

The Highland Council
City of Inverness Area Committee

5 March 2015

Agenda Item	7
Report No	CIA/5/15

Inverness Townscape Heritage Project

Report by Director of Development and Infrastructure

Summary

This report outlines progress that has been made during the development phase of the Inverness Townscape Heritage project and also the proposed governance and management arrangements for the project.

The proposed Inverness Townscape Heritage project supports the Council's programme of support for the Highland economy, more specifically helping make the Highlands an attractive environment for business, and supports the development of the Highlands' urban centres. It also addresses a key priority arising from the recent public consultation on land use and transport priorities in Inverness City Centre, which is the development of Academy Street and its surroundings.

1. Background

- 1.1 Early in 2014 the Highland Council received a £1.67m Stage 1 pass from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Townscape Heritage programme. The HLF awarded the Council a development grant of £109k to be used alongside a £35k Council contribution to develop the Stage 2 application. A Stage 2 pass is required before the HLF finance is formally committed to the project. In accordance with the terms of development grant offer from the HLF, the development grant has been used to employ dedicated staff (0.6fte Townscape Heritage Strategic Project Officer, 1fte Heritage Engagement Officer and 0.5fte Employment Support Officer) and external technical advisers.

2. Progress

- 2.1 The Townscape Heritage (TH) Team and its external technical advisers are actively developing the following work packages as part of the Stage 2 application:
- strengthen and crystallise the vision and concepts raised in the documents submitted in support of the Stage 1 TH application;
 - an assessment of all elements of the TH project, including buildings and public realm and to set out a robust programme for the successful delivery of projects over the 5 year delivery phase (2015-2020) within defined budget constraints;
 - undertake stakeholder and public consultation. A consultation event was

held on the 29 January 2014 at the Ironworks, Academy Street (summary of feedback can be viewed in Appendix1) and a further event is scheduled for the 10 March 2015;

- undertake member briefing sessions. A session was held on the 16th of January 2015 and a communications plan has been drafted to ensure members received regular updates.
- prepare eligibility criteria and appropriate weighting against which future TH grant applications will be assessed;
- prepare the necessary TH “Action Plan” documentation;
- prepare detailed proposals for public realm improvements to Station Square including budget costs; and
- develop a place-making proposal for the Academy Street area to improve the urban public realm of Academy Street and its surroundings, including links between Inverness rail and bus stations.

2. Stage 2 Timeline and Estimated Project Start

- 2.1 Significant work is currently underway in the preparation of the Stage 2 application. All work is programmed to be complete by end March 2015, when aspects of the draft Stage 2 bid will be informally submitted and discussed with HLF. The formal deadline for the Stage 2 submission is end May 2015, with an anticipated decision mid/end September 2015. Assuming a formal pass is secured, the project will then be able to commence activity immediately.
- 2.2 As there is no City of Inverness Area (CIA) Committee scheduled to take place between now and the Stage 2 submission, Members are recommended to delegate powers to the Director of Development & Infrastructure, in consultation with the City Leader, to agree the detail of the Stage 2 TH application and submit to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

3. Management & Governance

- 3.1 The Council is expected to provide robust and transparent management, and governance procedures at the time of submitting the Stage 2 application to the HLF. In the absence of a CIA Committee meeting between now and the submission deadline, a workshop(s) will be held during April/May for CIA Committee Members to help inform the final shape of the application. The workshop will be organised in consultation with the City Leader and the City Manager. The CIA Committee will also receive annual reports during the lifetime of the project.
- 3.2 An annual report will be provided to the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee as the project is being funded through the Capital Programme. The Council, and its partners, continue to develop procedures for the assessment of third party grants, and this will be developed further in collaboration with the HLF and Historic Scotland.

4. Project Fund

- 4.1 The Council is expected to provide confirmation of its own, and partners, funding at the time of submitting the Stage 2 TH application to the HLF. The estimated project costs are expected to be in the region of £4m, with an anticipated project fund of £3.3m being required to run a third party grant

scheme, activity plan implementation, and staff costs/overheads. The Planning, Development & Infrastructure Committee agreed at its meeting on the 18 February 2015 to ring fence £550k from the Capital Programme for the TH project. This will augment £200k revenue already earmarked for the project from existing Service budgets.

- 4.2 It is expected that the Inverness City Heritage Trust will be in a position to confirm funding of £946k (Historic Scotland allocation) for the project by the end of March 2015.

5. Implications

5.1 Resource

To complete its funding contribution to this project, the Council is in a position to confirm funding of £750k.

5.2 Legal

There are currently no legal implications. In moving forward to the delivery phase of the project, the Council will need to obtain a Standard Security for grants over £25k. A 'legal fees' budget will be included in the detailed breakdown of project costs to the HLF.

5.3 Equality

Equality issues are considered for each project as an integral part of the project planning process.

5.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever

Opportunities and constraints are considered as an integral part of the project planning process.

5.5 Risk

The Council is required to submit a detailed risk assessment as part of the Stage 2 application along with appropriate mitigation measures.

5.6 Gaelic

Opportunities for the inclusion of Gaelic are considered as an integral part of the project planning process.

5.7 Rural

There are no rural implications.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to

- (i) note progress with the preparation of the Heritage Lottery Fund Stage 2 Townscape Heritage bid; and
- (ii) agree delegated powers to the Director of Development & Infrastructure, in consultation with the City Leader, to agree the detail of the Stage 2 TH application and submit to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 17 February 2015

Author: Alan Webster 01463 702263

Appendix 1: Academy Street Townscape Heritage project - Development Phase Summary of consultation event 22nd and 23rd January 2015

The consultation event took place in the Iron Works Venue on Academy Street and was made up of exhibition materials with 2 stakeholder presentation sessions (12.30 and 5.30pm on the 22nd) and two public drop in session from 2 – 5pm on the 22nd and 10 – 12noon on the 23rd Jan.

Over 150 public and stakeholders attend throughout the 2 day consultation event. 132 opted to provide sign in details so we can keep in touch with them and these can be broken down into:

- 12.30 Stakeholder session – 40
- 2-5pm Public drop in session – 46
- 5.30 Stakeholder session – 27
- 10 – 12noon Public drop in session - 19

A total of 57 people completed feedback forms following the consultation event, see table 1 for sectorial breakdown.

Table 2 we asked participants to rate, on a scale of 1-5, how important various element of the TH projects proposed activity is to them, the highlights are reassuring for the development of the project with top line results showing:

- 66% scored 1 for bringing back in to use vacant floor space
- 63% scored 1 for refurbishment of historic buildings
- 52% scored 1 reinstatement of heritage features
- 48% scored 1 for improvement or development of civic space on Academy Street

In table 3 we also asked attendees to rate, on the same scale, the importance of a number of wider issues apparent of Academy Street, giving the following results:

- 62% scored 1 for traffic management / flow
- 50% scored 1 for better provision for cyclists and pedestrians
- 40% scored 1 for outdoor seating / cafes etc.
- 38% scored 1 for greening – provision of trees and vegetation

Table 4 show the general comments group into themes around:

- The public realm of Academy Street – street lighting / pavements / road surfaces / how people and traffic move around the street etc.
- Lack of footfall further down the street and no incentive to start a business at the far end of the street.
- Lack of investment in AS
- Heritage and interpretation of significant buildings on AS

Table 1 - Completed feedback forms sector representation

Commercial Property Owner on Academy Street	7
Business operator on Academy Street	2
Resident on Academy Street	0
General Public	24
Public Agency	8
Delivering training, education or health services	2
Construction Industry	6
Other	9
Total	57

Table 2 – TH project elements and priorities

Please score each option on how important it is to you. (1= very important through to 5 = not important)	% of attendees placing importance as no.1	% of attendees placing importance as no.2	% of attendees placing importance as no.3	% of attendees placing importance as no.4	% of attendees placing importance as no.5
Refurbishment of historic Buildings	63%	17%	2%	9%	9%
Reinstatement of build heritage features	51%	23%	3%	9%	14%
Improvement or development of civic spaces on Academy Street	48%	24%	20%	4%	4%
Reinstating original shop fronts	28%	24%	28%	13%	7%
Bring vacant floor space back into use	66%	15%	7%	5%	7%
More retail space	22%	18%	38%	9%	13%

More residential units	4%	28%	48%	12%	8%
More commercial space	17%	29%	26%	9%	19%
Improving heritage engagement- telling the story of Academy Street	18%	24%	33%	13%	12%
Employability	21%	30%	21%	19%	9%
Other (Please Specify					

Table 3 – Wider issues on Academy Street out with the delivery mechanism of the TH project

Please score each option on how important it is to you. (1= very important through to 5 =not important	% of attendees placing importance as no.1	% of attendees placing importance as no. 2	% of attendees placing importance as no.3	% of attendees placing importance as no.4	% of attendees placing importance as no.5
Better provision for getting around by bike or on foot	50%	13%	13%	15%	9%
Improved traffic management	62%	13%	13%	2%	10%
Greening -such as provision of trees, vegetation, green space	38%	30%	15%	9%	8%
Better facilities for cycling (such as storage)	20%	25%	32%	16%	7%
Outdoor seating (including cafes)	40%	33%	19%	2%	6%
Other (Please specify)					

Table 4 - Feedback form main comments

Movement in Academy Street	Buildings	General Comments	Businesses
Excessive traffic/traffic management/traffic dominates	Interpretation of buildings needed	No reason to go there, no incentive	Lack of/low footfall
Poor traffic Flow	Buildings falling into disrepair/poor maintenance/deteriorating and underused	Station square	Specialist shops needed/cafes needed for café environment
Poor/uneven/narrow pavements	Vacant buildings	Lack of investment	Lack of businesses
Poor access/poor gateway to the city	Bring buildings up to standard/buildings need restored/ Buildings have potential to be pleasing but not at present	Poor appearance/ Street image poor and dirty. Academy street a disgrace	Inappropriate shop fronts/ repair shop fronts
No incentive for pedestrians /pedestrian danger – not foot or cycle friendly/need cycle access	Heritage -increase visibility of Gaelic signage + leaflets	Poor lighting/safety	No incentive to establish business there
Parking		Improved linkages to other areas in city needed	Businesses are soulless, need better tenants/empty shops
		What about recycling, efficiency conservation of resources in the plan?	

All other comments/points made:

- *“Very interesting. Confident that the team will improve the area and make it a success. Would like more information on training and employability.”*
- *“The SWOT analysis completed by the Academy Street improvement project is a very useful starting point- some of these themes could be developed further through a consultative process.”*
- *“Well organised and presented.”*
- *“Informative event.”*
- *“Looks good for the future but what about now?”*
- *“Presentations please- 1 hour slots.”*