
Kilmahew/ St Peter's Project – Request for Development Funding

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Kilmahew/St Peter's Project near Cardross aims to transform the derelict site of the former St Peter's Seminary buildings and the surrounding woodlands of Kilmahew which has lain abandoned for more than thirty years. Whilst the building and site is of national significance due to its Category A listing, it is currently inaccessible due to being a dangerous building.
- 1.2 The project has been ongoing for 5 years and is well advanced in the development stages. The project has recently secured a stage 1 funding approval from Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland (HLF) for £565,000 development funding to allow the development of a second stage submission for £3m in 2015. The project is also the subject of a funding application to Creative Scotland for £2m.
- 1.3 The total capital value of the works is approximately £7m. The total value of funding applications to HLF and Creative Scotland will be £5.5m. In addition, Historic Scotland has already granted £500,000 towards eligible capital works.
- 1.4 NVA, a Scottish Arts charity 'who are driving the project' have requested £25,000 from the Council specifically to create an Audience Development Strategy which is required for stage 2 bids to both the Heritage Lottery Fund and Creative Scotland.
- 1.5 NVA seek the strategic support of the Council to assist in securing the necessary funding to deliver the project and will be making a presentation to the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee on the 14 January 2014. Strategic support will be in the form of political support and officer time, NVA will not be making an immediate request to Argyll and Bute Council for financial assistance towards capital works but would request this is kept under review if in the future appropriate opportunities arise.
- 1.6 The benefit of the project is to safeguard and bring back into productive use a Category A listed building of international repute for the purpose of cultural educational activities. Currently a dangerous building, failure to safeguard the building may in time result in its demolition for reasons of public safety.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That members agree to the following recommendations on the presumption that NVA are successful in their stage 1 application to Creative Scotland.
- 2.2 That members agree to the payment of £25,000 to NVA solely for the development of an Audience Development Strategy with regards to the Kilmahew/ St Peter's Project, and that members then agree which of the following four options for funding they wish to adopt. The four options are as follows:
- To earmark £25,000 from the General Fund Reserve.
 - To ask the Council to recognise the £25,000 as a cost pressure for D&I in the revenue budget during 2014-15.
 - To ask H&L Area Committee to allocate £25,000 from its share of additional council tax on empty homes to this project.
 - To advance money from the General Reserve Fund on the basis the first £25,000 of any underspend in Economic Development is used to fund the request.
- 2.3 The payment totalling £25,000 will be phased over 2 consecutive financial years as follows; 2013/14 – £12,500, 2014/15 - £12,500.
- 2.4 That members agree to support the project in principle and the provision of officer support to assist with securing the necessary financial capital monies to deliver the project.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1. A Project Business Case has been submitted to the Council to secure support for the Kilmahew/ St Peter's project. Paragraphs 3.2 – 3.16 below contains extracts and summaries from the Business Case to provide an overview on the purpose, approach, costs, timescales and benefit of the project.
- 3.2. The Kilmahew/ St Peter's Project aims to transform the derelict site of the former St Peter's Seminary buildings and the surrounding woodlands of Kilmahew which has lain abandoned for more than thirty years. Situated on the edge of the village of Cardross, the site covers approximately 40 hectares and is predominately wooded. Each of the structures from medieval to modern is now in a ruinous state.
- 3.3. The vision is to reinvigorate the site and create an international flagship for Scotland's heritage and cultural energy. The project will be an exemplar of cross sectoral cooperation and partnership working and will create an inspiring resource, where landscape can be used as a place of knowledge, learning and creativity.

3.4. The objectives of the project are as follows;

- To safeguard this iconic heritage landscape for future generations; combining elements from significant periods of Scottish history over an 800 year time frame.
- To share its unique history with a wide range of users through an innovative interpretation programme using new technologies and creative methodologies.
- To create a productive resource that enables wide ranging audiences, national partners and international visitors to explore and utilise this unique heritage asset simultaneously.
- To protect the Grade A listed St Peter's Seminary and the sites rich architectural and designed landscape status, and safeguarding its unique place in modern Scottish architectural history.
- To reach new audiences through re-activating historic routes across the site and wider region to reinvigorate the tourist offer on the west coast of Scotland building on its rich heritage.

3.5. St Peter's Seminary opened in 1966 as a training college for Roman Catholic priests and was built around Kilmahew House, a 19th century baronial mansion. Its dramatic setting, daring concrete construction, and unique combination of space and lights make it one of the most outstanding examples of experimental post-war architecture in the UK. In recognition of its national and international importance, the seminary was awarded Category A listing in 1993.

3.6. The project is driven by the desire to create a sustainable future for Kilmahew estate and to encourage a diverse range of visitors to engage with and participate in the natural, social and local heritage of the site. The project involves consolidating the ruinous structures, providing an orientation and learning pavilion and creating a number of interpretive and learning opportunities which will enhance the experience by encouraging participation in programmed activities and by improving access across the site.

3.7. Progress to date is outlined as follows;

- Support of key stakeholders including Scottish Government, West Dunbartonshire Council, Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park, West College Scotland, local communities.
- £2,065,000 secured towards the development and capital costs of the project.
- An appropriately skilled board and advisory group assembled to lead the project through the next crucial stages and beyond.

- A 20 year Masterplan produced by leading architects and landscape architects.
 - Successful negotiations with the Catholic Archdiocese of Glasgow to donate the site for the public good.
 - Conditional planning and listed building consents secured.
- 3.8. The project lead is NVA, a Scottish arts charity funded by Creative Scotland and a number of UK trusts and foundations. NVA was established in 1992 to advance education through cultural activity and describes itself as one of Scotland's most successful arts organisation with an experienced Board of Directors, well established financial managements systems and a long standing management team that is fully committed to the project.
- 3.9. NVA is currently working in partnership with the newly formed West College Scotland (WCS) to assess further education opportunities and develop an approach which will maximise the public benefit.
- 3.10. The projects seeks to deliver a wide range of cultural, social, economic, community, heritage and environmental outcomes, namely as follows;
- Developing/protection of the heritage asset
 - Improved public engagement with, and understanding of, heritage
 - Cultural engagement with a broad audience base
 - Skills development and enhanced community engagement
 - Improved international reputation for Scotland
 - Economic effects – visitors, tourism, reputation
 - Environmental protection and improvement of a historic environment
- 3.11. Capital costs are projected to be nearly £7m and it should be understood that this is for the selected option of a partial restoration and development of the wider site as described above. Previous commercial proposals for a full restoration of the site have been deemed unfeasible as costs were estimated to be in excess of £40m.
- 3.12. The initial 10 year plan will consolidate and partly restore the seminary buildings and create new build educational and community facilities within the historic walled garden setting. This will provide the infrastructure to safeguard this heritage landscape for current and future generations as set out within the 20 year Masterplan.

- 3.13. Stage 1 funding applications were made to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Creative Scotland for a total of around £5.5m. The stage 1 application for the HLF was approved December 2013 for £565,000 development funding to allow the development of a second stage submission for £3m in 2015 with decisions due December 2013.
- 3.14. A decision on the stage 1 application to Creative Scotland is due before the end of the year 2013. The remainder is to be secured via other organisations including other grant funding organisations, trusts, and public sector.
- 3.15. The project plan timelines are as follows;
- Stage 1 funding decisions – Dec 2013
 - Stage 2 funding decisions - May 2015
 - Site acquisition – May 2015
 - Procurement of contractors and commencement of works– Summer 2015
 - Construction complete – Spring 2017
- 3.16. In respect of the options appraisal, as required, the ‘do nothing’ option was assessed and it was concluded that this would result in further decline and deterioration of the buildings and site. Having lain empty for 30 years with no previous viable projects emerging, it may be assumed that without significant investment, in time the seminary is likely to require demolition for reasons of public safety. Currently site security is maintained and warning notices erected as the building is in a dangerous condition; however, these safeguards are routinely breached. In addition, failure to secure a future for the site may result in damage to reputation by virtue of the architectural significance of the building; it was included in the 2008 World Monuments Fund International ‘Watch List’.
- 3.17. The request for funding from the Council is for £25,000 phased evenly over two financial years (i.e. £12,500 2013/14 and £12,500 2014/15) specifically for producing the audience development strategy which is required for both the HLF and Creative Scotland Stage 2 submissions. The strategy will progress the broad themes identified in the Interpretation Plan. The following outputs will form the audience development strategy; (tourism) market analysis, research and interpretive planning, visitor management and flow, and interpretative strategy.
- 3.18. In the event that NVA is successful in securing stage 1 approval from Creative Scotland, support in principle and officer support could prove invaluable to NVA in demonstrating to funders that the project has strong support and is aligned with strategic plans for the region.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Kilmahew/ St Peter’s project is an ambitious long term project that is well advanced in the development stages. Whilst the site is of national

significance due to its Category A listing, it is currently inaccessible due to being a dangerous building.

- 4.2 This project is the best opportunity if the site is to be safeguarded as a cultural asset and more importantly, brought back into productive use for cultural and educational activity.
- 4.3 Significant sums of money have already been secured for the development stages of which many of the outputs have already been delivered. Within the wider context, the requested sum of £25,000 appears to be a relatively small investment which will assist access to the £2,065,000 sum previously secured from others, for development and capital works costs.
- 4.4 Whilst the project is well advanced, considerable efforts are still required to develop stage 2 submissions and secure capital funding and therefore Council support in the form of political support and officer time, will assist NVA in delivering the project.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy:
 - Within the Corporate Plan, a corporate objective is promoting our cultural, social and natural heritage and protecting our unique area.
 - Within the Economic Development Action Plan a key outcome is to move the tourism industry up the value chain, extend the season and improve its profile and propositions.
- 5.2 Financial: £25,000 from the Council towards the development of an audience development strategy to be phased over the two year financial period 2013 – 2015.
- 5.3 Legal None
- 5.4 HR: Limited officer time to provide strategic support
- 5.5 Equalities None
- 5.6 Risk: None
- 5.7 Customer Service: None

6.0 APPENDICES

- 6.1 None

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