity of the site. As well as re-establishing the values of the existing flora and fauna, positive significant residual impacts are predicted in the long term due to the provision of the new wetland habitat associated with the new SuDS features and the general enhancement of green space across the site. These are also expected to result in long-term positive residual impacts for habitat. The eradication of Japanese knotweed on the site will also be a significant positive residual impact.

### **Environmental impact and bat flight lines**

Positive significant residual impacts are predicted in the long term due to the provision of wetland habitat associated with the SuDS proposals and the enhancement of green corridors around the boundaries of the site. These are also expected to result in long-term positive residual impacts for bats (foraging habitat and commuting routes).

Although the bat activity surveys at Sighthill showed generally low levels of bat activity, the Environmental Impact Assessment identified that the existing line of trees used by bats as flight lines along the western boundary of the site should be retained. The masterplan proposals have been developed to ensure that this line of trees is retained.

### **Tree planting**

A programme of tree planting will enhance and replace the current trees and woodland at Sighthill.

#### *Planting on Sighthill*

- On the site currently there is 8.2ha of woodland with a high percentage of young trees that are not yet established. There are also 164 individual specimen trees.
- We will retain or plant 4.5ha of woodland on site afterwards and will be planting 1,195 specimen trees of different varieties across the site.
- Additional planting will be included within the housing development plots.

#### *Planting off-site*

- We will plan an additional 5.2ha of woodland at Crofffoot.
- This site was selected as the tree planting will form a natural flood risk management intervention and will help to reduce the frequent flooding of residents in the Crofffoot area.

The compensatory planting at the former King's Park Golf Course at Croftfoot, over and above the significant planting of trees at Sighthill, is in response to a request from James Dornan MSP for the Council to take action to reduce the impact of flooding on the residents of Croftpark Avenue. This multi-functional planting will have a positive benefit. Until the opportunity to provide compensatory planting at this location was identified, the planting proposals remained unfunded, despite the Council having applied for grant funding.

Some of the woodland will be retained where possible and the remainder will be offered to the community to recycle as part of the community arts project.

### **Community arts project**

In terms of site delivery, the scale of the development will involve site works over the next five years; with the works to the parkland being undertaken over the next three years. During this time it is recognised there will be limited access to green space. The project team will seek to minimise the impact where possible, via the phasing of the works. In addition a community led arts project has been established. The arts project will provide a temporary community garden which will relocate on site as the construction works progress, ultimately ending up as a permanent community garden within the heart of Sighthill, created by and for the local people. The community is working with the local contractors and indeed some of the trees will be used for the garden. Some have been cut for use as draughts and other games.

### **Communications and community engagement**

Our formal community consultation for Sighthill is through the Local Delivery Group (LDG) which has representatives from the community as well as the three strategic partners from Transforming Communities: Glasgow (TC:G), including the Council, Glasgow Housing Association and the Scottish Government.

The LDG meets quarterly and is the forum for the community to bring to us their queries and concerns, and for the partners to share information on the development. We then ask that the community representatives share this with the rest of the community.

There have been several walks around the site with local residents and they have been consulted throughout the development process. Indeed many are delighted that the park will now be more accessible to the residents given the proximity to their new homes. We have also held community events. Our last event was in February 2016 and the local residents had the opportunity to meet with the contractors who will be working on site.

As the project develops residents will be informed with more regular open events and newsletters.

It is vital that adequate green space is available for locals and visitors alike. The development will retain the same amount of green space as the current Sighthill Park and no brownfield sites will be left unattended. We are reconfiguring and replacing the current park with new parkland that will be more accessible and user friendly. Instead of a park that forms a barrier between the residents and the city centre the new park will intertwine and weave a landscape through Sighthill that includes open spaces, play areas, trim trails, recreation areas, paths and accessible water features (SuDS) that also function as a sustainable urban drainage system that prevent issues with flooding.

Further information is available at [www.glasgow.gov.uk/sighthill](http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/sighthill)