

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 14 SEPTEMBER 2005

BURNS MONUMENT - PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Report by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of the outcome of the public consultation exercise regarding the future of the Burns Monument in Kay Park, Kilmarnock carried out between July 25th and August 6th 2005 and to seek approval to implement a rebuilding project.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Community Services Committee of 23rd March 2005 agreed to support an exhibition and public consultation on the two viable options for the redevelopment of the Burns Monument.
- 2.2 The proposals were mounted as an exhibition in the Dick Institute with information leaflets and a feedback form, and on the Council website with illustrations of the proposals and an online comment form. The exhibition also had a dedicated telephone line, and was staffed throughout its hours of opening.
- 2.3 The options exhibited were:
- i) Undertake structural work to strengthen the remaining section of the monument and create a new monument of reduced height which protects the Burns statue. Improved lighting and an appropriate security fence would protect the monument. (OPTION 1)
 - ii) Undertake the work described above in Option 1 but include additional facilities around the memorial to support new services and functions, provide a base for staff and improve security at the site. The additional facilities could take the form of a courtyard development and provide accommodation for a new venue for Registration and Local History services. (OPTION 2)

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 There was a strong public response to the consultation with 396 responses received – 133 online and 259 from the exhibition in the Dick Institute. 6 written submissions were also received by the Directorate from local organisations and individuals.
- 3.2 Option 2 was supported by a majority of participants in the consultation with almost 90% (88.89%) preferring it to Option 1 (8.84). 9 commentators expressed no preference but left comments (2.27%). A wide variety of views was also expressed and it is clear that the public are keen to see progress made in restoring the monument with strong support for a sustainable use for the building. A list of comments is appended in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 Comments were also received regarding the general condition of Kay Park and the need to improve the park, increase its use and ensure that any new facility benefits from appropriate surroundings. With this in mind discussions have taken place with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and a consultancy company who have been involved in several successful HLF bids for parks in Scotland, and it is considered that a future bid for funding to upgrade the Kay Park may be worthwhile.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Funding for the redevelopment of the Monument would primarily be met from the insurance settlement relating to the fire damage to the building.

5. LEGAL AUTHORITY/IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Nil

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Redevelopment of the Monument and the provision of the proposed range of new facilities would be in line with the Community Plan commitment Improving Opportunities Aim 6 – To promote the availability of good quality homes and services, including leisure and cultural facilities to attract investment.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The public response to this consultation indicates a wish for a sustainable use for the Burns Monument and there was significant support for Option 2.

- 7.2 There is now a major opportunity to redevelop the Burns Monument and provide a new facility in Kay Park with new attractions and usage.
- 7.3 In view of the comments submitted regarding the condition of Kay Park it would be appropriate to consider a future bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to carry out a restoration and redevelopment of the park.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that Committee:-

- (i) Note the findings of the public consultation and the strong support for Option 2;
- (ii) Approve Option 2 as the appropriate redevelopment project for the Burns Monument in Kay Park;
- (iii) Remit to the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services to implement Option 2 and provide Committee with appropriate progress reports;
- (iv) Request the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services to progress a bid to Heritage Lottery Fund for the redevelopment of Kay Park; and
- (v) Otherwise note the contents of this report.

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/JAG/KH

10th August 2005

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

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APPENDIX 1

Comments from Burns Monument Consultation

"...everyone agreed that having the statue of Robert Burns at the centre of a working, living building would be much the best course of action."

Ayrshire Association of Burns Clubs:

"Kilmarnock Burns Club (to) urge the Council to adopt Option 2 as the winning proposal."

The No.0 Kilmarnock Burns Club:

" I fully support the proposal for a wedding and a family history research centre on the Burns Monument site."

Frank Beattie

"I think that Option 2 is a wonderful idea, there is no point in having anything historic or of interest stuck behind a fence...it would also regenerate the Kay Park which was once a thriving park..."

".. an excellent amenity for Kilmarnock.."

"Option 2 is an excellent proposal, creating a useful community facility which will be well used.."

"Should have been done years ago.."

"Great idea."

"Robert Burns is revered the world over, let's do him proud and give Kilmarnock something to be proud of."

Public keen to see an appropriate development:

"...Option 2 provided the structure and design is in keeping with the existing remains of the monument."

"It must be done properly as we do not have many attractions in Kilmarnock these days"

Many comments expressed the hope that the park would also be refurbished as part of the development:

"The park should also be restored in other ways ..."

"Hopefully it will regenerate the whole park area."

"If the gardens are improved it will also be a wonderful setting for photographs."

"I would like to see a regeneration of the Kay Park and hope that this is the first step."

A small group of commentators (12 or so) wished to see the monument fully restored to its former glory and a number expressed the view that by focusing only on Options 1 and 2 they had been denied the option of having the monument rebuilt.