

# Twechar Regeneration Masterplan

august 2005







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**East Dunbartonshire Council**

## **Twechar Regeneration Masterplan** final report

August 2005





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## Twechar Regeneration Masterplan final report

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## section 1

# introduction

### Brief

In November 2004, East Dunbartonshire Council, with its partners, commissioned the development of a regeneration masterplan for the settlement of Twechar. This document describes the development of the masterplan and sets out a strategy for the social, economic and physical regeneration of the area.

The masterplan framework is to help **radically transform** the village, whereby the existing and future community will be able to live in an environment which not only offers **good quality housing** but also provides **community, leisure, training, education, health and employment facilities and choices**.

The team undertaking the work comprised a multi-disciplinary team of specialists drawn from:

Kevin Murray Associates  
Drew Mackie Associates  
McLean Hazel  
Turner and Townsend  
Willie Miller Urban Design  
yellow **book**

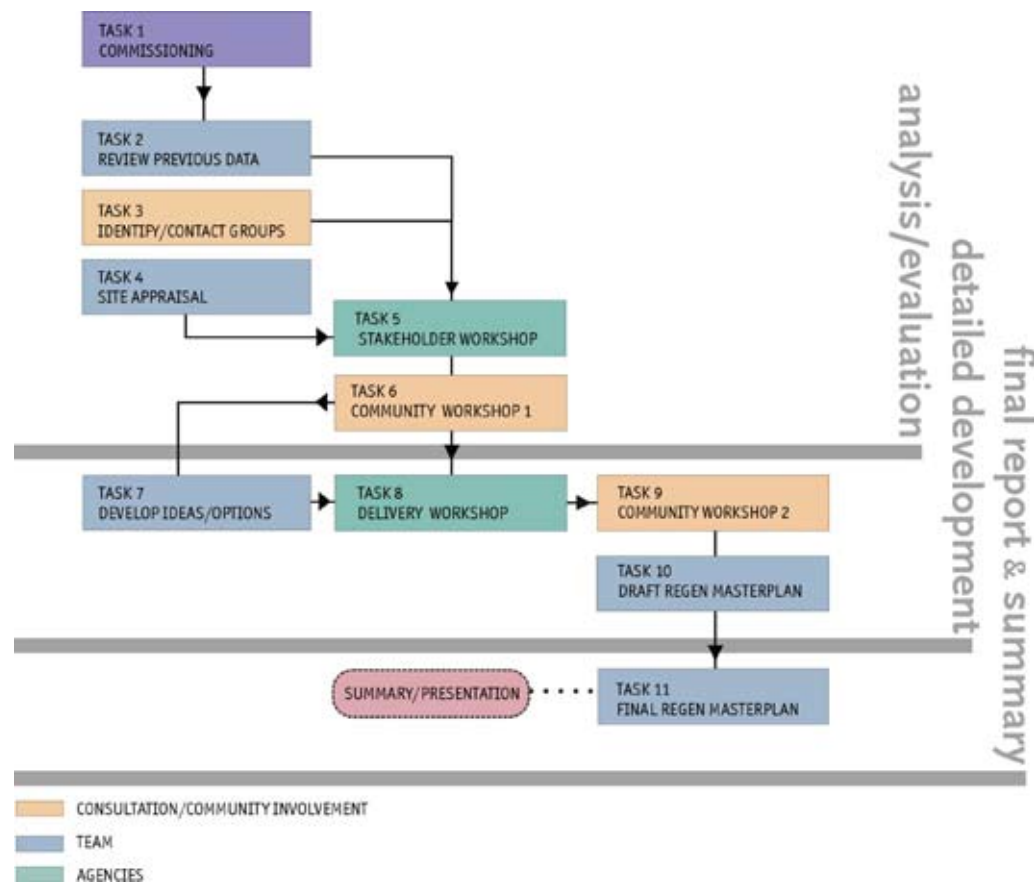
The intention is for the masterplan to provide a coordinating framework within which a partnership between the local authority, the local community, various agencies, housing developers and businesses can progress regeneration projects in an integrated manner.

open space and play area  
to the rear of Burnbrae



local shop on Glen Shirva Road





## Methodology

Figure 1.1, Methodology, shows the three key components of the study:

1. The analysis of documents, policy and data
2. An overview of the location, land and opportunity sites
3. Community and stakeholder engagement at different levels and stages – both to get a community ‘perspective’, but also to build up consensus and capacity around the regeneration along a preferred direction.

Key input, review and testing steps were undertaken with the community and the client steering group and stakeholder team. These acted as very useful cross-checking stages for all parties, especially during the closing stages when delivery options were being considered.

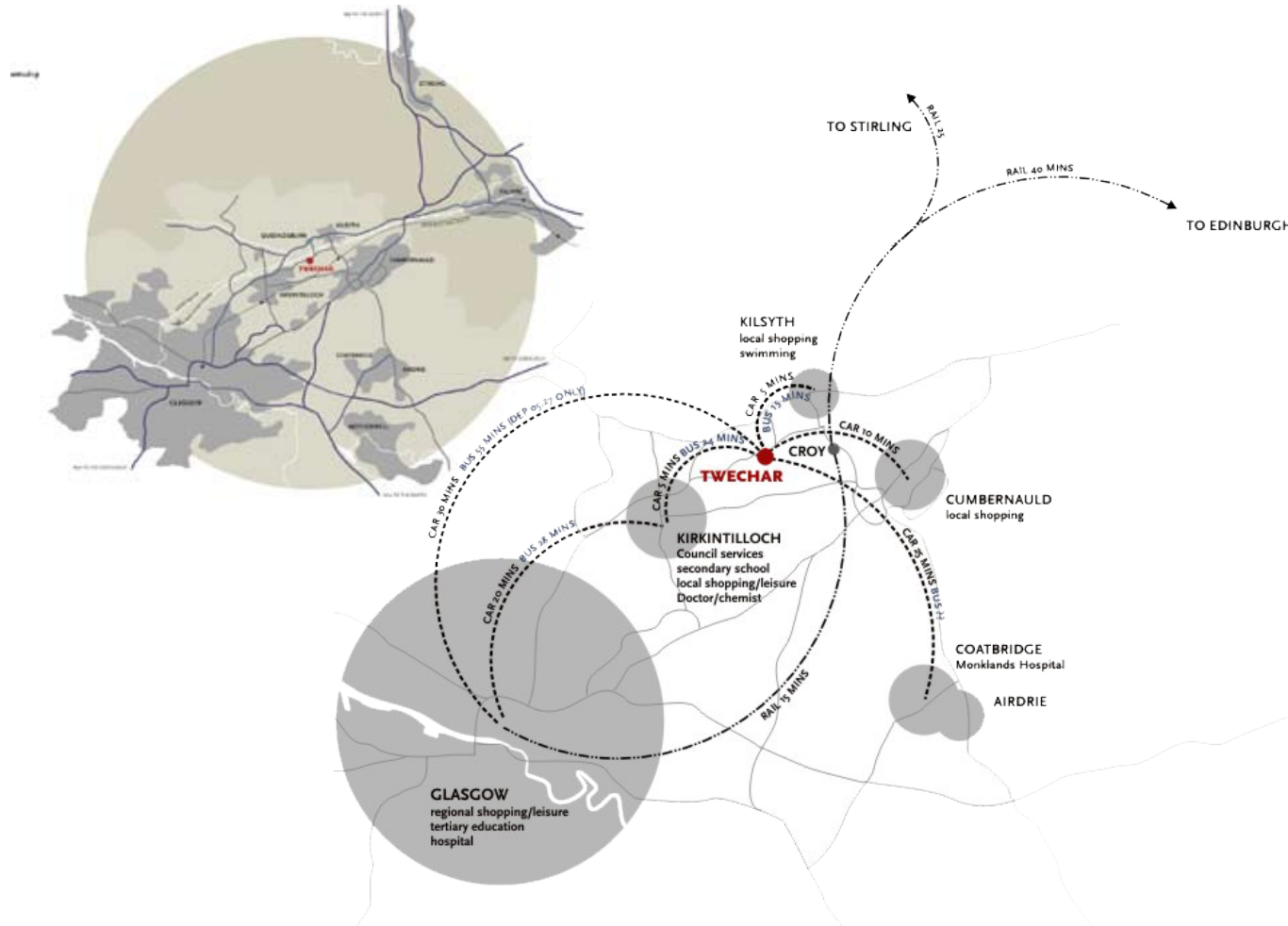
This document sets out the context and issues, the direction forward, proposed actions, and aspects of delivery. It is essential that the masterplan and recommendations described are not an end in themselves, but that they act as a catalyst for focused and effective action.



## section 2

## context and issues

Fig 2.1 Twechar's location and context



## Spatial and policy context

The village of Twechar is located in East Dunbartonshire, to the northeast of Kirkintilloch and adjacent to the Forth and Clyde Canal. Twechar is located on the site of a Roman camp by the Antonine Wall, but its development as a village only began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, stimulated by the creation of the Forth & Clyde Canal and the exploitation of local coal reserves between the 1860s and 1960s.

Growth was especially rapid between 1925 and 1974 when several hundred houses were built to accommodate the employees of the surrounding mines and related industries. The houses were built in a variety of configurations but the dominant form was two storey, semi detached/4-in-a-block or terraced blocks, each with a front and back garden and arranged on a curvilinear network of streets. Two distinct housing areas emerged, one to the north referred to as the *Coal Board Scheme* and the other to the south called the *Top Scheme*.

The eventual closure of the mines in the mid 1960s and decline of other traditional industries in Twechar led to falling population numbers and high levels of unemployment. Twechar has had to adjust to a new role in a fast-changing socio-economic climate.

Despite this post-industrial decline, Twechar is well positioned geographically to benefit from growth and investment in central Scotland. As illustrated in Figure 2.1, Location and Context, it is

close to nearby centers of varying sizes, such as Cumbernauld, Kirkintilloch, Kilsyth, and Bishopbriggs, and has better access to Glasgow and Edinburgh than many comparable settlements. It lies close to major east-west and north-south motorway links, and near the Edinburgh-Glasgow rail line. In reality however, Twechar is also rather 'remote' for some, being sufficiently far from the major road and rail networks to make it difficult for many residents - especially those without private transport - to take advantage of the village's central location.

In policy terms the village is located within the greenbelt countryside which surrounds the metropolitan core of the Clyde Valley. The village is only scheduled to grow at a very modest level within the statutory plan, but has not even achieved that level in the recent past.

### Community and economy

The village population had fallen to a little over 1350 in 2001, a decline of approximately 10% since 1991. The principal reasons for depopulation have been the lack of economic opportunity, lack of housing choice and more attractive quality of life in other communities. Over time, this decline has undermined the viability and sustainability of the community.

Twechar is one of four areas in East Dunbartonshire that feature in the 15% most deprived data zones in Scotland<sup>1</sup> (*Twechar 2001 Census Bulletin 2003*).

The Community Planning Partnership area profile shows that:

- Twechar has a higher proportion of children and younger adults (up to age 35) and a lower proportion of people

aged 35+: this suggests a combination of out-migration by economically active people, as well as high mortality rates among adults over 75

- the proportion of people with a limiting long term illness (14.2%) is more than twice the ED rate (6.7%)
- absolute numbers are small, but mortality rates among over 75s are more than twice the ED average; the same applies to deaths from cancer and coronary heart disease
- hospital admission rates are also well above average in all categories except accidents, with especially high rates for cancer, cerebrovascular disease, respiratory disease, alcohol misuse and drug misuse
- the percentage of the population in receipt of Incapacity Benefit and/or Disability Living Allowance is twice the ED average
- 23% of the population live in households receiving income benefits/credits (ED 8%)
- the economic activity rate (16-74 yrs) is 55% (ED 67%); the difference is almost entirely accounted for by the high level of permanently sick/disabled (14.9%/ED 5.3%)
- only 9% of employed residents are in managerial/ professional occupations (ED 32%), while 39% work in process/elementary occupations (ED 13%)
- 6.9% of the population have degrees or equivalent (ED 28.8%) but 52.3% have no qualifications (ED 24.2%)

- 38.6% of employees work in the manufacturing sector (ED 12.4%) and 21.8% work in construction (9.7%)
- 27.3% of homes are privately owned (ED 80.9%); 70.7% are rented from the Council (ED 14.3%); 38.7% of all homes are flats (ED 18.5%)
- compared with East Dunbartonshire as a whole, Twechar has an exceptionally high proportion of single person households (not pensioners): 22.5% (ED 11.2%); it also has near twice the number of lone parent households with dependent children; there are fewer couples, with or without children<sup>2</sup> (*Twechar Area Profile*)

The 2001 Census<sup>3</sup> shows the approximated social grade of the population as follows:

**Figure 2.2: Social grading (2001 census)**

Social grade	Twechar	ED
<b>AB</b> Higher/intermediate managerial/ admin/ professional	6.3	31.0
<b>C1</b> Supervisory, clerical, junior managerial/ admin/professional	15.6	30.6
<b>C2</b> Skilled manual workers	18.5	11.3
<b>D</b> Semi-skilled/unskilled manual workers	23.9	11.1
<b>E</b> On state benefit, unemployed, lowest grade workers	35.7	16.0

Young people are particularly affected. Figure 2.3 shows that, of children under 16:

- 33% live in households with no car
- 34% live in lone parent households
- 32% live in workless households

Figure 2.4 shows that, of young people in the 16-24 age group:

- 13% are married/living together
- 11% are not in good health
- 19% have no qualifications
- 12% are unemployed

**Figure 2.3 Dependent children (2001 Census)**

	Twechar %	ED %
In overcrowded household	24.9	12.7
In household with no car	32.9	9.1
In lone parent household	33.5	15.7
In workless household	31.7	8.7
Not in good health	2.2	0.9
Limiting long-term sickness	5.9	3.6

**Figure 2.4 Young people 16-24 (2001 Census)<sup>1</sup>**

	Twechar %	ED %
In household with no car	34.4	9.7
Married	3.9	1.5
Co-habiting	9.1	3.3
Not in good health	11.0	2.2
Limiting long-term sickness	11.7	4.9
No qualifications	18.8	7.8
Full-time student	24.0	48.4
Unemployed	11.7	5.0
Permanently sick/disabled	4.6	1.0

## Risk

These data suggest that Twechar is drifting to a point where it may not be viable or sustainable. The decline in population means that Twechar is below the threshold for a range of key services, and the roll at the primary school (arguably the most vital community asset) is in decline. A wide range of facilities and amenities are easily accessible by road, but not all households have access to a car.



above: Twechar Recreation Centre and cafe (below)



There were only 58 registered unemployed people (2001 Census) but the high level of people who are economically inactive because of long term sickness/disability (148) or "other" reasons (74) suggests a significant problem of hidden unemployment<sup>1</sup>.

## Economic Development Framework (2000)<sup>3</sup>

Important initiatives are already under way to help the community regenerate itself socially and economically. For example, the joint *Economic Development Framework for 2002*<sup>3</sup> highlights:

- helping individuals to improve their employability, especially in communities affected by high unemployment; proposed measures include training in core skills and provision of support services (job search, childcare, work experience, debt counselling, adult guidance)
- assisting communities where there are high levels of unemployment and deprivation to help themselves by: devolving decision making; local groups delivering programmes; involving locals in decisions; developing leadership skills
- involving the social economy and improving the viability and quality of social economy organisations/services<sup>4</sup>

## Healthy Living and Enterprise Centre

Twechar Healthy Living and Enterprise Centre is a major initiative, managed and operated by Twechar Community Action (TCA), a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. The HELC Business Plan<sup>5</sup> states that the aim of the centre is to act as a focus for village life, where residents can access opportunities and services. It calls for a "significant investment

in the facility” to help it reach its full potential and meet the needs of the community.

Currently the Centre is open 7 days; it is used by about 200 residents every week, plus 150 people from neighbouring areas; it generated £8,000 income in the period April-June 2003; and has 25 regular volunteer workers.

Regular activities include:

- a café open daily
- a parent and toddler group (Mon-Fri)
- a daily after school computer club
- courses provided by Cumbernauld College
- an evening football club
- fitness classes
- hairdressing, beauty therapy, aromatherapy
- weekly legal, money advice and child health drop-in surgeries
- dance clubs, badminton and a youth club.

The current business plan (being updated)<sup>5</sup> aims to convert the centre into a more attractive, multi-functional facility including a health suite, a training suite, two business units, a dedicated youth room and a crèche. Capital costs are estimated at £590k, with annual running costs of £100k.

### **Twechar Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Recycling and Reprocessing Facility**

A study was undertaken for the Council by EnviroCentre Ltd<sup>6</sup>, which concluded that a WEEE facility **is** feasible in principle,



above and below - Twechar Enterprise Park



subject to a number of qualifications. For example:

- the facility needs to secure “feedstock” from other waste amenity sites: this **may** be possible, but will require negotiation
- Scottish Executive policy on WEEE recycling “appears” to allow for Twechar to operate as an authorised treatment facility, which could work in collaboration with the proposed “clearing house”, but this needs to be confirmed
- private sector companies are considering expansion to manage WEEE, but “there was little interest in establishing new facilities at Twechar”; some thought Twechar might act as a “bulking station” which could supply recycled material for reprocessing
- with the market for recycled plastics mainly in England, haulage costs will be an issue
- there **may** be routes where the cost of hauling WEEE material by canal would be competitive with road haulage, especially between Glasgow and Twechar, although investment would be needed in civic amenity sites
- a social economy enterprise may be the most appropriate vehicle, and there are opportunities for grant funding as well as training and education
- a “large facility” serving the Glasgow and Clyde Valley area could be self-sustaining based on the market value of material recovered.

EnviroCentre recommend formation of a Steering Group to move the project forward, including a possible demonstration project for the movement of WEEE by canal, but they indicate that the cooperation and support of EDC and Glasgow is key, and that the interest of other local authorities should be established “in more concrete terms”.



## Housing

The report on the proposed Twechar WEEE facility refers to an earlier study by Milton Resources Ltd on the carriage of waste on lowland canals. This report explores scenarios for transferring waste from Mavis at Bishopbriggs to Avondale, south of Grangemouth.

This initiative clearly has potential at both a local and more strategic level. However, it also carries risks – both environmental and in terms of viability. It is therefore important that a sound business case is established. If the case for a WEEE facility can be made, the development must be sensitively integrated with the other aspects of the holistic regeneration, for instance in terms of its visual appearance and transportation implications.

The make up of the housing stock is a key factor in the current situation, and also in the village's capacity to evolve. The vast majority of the homes are in the social rented sector. Only about a third of households are owner occupied, and many of these are Council properties purchased under right to buy (RTB). The current position is:

- Total of 655 housing units
- 231 private owner-occupied (including 153 under RTB), some 35%
- 424 Rented (Council), representing 65%
- 24.9% (106 of the Council stock) are considered "unsuitable housing"

This picture has been shifting over recent years with growing home ownership. However it remains a very different picture from the housing balance of East Dunbartonshire as a whole which, from a total of 42,640 units, has

- 37,669 private owner-occupied (including 5,308 RTB), a very high 88%
- 4,110 Council stock, and
- 861 Stock transferred

Twechar's stock ratio is also very far off the current Scottish averages of 67% owned to 33% rented<sup>7</sup>. This presents a potential problem of long term renewal and sustainability, and also a more immediate challenge in holding onto some current and potential residents.



variety of styles and ages of housing



Evidence, mainly in the form of anecdotal advice from the consultation process – indicates that many people looking for family homes move out of the village to nearby towns because there are so few opportunities to purchase (and possibly more community support infrastructure).

There are a significant number of Council-owned one-bedroom flats, particularly in the core area of former Coal Board properties dating from the 1930s. Often these properties are allocated to young single people from urban areas who find themselves isolated in this village environment. Some of these young people allegedly have drink and drug problems, and there is a fairly high turnover rate in this part of the system locally.

Looking to the long term, the mono tenure and culture – typical of Council estates with modest to low demand – is likely to be a constraint on diversification. Also:

- a mismatch of (the more historic) house sizes to current demand and concentration of larger homes (eg over supply of 1, 2 and 5 apartments with respect to demand)
- a high level of abandonment in parts, reinforcing a negative cycle and need for regeneration in the core area
- relatively modest level of ownership under right to buy (though this could change) and
- reluctance of private sector to build new housing for sale, despite some modest allocation within the local plan to allow for this, despite alleged local demand.

It has to be said that, although there are clearly shortcomings in some of the housing stock, the case for change is neither primarily nor exclusively stock driven. Twechar is not yet in a

situation of freefall crisis that some 'estates' reach. Nevertheless, the portents are there and non-intervention around a status quo position would see further population decline, loss of limited services, probable difficulties in capturing rent and land values, plus a risk that Twechar's image abroad would suffer irretrievably, affecting confidence and market investment potential.

Fundamentally, and following informal dialogue with several house builders, we interpret that there is an insufficient level of transformational change to attract their interest with any degree of confidence, despite the potential arising from the strong environment.

The need is therefore for a level of reinvestment in the village, including a shift of tenure mix towards the Scottish norm, to make the village more attractive and sustainable over the longer term.



**variety of styles and ages of housing - recent owner occupied homes**



## Twechar's Environment

### A sense of place

Historic views of Twechar [courtesy of East Dunbartonshire Libraries]



Twechar lies in a landscape setting of exceptional quality. It is located on the southern flanks of the Kelvin Valley with open views northwards over the flood plain of the Kelvin with its mosaic of fields, hedgerows and watercourses, to a backdrop of the Kilsyth Hills. To the south, the rising southern slopes of the valley create a more enclosed character and culminate in ridges crowned with blocks of mature deciduous woodland. The Forth and Clyde canal runs along the northern edge of Twechar and

creates a strong landscape corridor linking to Kilsyth in the east and Kirkintilloch in the west. As described earlier, the village of Twechar originated in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a coal mining settlement. From the 1850s onwards, the previously predominantly agricultural area was developed for a series of mine works, accompanied by various related industrial processes and accommodation and facilities for workers (see Figure 2.5a and b, Historic maps of Twechar 1859, 1912).



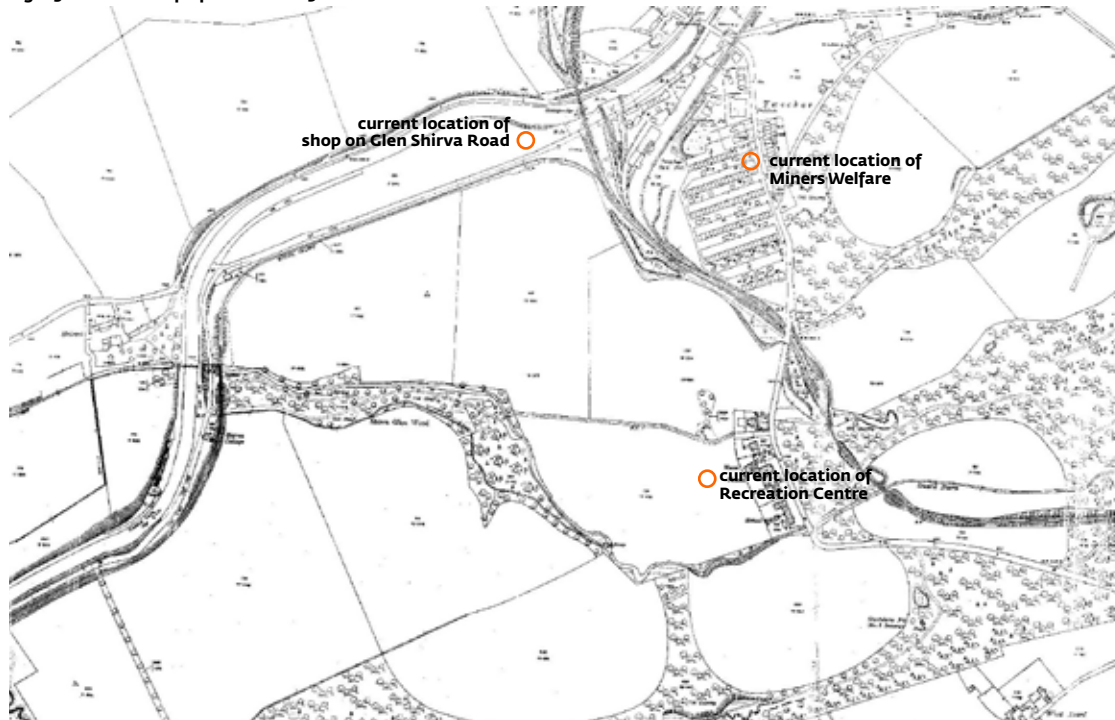
Fig 2.5 a Historic map of Twechar in 1859



The key mining and processing areas were located either side of the Forth and Clyde canal east and west of the extant drawbridge, while large processing areas and miners' rows were arranged south of the canal and along Main Street. Although virtually all of the historic industrial areas have now been cleared, the character of Main Street today is very much defined by the buildings that have survived from the early days of the village, most notably several attractive sandstone terraces, a number of Victorian villas with mature gardens and the landmark Twechar Church.



Fig 2.5b Historic map of Twechar in 1912



above and below: Twechar's exceptional landscape setting





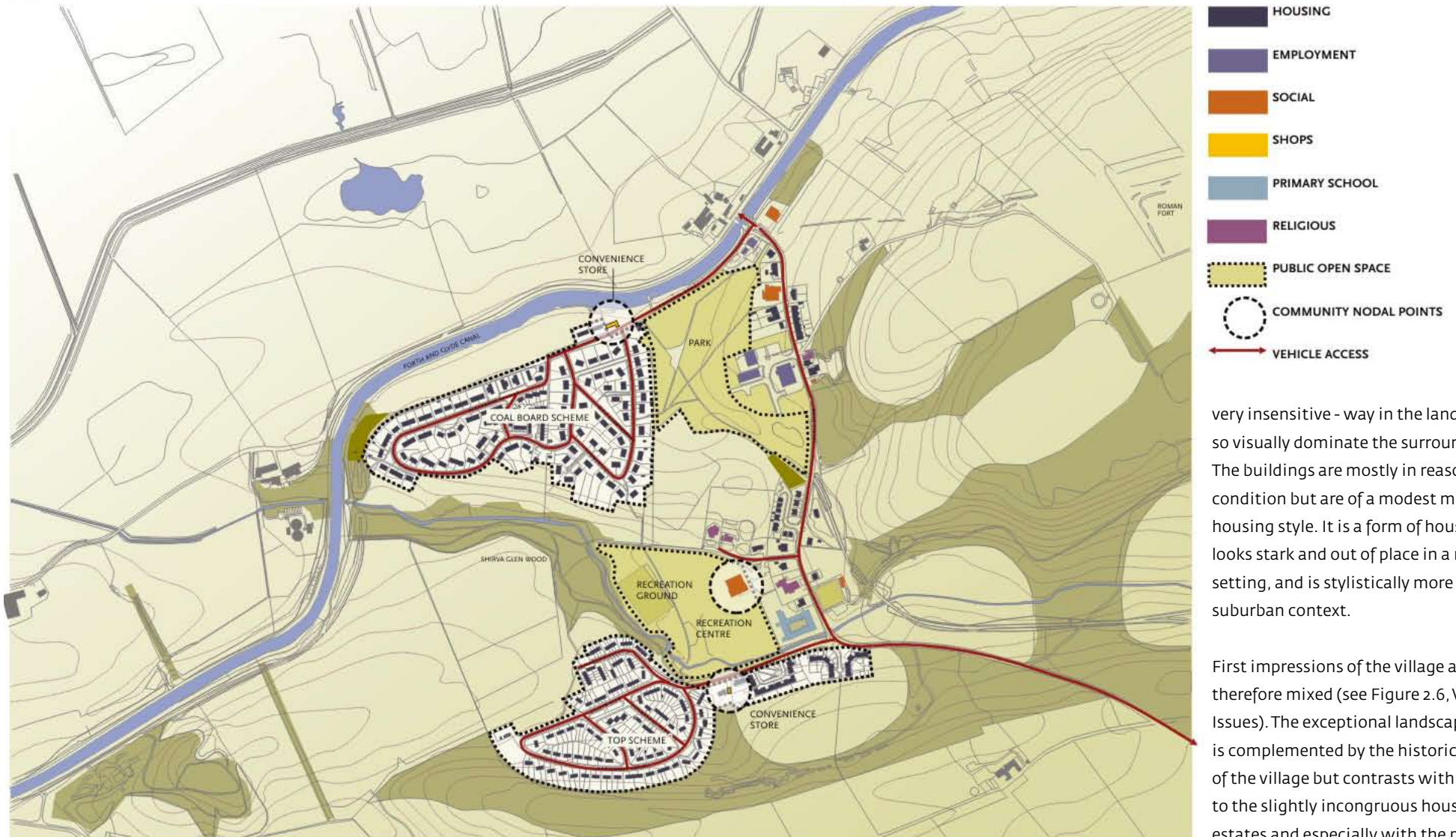
Fig 2.6 Visual issues



The subsequent construction in the 20<sup>th</sup> century of large areas of public sector housing has had a more dominant and widespread impact on the character of Twechar. Housing was constructed in several phases from the 1920s through to the 1970s. These housing areas were arranged in a practical - but unfortunately



Fig 2.7 Land use and foci



very insensitive - way in the landscape and so visually dominate the surrounding area. The buildings are mostly in reasonable condition but are of a modest municipal housing style. It is a form of housing that looks stark and out of place in a rural setting, and is stylistically more suited to a suburban context.

First impressions of the village are therefore mixed (see Figure 2.6, Visual Issues). The exceptional landscape setting is complemented by the historic parts of the village but contrasts with views to the slightly incongruous housing estates and especially with the poor

quality environment at key entrance points to the village. The general scruffiness and conspicuous lack of stewardship of the environment at the main arrival points are especially damaging.

Figure 2.7, Land use and foci, illustrates the layout of the key physical features of the village. The provision of public facilities includes:

- two small convenience stores
- the Recreation Centre (sports hall, meeting rooms, small business spaces and café)
- Twechar primary school
- the Enterprise Park industrial estate
- several churches
- a pub
- several social clubs

## Environmental parameters and capacity

Given that Twechar is located within an attractive but also sensitive landscape, there are numerous designations that protect natural and archaeological features, as shown in Figures 2.8, Environmental Assets, and 2.9, Heritage, including:

- a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation on Bar Hill
- various areas protected by Tree Preservation Orders
- corridors identified in the Local Plan as Important for Wildlife
- the Antonine Wall, nominated as a World Heritage Site
- a Roman Fort on Bar Hill
- the site of a Roman camp in the centre of Twechar itself

There are also many interesting features in and around the village that are reminders of its industrial role, including excavations, embankments and structures, linked to the operation of a network of mines, quarries, various railway lines and the Forth and Clyde canal. Some of these - especially the mine workings - may affect ground conditions and would require detailed investigation if they coincide with areas planned for development (see Figure 2.10, Mining Legacy).

There are attractive walks through the wooded areas, along the canal tow path and up onto nearby hill tops. There are good footpath and cycle links to adjacent settlements and excellent views from high ground along the Kelvin Valley.

The environmental and archaeological assets in the vicinity of the village will inevitably influence the future development of the village (see Figure 2.11, Landscape Sensitivity). Areas designated for protection will physically constrain development, as follows:

- to the north – the line of the Antonine Wall and the canal wildlife corridor
- to the east – the Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
- to the west – the Tree Preservation Order and wildlife corridor at Shirva Glen
- to the south – the Tree Preservation Order on the ridge line

In addition, certain other areas which seem on plan to be eminently developable are in fact extremely sensitive because they are especially conspicuous from the wider area. These areas, if developed, could visually overwhelm the village or the surrounding landscape. This is a particular issue where

development would breach a ridgeline, subdividing the landscape and creating an obtrusive silhouette.

These sensitivities mean that future development in or on the edges of Twechar will require a careful approach, with a thorough 3-dimensional assessment of visual impact and careful tailoring of proposed development to the natural grain and inherent capacity of the landscape.



Fig 2.8 Environmental assets

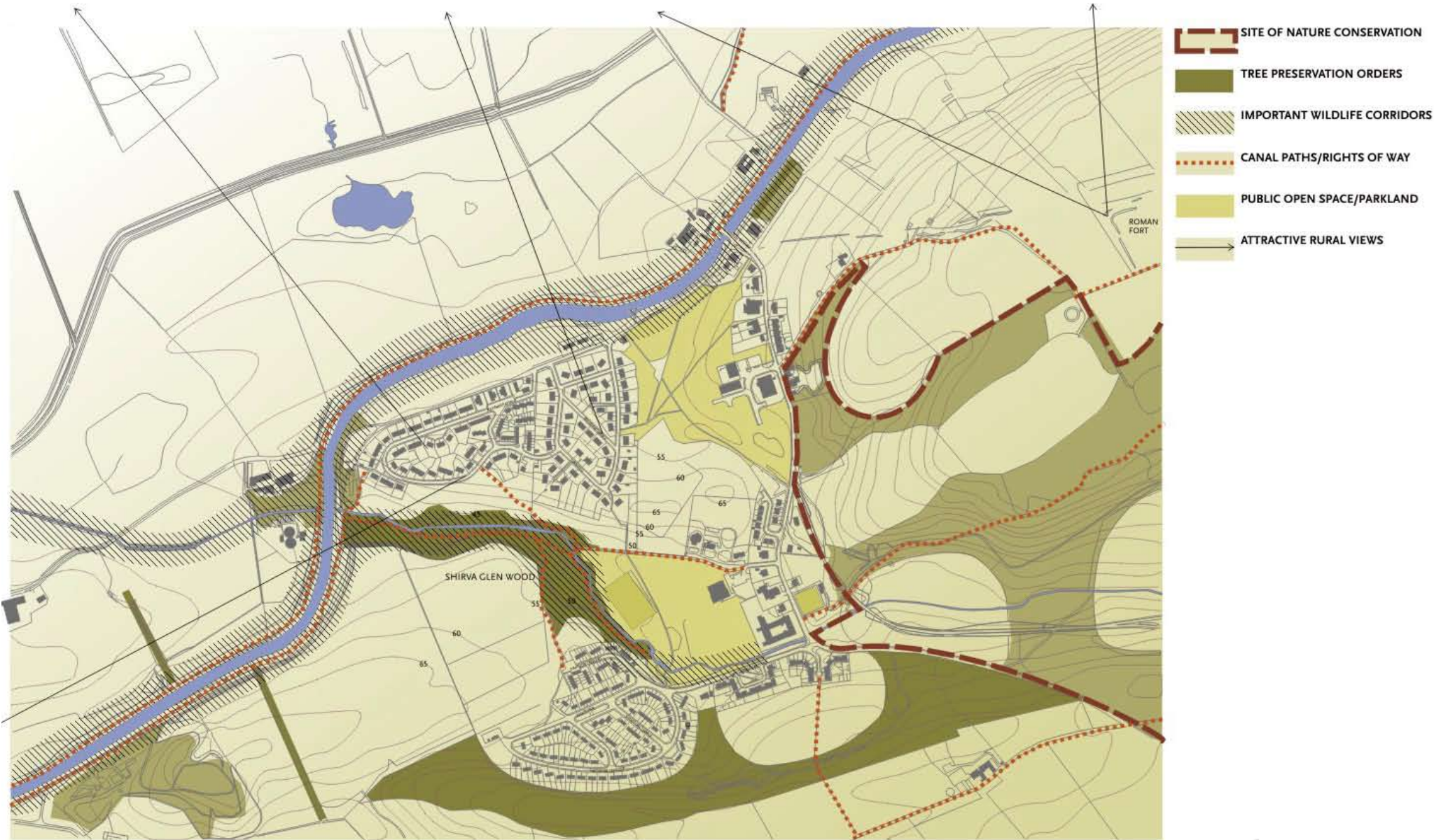




Fig 2.9 Heritage

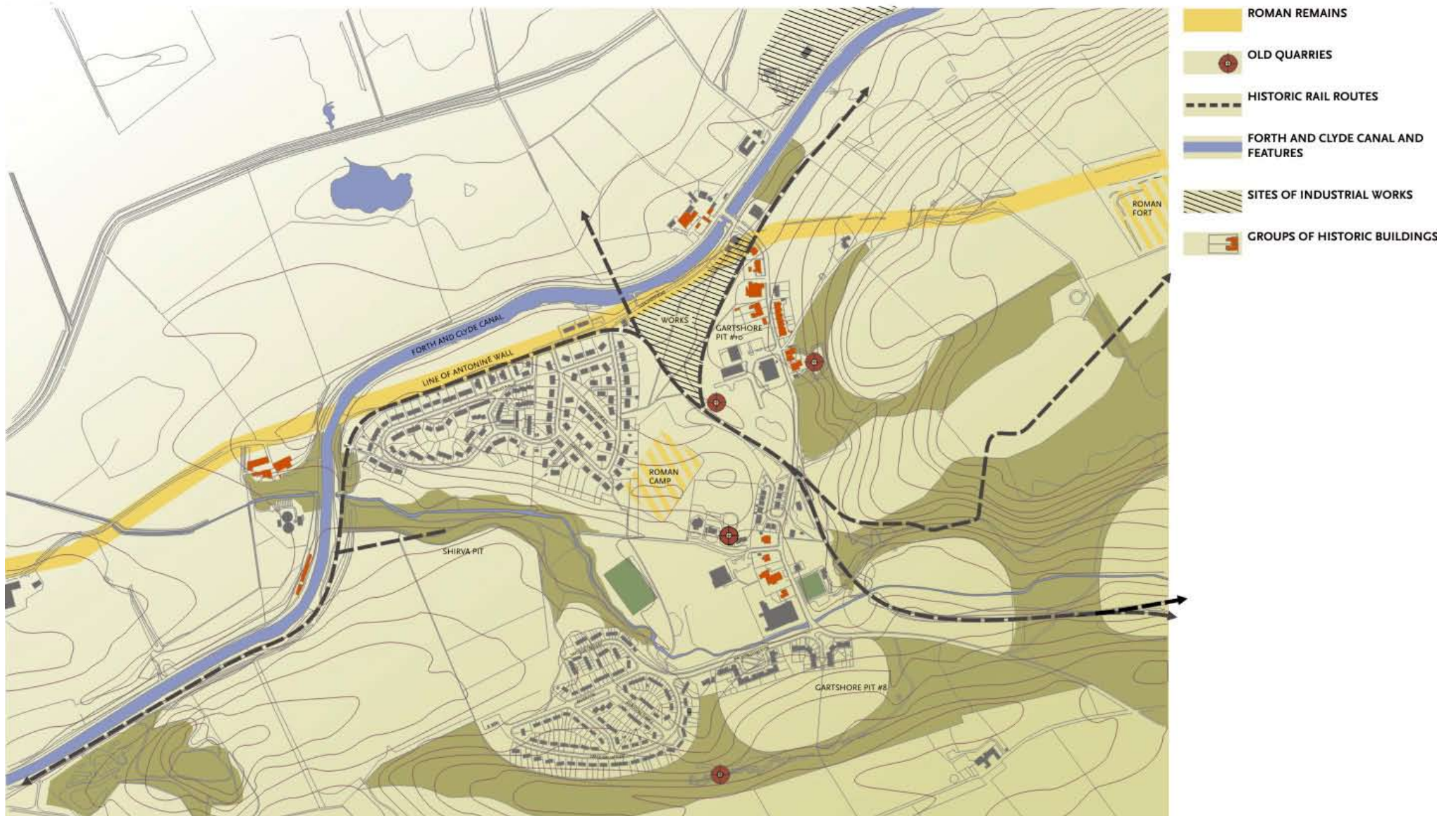
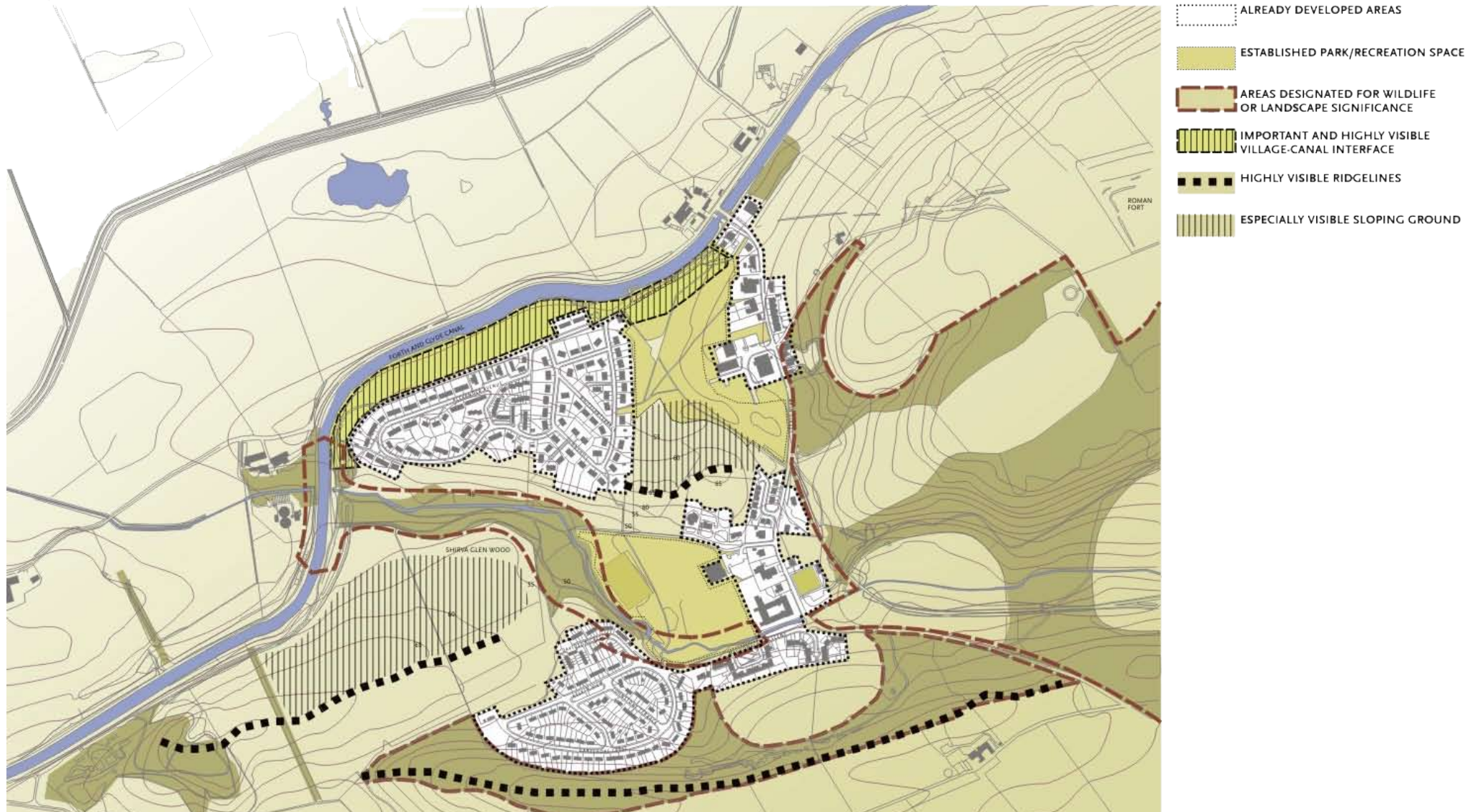


Fig 2.10 Mining legacy





Fig 2.11 Landscape sensitivity



panorama north from Macdonald Crescent







panorama looking south-east from Alexander Avenue





panorama to Alexander Avenue over canal from B8023





the Twechar environment: rolling agricultural landscape



looking south from Alexander Avenue



central open space





former stables near Glen Shirva Aqueduct





the Twechar environment: 19th century buildings on Main Street



the Twechar environment: the Forth and Clyde Canal looking west from Main Street



the Forth and Clyde Canal looking east from Main Street





mature beech woodland forms a strong landscape framework



vibrant autumn colour, well maintained grass and stone wall create a quality setting



nautilus interest in a garden off Park Avenue





the Twechar environment: mast on open space at Park Avenue



access to open space at Burnbrae



Church of the Nazarene, Main Street





Twechar RC Church



open space at Kelvin View and Davidson Crescent



Barrhill Tavern on Main Street





## Transport Issues

### Strategy

The *Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Structure Plan 2000* seeks to enhance the well-being and quality of life of the residents of the Clyde Valley. Significantly, aims relating to economic competitiveness (Aim 1) and social inclusion (Aim 2) are underpinned by those relating to the integration of land-uses and transportation (Aim 4), particularly public transportation.

The Plan's strategic vision seeks inter alia to strengthen communities. It acknowledges that many small villages are poorly served by the transport network with few alternatives to car use. In addition, the long-term functional changes being experienced by remote former mining villages are acknowledged: *"these areas need enhanced local services and to be linked better to the wider conurbation and main towns upon which they are increasingly dependent."* (Paragraph 5.4) The Plan identifies a corridor of growth, based on a central transport corridor, which will link centres of employment and services to all communities, particularly areas of need. However, Twechar is outwith this corridor.

Strategic Policy 3 indicates that the Plan seeks to manage travel demand along strategic corridors, with Schedule 3(b) (ii) identifying Priority Corridors for Management, including Kirkintilloch/Glasgow and Cumbernauld/Glasgow as links to the central corridor. Measures to be implemented along these routes include new priority public transport routes. Twechar is located near to the termini of these corridors.

In respect of rural transportation, Twechar is identified as one of

Fig 2.12 Road connections



eight rural communities. The Plan states the need to integrate rural and urban communities in transport terms. This will help those living in rural areas to access the facilities of the towns, and those living in urban areas to access the countryside for leisure activities.

With reference to tourism and recreation, the Strategy highlights the significance of the Forth and Clyde Canal Millennium Link, particularly in terms of the opportunities it presents for pedestrians and cyclists. Aims 100 and 102 seek to improve access to the Antonine Wall and other Roman remains at Twechar<sup>8</sup>.

## Road Network

As was seen earlier in Figure 2.1, Location and Distance, and as shown in Figure 2.12, Road Connections, Twechar is reasonably well connected to the strategic road network. The A803, which lies to the north, can be reached via the B8023. The A80 to the south can be reached via B8023 / B802 / B8048

Twechar lies approximately 4km east of Kirkintilloch and 2km west of Kilsyth at the junction of the B8023 and a minor road which runs south through the village to the B8048, which provides access to Cumbernauld.

The B8023 and the minor road are generally lightly trafficked roads. Therefore traffic volume is not expected to be an issue. However, a relatively high proportion of traffic on the minor road was observed to consist of heavy good vehicles (HGVs) travelling to and from nearby quarries and waste/industrial

**Main Street - traffic route through the village**



**the unprepossessing entrance to Twechar over the canal**

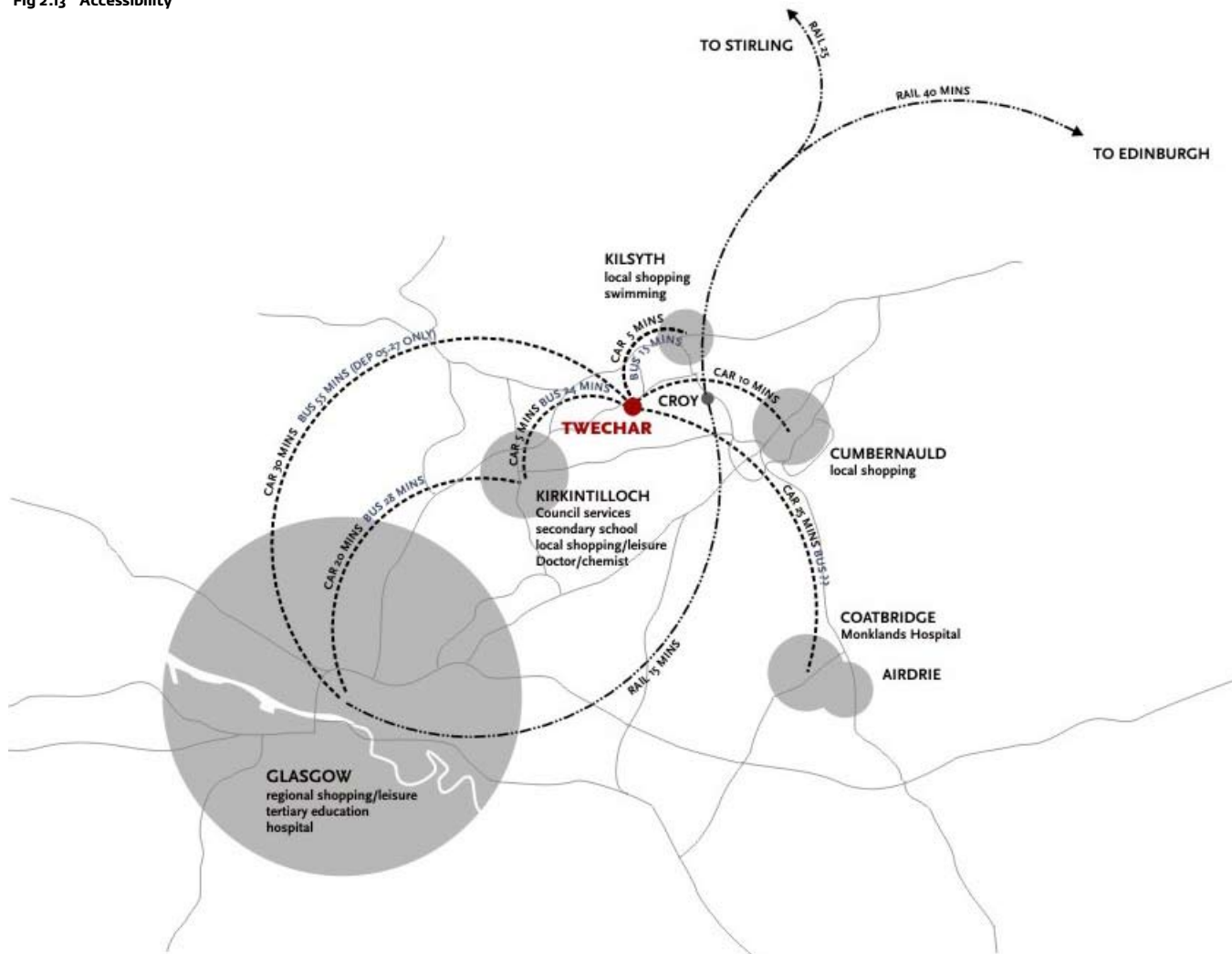


premises. The large number of HGV vehicles on the road is prejudicial to environmental quality and road safety, particularly for pedestrians. Some improvement works have recently been undertaken to address drainage issues. The older parts of the village, the recreation centre and industrial estate take access from this road.

Although the internal road structure of the village appears uncoordinated and fragmented in plan – effectively divided into two separate and unconnected parts – it appears to function acceptably. An issue that causes residents concern is the condition of road surfaces which are often poor.

Residents travel regularly to Kilsyth, Kirkintilloch and Cumbernauld for day to day services, especially shopping, banking, health services and leisure facilities (see Figure 2.13 Accessibility). The main secondary school for Twechar children is in Kirkintilloch, as are some of the offices of East Dunbartonshire Council. Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch are each approximately 5 minutes drive from Twechar but bus journeys are 15 minutes and 24 minutes respectively. Cumbernauld is only easily accessible by car. Key services (eg GP, PO, school, supermarket) are all within 10 minutes drive time, but 47.7% of households do not have a car (ED 20.7%)

Fig 2.13 Accessibility



## Public Transport Facilities and Services

### Rail

The nearest railway stations are located at Croy (3km) and Lenzie (6km). Croy station is served by Edinburgh-Glasgow via Falkirk trains, which operate half hourly in each direction with travel times of 35 and 15 minutes to Edinburgh and Glasgow respectively. Both stations are served by Glasgow-Dunblane trains, which operate half hourly in each direction with travel times of approximately 15 and 30 minutes to Glasgow and Dunblane respectively. There is no dedicated bus service to Croy station but it can be accessed by private transport or dial-a-bus services.

### Bus

Twechar is served by bus routes that provide frequent local services to Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch and a very limited direct morning and evening service to/from Glasgow. There is a half hourly bus service every day on the Kilsyth-Glasgow route (Glasgow is also an important destination for some Twechar residents, as a major focus for employment, for tertiary education and also for city-scale leisure and recreation facilities.) It takes approximately 30 minutes to the centre of Glasgow by car, but travelling by bus requires a change at Kirkintilloch and results in an overall journey time of over 50 minutes.

In addition, there is a Dial-a-bus service for the elderly or less able and the number 400 Ring and Ride Service operated by First Bus in North Lanarkshire, which connects Twechar with Cumbernauld, Kilsyth, Airdrie/Coatbridge and Croy Station. Bus stances are located throughout both principal residential areas



and on the main road through the village. All properties are within a short walking distance of a bus stop.

**Figure 2.14 – Summary of Bus Services at Twechar**

Service	Route	Summary
84 (184)	Kilsyth to Kirkintilloch via Twechar (A single 184 continues to Glasgow departing Kilsyth at 05.27)	Monday to Sunday from early morning until late evening at 30 minute intervals in both directions.
X70, X80	Twechar to Glasgow via Lenzie and Kirkintilloch	Limited morning and evening peak service to/from Glasgow.
400	Ring 'n' Ride service providing connection to Kilsyth, Cumbernauld, Airdrie, Coatbridge and Croy Station.	Service on demand.

### Walking/Cycle Route Provision

The Forth and Clyde Canal towpath on the north side of the canal west of the lift-bridge at Twechar is designated as a National Cycle Network traffic-free route. This provides a direct traffic free walk/cycle route to Kirkintilloch.

A footway is provided on the main road through the village, but it does not provide a direct route between the two principal residential areas, which are separated by open space. The pedestrian environment on Main Street is prejudiced by frequent HGV movements.

A network of well-used footpaths crosses the open space, connecting the two main areas of housing, the primary school and recreation centre.

### Car Parking

Within the main residential areas car parking is generally on-street. This leaves insufficient width for two-way flow and so creates natural traffic calming by requiring drivers to give way to oncoming vehicles.

### Planned/Proposed Infrastructure Works

#### Roads

Minor works to improve drainage have recently been undertaken on the main road near to the primary school. The Council is aware of a number of other roads drainage issues within Twechar. No major road works are planned.

#### Rail

Croy Station is to be the subject of a £5 million phased investment programme to expand its park and ride facilities. Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority (SPTA) plans to deliver this project in two phases, and include the doubling of car parking capacity and the introduction of feeder bus services to Cumbernauld and Kilsyth.

#### Bus

No significant amendments to bus service provision are currently planned.

### Potential Development

There is a proposal to site a Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Recycling and Reprocessing Facility in Twechar, possibly on land south of the canal and west of the lift bridge. The principal method of moving components to/from the plant is intended to be by lorry, but could also potentially be

via the canal by means of barges. If the use of HGVs is ultimately proposed then this would undoubtedly exacerbate the existing impact of HGVs using the main road.

### Summary

In summary the main transport issues for Twechar are focused around:

- the speed of traffic (especially HGVs and other commercial vehicles) through the main street of the village, close to a range of community facilities such as school, shops and leisure centre. A 'twenty's plenty' restriction is under consideration
- some specific weaknesses in public transport provision, bearing in mind low car ownership and/or access to a car for many households.

**Bus entering the village at the canal bridge**



## Community inputs

From the start of the regeneration masterplan project we worked with the community to ensure that:

- local people know what is going on
- the views of local people are incorporated into the proposals
- local knowledge informs the development of goals and detailed proposals

Initially, Sandra Sutton, the community representative on the Steering Group, assisted with the preparation of a list of local contacts. Subsequently interviews were held with key individuals and meetings or workshops events held with different groups. These included:

- 2 open public meetings to discuss the future of Twechar
- a consultation exercise at the Twechar fundraiser
- meetings with the Steering Group rep (Sandra Sutton)
- a meeting with the Recreation Centre manager (Sandra Comrie)
- a meeting with the primary school head teacher (Liz Denney) and sessions with 2 classes of pupils
- a meeting with the community police officer (Spenser Trueman)
- a workshop with Twechar youth committee and joint production of a youth newsletter on the consultation process
- a workshop with Twechar Youth Club
- a workshop with Twechar Community Action, including sports club representatives

The following page shows a typical publicity poster and photos recording the different events.

**Community participants at the Fundraiser Event**



## Issues

General issues coming from the above are:

- The level of community spirit in Twechar is very high. Everybody comments on it - local people and officials. This is evidenced by the history of the Recreation Centre, which was due to be closed by the local authority and was subject to a community sit-in, supported by the whole community. Under a deal struck with the Council the community now run the Centre through Twechar Community Action. Despite troubles over the last few years with funding and management, the Centre is now improving and expanding its range of activities, many of which are revenue earning. Thus the community has the experience of running its own projects.
- Young people are active participants in the promotion of a better village. They have drawn up a plan of what they think is needed in the Recreation Centre and are actively involved in supporting events and other community volunteering activities.
- A drugs fatality a few years ago sparked the formation of Mothers Against Drugs (MAD) to tackle drug abuse in the area. The Police say that abuse in Twechar is probably now lower than in other ED communities. The community say that (apart from light recreational use) there are only 6 hard users in the village.
- The prevalence of one bedroom flats in the village (and the lack of them in other East Dunbartonshire areas) often leads to the allocation of these premises to people from

Community participants at January Workshop at the Miners' Welfare



reporting back at January Workshop at the Miners' Welfare



poster for the January Workshop at the Miners' Welfare

# THE FUTURE OF TWECHAR?

•

Consultants have been appointed by  
East Dumbartonshire Council to look at the future  
of the village and how it can be improved.  
We've already been talking to groups and  
individuals in the village but we want to make sure  
**EVERYONE** knows what's going on and has a say.  
We're holding a public workshop in the  
**Miners' Welfare at 7.00.pm on**  
**Thursday, 20th January**  
to make sure we've got a proper grasp of the issues  
affecting the village and what needs to be done.  
No plans have been prepared yet - that's the next  
stage!

•

**We need your help.**  
**Come along and join in -**  
**IT'S YOUR FUTURE!**

Twechar youth club workshop





other parts of the district. The recent press coverage cites this as the cause of drug problems but this is denied by many people in the community, who acknowledge it as an indigenous problem. The one bedroom flats are nevertheless seen as an issue by locals who would generally wish to see them demolished or turned into more spacious units.

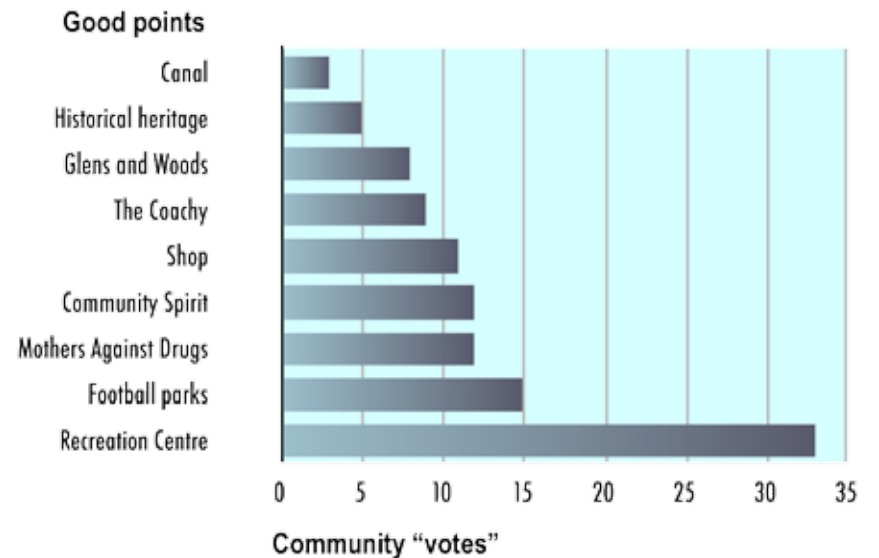
- The village has a curious imbalance of community facilities. It has no doctor's surgery or pharmacy but has three large halls (four if the hall in the Primary School is included). The Centre provides the venue for sporting activities and is increasingly being seen as a centre for community activities. Social occasions are catered for in the other (licensed) premises.
- Many of the problems cited by locals are to do with the management of the area – litter, broken glass in streets and parks, poor lighting and supervision of green spaces and so on.
- The police say that crime is low in Twechar. There are few break-ins and most calls concern nuisance behaviour by teenagers. At the recent public meeting this was cited by local residents as an issue that could only be solved by the villagers themselves taking the lead in persuading kids to change their behaviour. The Police support this approach and are working with locals to implement it.
- One suggested community project that is actively being pursued is the building of a community canal boat. An organization in Glasgow promotes this. The idea would be to use the boat to mount community / youth activities based in Twechar but also use the boat to bring in customers from outside and for local excursions / events.

### Fundraising exercise

The following assessments of good and bad things about Twechar are taken from an exercise run as part of the fundraising event in the Recreation centre on Sunday the 28<sup>th</sup> of November. Over 40 participants added items to a basic list of good and bad elements and then added ideas for the future. Each participant then had to indicate their top three priorities in each category (best of the good, worst of the bad and best ideas). The scoring is shown on Figures 2.15 and 2.16.

Fig 2.15 January Workshop results

*The chart to the right shows the listing of "Good points about Twechar" derived from a community fundraising event held in the Centre in early 2005. participants (around 50) were asked to tick good and bad points on a wall chart. The Recreation Centre received a resounding vote of support.*



### 1. Good Things about Twechar (Figure 2.15)

Participants thought that the Recreation Centre is one of Twechar's most important assets: 96 per cent of participants gave one vote to the centre. Football Parks (45%), M.A.D. (Mothers against Drugs) Initiative (39%) and the community spirit (39%) are some of the most important village characteristics. The shop (33%) and landscape (27%) were also seen as important.

## 2. Bad Things about Twechar (Figure 2.16)

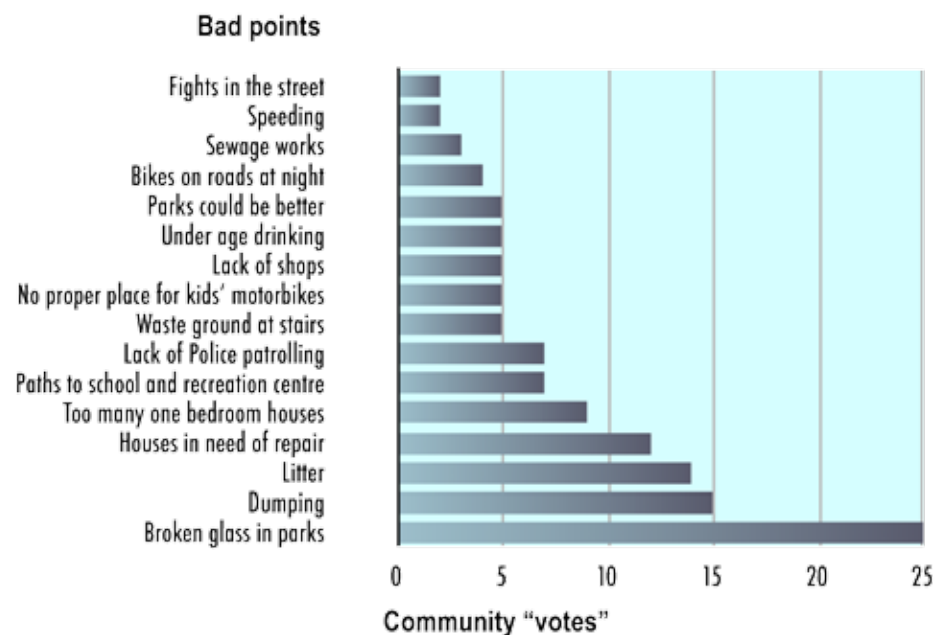
Litter, broken glass in the parks and dumping grounds were mentioned as the worst problems in the area (75 % gave one vote to broken glass, 42% for litter and dumping ground 45%). Too many one bedroom houses (24%), lack of police patrolling (18%) and paths to school and recreation centre (18%) were named as other concerns.

## 3. Bright Ideas for the Future

48% of participants gave one of their votes to a swimming pool. 45% gave one vote for a cleaner canal. Facilities for children are also seen as important for Twechar; a bike course, skateboard park, bunk house, paintball facility were mentioned (99% gave one vote to at least one of these activities). 36% of people gave a vote to canal activities (including a community boat). Other environmental assets such as the glens and woods should, according to Twechar's residents, be protected (21%).

Despite many of the apparently negative trends and data sets identified earlier, our community involvement sessions discovered that there is a strong and positive sense of community, with key leaders and an active youth sector. There are, however, some acknowledged difficulties with, for instance, anti-social behaviour and drugs.

Fig 2.16 January Workshop results





## Summary of Emerging Picture

**Overall the picture is one of a progressively declining village, potentially slipping into a very dangerous spiral where even more services could close, such as the school, shops and community facilities, with further flight from housing leading to an irreversible decline. Compared with Scotland as a whole there is:**

- **higher poverty and deprivation locally**
- **a lot of people in poor health**
- **more people dependent on benefits and family members**
- **a lack of housing for people who want to buy**

**However, the raw data trends from the 2001 census and elsewhere do not tell the whole picture. Twechar is a strong community and conditions are better than in many comparable former industrial villages. It has, for example, an especially strong landscape setting and important environmental and heritage assets. In addition, there is plenty of work in the local area, but some people just don't have the right skills or qualifications and some don't have the transport to get to work.**

**The fact that there are significant positives, including a forward-looking community attitude, provides Twechar with a stronger community platform from which to build. There are needs, but also many more opportunities than in other post-industrial locations.**

## section 3

# directions and scenarios

images from the testing of future scenarios and proposals



As part of the strategy and direction setting stage of the commission, we explored a set of future scenarios with consultees based on alternatives for the size of the village by 2020, as follows:

- “do nothing” - accepting current trends that would take the population below 1,000
- population stabilisation (around 1,300-1,500 residents)
- modest growth (2,000-2,100)
- major growth (2,600-3,000)

The scenario plans illustrated the potential location of development and the approximate land-take that would be required to achieve the population levels described above, as shown in Figures 3.3- 3.6.

The scenario plans took into account the complex range of constraints that exist in and around Twechar that make many parts of the surrounding land difficult or impossible to develop. The constraints included environmental and heritage designations, existing land uses that cannot be displaced and areas that are especially sensitive and where there would be an unacceptable loss of amenity if they were developed (see Figure 3.2, Developable Areas).



Fig 3.1 the matrices used to assess options, together with views of possible development areas



above: panorama looking west from Kelvin View



below: panorama looking north from Macdonald Crescent







Fig 3.2 Developable areas

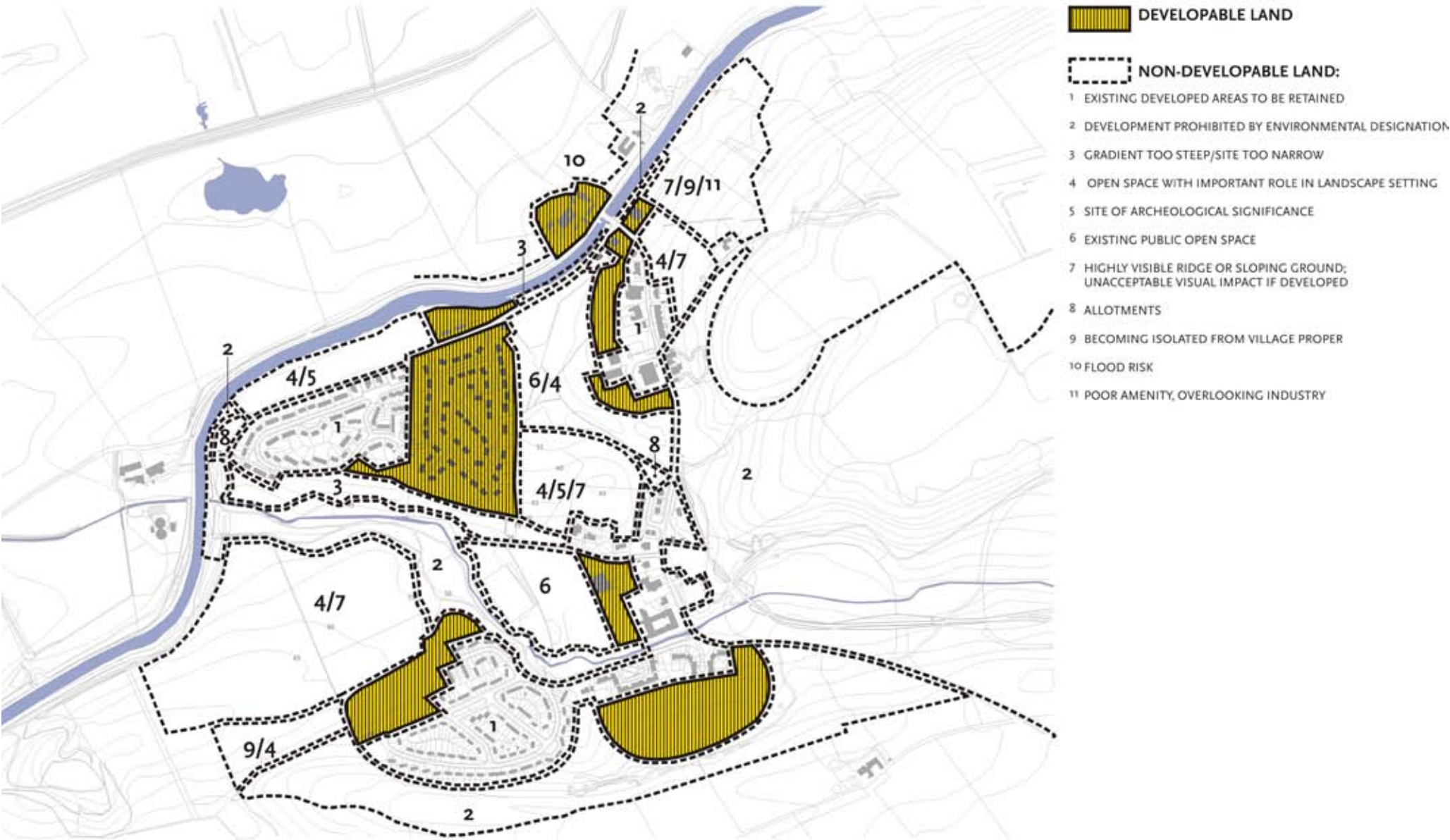


Fig 3.3 do nothing - accept current trends



**SCENARIO 1**  
TOTAL VILLAGE POPULATION **1350 or less**



Fig 3.4 population stabilisation



## SCENARIO 2

TOTAL VILLAGE POPULATION approx 1500

### DESCRIPTION

AREA A redeveloped, replacing single bed units with 2, 3 or 4 bedroom housing, resulting in a modest increase in population

Fig 3.5 modest growth



## SCENARIO 3

TOTAL VILLAGE POPULATION 2000

### DESCRIPTION

AREA A redeveloped, replacing single bed units with 2, 3 or 4 bedroom housing, resulting in a modest increase in population

AREAS 1,2,3 developed:

Area 1 2.2 hectares

Area 2 2.8 Hectares

Area 3 3.7 hectares

TOTAL 8.3 hectares

at 28 units/ha = 232 new units



Fig 3.6 major growth



## SCENARIO 4

TOTAL VILLAGE POPULATION 3000

### DESCRIPTION

AREA A redeveloped, replacing single bed units with 2, 3 or 4 bedroom housing, resulting in a modest increase in population

AREAS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 developed:

Area 1 7.4 hectares  
Area 2 6.6 Hectares  
Area 3 3.8 hectares  
Area 4 1.2 hectares  
Area 5 2.1 hectares  
Area 6 4.8 hectares

TOTAL 26 hectares  
at 28 units/ha = 728 new units

The future scenarios were also tested with the community using evaluation matrices illustrated in Figure 3.1. The discussions confirmed the weakness of no change (scenario 1); equally the inadequacy of consolidation (scenario 2) in really changing anything long term; and the potential over-ambition and negative impacts of major growth at this stage (scenario 4). The general consensus was that it was wisest to move in the direction of modest growth (ie scenario 3), taking the population towards 2000 or so, representing a growth of the village of around 50 %.

testing scenarios



community workshop cards

### A growing village

Growing the population towards 2,000 or more

- to support & sustain local services (eg school, health)
- attract and capture investment & spend
- recycle land/buildings
- build confidence & reputation
- improve performance

### New housing

Broaden the range & type of housing by

- redeveloping the 1800s Coal Board housing - critical to investment
- decent & relocation
- introducing new housing for sale and rent
- encouraging new housing - including well-built family housing around the edges

Target: 50-75 additional new social tenures (200-340 intermediate)

### Village design guidance

To ensure the quality and character of the buildings and spaces to enhance the village, there should be a design code to ensure quality.

This will address streets, spaces, buildings, materials etc

### Improve local services

Progressive investment in locally including

- expanded recreation centre
- healthy living & enterprise centre
- new shops
- protected and improved school
- new play spaces

### Economic development

To address hidden unemployment and future growth needs and provide a thriving, lively village, only level jobs & training are proposed. These include

- New business units
- Community enterprise & training
- Boat building & repair
- Heritage/visitor centre & cafe
- Recycling facility

### Canalside proposals

To make better use of an important resource the following are proposed alongside the canal

- Leisure & night bar/night
- Boat repair & training
- Café/pub/restaurant
- Heritage/visitor centre
- Community enterprise
- Recycling centre
- Some high quality housing

The precise locations would need to be



The chart in Fig 3.7 shows the priorities assigned to the scenario proposals at the public meeting held in May 2005. The audience ranked the proposals according to the timescale in which they would happen and the priority they should be given. The numbers in the boxes indicate the number of groups that assigned that proposal to that slot. The Weighted Priority Score adds the High Priority scores x3 to the Medium Priority scores x2 and the adjusted Low Priority scores. The proposals have then been sorted by Weighted Priority. Several other proposals were made by the audience - many of which were included in the consultants proposal. These were:

- get rid of hgv traffic through the village
- repair roads
- shuttle bus to Croy Station
- tourist walks
- light up the bridge
- canal mooring west of the bridge
- control motorbikes and quadbikes
- improve paths
- no building on Greenbelt
- control speeding
- improve road drainage

Fig 3.7 community workshop results - May 2005

	Timescale			Priority			Weighted Priority Score
	Short	Med	Long	High	Med	Low	
<b>Transport</b>	2	2		4			<b>12</b>
<b>New Housing</b>	3	1		4			<b>12</b>
<b>Partnership Mechanism</b>	4			3	1		<b>11</b>
<b>Economic Development</b>	2	2		3	1		<b>11</b>
<b>Canalside proposals</b>	1	1	2	3	1		<b>11</b>
<b>A growing village</b>	2		2	3	1		<b>11</b>
<b>Building Community capacity</b>	3		1	3	1		<b>11</b>
<b>Improve Local Services</b>	2	2		1	3		<b>9</b>
<b>Village Design Guide</b>	3	1		2		2	<b>8</b>

The shared belief is that the modest growth scenario - Scenario 3 - offers the most potential to reverse decline and transform the village in a sustainable manner and without undermining key strengths of the village - the sense of community and the quality of the rural landscape. This scale of development is more likely to support local services, attract and capture new investment and spend, recycle land and buildings, and improve village confidence and performance. This ambition for a more sustainable future community is encapsulated in a 'vision for Twechar'.

## section 4

# a vision for Twechar



The simple, but shorthand, **2015 Vision for Twechar** is that it will become...

**a stronger, growing residential community rising to over 2,000 inhabitants, including a higher proportion of economically active people with:**

- a wider range of house types and tenures, including a higher proportion of owner occupied and family homes
- more community and leisure facilities and opportunities, including retention of the school with a rising roll
- improving social & health indicators
- more local job and training opportunities - some linked to canal uses
- new residents and investment, and holding onto existing inhabitants
- improved transport facilities



All of the above would be set in a distinctive, sensitive physical environment, as illustrated in the conceptual diagram in Figure 4.1. The aim is for Twechar to increase its chances of being a desirable, sustainable place to live well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.





## RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

**SITE A**  
approximate area: 6 hectares  
no. of residents: 372

**SITE B**  
approximate area: 2 hectares  
no. of new residents: 124

**SITE C**  
approximate area: 3.5 hectares  
no. of new residents: 217

**SITE D**  
approximate area: 0.7 hectares  
no. of new residents: 43

**SITE E** (long term development potential)  
approximate area: 1 hectares  
no. of new residents: 50

**POTENTIAL TOTAL NO. OF RESIDENTS  
IN NEW ACCOMMODATION: 756**  
(excluding Twechar Farm)

**EXISTING POPULATION: 1350**

**POTENTIAL FUTURE VILLAGE TOTAL: 2000+/-**

## NON RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

**SITE F**  
approximate area: 0.5

**SITE G**  
approximate area: 0.8 hectares  
development for Healthy Living Centre/other community uses

**SITE H**  
approximate area: 0.5 hectares

**SITE I**  
approximate area: 0.2 hectares

**SITE J**  
approximate area: 0.3 hectares

## section 5

# regeneration masterplan proposals

The key project proposals are listed below.

### 5.1 New housing

#### Aim

**Broaden the range and type of housing to create a more sustainable community with more choices and higher population. This is a central part of the vision for the future of Twechar, combining the redevelopment of a core part of the village, with expansion around the edges.**

The case for change, as noted earlier in the baseline review, is not driven by a narrow stock condition or housing economics argument which is internal to housing 'system' thinking.

Rather it is about a wider and longer term perspective on village sustainability. This set of steps is important not just as a housing measure - to provide a better fit for 21<sup>st</sup> century needs - but as a mechanism for re-balancing the community and stimulating other types of investment. This growth proposition therefore has to fit comfortably with the current and future evolving planning framework, including the growth concepts of both the local and structure plans. It also needs to fit with the Housing Investment Business Plan as devised by the Council and endorsed by Communities Scotland. We believe the approach is able to do both.

Even though there are potentially some rental income\* and land ownership implications for the Council in the interim, this dimension of the regeneration proposal is addressing a long term decline scenario which requires a major transformational step to

- improve the place physically,
- reverse the decline in population with, for instance, new family housing and
- provide enough of an opportunity to secure significant investment from a range of developer and RSL partners.

\*Rental income losses, notionally at £46 per week per house, have been tested as part of the Business Plan sensitivity test at the time of drafting.

#### Proposals

- Redevelop the 1930s Coal Board housing area to provide new family-oriented housing for sale and rent (possibly also with elderly provision). Because of the existing problems and scale of opportunity provided by this redevelopment, this is a critical springboard for transformational investment for the whole village. The design and layout are particularly sensitive given the relationship to external views of the village along the canal, and because of proximity to the central green area. The illustration provided (Figure 5.1) is indicative at this stage

and can be further developed as the precise mix is refined.

- A decant and relocation strategy for households affected by any redevelopment is required to take account of phasing, right to buy issues, infrastructure implications and the need to minimise double decanting.
- Introducing a balance of new housing for sale and rent - including housing for the elderly - in the core. It is proposed to have more traditional (higher) density around the core of the village, dropping to a more suburban level around the edges.
- In parallel with the central redevelopment, encouraging further new housing, including both self-build and housebuilder and RSL family housing around the edges of the village. Initially this is to take place within the existing Green Belt village envelope, but plans need to be made to grow beyond this within acceptable and agreed environmental limits, as provisionally suggested. Infrastructure and layout planning needs to take account of this.

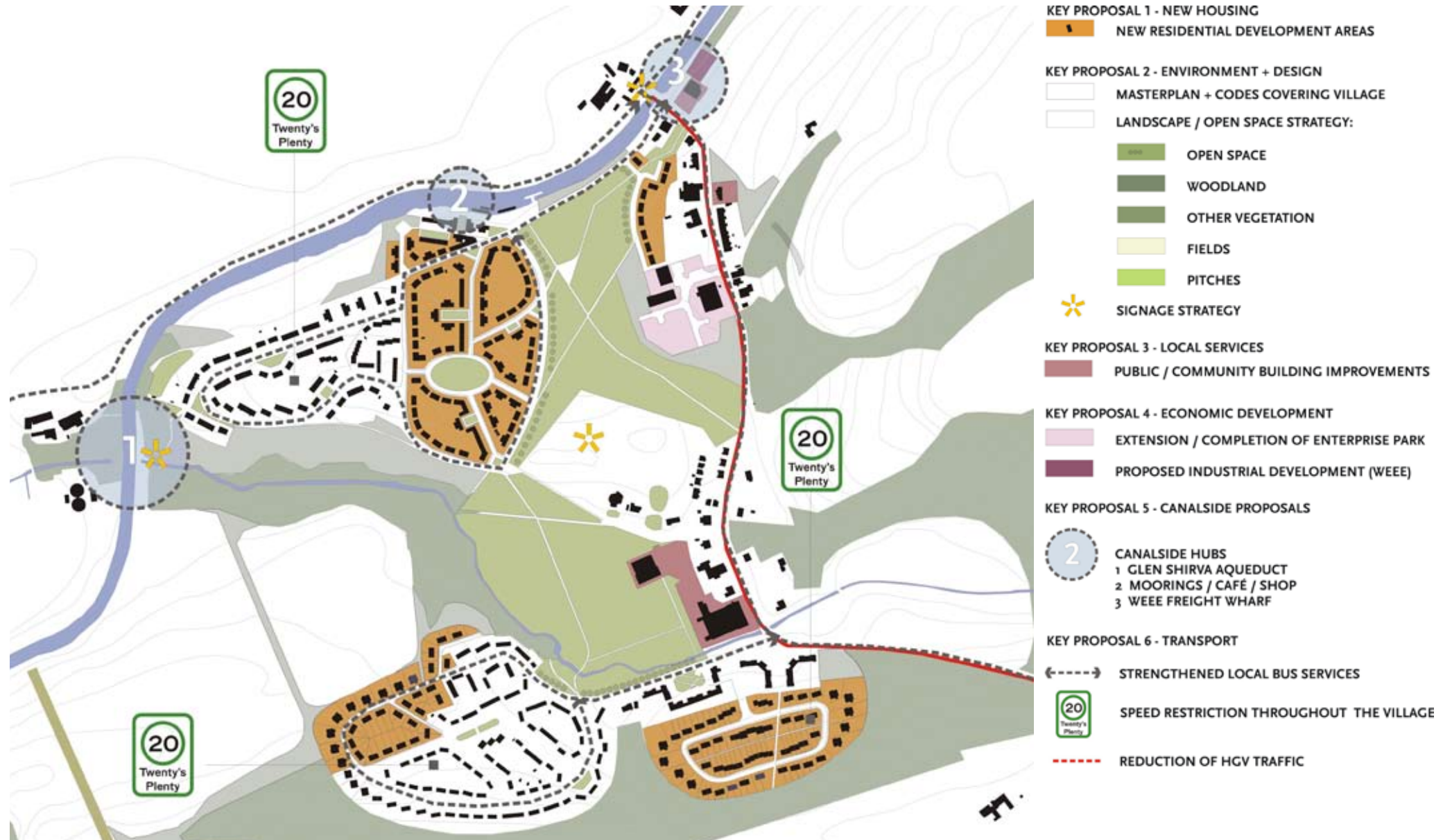
The areas to proposed for new housing-led development are shown on Figure 5.2 Masterplan Physical Components. Detailed survey work is required to test ground conditions and assess the potential need for stabilisation. Detailed layout and phasing plans will also be required, to develop concepts for the protection of the environmental quality and visual identity of the village, and in accordance with the needs of developers.



Fig 5.1 Masterplan



Fig 5.2 Masterplan physical components





## Location and phasing

The location of new development is linked to the fact that this comparatively central location, with visibility to and from the canalside and valley, has a much greater likelihood of transforming the village's image, attractiveness and desirability than incremental growth around the edges.

The phasing of development could be approached in different ways:

- a 'clean slate' clearance approach to the former Coal Board housing would risk loss of substantial population and leave the appearance of a larger building site for a longer period.
- a very intricately phased decant, demolition and build programme might address this, but be logistically challenging for the developer, for instance in terms of street structure.
- a 'linked demolition and rebuild' would involve the demolition and rebuild of sizeable land parcels – to ensure both a viable neighbourhood and sufficiently transformational identity.

It is the latter approach which is recommended and presented in the programme matrix in the final section of this report (Figure 6.4, Outline programme of regeneration activity).

## Indicative target

A total of between 50-70 new social rented dwellings are

proposed, largely as replacements for households affected by redevelopment, plus some extra.

300-340 new owner-occupied homes at a variety of sizes and sales levels are proposed. This is required, to provide for local indigenous growth and to attract sufficient new people and investment into the village.

Preliminary discussions with developers suggest this is an appropriate number to proceed with in terms of the market and demographics, with one or two developers producing around 50 units per annum.

If the proposals are adopted and implemented the stock numbers and balance of Twechar would move towards

- A total of 853 units
- 542 private (including 144 under RTB), totalling some 64%
- 251 Council stock, but improved over the time period
- 60 Council/RSL new build rented stock

This programme would shift the balance towards the current Scottish norm – as shown in Figure 5.3, Owner-occupation and

**Fig 5.3 Owner occupation and rented housing statistics**

Area	Owner occupied	Rented	Total	Ratio
Scotland				67:33
East Dunbartonshire	37,700	4,200	42,640	88:12
Twechar now	231	424	655	35:65
<b>Twechar 2015</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>251+60</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>64:36</b>

rented housing statistics below – although that national ratio will almost certainly have shifted by the completion of the regeneration. The approach is not dissimilar to the successful Crown Street Regeneration Project in Glasgow which, by moving from a social rented monoculture to a 75:25 owner-tenant mix, helped stimulate investment across a wider area and tenure base.

## Risks

It would be unrealistic to present such a central plank of the regeneration masterplan as a risk-free numbers-only exercise. There are many challenges to be overcome along the way. They include, for instance

- Securing the right development partner with the right sustainable community philosophy and credentials
- Ensuring adequate capital and revenue funding streams – from both public and private sectors
- Integrating/adapting the proposals with the Housing Investment and other related business plan processes
- Securing satisfaction about ground conditions risks and costs – especially in those areas around the edges about which ground conditions are less certain (as indicated earlier in Figure 2.10, Mining Legacy)

- Political risks arising from those households directly affected by displacement and decant, which need to have sensitive handling
- Securing planning permission for the respective phases
- Getting the phasing and decant sequencing right, alongside the build and occupation rates
- General host community acceptance of new incoming households

### **Lead players**

East Dunbartonshire Council,  
Communities Scotland,  
Community (Developer and RSL partners)

### **Key early actions**

Test whether concept is appropriate and can fit with aspirations and operation of both Council's Local Housing Strategy and Communities Scotland's investment programme.

The more detailed proposed steps are listed in the overall programme matrix in the final section of this document (see Figure 6.4, Outline programme of regeneration activity).



## 5.2 ENVIRONMENT AND DESIGN

### Aim

**High quality built and natural environment which is distinctive, coherent and legible, and presents a positive identity of Twechar village.**

The risk for the village is that ad hoc development may be secured, each portion of which tries to develop its own competing identity on separate land parcels.

It is absolutely crucial that there is a structuring design code to co-ordinate the design and layout and appearance of the village as a whole, incorporating guidance for built form and landscape treatments. Together with a maintenance regime, this is part of the quality upgrade required for both existing and future housing areas.

### PROPOSALS

- a development layout master plan and code to guide overall structure and relationships. this should include open space, road and street layouts, widths and typologies (including parking arrangements, tree planting, treatment to verges, etc)
- a building design and materials code to ensure the quality and character of the buildings are consistent and co-ordinated. this should indicate preferred materials, general form and frontage relationships.
- an open spaces strategy to enhance the village, including an appropriate landscape and planting strategy. This should be worked up with strong community involvement to continue strengthening village identity



Contemporary Scottish housing at the Drum, Bo'ness (above and below)





Contemporary Scottish housing - above Coulmakyle (courtesy Malcolm Fraser Architects) below - Irvine housing (courtesy Wren)



- a signing strategy for both internal village activity (eg by foot and cycle), together with one for visitors which takes account of heritage attractions and leisure routes along the canal and into the woodlands. Again, this should be worked up in association with the community and implemented as an easy early measure.

### Lead players

East Dunbartonshire Council departments,  
Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire,  
British Waterways, community.

### Key early actions

Prepare briefs to scope the additional tasks



## 5.3 LOCAL SERVICES

### Aim

**Progressive investment in the locality to attract and retain residents and visitors of all ages.**

These measures are aimed at securing the existing village population and meeting the needs of future households, including:

- the renovation and expansion of the recreation centre to improve its use and central role as a hub of the community, including healthy living and enterprise centre functions, as currently being proposed in the Centre business plan and associated planning proposals. This would augment the role of the centre and bring important additional functions into the village as part of a cluster of community support.
- new shops, which will be required over time to support changing needs, as the population rises. This will need to be carefully planned to meet the needs of future households – as well as existing. Ideally the planning of this should be part of the first phase redevelopment of the Coal Board housing.
- a protected and improved school. This is central to the needs and aspirations of the community, not least if new families are to be attracted, and existing ones retained. There will need to be an explicit protection policy for the period when numbers drop a little before they rise again.
- new play spaces – partly linked to new housing provision

– but also as part of an upgrade of existing neighbourhoods. These should be planned in conjunction with young people and nearby householders in accordance with contemporary good practice.



Contemporary Scottish school - above Cornbank Primary Nursery School (courtesy Malcolm Fraser Architects) below - community shop

### Lead players

East Dunbartonshire Council departments, Communities Scotland, Community), (Groundwork or equivalent)

### Key early actions

Identify core commitments in operating plans  
Identify preferred locations



## 5.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Aim

**To address hidden unemployment and future growth needs with entry level employment and training: preventing a dormitory-only village, whilst maintaining a quality residential village character.**

There is no evidence of a huge jobs deficit in Twechar. The village has relatively easy access to centres of employment in Cumbernauld, Kirkintilloch, Kilsyth and the wider Glasgow/Lanarkshire travel-to-work area, and the level of claimant count unemployment is small in absolute terms.

The proposed moderate growth scenario is intended to be achieved primarily by attracting and retaining people of working age who are in employment in the travel-to-work area. New/retained residents will not generate any significant demand for employment opportunities in the immediate locality. Nevertheless, the availability of a small pool of local jobs (on the Enterprise Park and elsewhere) is useful, although they will not all be filled by residents of Twechar.

However, there is some evidence of hidden unemployment, which is typically associated with communities where there is poverty and exclusion. The 2001 Census showed that there were about 60 unemployed people in the village, and a further 220 who were unable to work because of sickness/disability or other reasons. If a third of these are keen/willing to work (this is consistent with survey findings among non-claimant unemployed in Edinburgh) there may be a group of say 120-130

residents out of work but seeking employment: about 10% of the population of the village. This level of claimant/non-claimant unemployment is high, but not exceptionally so for central Scotland.

We can reasonably infer that this group includes a high proportion of people who face significant barriers to work, because they have few or no qualifications and low skill levels, or do not have access to a car.

The jobless cohort will fall into various categories, including:

- the job-ready or near job-ready, capable of securing and keeping a job, but perhaps facing practical barriers (transport access, childcare etc)
- people who are eager to find work, but who need to develop basic and core skills, build their confidence or acquire workplace disciplines
- people with positive attitudes to work, but who are a long way from work-ready: this group includes people with drink, drugs and behavioural problems.

The expectation must be that there is a significant mismatch between available jobs in the travel to work area and the skills/aspirations/expectations of jobless residents. For example, more than half the adult residents of the village have no qualifications. It is reasonable to assume that many of those seeking work will be looking for low-skilled, low-wage entry level jobs, and

that some people will need training or work experience before entering/returning to the labour market. In these circumstances it is reasonable to assume that:

- some local residents would benefit from the creation of new jobs in the Twechar area, and
- there would be some demand for local training and/or intermediate labour market opportunities, or jobs in a community business.

Without specific survey work it is not possible to quantify the level of demand in the latter category, but it might be in the region of 20-25 places; spare capacity could be taken up by eligible people from the wider area.

The aim should be to provide local jobs by attracting small businesses that will:

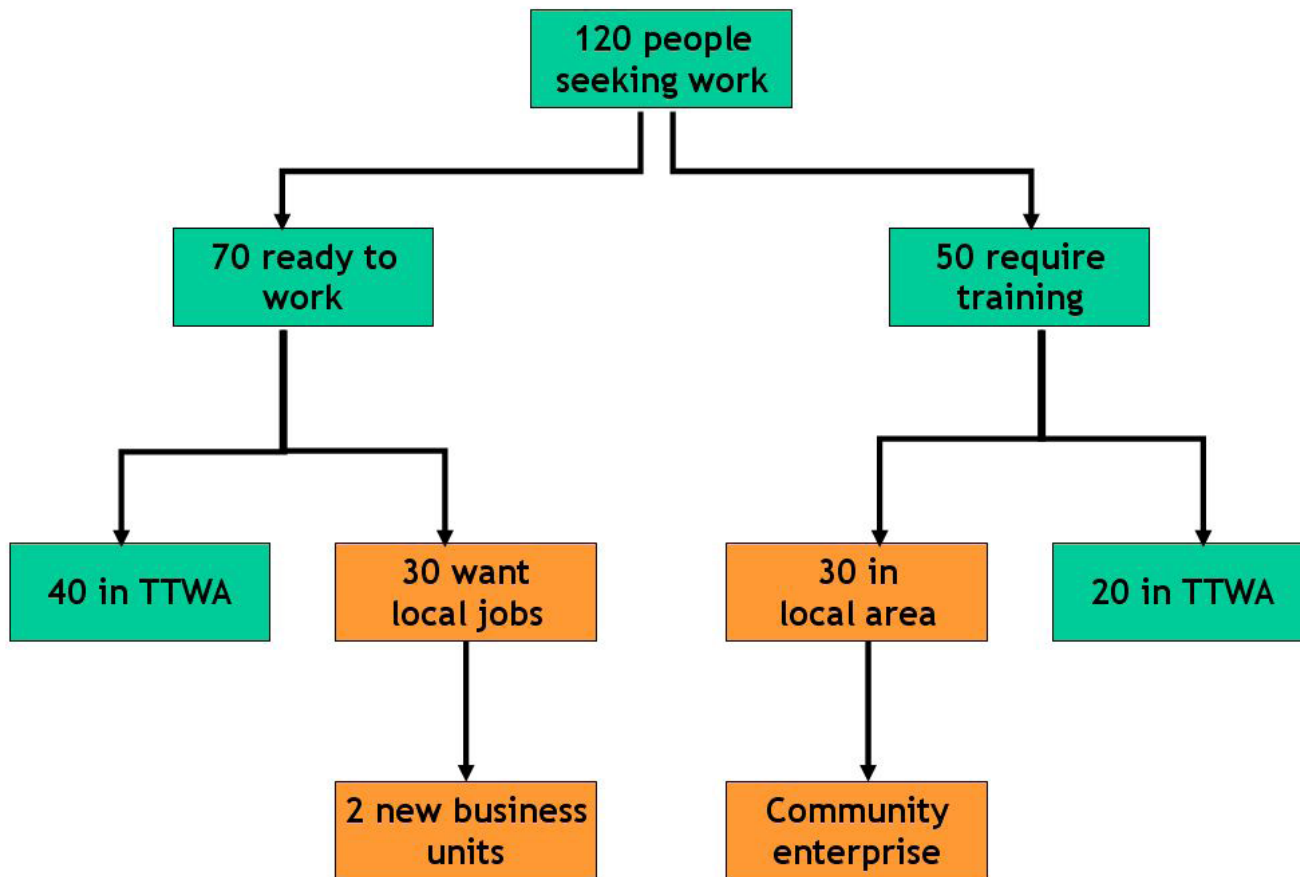
- provide entry-level jobs suitable for jobless local residents
- carry out good neighbour activities that do not have a negative impact on the environment or generate significant additional traffic.

### Proposals

- extension of the existing employment area to create new business units. There is a case for completing the development of the vacant plots at the Enterprise Park, and



## Local jobs and training



for reserving one site for a training operation/community business. It is important that the form of development and type of economic activity are appropriate and consistent with community aspirations for the village and the expectations of prospective new residents, and not in conflict with the objectives of this strategy.

- community enterprise and training. Projects under consideration include a boat building and repair facility and/or a canalside visitor centre which would showcase the area's history – from the Antonine Wall, to the canal and coal mining – with a café for walkers, cyclists and boat users. Because such projects are unlikely to be commercially viable,



boat building skills

the appraisal process needs to take account of ongoing revenue costs and to identify funding sources.

- a waste electrical and electronic equipment recycling (WEEE) facility has been proposed, possibly making use of the canal to deliver feedstock from the greater Glasgow area. The facility would be located in or near the village, and would need to be a 'good neighbour' development, with attractive design, minimum negative impacts and real direct employment benefits.

It is estimated that a large (6100 sq m building, plus a yard) facility could create up to 57 jobs, plus 35 trainee places. In terms of the current demographic profile of Twechar there appears to be a good fit between these unskilled/semi-skilled manual jobs and the local workforce. The appeal of the WEEE facility is clear, although there is no guarantee that all the jobs would be taken up by local people. However, the business case is acknowledged to be uncertain and the project is extremely sensitive.

There is a risk that the scale of and form development could have a negative impact on the village environment, compounded by



electrical waste recycling



additional road freight traffic. Both the business case and the likely environmental impact must be evaluated carefully before any decision is taken to proceed.

### Key players

East Dunbartonshire Council,  
Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire,  
community, private sector,  
Communities Scotland



The WEEE Man - contemporary sculpture made from electrical and electronic components



## 5.5 CANALSIDE PROPOSALS

### Aim

**To make much better local and strategic use of an important resource and opportunity.**

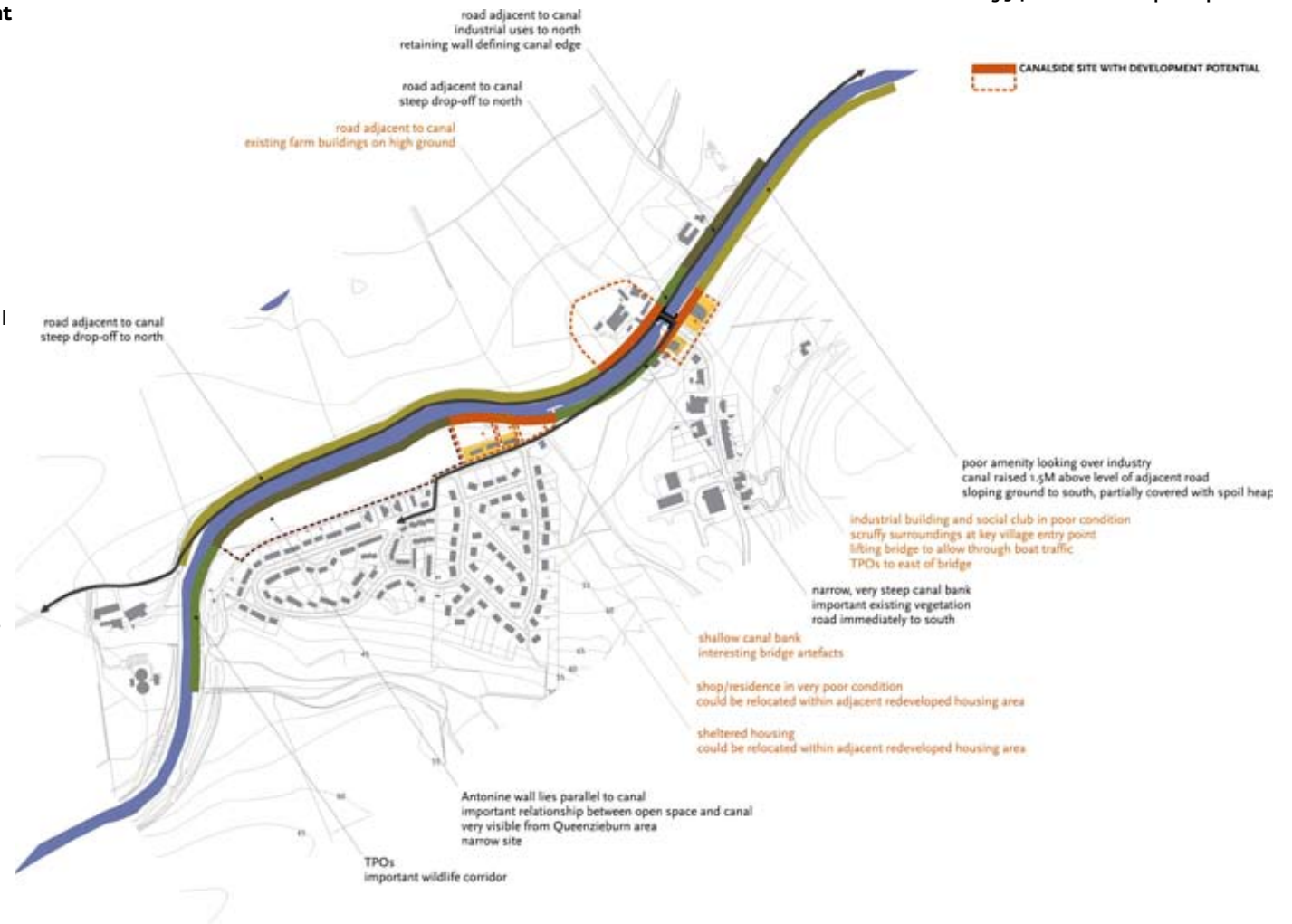
The canal and its associated landside corridor are both a transport connector and a major visual and amenity resource for the village. It presents a front door of the village to the wider world. However, as the plan shows (Figure 5.4, Canalside Development Potential) there are actually only limited opportunities to develop close to the canal edge. It will be important not to squander these, and to balance the best overall options for the village.

### Proposals

The following proposals are made for the corridor alongside the canal:

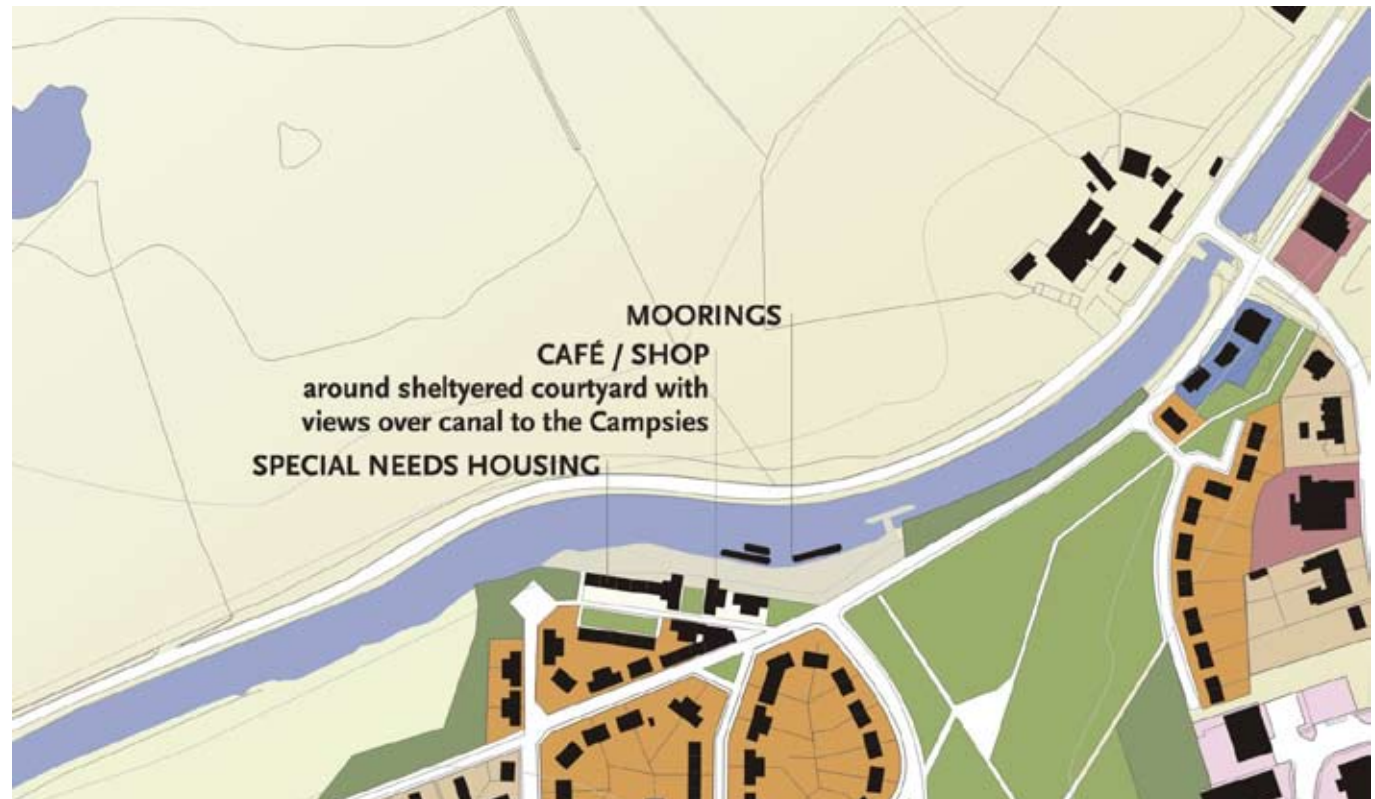
- Leisure and freight berthing on the canal planned and designed in conjunction with British Waterways. This needs early identification to secure the right berthing location, even if it is not developed in the earliest phases
- Boat repair and training, associated with the berthing, but developed as a combined ILM training and community development project. Given the limited range of opportunities in this field, Twechar could perform a wider strategic role in this regard.
- Café/pub/restaurant, in tandem with the growth of 'new' population and to help draw in leisure visitors.

Fig 5.4 Canalside development potential



This would play to the local strengths of Twechar and its canalside location, and also help to draw in visitors, in the same manner that The Stables does further along the canal. However, this can only happen in tandem with new population, and should not be at the expense of existing village facilities.

- A heritage/visitor centre to display the unique heritage of the village and its surroundings. This could be relatively low key – in conjunction with the proposed café or similar enterprise. It is consistent with Twechar's status as one of the minor development nodes on the Forth & Clyde Canal, close to Kirkintilloch, Scotland's canal capital, providing a range of basic services/facilities for walkers, cyclists and boat users. It could complement commercial development such as a canal-side pub, but it is not a commercial proposition in itself. It could provide a useful training/intermediate labour market (ILM) vehicle, with revenue earning elements such as a café. A well-designed centre could add to the attractiveness and amenity of the canal, and attract additional visits.
- A recycling centre, possibly in the village, or perhaps more usefully away from the core (see previous section)
- Some high value housing at or near the canal, both to create value and to display a strong external edge and image to the wider Kelvin Valley. This is likely to be an alternative to some of the aforementioned ideas, but may be attractive to a developer of the wider village core – providing an external landmark of image upgrade.



All these proposals require additional detailed planning and development to ensure optimum fit along the canalside.

### Key players

East Dunbartonshire Council, British Waterways, the community.

### EARLY PROJECTS

Identify berthing potential and activity to be associated with it



## 6.6 TRANSPORT

### Aim

**To enhance the connectedness, liveability and safety of the village, including prioritising support for those without regular access to a car.**

Approximately half the households do not have access to the car. Of those who do, one family member is likely to use the car for commuting for most of the weekday and therefore other family members will not have access to a car.

The limited number of facilities within the village means that access to a good bus service and the ability to afford the bus fares are crucial issues for the majority of residents.

### Proposals

- Progressively negotiate - in light of the growing population – strengthened local bus services to key destinations (including Croy station), to assist access to jobs, services and education. The growth strategy strengthens the case for at least maintaining the existing level of service and opens up the opportunity for better services to be provided, both in terms of frequency and the range of destinations served. A growth strategy could allow further improvement to the bus service, and is not expected to be constrained by traffic volume issues.
- The short-term objectives should be to maintain the service to Kirkintilloch and Kilsyth and to add a scheduled service to Croy station and Cumbernauld.
- Negotiate the reduction of through freight lorries and their negative impact on the village. The amount of HGV traffic passing along the main street deserves to be addressed. Work planned by the Council under its road maintenance programme is welcomed. Further measures would be beneficial. A ‘management’ solution may be possible if major local traffic generators (notably RMC and Biffa) would be willing and able to re-route HGV traffic that is under their managerial control. Should this not prove effective, a weight limit on the bridge over the canal could be considered. If traffic calming on the main street is deemed necessary a ‘road-hump’ solution may not be welcomed due to the additional noise produced by HGVs negotiating these objects, so other visually based forms of calming will be needed.
- Consideration should also be given to the specific location of any development generating HGV traffic so that such traffic does not need to pass along the main street or penetrate the residential areas.
- Adopt and enforce ‘twenty’s plenty’ in key locations across most of the village. This should include both sensitive areas near the school but also virtually all of the residential areas too.
- Strengthen the links and signing to national and local cycle and footpath/towpath networks. Upgrading the links or improving maintenance will not be worthwhile without complementary initiatives to secure enhanced usage by locals and visitors.

### Key players

East Dunbartonshire Council (Roads, Planning), community, bus operators, HGV operators.





## 6.6 BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

### Aim

Build on the existing strengths of the community with training to bring added skills in regeneration

The various stakeholder and community meetings indicated a large level of support for the regeneration proposals, but also a need to bring the community alongside in devising, implementing and managing some of the projects and processes.

There is already a fair level of commitment, enthusiasm and capability in the community, but the aim is to strengthen this in terms of skills and management and broaden the base of community participants.

### Proposal

The proposal is to support the wide nature of regeneration with a training and skills development initiative, to ensure the projects are not 'done to' the community, but are rather part of a constructive partnership. They would be in topics such as:

- development – including construction, procurement, costs etc
- management – both at a general level, but particularly project level
- partnering – with different agencies, with the aim of being effective
- being an effective client – to get the most out of, for instance consultants or contractors

- lobbying – to secure appropriate solutions, funds, outcomes
- design and environment – to ensure the right concepts, standards, and place outcomes are being sought and delivered.

### Key players

Community, Communities Scotland, East Dunbartonshire Council, advisers/trainers as appropriate.





## section 6

# implementation

### 6.1 Development costs

The costs of the regeneration masterplan arise from five main areas, as indicated in Figure 6.1, Indicative Development Costs. They are indicative costs at this stage – based on estimates from comparable projects in Central Scotland.

**Figure 6.1 Indicative Development Costs**

Assembly of land and buildings (including Right To Buy Properties)	UNKNOWN
Demolitions and site preparation	£1.2 Million
Masterplan and detailed design	£0.2 Million
Legal	£0.2 Million
Construction of new housing – mix of tenures and types (Assume 60 affordable, 320 owner occupied)	£32 Million
Non residential development	£5-10 Million
Non development costs - training, maintenance etc	£300-700k
Other studies, support etc	£200-300k
PROJECT TEAM	£100-200k per annum

The precise allocation of these depends upon:

- the detailed design and construction costs – once the next level of design and masterplanning has been completed
- the precise role of development partners (and who carries which commitments and risk – eg the developer),
- the timescale and rate of development, as well as
- the implications of any detailed ground condition surveys, bearing in mind a degree of uncertainty about ground stability in many areas around the village. (at this stage this does not preclude development – but rather may add a cost in land preparation. this is indeterminate at this stage and would need to be subject to individual site investigations).

### 6.2 Receipts

There will of course be receipts, arising from sales and also from rental income. Our recommendation is for a Joint Venture mechanism with a mechanism to share profit – devised in such a way as to incentivise all parties. This means that the profit share element may be modest to begin with but, if the right scheme is being designed to be attractive to a range of occupiers, the profit share should rise over time.



With good design and a good first phase mix, the aim is to see values and the desirability of the project increase once Twechar becomes known on the market. This kind of approach has been successfully pursued recently at The Drum development in Bo'ness.

So much depends on the combination of the mix and the quality of the housing and neighbourhood design that we cannot assess the likely uplift in values at this stage.

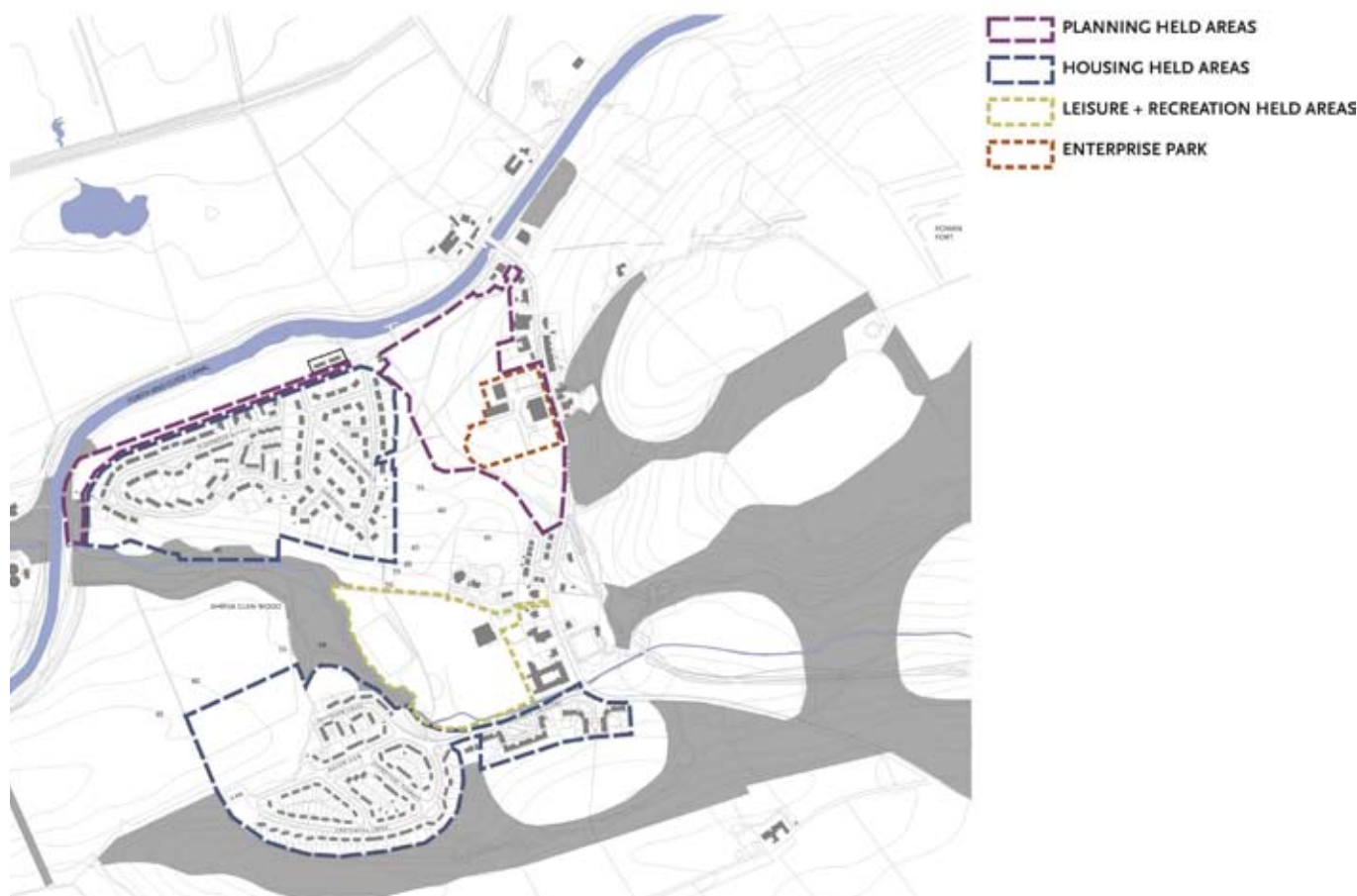
## 6.2 DELIVERY MECHANISM

### LAND OWNERSHIP

Because virtually all of the key land ownership is under Council control - as shown on Figure 6.2, Council Land Ownership - it should be possible to move quickly and in an integrated manner on the key projects.

Discussions have been held with some of the key adjoining owners - such as Gartshore Estates and British Waterways - and this would need to be extended to any other parties who may be directly affected by the proposals, ideally before a developer partner is signed up.

Fig 6.2 East Dunbartonshire Council Land Ownership



Various options for an appropriate regeneration vehicle have been explored and tested with stakeholders. The main considerations were:

- the potential mechanism for cross-partner support including ability to use policy, powers and resources
- the means to evolve a formal partnership to lock in the key players in mutual support, including the community
- securing the trust of developers and RSLs
- accessing the lion's share of the land required for regeneration
- prioritising resources, project direction, co-ordination and management
- securing and distributing funding; receipts also important
- the potential need for a local presence and locally committed 'team'

Options examined included:

- Urban Regeneration Company (URC)
- A Joint Venture Company Model (JV)
- Community Development/Land Trust
- Local Partnership Model

These are not necessarily mutually exclusive options.

### **Option 1 Urban Regeneration Company**

This involves the creation of a new 'dedicated' regeneration vehicle, separate from the Council, and supported by the Scottish Executive.

The benefits of this approach include the creation of a critical mass of focused technical and financial commitment, capable of funding major infrastructure and redevelopment.

Potential disbenefits include the question as to whether this provides any real additional resources, whilst at the same time 'giving away' Council control and land assets. Because it involves the creation of a completely new vehicle, this approach may lose the commitment of some other partners over time.

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges is that the project is not necessarily of a scale and critical mass to secure Scottish Executive support.

### **Option 2: Joint Venture**

This variant would involve the selection of a lead developer, probably in association with a housing association/RSL partner. The benefit of this is the critical mass of financial commitment and muscle which this would provide to focus on development delivery.

There may be some additional capability to assist with resources to fund infrastructure.

The main disbenefits are that it appears to shift both the risk and reward of the whole project. It involves giving away considerable control, as well as land.

The delivery depends on market cycle fluctuations, and there are likely to be concerns about securing and maintaining quality across the different phasing stages while the project is substantially in the control of a developer.

### **Option 3: Community/Land Trust**

This option would involve vesting the key land in a Community Trust, effectively as a dowry, from which new investment and management would be generated through capital receipts and charges.

The trust would dispose of the land progressively, aiming to raise values over time through improvements and quality place-making.

A key benefit of this approach lies in capturing the value (through receipts) locally within the village.

This also offers the opportunity of having strong community input and even control.

A potential disbenefit of this more localized and 'bottom up' approach is that it may not generate the same level of (or indeed any) market interest from the development sector.

It may not be taken seriously by these players, and may not be in a position to fund and manage major reclamation or infrastructure projects.

This approach also involves a loss of control from the Council, including some of the key housing assets.

#### Option 4 Local Partnership

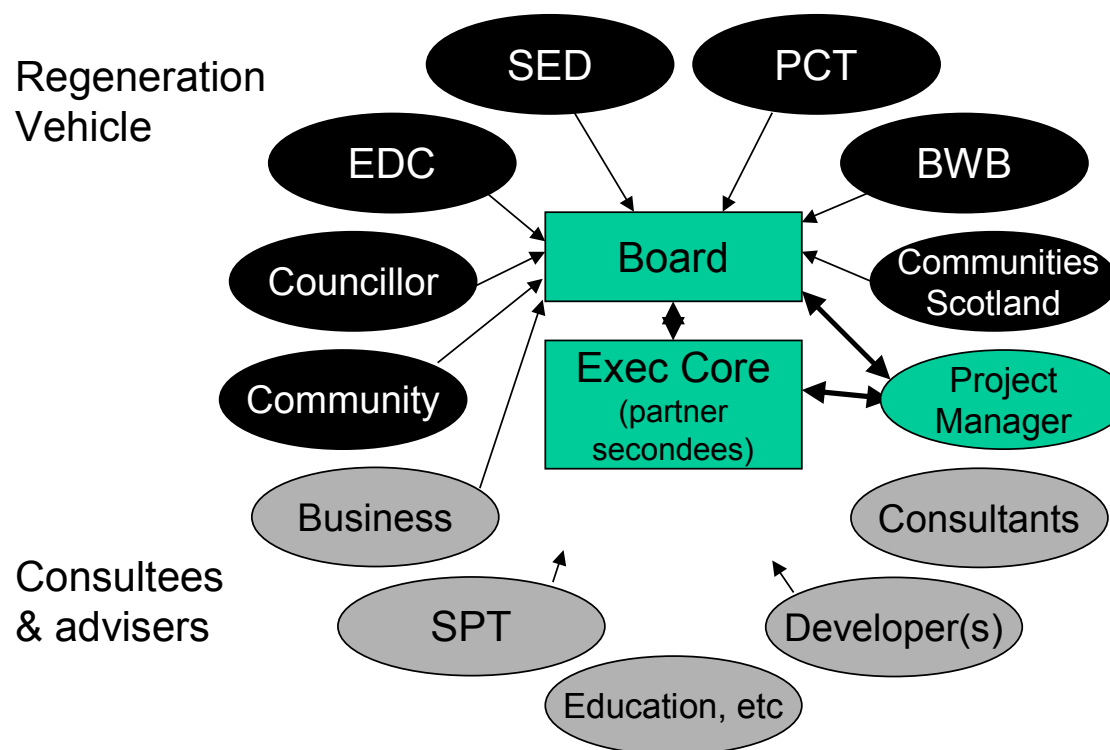
This involvement combines some of the benefits of the others, but minimizes the risk of handing all the responsibility primarily to one party.

The partnership would be integrated through a shared operating plan and could even be formalized into a company limited by guarantee.

The benefits of this mechanism are the inclusion and equal commitment of all the key players and their resources and powers. It also provides for a real and constructive community role, whilst allowing for one or more developers to participate as a delivery partner within an agreed framework.

The risk in this model lies in the variety of partners that have policies and political leadership which can change. In addition it depends upon the goodwill of partners, especially a commitment to running costs. The challenge is around how it can capture and recycle value within the locality, when so many of its constituent organisations have other policy or locational priorities.

Fig 6.3 Possible Partnership Model





### FIGURE 6.3 POSSIBLE PARTNERSHIP MODEL PROPOSAL

The recommendation is for a form of partnership mechanism, combining the Council, Scottish Enterprise, Communities Scotland and British Waterways as key funding partners (see Figure 6.3, Possible Partnership Model)

The partnership should align itself with the community planning process and structures locally, and should include a strong level of community representation, together with local councillor representation on the board.

Additional parties, such as the Primary Care Trust, could usefully be involved. There will need to be a relationship with one or more developers and RSLs to provide housing and other facilities – but they should not necessarily be represented on the board in the first instance.

By including the Council – as a major landowner, as well as statutory body – the partnership should aim to create, capture and recycle a proportion of capital and revenue receipts locally.

The project steering group should operate as an interim board until the new partnership board is established. Suggestions for how to progress and activate the Twechar Regeneration Partnership are listed below.

### NEXT STEPS

Suggested next steps include:

1. Review of draft report by partners – secure support (eg planning and housing investment plan) and make any amendments
2. Steering group to reconvene as 'interim board'
3. Appoint project manager and second support team
4. Prepare memorandum of agreement and commitment (5-7 years)
5. Update vision, purpose, principles, operating plan
6. Confirm legal status to undertake activity, such as direct employment
7. Prepare financial appraisal – to be reviewed independently
8. Agree mechanism to capture/recycle receipts/revenues locally
9. Commission next stage of detailed planning and design

– including codes and ground conditions on early sites

The manner in which this integrates with the later aspects of regeneration listed in the proposals is shown in overleaf in Figure 6.4, Outline programme of regeneration activity.

**Figure 6.4 Outline programme of regeneration activity**

Regeneration Programme periods	Non-Housing activity	Housing activity
<b>Period 0-6 months, Year 1</b>	<p>Steering group to reconvene as 'interim board'</p> <p>Appoint project manger and second support team</p> <p>Prepare memorandum of agreement and commitment (5-7 years)</p> <p>Update vision, purpose, principles, operating plan</p> <p>Identify &amp; align core commitments in operating plans</p> <p>Complete business plan review of WEEE recycling facility</p> <p>Identify preferred locations for different activities (pre- planning submission)</p> <p>Identify berthing potential and activity to be associated with it</p> <p>Confirm legal status to undertake activity, such as direct employment</p> <p>Prepare financial appraisal – to be reviewed independently</p> <p>Agree mechanism to capture/recycle receipts/revenues locally</p> <p>Procure developments partner(s)</p> <p>Create Partnership Regeneration vehicle</p> <p>Plan community capacity training</p>	<p>Assess detailed impact on Housing Investment business plan</p> <p>Trial bores on key sites</p>

<b>Period 7-12 months, Year 1</b>	<p>Commission next stage of detailed planning and design – including design and layout codes and ground conditions on early sites</p> <p>Commence community capacity training</p>	<p>Prepare detailed master plan &amp; outline phasing</p> <p>Detailed consultation with affected householders</p> <p>Secure planning permission</p> <p>Plan detailed decant &amp; redevelopment strategy</p> <p>Stop lettings in housing planned for demolition</p>
<b>Year 2</b>	Prepare a Community Charter with the local community	<p>Commence decant &amp; demolitions – 50 units Council</p> <p>Commence new build – 40 units social rented</p>
<b>Year 3</b>		<p>Decant &amp; demolitions – 50 units Council</p> <p>New Build – 20 units social rented</p> <p>New Build – 100 units private</p>
<b>Year 4</b>		<p>Decant and demolitions – 40 units Council</p> <p>New Build – 100 units private</p>
<b>Year 5</b>		<p>Decant and demolitions – 33 council</p> <p>Decant and demolitions – 9 RTB</p> <p>New Build – 80 units private</p>
<b>Year 6</b>		New Build – 40 units private





## section 7

# appendices

### **Appendix 1: Key stakeholder consultees**

Aitken, Alan, East Dunbartonshire Council

Breslin, Christopher, British Waterways Scotland

Burns, Mary, Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire

Cromrie, Sandra, former Twechar Recreation Centre Manager

Denney, Elizabeth, Twechar Primary School

Dickson, Fiona, East Dunbartonshire Council

Dickie, Eleanor, Communities Scotland

Ewen, Alistair, East Dunbartonshire Council

Goodstadt, Vincent, Glasgow and Clyde Valley Structure Plan  
Team

Gray, John, East Dunbartonshire Council

McDonald, Angus, Communities Scotland

McGhie, Crawford, East Dunbartonshire Council

Robin, John, Strathclyde Passenger Transport Moir, Alan,  
Councillor

Moyes, Allan, East Dunbartonshire Council

Nicol, Joyce, East Dunbartonshire Council

Riddell, Joan, East Dunbartonshire Council Simmons, John, East  
Dunbartonshire Council

Sandra Sutton, Community Activist, Twechar Recreation Centre  
Manager

Shaw, Karen, East Dunbartonshire Council

Thomson, Andrew, Strathkelvin Development Company

Trueman, Spenser, Strathclyde Police

Walker, Brian, East Dunbartonshire Council

## Appendix 2: References

### Documents referred to in the text

- <sup>1</sup> East Dunbartonshire Council, Twechar 2001 Census Bulletin, 2003
- <sup>2</sup> East Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership, Twechar Area Profile [extract from Draft Regeneration Outcome Agreement]
- <sup>3</sup> East Dunbartonshire Council, Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire, East Dunbartonshire Enterprise Trust, An Economic Development Framework for East Dunbartonshire, October 2000
- <sup>4</sup> East Dunbartonshire Council, Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire, East Dunbartonshire Enterprise Trust, An Economic Development Framework for East Dunbartonshire, October 2002
- <sup>5</sup> Twechar Community Action, Twechar Healthy Living and Enterprise Centre: Business Plan January 2004-March 2007, December 2003
- <sup>6</sup> EnviroCentre Ltd, Feasibility Study for a Twechar Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Recycling & Reprocessing Facility (Report for East Dunbartonshire Council, June 2004
- <sup>7</sup> East Dunbartonshire Council: Stock Condition Survey, Valuation and Options Appraisal Study. Draft Final Report, Kirkintilloch, 2003
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## **The Steering Group**

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Eleanor Dickie, Communities Scotland  
Alistair Ewen, East Dunbartonshire Council  
John Gray, East Dunbartonshire Council  
Angus McDonald, Communities Scotland  
Crawford McGhie, East Dunbartonshire Council  
Alan Moir, East Dunbartonshire Council  
Councillor Allan Moyes, East Dunbartonshire Council  
Joyce Nicol, East Dunbartonshire Council  
Karen Shaw, East Dunbartonshire Council  
Sandra Sutton, Community Representative, Twechar Recreation Centre Manager



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