

Economic Development Focus of Work - Arrochar

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask that members endorse a continued focussed approach to economic development activity in Arrochar.
- 1.2 Projects and regeneration development officers have been working with the Arrochar community over the past eighteen months on two discreet projects: a viewpoint feasibility study and the exploration of long-term solutions to the challenge of waterborne litter. As the proposed viewpoint is fully costed and work in relation to waterborne litter has passed to Marine Scotland, there is now opportunity to support a third community ambition and to add this to work plans.
- 1.3 Discussions with the owner of the Ben Arthur resort development site and potential developers have taken place to consider ways of addressing the issues of dereliction, with a view to finding a productive economic function for the site given its prominent location on the A83. The complex site has a number of constraints to overcome and a multi-agency response is required to bring forward a positive solution that addresses the environmental dereliction and has the potential to provide a source of employment for the area. It is therefore considered that a focused economic development response is required to be taken in collaboration with colleagues from the National Park Authority and for the stimulating progress on the Ben Arthur resort site to be added to work plans.
- 1.4 In addition to working with the NPA, it is also proposed to work with wider partners through the Arrochar, Tarbet and Ardlui Community Council Forum.
- 1.5 The work aligns to outcome 2 of the Outcome Improvement Plan (OIP) 2013 – 2023 which relates to supporting sustainable growth, and to the investment in infrastructure section of the EDAP.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee members:

- 2.1 Endorse work towards unlocking the development potential of Ben Arthur resort as the area of focus for projects and regeneration team activity in Arrochar.

Economic Development Focus of Work - Arrochar

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to ask that members endorse a continued focussed approach to economic development activity in Arrochar.
- 3.2 A focussed approach has been found to be the most time and resource efficient method of supporting communities realise their ambitions within an economic regeneration context. This method of working has successfully been applied to Arrochar over the past eighteen months in relation to two discreet projects, which are summarised in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.4.
- 3.3 These items of work have reached their conclusion from an economic development perspective, which now provides the opportunity for projects and regeneration development officer resource to respond to a longer-term third partnership ambition, and for this to be included in work plans as the specific area of focus going forward.
- 3.3 The redevelopment of the derelict former Royal Navy torpedo factory is a shared ambition of the partners represented on the Arrochar, Tarbet and Ardlui Community Council Forum (ATA Forum). Organisations represented at the ATA Forum include the community council, the Arrochar and Tarbet Community Development Trust, Marine Scotland, Argyll and Bute Council and the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority (NPA). The site is currently a standing item on the agenda, and on which a representative from the National Park Authority regularly reports.
- 3.4 The potential scale of redevelopment is such that it would have a substantial impact on the economic growth potential of the area if progress were to be made to unlock the development potential of the site. It is therefore proposed to combine efforts with the NPA to work in collaboration with a view to stimulating interest in the site.
- 3.6 Activity would align to outcome 2 of the Outcome Improvement Plan (OIP) 2013 – 2023, which relates to supporting sustainable growth, and would meet the Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP) outcome, ‘capital investment has successfully regenerated Helensburgh and Lomond in a manner that optimises sustainable economic growth’. The site is also recognised as an area for visitor experience within the NPA’s Local Development Plan (VE1).

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee members:

- 4.1 Endorse work towards unlocking the development potential of Ben Arthur resort as the area of focus for projects and regeneration team activity in Arrochar

5. DETAIL

- 5.1 Over the past eighteen months work has been undertaken on two projects to support the ambitions of the Arrochar, Tarbet and Ardlui Community Council Forum (ATA Forum). The projects sought to raise the profile of the effects of waterborne litter on the Arrochar shoreline and to consider the area at the junction of the A814 and A83 for a viewpoint.
- 5.2 Marine Scotland has since been awarded £0.5m from Scottish Government to look at ways of addressing waterborne litter and as such this standing item has passed to representatives from Marine Scotland to progress.
- 5.3 A feasibility study was jointly commissioned between Argyll and Bute Council and the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority (NPA) to explore the possibility of a viewpoint at the prominent junction. The study included technical and community input and resulted in mixed responses, with notable concerns raised over siting, design, height, parking and access.
- 5.4 The ATA Forum has since requested that the study be repeated at the same junction to explore new design options. However, this is not considered to be a practical response given the concerns over siting and parking. A viewpoint that was positioned in an alternative welcoming, safe and connected location could however be explored through an improvement and development plan, which the Development Trust are looking to progress. There may also be a role for economic development officers to assist with this as the plan is developed.
- 5.5 The site of the former Royal Navy torpedo factory is also included as a standing item at the ATA Forum under the heading 'Ben Arthur resort', which references the name associated with the proposal for a hotel, timeshare, marina and housing development on the site, the planning permission for which has now lapsed. The standing item is reported on by a representative from NPA. To date, discussion has been mainly in relation to the unkempt nature of the derelict site and the attempts to curb fly tipping and antisocial behaviour. There is therefore significant need to make a concerted effort to try and stimulate the redevelopment potential of the site, with a longer term view to seeing the area improved and the wider economic growth potential boosted.
- 5.6 Discussions with the owner of the Ben Arthur development site and potential developers have taken place to consider ways of addressing the issues of dereliction, with a view to finding a productive economic function for the site

given its prominent location on the A83. The complex site has a number of constraints to overcome and a multi-agency response will be required to bring forward a positive solution that addresses the environmental dereliction and has the potential to provide a source of employment for the area.

- 5.7 Through adopting a collaborative approach, this specific area of work is considered to be the area of Arrochar at this point in time where projects and regeneration development officer resource would most usefully be directed.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The addition of the Ben Arthur resort site to economic development work plans will ensure a concentrated and collaborative effort can be taken with a view to unlocking the potential of the site, which is recognised as an area for visitor experience within the NPA's Local Development Plan and which has the significant potential to support economic growth in the Arrochar area over the longer-term.

7. IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. **Policy:** Work aligns to the Outcome Improvement Plan and Economic Development Action Plan, as well as the National Park Authority's Local Development Plan.
- 7.2. **Financial:** None
- 7.3. **Legal:** None
- 7.4. **HR:** None
- 7.5. **Equalities:** None
- 7.6. **Risk:** None
- 7.7. **Customer Service:** None

Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services: Pippa Milne
Policy Lead: Cllr Aileen Morton

For further information contact: Lorna Pearce, Senior Development Officer (East), Transformation Projects and Regeneration Team, 01700 501 374

June 2018

APPENDICES

None