
Rothsay Townscape Heritage Phase 2 Stage One Bid

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. In recognition of the success of Rothsay Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) and the significant beneficial impact that the heritage-led regeneration project has made to the town, Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) have requested that the Council give consideration to making an application for a second project – Rothsay Townscape Heritage (TH) in order to build on the momentum. The original intention was to consider undertaking some preparatory work for Rothsay, with a potential submission in August 2016, however HLF have formally asked us to consider pulling this forward to 31st August of this year as they consider that, although still a competitive process, this will be a less competitive round at a Scottish level.

1.2. Like a THI, a TH is a five-year heritage-led regeneration project targeted at conservation areas with a number of listed buildings, but its focus has shifted slightly from the current style of project to taking a more holistic response to the needs of a town in order to boost economic growth. The TH therefore offers greater flexibility in how such projects are delivered, and seeks to fully understand the needs of the area, including where it is most fragile, in order to support positive change through carefully targeted investment.

1.3. Should a round one application prove successful, a subsequent year long period of research, analysis and development would follow, working towards a second round submission date of March 2017, and potentially allowing a delivery period of five years, from 2017 to 2022.

It is recommended that members:

- (i) Consider the content of this paper.
- (ii) Agree to the submission of a stage one bid and note that if the stage one bid is successful there will be a need to identify £200k of match funding to allow the project to progress to stage two.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This paper seeks to provide the background to the Townscape Heritage funding call, and to highlight the impact, deliverability, affordability and associated risk, and recommends the Council submit a first round bid to Heritage Lottery Fund on 31st August 2015.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that members:

- (i) Consider the content of this paper.
- (ii) Agree to the submission of a stage one bid and note that if the stage one bid is successful there will be a need to identify £200k of match funding to allow the project to progress to stage two.

4.0 DETAIL**Background**

- 4.1 The Townscape Heritage (TH) programme has evolved out of the original Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme, which both Campbeltown and Rothsay have notably benefited from in recent years. It is in recognition of the success of these projects, and the visible improvement that they have delivered, that Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is actively encouraging the Council to make an application for a second project for Rothsay. They recognise that there is still a great deal of investment required and see a second project as an opportunity to build on the momentum created and to better protect their significant investment to date, in both the town centre and in the Pavilion project.
- 4.2 The focus of the TH is more holistic than that of the current THI. Instead of focussing solely on returning buildings to a good state of repair, the programme seeks to respond to the wider needs of the town and greater emphasis is given to delivering projects which have the potential to stimulate economic growth. As a result there is much more flexibility and greater opportunity for involving the community.

Impact

- 4.3 The Government's Economic Strategy is based around a key theme of infrastructure, development and place with a focus on harnessing the strength and qualities of our cities, towns and rural areas, including coastal communities, such as Rothesay. The Strategy reaffirms the Government's commitment to delivering increased sustainable economic growth with opportunity for all to flourish. The key objectives of the Strategy are to ensure Scotland's government, and the whole of the public sector, are aligned towards one Purpose, which is:

"to focus the Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increased sustainable economic growth".

- 4.4 The current project has been extremely successful in visually lifting the town centre and improving the critical first impression of the visitor. The targeted area of Guildford Square and surrounding streets was chosen to encourage footfall through the town centre and to align with the Council and Scottish Government objective that makes specific reference to the importance of the physical fabric of our towns, the importance of Place and the need to ensure that there is an alignment of capital investment across the public sector and agencies.
- 4.5 The current THI has secured funding of £2.6 million and has been able to offer grant to help fund the redevelopment of a prominent gap site, to comprehensively repair 4 tenements and return 8 smaller buildings to a good state of repair. A shopfront repair programme has helped to restore 10 shopfronts and over 200 training and event days have been held over the course of the project. In addition, 4 Bute-based construction jobs and 2 Bute-based construction apprenticeships have been created as a direct result of the project. The total investment in the area, including private investment amounts to £4million.
- 4.6 A TH presents a significant opportunity to build on the momentum created and to continue bringing Rothesay's buildings back into a good state of repair, particularly those of the shopping streets to encourage greater footfall. There is still a strong need for further investment in the built fabric of the town, and this is reinforced and this need is recognised by Scotland's independent regeneration network, Scotland's Urban Regeneration Forum (SURF) through their work entitled the 'Alliance for Action'.
- 4.7 A TH project has the potential to align with Council objectives to protect the quality of our built environment as an asset for sustainable economic growth, and to support growth enhancing activities. The Council's policies recognise the importance of the built environment in delivering economic regeneration and align with the key objectives of the Government's Economic Strategy. With continued investment there is therefore opportunity to secure a wider and more long lasting benefit.
- 4.8 The Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) identifies Rothesay town centre and waterfront as being a "Strategic Area for Action". A TH would therefore align with the objectives set out within the LDP, which states that:

"By 2024, it is hoped that Bute will be:

- A place that enjoys revitalised town centres and waterfronts...with...Rothesay capitalising on its outstanding built heritage.
- A competitive place, better connected to the global economy with thriving local rural communities that provide an incentive for businesses to locate to.
- A place of outstanding natural and built heritage...better public realm and restored iconic buildings such as the Royal Hotel and Pavilion.
- A place that can offer a wide range of housing choice in places with modernised essential services and infrastructure, with a focus of larger scale growth in Rothesay.”

4.9 The built fabric of Rothesay is in great need of further investment and there is evidence of strong community support for the project. Securing TH funding for the town offers a significant opportunity therefore, and with the Alliance for Action there is already real buy in from the community at such initial stages.

Deliverability

4.10 We have proven that we can deliver a regeneration project of this nature on time and to budget and therefore have evidence to support the assumption that we would be able to replicate the success of the current project, should we be successful in securing another round of funding.

4.11 Feedback from the community strongly supports the idea of a continued regeneration project. The Rothesay Alliance for Action involves a wide range of community groups, and will deliver a report with tangible and deliverable outcomes that are also aligned with public, third and private sector programmes. The report will not only seek to reflect the views of the community but as a great deal of time has been invested in helping to collaborate on the document, it is likely that the community will be more invested in the outcomes. Feedback to date also suggests that building on the success of the THI would be a critical component of the vision for Rothesay and a key desired outcome.

Affordability

4.12 The current Rothesay THI project commenced in 2011 and will run until 31st March 2016. The funding package includes £1.5 million from HLF, £499,933 of CARS funding, £500,000 from the Council and £93,777 from Leader, giving a common fund of £2.6 million.

4.13 The maximum amount of TH funding available this round is £2million and HLF would expect a £200k contribution from the Council and other sources. We would therefore seek to identify funding from within the Council and supported by potential external funding to meet this.

4.14 Although a potential TH could operate as a stand-alone project, in order to enhance the potential investment a bid could be made to Historic Scotland for CARS funding, and other potential funding sources, such as HIE or SusTrans. In respect to further CARS rounds, Historic Scotland have indicated that there will be a call for applications next summer and

as such a further report outlining the detail of this will be brought to Committee at this time.

- 4.15 Through initial discussions with HIE, it is clear that they would be keen to explore how best to support such a project and where best to target any potential investment, should a bid for a TH be supported within the Council. They have commissioned SURF to undertake the Alliance for Action report, as an innovative response to engaging the community in creating, and delivering, a realistic vision for Rothesay. If a TH application were to be supported, it would therefore be intended to closely align the TH strategy with the themes, desired outcomes and vision of the Alliance for Action work. Consultation to date has revealed that utilising vacant shop units for creative industry purposes, and improving the journey between the town centre and the Pavilion might be two key areas for a potential TH to explore.

Risk

- 4.16 The risks and sensitives in relation to making a bid for a TH project are as follows:
- a) If we miss the deadline of 31st August 2015, we will not be able to submit another application until 31st August 2016.
 - b) If we were to wait another year, the bid will be subject to a higher level of competition.
 - c) The process is a competitive one and therefore there is no guarantee that we would be successful.
- 4.17 Securing a TH for Rothesay would be as a result of a successful two stage submission process. This report requests permission to make a bid to round one, which is subject to scrutiny at UK level and which is decided upon by a London Committee in January each year. Therefore, if we do not make an application on 31st August 2015, then the next opportunity to apply would be a full year from then.
- 4.18 Feedback from HLF to date recommends that an application made this year rather than next would potentially be subject to a lesser competitive environment, due to the number of applications they are expecting in 2016. This would mean that should a bid be supported, then potentially the only TH application from Scotland this year would be from Argyll and Bute.
- 4.19 Should the round one application prove successful and we are invited to fully scope out and develop the project, then we would have a full year in which to pull together a robust and sustainable application, which could subsequently be submitted to the Scotland Committee for their decision in either: March, June, September or December.
- 4.20 THI programmes have proved hugely beneficial in boosting confidence and making towns more attractive for investment, however the application process is a competitive one and whilst we have been successful in Rothesay, and Campbeltown to date, there is no guarantee that any bid to HLF would be successful.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 It is clear from the Campbeltown and Rothesay THIs that carefully targeted investment has the ability to produce significant visual enhancement, whilst boosting confidence in an area, and strengthening community participation. A sense of optimism has been created through both the success of the THI and the Pavilion project having begun to get underway and as such there is substantial opportunity to build on this momentum and to continue making much needed improvements to the town centre, and to enhance the connection between the town centre and the Pavilion.
- 5.2 The continuation of a regeneration project in Rothesay is widely supported by the community and the complementary work that SURF are delivering, through the Alliance for Action, is enabling a network of community groups to become actively involved in shaping the future of their town. There is a clear willingness to support a second TH project for Rothesay and a second regeneration project of this type is likely to arise as a key desirable outcome for delivery. It is therefore recommended that consideration be given to making an application for a first round bid.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

Policy:	Through the Corporate Plan, Development Plan Community Plan and Economic Development Plan the Council recognises the importance of investment in its built heritage in order to secure the regeneration of its towns and the economic benefit that will come from this.
Financial:	If it is agreed that a bid could be made for a Rothesay TH, provision would have to be made for match funding of £200k over a 5 year period.
Legal:	None.
HR:	There may be additional staff resources, based on HLF requirements and criteria for the development phase, and any such resources would be sought from HLF as part of the stage one bid.
Equalities:	None.
Risk:	A bid submitted this year will be subject to less competition than next and as such it is recommended that this year presents the optimum opportunity to secure funding.
Customer Services:	None

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4th August 2015

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