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**To: Planning and Property Policy Board**

**On: 10 March 2015**

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**Report by: Director of Development and Housing Services**

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**Heading: Semple Trail Heritage Project: Update**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report seeks to update Members on the good progress of the Semple Trail Heritage Project and provide an overview of forthcoming works the delivery of which is being led by Development & Housing Services in partnership with a range of Council services and partners agencies.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board
- (i) Note the progress made to date on the Semple Trail Heritage Project
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## **3. Background**

- 3.1 Following approval by the Planning and Economic Development Policy Board in 2010 to develop the Semple Trail Heritage Project, a funding package of £860,000 was secured to create an area of heritage distinction through the consolidation and improvement of infrastructure and heritage assets around Castle Semple Loch, Lochwinnoch (see attached plan).
- 3.2 Now in its final year of delivery, the Semple Trail Heritage Project is progressing well with a significant proportion of the investment delivered in the creation of improved 'Heritage Destinations'. Funding is drawn from a variety of organisations including the Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic

Scotland, Renfrewshire LEADER and Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. Some of the headline achievements to date include:

- The creation of a new path which links Johnshill to Parkhill Wood
  - The installation of interpretative and orientation features to promote areas of interest and encourage visitor exploration;
  - The delivery of the hugely successful 'Windows on Wildlife' (WoW) project which delivered workshops to more than 1,500 school pupils over a 2 year period and achieved regional media interest, and;
  - The delivery of a programme of workshops and skills events by the Council's Arts and Museums Service and Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park to over 500 individuals.
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#### **4. Next Steps**

- 4.1 Over the coming months, significant repair and maintenance works will be carried out to the cascades, ice house, cave and grotto (all features of the original designed landscape) to make them more attractive as heritage features.
  - 4.2. A second phase of infrastructure improvements will take place to improve paths in the RSPB Lochwinnoch Reserve and Parkhill Wood, as well as the creation of a new path to enable access to the built heritage features listed above.
  - 4.3. A number of environmental and landscaping improvements will be made at Blackditch Bay (located approximately 1km along the loch shore from Castle Semple Visitor Centre) including the eradication of invasive non-native plant species in an effort to restore the historic characteristics of the designed landscape.
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#### **5. Project Timescale**

- 5.1. In November 2014 Heritage Lottery Fund approved the change to the project end date from June 2015 to December 2015 to better accommodate the programme for built heritage works and improvements to Blackditch Bay. This extension has no effect on overall project cost and merely ensures that all agreed outcomes are met.
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#### **Implications of the Report**

- 1. **Financial** - The Semple Trail Heritage Project will be delivered within approved budgets and secured external grant funding.
- 2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
- 3. **Community Planning** –

- **Greener** - The Semple Trail Heritage project will enhance the natural environment of the area by creating and improving natural habitats in line with the Local Biodiversity Action Plan
  - **Jobs and the Economy** - The Semple Trail Heritage project will contribute to economic development opportunities for businesses in the Lochwinnoch and Howwood areas through increased visitor numbers
4. **Legal** – none
  5. **Property/Assets** – none
  6. **Information Technology** - none
  7. **Equality & Human Rights** -  
 (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
  8. **Health & Safety** – none
  9. **Procurement** – all goods/services required during the delivery of this project are subject to Renfrewshire Council's procurement regulations as well as any additional requirements stipulated by project funders.
  10. **Risk** – none
  11. **Privacy Impact** - none

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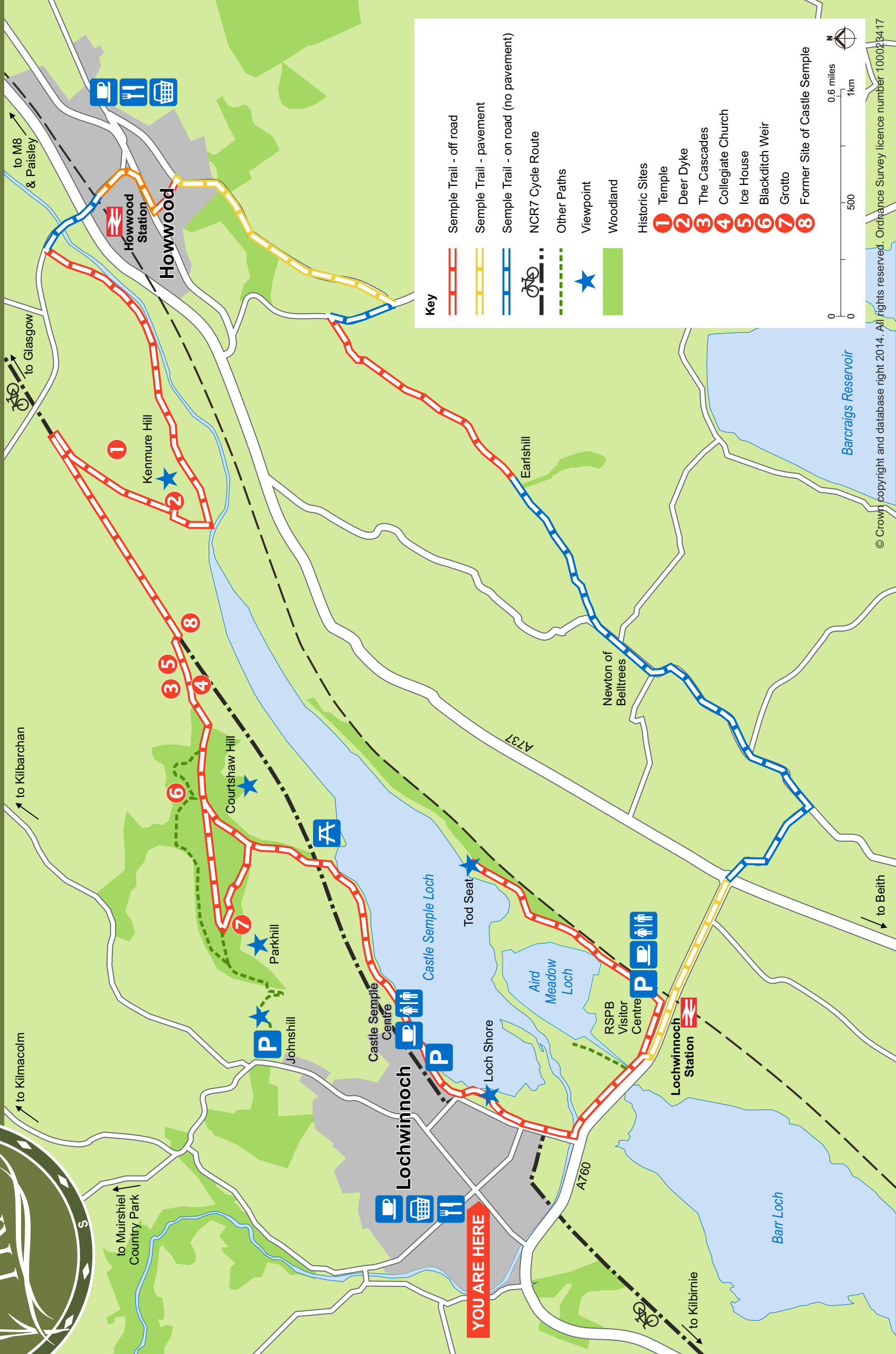
#### **List of Background Papers**

- a) Report to Planning and Property Policy Board: 13<sup>th</sup> May 2014 'Local Green Network Projects 2014/15'
  - b) Report to Planning and Economic Development Policy Board: 6<sup>th</sup> June 2012 'Semple Trail Heritage Project Funding Awards'
  - c) Report to Planning and Economic Development Policy Board: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011 'Semple Trail Heritage Project – Implementation and Funding Applications'.
  - d) Report to Planning and Economic Development Policy Board: 10<sup>th</sup> August 2010 'Semple Trail Heritage Project – Heritage Lottery Fund Award'
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# DISCOVER THE SEMPLE TRAIL



Take a walk along the 14.4 km (9 mile) circular trail around the Castle Sempole area to discover its secrets and experience its different moods. The route has a number of loops for shorter strolls.

Three great families left their mark over the centuries, even changing the loch's water levels to create fields and to power mills. You can discover their pleasure grounds at the Temple, Grotto and Cascades or visit the Collegiate Church, their private chapel and burial ground.

Picnic on the shore, visit a RSPB hide, climb up to the viewpoints and explore the loop paths through the woods. The scenery is always changing as the Trail moves from woodland and farmland to shoreline and wetland. Come at different times of year to experience the seasons – spring flowers, swifts flying overhead in summer, autumn colours and winter wildfowl visitors swimming on the loch.

Walk the Sempole Trail and discover past secrets.



[www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/sempletrail](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/sempletrail)