

PROPOSED COMET ARCHWAY - HELENSBURGH PIER

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of a request from the Helensburgh Heritage Trust to erect a two dimensional silhouette of Henry Bell's ship the 'Comet' on a grassed amenity area forming part of Helensburgh Pier. The proposed location is outlined on the attached plan.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the content of the report.
- 2.2 That additional information is gathered regarding the structure and whole life costs of the proposed silhouette and a further report brought to the next Area Committee for consideration.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Helensburgh Heritage Trust has made a request to the Council for permission to erect a two dimensional silhouette of Henry Bell's ship the 'Comet' on a grassed amenity area forming part of Helensburgh Pier. The proposed location is outlined on the attached plan.
- 3.2 The Comet commenced its passenger service in 1812 and the Helensburgh Heritage Trust wishes to celebrate the bicentenary of the service by commissioning and erecting the silhouette. The silhouette would be accompanied by an information board.
- 3.3 A sketch of the silhouette is attached along with a sketch depicting its proposed location on Helensburgh Pier in relation to the pier access and the Tourist Information Centre. The information provided by the Helensburgh Heritage Trust is that the silhouette would be approx 15 feet in length and would be set 10½ feet (3.2m) off the ground with the top of the mast being 20 feet (6.1m) off the ground.

- 3.4 The silhouette is to be made from metal and to have a designed life of 50 years. The Helensburgh Heritage Trust is advising the structure will have no moving parts and will require minimal initial maintenance. The silhouette will be mounted on two poles which in turn will be bolted to a concrete plinth.
- 3.5 The Heritage Trust are keen for the silhouette to be on the pier as a celebration of the bicentenary but recognise that the silhouette may require to be relocated to accommodate future developments on the pier and that ultimately the silhouette may have to be repositioned off the pier.
- 3.6 The Helensburgh Heritage Trust intends to submit an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to fund the silhouette project. The Trust is keen to see the silhouette in place by August 2012. The funding application requires to be countersigned by the Council as landowner as demonstration of support for the project. The Trust wishes to submit the funding application now in order to have the silhouette in place by August.

The Trust has already applied for and received planning permission for the erection of the silhouette at the location indicated on the attached plan.

- 3.7 The proposed location currently contains a car park sign and a dog waste bin. The Helensburgh Heritage Trust have been advised that should any permission to erect the silhouette be granted the Trust will require to reposition the car park sign and the dog waste bin to a location determined by the Council and at the sole expense of the Trust.
- 3.8 Prior to any permission to locate the silhouette on the pier the Helensburgh Heritage Trust have been advised that they will require to provide an appropriate engineer's certificate confirming the silhouette, mounting poles and plinth are all of sufficient specification to withstand the exposed location. It is obviously of paramount importance that the silhouette does not become a danger in adverse weather conditions. The Heritage Trust have also been advised they will require to provide a further engineer's certificate confirming any structure which is ultimately erected has been constructed in accordance with the specification provided.

To date the Helensburgh Heritage Trust has not provided any engineering certificate and only as of 30th March provided basic engineering drawings.

3.9 As a supplement to any engineer's certificate provided by the engineer acting for the Helensburgh Heritage Trust the Executive Director of Development & Infrastructure Services will be requesting the local CHORD Programme Manager to approach the Council's engineering consultant AECOM to comment on the structural integrity of the silhouette and make appropriate recommendations.

In this regard the engineer working for the Helensburgh Heritage Trust has again been asked to provide certification for the silhouette and has also been asked to provide the engineering calculations supporting the design of the silhouette. The engineering calculations will enable AECOM to more fully assess the proposed structure of the silhouette and its mounting platform.

3.10 It should also be noted that should the Helensburgh Heritage Trust be granted permission to erect the silhouette that the Trust envisages the silhouette being gifted to the Council following its completion. Given the Heritage Trust's intent to gift the structure to the Council it is appropriate to consider the potential cost to the Council as the silhouette weathers, suffers storm damage or is defaced by vandals. In addition the Council would require to bear the cost associated with any required repositioning of the silhouette.

The engineer acting for the Helensburgh Heritage Trust has been asked to provide additional information on any proposed weathering treatments for the proposed silhouette. It may be that the Council's engineering consultants will recommend a different grade of steel for the construction and/ or appropriate weathering treatments to minimise the structures whole life costs.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The proposal to erect a silhouette of Henry Bell's ship the 'Comet' on Helensburgh Pier to mark the bicentenary of its passenger service is notable but there are a number of issues which require careful consideration.

(i) Helensburgh Pier is an exposed location and any structure to be erected must be able to withstand the exposed location without becoming a danger. In this regard the Trust's engineer has been asked to provide certification of the silhouette structure and to provide the calculations on which the design was based.

To supplement certification from the Trust's engineer the Executive Director of Development & Infrastructure Services will be requesting the Council's engineering consultants on the CHORD project, AECOM, to comment on the proposed construction of the sign and its whole life costs.

- (ii) The Helensburgh Heritage Trust intends to gift the silhouette to the Council and while the silhouette is designed to have a 50 year lifespan it will require periodic repainting due to weather exposure and possibly due to acts of vandalism. Given the prominent location proposed for the silhouette any acts of defacement would require to be attended to as a matter of urgency. The silhouette therefore has an ongoing cost implication to the Council. The Trust's engineer has been asked to provide details on the weather treatment to be applied to the silhouette and the Council's engineering consultant, AECOM, will be asked to comment on the grade of steel to be used and the proposed weather treatment with a view to minimising the silhouette's lifetime maintenance costs.
- (iii) Should the silhouette ultimately be erected but require to be repositioned at some future date due to development on the pier the cost of repositioning the structure would fall to the Council.
- (iv) The proposed location for the silhouette currently contains a sign for the pier car park and a dog waste bin. The Helensburgh Heritage Trust shall require to reposition the sign and the bin to a location approved by Argyll and Bute Council and erected in accordance with the Council's required specification.

4.2 The Helensburgh Heritage Trust is intending to fund the silhouette project by applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund. As part of the funding application the Council requires to co-sign the application form as proof of support for the project. Given the various issues raised above and summarised at 4.1 it would be inappropriate for the Council to co-sign any application at this moment in time but instead to seek additional detail regarding the structure and whole life costs of the proposed silhouette and report to the next Committee.

5. IMPLICATIONS

POLICY:	None
FINANCIAL:	Future maintenance and possible relocation costs.
PERSONNEL:	None
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:	None
LEGAL:	None

Executive Director of Customer Services
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