

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

18 January 2012

Agenda Item	15
Report No	PED 13/12

WICK, PULTENEYTOWN CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME

Report by Director of Planning and Development

SUMMARY

This report seeks approval for one large grant and one small grant under the Wick, Pulteneytown Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme.

The CARS programme of supported projects in Pulteneytown, Wick supports the Council's Single Outcome Agreement commitments to help build a competitive, sustainable and adaptable Highland economy and help sustain Highland communities.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 In 2007 the Council secured the offer of £1.5m grant from Historic Scotland to operate a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) in Pulteneytown, Wick. The aim of the CARS is to bring about regeneration through the repair and reuse of historic buildings.

1.2 The CARS operates two separate grant strands:

1. A large grant scheme which focuses on vacant and "at risk" priority buildings which require funding in order to enable them to be brought back into use. These grants, with a value greater than £60k, are determined by Members at the Planning, Environment and Development Committee.
2. A small grant scheme is available to property owners within the conservation area for smaller repair works to their historic buildings. These grants are considered by the local Ward Members and are formally approved by the Director of Planning and Development after consultation with the Chair of the Planning, Environment and Development Committee.

2. Large Grant Application – Harbour Quay

2.1 An 'in principle' approval for a grant of up to £400,000 was agreed at the 16 March 2011 PED Committee for works to stabilise the properties at the Harbour Quay site. This report brings to Members' attention, a breakdown of the proposed award now that the tender process has been completed. The tender was returned with total works cost of £388,927.87, which together with VAT at 20% being payable on part of the site (£57,561.33) and the professional and development services fees (£38,506.74), brings the total project cost to £484,995.94. The level of VAT applied

may be lower but for the purpose of grant award, 20% has been assumed.

- 2.2 As the Harbour Quay site comprises two properties, 14 Telford Street owned by the Highland Council and Harbour Quay, owned by the Highland Housing Alliance, the total project cost will be divided into two separate grants. The split has been calculated on the actual building works being carried out at each property and results in a 74% (Highland Housing Alliance) / 26% (Highland Council) divide.
- 2.3 Whilst the Highland Council can, through its agreement with Historic Scotland, approve the large grant to the Highland Housing Alliance in the usual way through the Planning, Environment and Development Committee, the Council can not approve a grant to itself and hence a grant request must be submitted to Historic Scotland for approval. This is considered to be a procedural matter and there is no reason to believe that Historic Scotland will refuse the grant, given that it has been closely involved in the development of this project and that this is one of the key 'at risk' properties.
- 2.4 The Highland Housing Alliance will provide development services, including the procurement and management of the contract at Harbour Quay on behalf of The Highland Council. The fee for this work is £6,705 and is eligible for grant assistance.
- 2.5 Costs
Conservation stabilisation works (£388,927.87), VAT on £484,995.94
relevant works (£57,561.33) and professional and
development services fees (£38,506.74)

CARS Grant Requested

Grant to Highland Housing Alliance	£369,940.39
Grant to The Highland Council, including Development Services fee	£115,055.55
Total CARS grant	£484,995.94

3. Small Grant Application – 62 Argyle Square

- 3.1 62 Argyle Square is a B listed building at the heart of the Pulteneytown Conservation Area.
- 3.2 Whilst a small grant of this nature would usually be approved through delegated powers, the owner of 62 Argyle Square is a locally elected Member and in accordance with Standing Orders, determination of this grant is a matter for the Planning, Environment and Development Committee.
- 3.3 The property has inappropriate front and back doors and the proposed works will see these replaced with timber panelled doors to match the historic pattern. The total cost of the proposed work is £3,180. A CARS grant of £1,590 is recommended, based on a standard CARS grant level of 50%.

3.4	<u>Costs</u>	
	Reinstatement of traditional front and rear doors	£3,180
	CARS Grant @ 50%	£1,590

4. Implications

- 4.1 Resource: The Planning and Development Service draw down Historic Scotland funding at 100% for grants and 50% to support the management of the CARS programme until 2012.
- 4.2 Equalities: There are no equalities implications arising from the CARS programme as resources are directed towards vacant and 'at risk' priority buildings which require funding in order to enable them to be brought back into use and to the conservation merit of the buildings and the proposed works.
- 4.3 Risk: There is a time limit associated with the Historic Scotland grant which must be utilised by March 2012. Efforts are underway and are focused on ensuring that the two large projects at Union Street and Harbour Quay are progressed along with a number of small grants to ensure full use of the CARS funding.
- 4.4 Legal: There are no legal implications arising from the activities being proposed.
- 4.5 Climate Change: There are no climate change implications arising from the activities being proposed.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- (i) Approve a large CARS grant of £369,940.39 to the Highland Housing Alliance for the Harbour Quay project.
- (ii) Approve a small CARS grant of £1,590 for 62 Argyle Square.
- (iii) Agree that the Council submit a CARS grant application to Historic Scotland for the award of £115,055.55 for works and fees for the Harbour Quay project (14 Telford Street).

Designation: Director of Planning and Development

Author: Bryony Robinson, Wick CARS Officer, 01955 602199

Date: 10 January 2012