

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE: 9 MARCH 2005

NEWMILNS BUILDING RESTORATION FEASIBILITY STUDY

Report by Executive Director of Development and Property Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee on the results of Newmilns Building Restoration Feasibility Study and to consider options for the way forward.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Development Services Committee of 4 May 2004 agreed to fund a study to find viable proposals to treat the remaining vacant buildings in the centre of Newmilns, following completion of the successful Newmilns THI.

3. THE NEWMILNS BUILDING RESTORATION FEASIBILITY STUDY

- 3.1 Ryden, Jura Consultants, MCA Research and Elliott & Company were appointed by East Ayrshire Council (EAC) in June 2004 to undertake a feasibility study into the restoration of buildings in Newmilns. The main aim of the study was to:

'identify proposals for the repair, restoration and re-use of those properties suffering from vacancy and/or significant disrepair in the centre of the town, taking into account the availability of funding, the long-term viability of the proposals and established conservation objectives'

- 3.2 Newmilns Townscape Heritage Initiative (NTHI) is nearing the end of its life with all the funds fully committed and projects completed. The £5.5 million invested was a very significant achievement, and while it is still early to assess the lasting success of the NTHI, it is generally accepted as having a beneficial impact on the town. While a number of the most important buildings have been restored and renovated, there remains a number of buildings throughout the area which are still in need of attention. In addition, a number of buildings which were not under threat at the start of the NTHI have subsequently fallen into disrepair. This has given the Main Street in particular an air of being incomplete, with fairly severe dereliction alongside newly restored properties.

- 3.3 The Council and Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire commissioned this study to identify ways in which the remaining buildings can best be restored and how such restoration can be achieved in terms of the best vehicle to drive forward the regeneration of the area and how that can be effectively funded. The Study area included the existing NTHI area on Main Street, but was expanded east, west and northwards to include High Street, Darvel Road, Isles Street, King Street and Loudoun Road. A multi-disciplinary approach involving

community consultation, structural engineering, economic development and funding expertise, chartered surveying and architectural services was utilised to complete the reports. A summary of key findings is attached at Appendix 1.

4. KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- 4.1 The soon to be completed NTHI project has addressed the town's major buildings of architectural merit, but within the study area the remaining 20 vacant and derelict buildings and sites are generally small, difficult to develop and have little or no architectural merit.
- 4.2 The chances of obtaining additional funding through THI, Historic Scotland, Communities Scotland, SEA and ERDF are marginal. EAC will have to drive further restoration and regeneration with the community taking a prominent role: perhaps drawing on the Scottish Rural Partnership Fund where active community participation is a prerequisite.
- 4.3 EAC will have to tackle ownerships, which constrain development particularly in instances where owners are not able or willing to be pro-active. Public realm enhancements should be a focus of future activity.
- 4.4 Given the smaller nature of likely projects, the study recommends that a professional Project Officer be appointed by EAC to assist local owners and businesses in progressing their development aspirations.

5. THE NEWMILNS TOWSCHEME

- 5.1 The Newmilns Town Scheme is currently offering up to 50% grant assistance to private and residential properties within the Main Street, Newmilns Outstanding Conservation Area. This repair and restoration grant scheme is jointly funded by the Council and Historic Scotland. The following properties are subject of grant applications that are currently awaiting approval by Historic Scotland:-

8 Greenside	32 Main Street
76 King Street	147 – 149 Main Street
19 High Street	16 King Street

The approval of grants for the above properties and the implementation of the proposed works will make a further improvement to the appearance of the properties in the Outstanding Conservation Areas.

6. THE WAY FORWARD

- 6.1 The following is a suggested way forward for the continued regeneration of Newmilns:-

- (i) Continue to offer small scale grants for façade treatment under the Newmilns Town Scheme, jointly funded by EAC and Historic Scotland, subject to the availability of funding;
- (ii) To further develop proposals to tackle the two key sites in the centre of Newmilns, nos. 47-51 and 57-59 Main Street;
- (iii) To develop an ERDF bid for a Business Centre/Multi Use development in the centre of Newmilns, potentially linked to the two properties identified above;
- (iv) Consider opportunities for further public realm improvements; and
- (v) To consider future funding opportunities as outlined in the feasibility study.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 To develop future projects there may be a need for legal assistance to offer grants to property owners for renovation projects; undertake property purchase on behalf of the Council for demolition and public realm projects, or to utilise available compulsory purchase powers.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Subject to approval by a future committee it is proposed to allocate funding from the Development Services Capital Programme towards continuing the future regeneration of Newmilns.

9. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Newmilns Townscape Heritage Initiative (NTHI) has contributed to the “Improving the Environment” Action Plan within the East Ayrshire Community Plan. The NTHI is identified in Aim 1 “To protect and improve the natural and built environment.” Any future regeneration projects will also contribute to the above aims of the Community Plan.

10. RECOMMENDATION

10.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (a) Note the findings of the Newmilns Building Restoration Feasibility Study;**
- (b) Agree the way forward for the continued regeneration of Newmilns as detailed in Section 7.6 of this report;**
- (c) Authorise the Solicitor to the Council to provide any necessary legal assistance required to progress the agreed way forward; and**

(d) Note that project updates will be provided on a regular basis

James Lavery
Executive Director of Development and Property Services Department

25 February 2005
(CMcK/IMB)

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report by the Director of Development Services to Development Services Committee: 26 August 2003 – Newmilns Townscape Heritage Initiative ; Update.
2. Report by the Executive Director of Development and Property Services to Development Services Committee: 4 May 2004 – Newmilns Townscape Heritage Initiative: Study Update.
3. Report by the Executive Director of Development Services to Development Services Committee: 29 June 2004 – Main Street, Newmilns Outstanding Conservation Area - Town Scheme.

For further information on the report contact Alan Neish, Head of Planning, Development and Building Standards, on 01563 576767

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Newmilns Building Restoration Feasibility Study

APPENDIX 1

1. 47-51 & 57-59 MAIN STREET STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENTS

These two properties at the heart of town centre need significant repair and maintenance work. Furthermore the condition of one of the properties suggests that demolition may be an option.

Although neither building is listed, nor has any architectural merit, a mix of extension and renovation work would undoubtedly lift the surrounding area.

A detailed study with a separate report for each of these buildings was prepared with indicative costings based on a potential proposal for the properties(see below).

2. BUSINESS & RESIDENT COMMUNITY SURVEYS

The Newmilns business and resident communities are keen to be involved in the town's regeneration. A high number of businesses and residents put their names forward to be contacted for future community development work.

3. PROPERTY MARKET ASSESSMENT

A retail led regeneration project is unlikely.

It is unlikely, given the amount of social housing provided through the NTHI, that the public sector will lead new residential projects. With current local residential values low, attracting significant private investment is considered a longer term opportunity.

Multi-purpose units, perhaps for business start-ups, small local relocating businesses, or a 'one stop shop' public sector services outlet, may be feasible.

There are no major commercial leisure facilities in Newmilns with the exception of the Ski-slope, community facilities are centered in the EAC owned and managed Morton Hall. This is unlikely to change in the short term.

4. RESTORATION & REGENERATION OPTIONS

Physical and demand limitations within the study area restrict the opportunities for new uses or re-use for many of the properties considered.

It is considered that private sector led development is unlikely and should be discounted as a viable option at present.

The public sector has to be the focus of regeneration activity with EAC in the lead role and working where possible with owners and the wider community.

5. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

The study identified four physical development options, namely (1) demolition and public realm; (2) renovation; (3) new development; and (4) façade treatment. The study then illustrated these options by applying them to a relevant opportunity from the long list:

Proposal for <u>Demolition & Public Realm</u> at 57-59 Main Street	Proposal for <u>Renovation</u> at 47-51 Main Street
	
Proposal for <u>New Development</u> at 118-126 Main Street for Multi-Use / Business Centre	Proposal for <u>Façade Treatment</u> at 21 Main Street
	

6. Potential Sources of Funding

The chances of success for a second round THI bid, based on the nature of the remaining buildings, are marginal.

Given their historic and deprivation criteria, there is little or no scope for Historic Scotland and Communities Scotland to make significant mainstream contributions. However, lower level assistance through, respectively, their Town Scheme and Public Sector Housing Grant may be available.

As SEA and ERDF assistance is primarily based on employment creation, scope to access funding from these bodies is limited.

More optimistic is the prospect of funding through the Scottish Rural Partnership Fund; active community participation is a pre-requisite.

**NEWMILNS BUILDING RESTORATION FEASIBILITY STUDY
PROPERTY LIST**

Ref	Address	Potential Conversion	Potential Redevelopment	Repair Grants	Building Restoration
1	2 Darvel Road		•		
2	16 High Street			•	•
3	19 High Street	•		•	
4	2 Isles Street			•	
5	6a Isles Street		•		
6	4-6 King Street		•	•	•
7	21 Kinholm Street			•	
8	68 Loudoun Road	•		•	
9	16 Main Street			•	
10	18 Main Street			•	
11	21 Main Street	•	•	•	
12	32 Main Street			•	
13	47-51 Main Street			•	
14	57-59 Main Street	•	•	•	•
15	61 Main Street			•	•
16	76-80 Main Street			•	
17	118 Main Street	•	•	•	
18	120-122 Main Street	•	•	•	
19	124 Main Street	•	•	•	
20	126 Main Street	•	•		

NEWMILNS BUILDING RESTORATION FEASIBILITY STUDY

MAP 1

