

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING – 2 JULY 2008

**CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME (CARS) FOR CUMNOCK
CONSERVATION AREA**

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of Cabinet to enable a bid for grant assistance to establish a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) for Cumnock Conservation Area to be submitted to Historic Scotland.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Historic Scotland has recently announced that additional funding has been made available for further area-based regeneration and conservation initiatives to be established. Funds are available for Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS) or to support an approved Heritage Lottery funded Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI).
- 2.2 Historic Scotland designated the Cumnock Conservation Area in November 1974, and it was extended in May 1995 by Cumnock and Doon Valley District Council. Cumnock Conservation Area contains 35 of the 41 listed buildings within Cumnock Town Centre. Environmental improvements were carried out in the area between 1993 and 1996; however, there has been minimal investment within the last 12 years in the area's historic fabric and many of the buildings within the conservation area require significant investment.
- 2.3 As a means of addressing the decline of the town centre, East Ayrshire and its partners have now agreed a Cumnock Town Centre Regeneration masterplan based on the area around the existing Glaisnock Shopping Centre. This plan includes the development of a new office building, the provision of a supermarket, the modernisation and upgrading of the shopping centre and the development of additional car parking, and an improved traffic management system.
- 2.4 In addition to the above, Dumfries House, one of Britain's most beautiful stately homes, is located near Cumnock. Built between 1754 and 1760 by the Adam brothers for the 5th Earl of Dumfries and with a unique collection of Chippendale furniture the House has been described as an 18th Century time-capsule. The building and its contents have remained virtually unchanged for 250 years. In June 2007, HRH the Duke of Rothesay, headed a consortium of charities and heritage bodies to purchase this unique house, its contents and adjoining land to keep this historical jewel intact and open it to the public. A charitable trust was formed to take forward the important work of preserving this cultural treasure for future generations. The House, which is

renowned as one of the UK's most important 18th Century classical houses, opened its doors to visitors on 6th June 2008.

- 2.5 With the anticipated influx of tourists into the area to visit Dumfries House there is a need to maximise the potential of Cumnock Town Centre to attract more visitors. A Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme for Cumnock Conservation Area will assist greatly in achieving this. Additionally, as part of the package to rescue Dumfries House the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment has formulated a masterplan for a major extension of Cumnock to the north of the town centre following design principles developed at Poundbury, Dorset. Known as "Knockroon" the masterplan was developed during a five-day Enquiry by Design workshop. Working alongside the Council and local stakeholders, linkages between Knockroon and the town centre were examined to ensure that the new residents of the development would be able to access the facilities in Cumnock Town Centre and contribute to its regeneration. Improvements to the appearance and attractiveness of the conservation area will help to ensure that the benefits to Cumnock Town Centre from the "Knockroon" development is maximised. The Cumnock CARS should be seen as an important element in the wider regeneration of Cumnock and Cumnock Town Centre.

3 CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEMES (CARS)

- 3.1 Through Historic Scotland's Historic Environment Regeneration Fund up to £8 million is being made available over the next five years (2009-10 to 2014-15) to fund new CARS and THI initiatives. They anticipate the maximum award that will be made to any single local authority from the Fund being £1 million for the 5 year period.
- 3.2 Historic Scotland anticipates resources being targeted towards conservation areas:
- that have not previously benefited from CARS funding
 - that are situated out-with the cities
 - that are a recognised "priority areas" for Historic Scotland investment
 - where economic, social and physical need for financial support can be demonstrated
 - that are highlighted as being a priority for investment through Development Plans and by Community Planning Partnerships
 - where their support can be demonstrated to be adding value to any wider package of public and private investment and action
 - that are being actively managed in line with best practice set out in *Planning Advice Note 71: Conservation Area Management*; and
 - where there is evidence of strong local commitment for heritage-led regeneration.
- 3.3 The CARS is a rolling 5-year grant offer from Historic Scotland. It offers resources towards meeting the costs involved to implement a programme of repair work to the historic fabric of a conservation area, with an emphasis on building repair rather than public realm work. The scheme will fund:

- a repair programme for priority projects
- a small grants scheme (to assist, for example, home-owners or retailers)
- community engagement in its widest sense (for example, providing training opportunities in traditional skills or establishing heritage awareness programmes.
- conservation and restoration of the public realm (up to 25% of any award)
- administration costs (up to 10% of any award)

3.4 Historic Scotland has requested that bids for the CARS are submitted by the 30th September 2008. It is suggested that based on the above criteria and current project priorities a bid for CARS be made for the Cumnock Conservation Area.

3.5 The following are a list of CARS submission requirements :-

- a copy of a Conservation Area Appraisal or Conservation Area Management Plan for the area and a short summary (if available)
- a survey of vacancy levels and condition survey of properties in the area(s), including identification of repair needs and any buildings at risk
- cost Estimates or bills of quantities prepared for any of the priority buildings or Small Grant Schemes intended for action under the CARS
- valuation Advice on any priority buildings that may receive CARS grant assistance
- photographs of possible priority buildings and sites under a proposed CARS
- letters of support from any potential funding partners
- production of a economic and market appraisal to demonstrate the economic and social need for support through the CARS
- its fit with Development Plan Policies, Community Plan, wider investment programmes, and other action to address the regeneration and conservation needs of the area(s) concerned
- identification of staff and overheads required to manage the Cumnock CARS
- identification of complimentary activities to increase understanding of the Conservation Area and improve conservation skills
- summary of any associated funding bid
- identification of the scope and purpose of the proposed CARS, including priority buildings & sites and the action proposed for them
- a projected breakdown of expenditure.

3.6 To date a Conservation Area Appraisal or Conservation Area Management Plan has not been prepared for Cumnock Conservation Area. It is, therefore, proposed that a draft Conservation Area Appraisal should be produced by consultants as part of the CARS submission.

4. **APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANTS TO PREPARE CARS.**

4.1 To undertake the works identified in paragraph 3.5 for the Cumnock Conservation Area it is considered necessary to appoint a team led by a RIAS accredited architect with specialist knowledge and experience in relation to

repairing listed buildings and Historic Scotland's and Heritage Lottery Fund's grant requirements. The team will require to be appointed and the necessary work completed prior to the submission date of 30th September 2008.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 To enable these bids to be progressed funding for the appointment of suitably qualified and experienced team led by a RIAS accredited architect will require to be sourced from the Fairer Scotland Fund allocation to the Restoring Communities Programme, as part of the wider regeneration of Cumnock Town Centre. It is estimated that the cost of this appointment will be between £25,000 -£50,000..
- 5.2 An, in principle, commitment of Council funding towards this scheme, to fit with Historic Scotland's initial funding cycle, is required prior to the submission of the bid. The size of the proposed Council contribution will depend on the size of the bid for funding from Historic Scotland. This will require to be the subject of a further Committee report.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Temporary additional qualified conservation staff and administration assistance would be required to deliver the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme, if the bid is successful. The costs for appointing any temporary staff would be built into any future grant funding bid.
- 6.2 These temporary posts will be approved as required under the Scheme of Delegation.

7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The duty to formulate proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas is contained within Section 63 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997..
- 7.2 The Conservation Area Appraisal for the Cumnock Conservation Area will become Supplementary Planning Guidance and a material consideration in the determination of planning applications upon its completion and approval.

8. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The East Ayrshire Community Plan's, "Improving the Environment Action Plan" aims to protect and improve the natural and built environment through sustainable development. It specifically identifies the implementation of Cumnock Town Centre Regeneration Project. The development of the Cumnock CARS can be considered to be a key element of the Cumnock Town Centre Regeneration Project.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The only significant risk resulting from this report is the cost of appointing the team of consultants to carry out the works identified in para 3.5 above.

10. RECOMMENDATION

10.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (i) Agrees that a bid to Historic Scotland for grant assistance to establish a Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes for Cumnock Conservation Area be submitted;**
- (ii) Agrees to the appointment of a consultancy team, led by a RIAS accredited architect with specialist knowledge and experience in relation to listed building repairs and Historic Scotland's grant requirements, to prepare the information identified in paragraph 3.5 at a maximum cost of £50,000;**
- (iii) Agrees in principle, to commit funding to the Cumnock CARS to enable the funding bid to be submitted but that the level of funding to be considered at a future Cabinet;**
- (iv) Agrees, in principle, to the appointment of additional temporary qualified conservation staff and associated administrative support to deliver the Cumnock CARS, if the bid is successful.**

Elizabeth Morton
**Depute Chief Executive/
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18 June 2008 (CMcK/SA)
FV-AN

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report to Development Services Committee – 2 May 2006 “CARS & THI for John Finnie Street & Bank Street, Kilmarnock, and a CARS for Catrine Outstanding Conservation Areas – Update”

Anyone wishing further information should contact Karl Doroszenko, Development Planning and Regeneration Manager, Tel: 01563 576751

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