

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 1 APRIL 2009

MAIN STREET, NEWMILNS 'OUTSTANDING' CONSERVATION AREA TOWNSHEME: 47-51 MAIN STREET, NEWMILNS, OFFER OF GRANT - ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUEST

Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the Council to offer an additional building repair grant of £10,000 under the Newmilns Townscheme to help bridge a funding gap that has occurred during the implementation of external works to the facades of 47-51 Main Street, Newmilns within the 'Outstanding' Conservation Area. The additional funding will enable a lime render to be applied to the front, side and rear elevations of the building resulting in the overall project being completed, the Conservation Area being subsequently enhanced and one retail unit and a flat brought back into active use.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Main Street, Newmilns 'Outstanding' Conservation Area Town Scheme is jointly funded by Historic Scotland and the Council and has been in operation since 2004, following on from the significant success of the Newmilns Townscape Heritage Initiative. The Town Scheme has helped to improve the visual quality of the Conservation Area as well as bringing vacant properties back into use through the grants that have been awarded.
- 2.2 47-51 Main Street, Newmilns is a two-storey flat roofed property. The property consists of three ground floor retail units, two of which are currently vacant and a second floor residential property. The external facade of the building had been left to deteriorate for several years, which had a detrimental visual impact on the Conservation Area along with the vacant units.
- 2.3 A grant of £33,000 from Historic Scotland and the Council under the Newmilns Town Scheme (£10,000 from Historic Scotland and £23,000 from the Council) was made to the owners of the property, which was accepted on 20 December 2006. The owners contributed £37,140 to the cost of the external works. The total projected project cost at that time for the external works alone was £70,140 including expenses and VAT.

- 2.4 On 1st February 2008, the owners' architects advised that the costs for the project had escalated and that the majority of these costs were unforeseen. An additional contribution of £40,000.00 was approved by Cabinet on the 23 April 2008 to bridge a funding gap at that point. The total project costs, including internal and external works, contingency, fees and VAT totalled £148,449.79 on 22nd May 2008. The owners contributed £75,449.79 towards this cost with the Council and Historic Scotland contributing £73,000 (£10,000 from Historic Scotland and £63,000 from the Council)
- 2.5 The owners' architects approached the Council on 1st September 2008 requesting a change in the render specification from lime to wet dash render. From September to December 2008, the Council were involved in detailed discussions regarding various types of cement based render specifications and samples that the architect supplied to the Council for consideration. However, after consulting a Conservation Accredited Architect and a report from the Scottish Lime Centre, the request to use a cement based render was rejected as there is a higher risk that it would fail in the short to medium term (5-10 years) after being applied to the building.
- 2.6 The Council wrote to the owners architects advising of this decision and that localised remedial reinforcement to all affected masonry cracking should be carried out as specified in the Conservation Accredited Architects report.
- 2.7 As a result of the above, the owners' architect submitted revised figures to the Council on 4th March 2009 which included the costs for the application of a lime based render. The total project costs have increased as a result of the lime based render and other unforeseen items and now stands at £175,693.47 including internal and external works, contingency, fees and VAT, giving a net deficit of £24,958.77.
- 2.8 The 2 July 2008 Cabinet agreed an indicative funding allocation to the Planning and Economic Development Project budgets including a £10,000 allocation for Building Improvement Projects. This allocation was intended to be utilised on a specific building project, but as a result of the economic downturn the project is no longer going to proceed. The £10,000 allocation is available therefore for an alternative building improvement grant.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Historic Scotland advised that they can contribute £10,000 towards the lime render subject to a separate Newmilns Town Scheme application being submitted and the Council matching their contribution.

- 3.2 It is proposed that East Ayrshire Council should match Historic Scotland's contribution of £10,000. The remaining £5,000 will be contributed by the owners.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no personnel implications.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Where a grant is approved under the Newmilns Town Scheme, it will be subject to standard conditions required by Historic Scotland and the Council to ensure that high quality workmanship and the objectives of the Newmilns Town Scheme are met. Additional conditions may also be attached depending on individual circumstances.
- 5.2 Offers of grant under the Newmilns Town Scheme are issued by the Solicitor to the Council following the appropriate authorisation.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The implementation of the Newmilns Town Scheme is in accordance with the Environment Policies of the East Ayrshire Local Plan.

7. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The grant support through the Newmilns Townscheme contributes to achieving the aims of the East Ayrshire Community Plan: Improving Opportunities and Improving the Environment Themes. The Newmilns Townscheme will also contribute towards meeting the draft aims and aspirations of the 'Delivering Community Regeneration' Action Plan which is currently being prepared.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 Without this additional funding the property at 47-51 Main Street, Newmilns will be incomplete and will detract from the character and appearance of the Main Street, Newmilns 'Outstanding' Conservation Area.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Cabinet is asked to:
- (i) approve an additional Newmilns Townscheme grant of £10,000 towards the application of a lime render to 47-51 Main Street, on the basis of £10,000 match funding from Historic Scotland and an additional £5,000 from the owners..

Elizabeth Morton
Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

11 March 2009 (AMcG/SA)

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Cabinet paper of 23 April 2009 - Main Street, Newmilns 'Outstanding' Conservation Area Town Scheme: 47-51 Main Street, Newmilns, Offer of Grant – Additional Funding Request

Members wishing further information should contact Colin McKee, Heritage Projects Co-ordinator, on 01563 576759 or Antony McGuinness, Planning Officer, on 01563 576757.

Implementation Officer: Alan Neish, Head of Planning and Economic Development.