

**LOCHGILPHEAD CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME (CARS)  
GOVERNANCE**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report asks members to agree to the governance arrangements for the Lochgilphead Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) (Round 8 2020-2026).
- 1.2 The Lochgilphead Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) is a grant programme focusing on the regeneration of historical buildings as well as traditional skills training and community engagement jointly funded by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Argyll and Bute Council. The total grant fund available is £1,257,400. Lochgilphead CARS aims to deliver three priority building projects, a number of small repair grant projects to private home owners and businesses and a number of shopfront repair projects.

**1.3 RECOMMENDATION**

The committee is asked to:

- (a) Note and approve the governance arrangements as outlined within this report.
- (b) Agree to delegate authority to the Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee should an urgent decision on a small repair or shopfront repair grant in excess of £10,000 be required.

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**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**

**MID ARGYLL, KINTYRE AND THE  
ISLANDS AREA COMMITTEE**

**DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC  
GROWTH**

**2 JUNE 2021**

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 This report asks members to agree on the governance arrangements for the Lochgilphead Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) (Round 8 2020-2026).
- 2.2 This report details Lochgilphead CARS grant figures including Historic Environment Scotland funding of £969,731 and Argyll and Bute Council match funding of £386,220. The total projected budget for Lochgilphead CARS including contributions from private building owners' is £1,606,096. This budget will cover priority building projects, small repair grants, shopfront repair grants, traditional skills training, community engagement and staff costs. There is a possibility that additional funding can be secured but this cannot be guaranteed.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The committee is asked to:
- (a) Note and approve the governance arrangements as outlined within this report.
  - (b) Agree to delegate authority to the Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee should an urgent decision on a small repair or shopfront repair grant in excess of £10,000 be required.

**4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1 At the Policy and Resources Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018 the Council agreed to making a financial commitment of £386,220 towards Lochgilphead Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS). The funding was confirmed at Full Council on the 21 February 2019. On the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2019 Historic Environmental Scotland confirmed that they had awarded £969,731 to Lochgilphead CARS. The CARS type and quality of works eligible for CARS grant funding will be guided by the Scheme Guidance (Including HES's

Advisory Standards of Repair) in accordance with the Lochgilphead CARS grant contract of the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020, signed by the Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

- 4.2 Lochgilphead CARS started on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 with a full-time project officer in post. A launch event was planned for May but had to be cancelled following the outbreak of COVID-19. A virtual launch was held in the summer using a dedicated web page and initial work has been carried out. This includes; setting up of systems, creating guidance documents and forms, the appointment of a framework Design Team, communication with stakeholders and discussions with owners of priority buildings. To date one priority building is progressing with construction tenders due to be issued shortly. Extensive consultation had taken place in 2020 with partner organisations regarding training and education events but all plans had to be shelved due to the restrictions that were introduced. Due to the pandemic HES offered a one-year extension to all Round 8 CARS. This offer has been accepted and the Lochgilphead CARS will now run until 31 March 2026.
- 4.3 The total grant budget for small repair projects and shopfront improvements is £403,000. The grant levels will be set depending on the demand for funding and the ability of owners to cover the remainder of the costs. Traditionally the CARS small grants budget funds small scale repair projects, such as individual joinery or masonry repairs but this may be extended to include more substantial communal repairs to tenement properties to safeguard homes and businesses. A similar approach was adopted in Campbeltown and proved to be very successful leading to a number of vacant units coming back into use with new businesses opening and people moving back into town centre residential accommodation.
- 4.4 The total grant budget for Priority Building projects is currently set at £905,096 and three Priority Buildings have been identified for comprehensive repair but this could be subject to change depending on a number of factors.
- 4.5 Building owners can incur expenses when developing a CARS Small Grant or Shopfront Repair project to application stage, particularly when a professional adviser is involved. It is therefore proposed that a two stage process be adopted, ensuring that only projects that are likely to be recommended for grant approval are invited to complete the application process. The proposed grant application and approval process is proposed as follows:
- Formal launch of the Small Grants Scheme and Shopfront Repair Scheme in August 2021. Both schemes would be widely publicised via all available means and ensure that funders are recognised on all material.
  - Initial expressions of interest invited from property and business owners in the grant area. A closing date of early October 2021 would be set.
  - All potential projects would be scored by council officers using the Lochgilphead CARS grant assessment table (currently being developed).
  - All scored projects would be reviewed, and ranked highest to lowest.

- “Invitations to Apply” would be issued to the highest scoring projects. Where applicable, the owners of these buildings could then appoint a suitably qualified professional adviser to oversee the delivery of their project. The resulting fees would also be eligible for CARS grant funding.
- Building owners who have been invited to apply must attend a start-up meeting with the CARS project officer. The full grant procedure process would be discussed and questions answered. The meeting would provide further evidence of the commitment of the building owner to the process.
- At this stage funding would be ring-fenced within the CARS Small Grant and Shopfront Repair Scheme budgets for these projects.
- Deadlines would be set for the submission of the CARS grant application form and associated documentation.
- In the event that schemes are undersubscribed or projects fail to go ahead, a second round of expressions of interest would be invited.

4.6 The Lochgilphead CARS project officer will make recommendations on grant levels over £10,000 to the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee for their approval. Officers will have delegated authority to award grants up to the value of £10,000.

4.7 Factors such as winter working can have a significant negative impact on the cost and timescales for repair and conservation projects particularly where traditional materials are to be used. Where possible, it would be advantageous to avoid delays that would affect the value for money realised by Lochgilphead CARS grant-funded projects. Should an urgent decision on small repair or shopfront repair grants in excess of £10,000 be required, it is recommended that this be delegated to the Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee.

4.8 All proposed Priority Building grants will require approval at the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee. Grant intervention rates and grant levels will be reviewed regularly and any changes will be reported to the Area Committee in the next available update report.

4.9 The Lochgilphead CARS project officer will notify grant applicants of the decision made by the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Committee.

4.10 The type and quality of work that is eligible will be guided by Historic Environment Scotland’s Advisory Standards of Repair.

4.11 To satisfy audit requirements updates on the overall financial position of the scheme will be submitted to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on a six monthly basis. These updates will also include a report on the progress of the scheme.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The arrangements described above are based on processes used successful within other CARS projects including Campbeltown and Dunoon.
- 5.2 This report seeks the approval of the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee for its proposed governance arrangements to ensure the process of grant distribution is made as smooth as possible.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy - The Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan 2013-2023 support town centre Regeneration and a diverse and thriving economy.
- 6.2 Financial -To satisfy audit requirements we provide an update on the overall financial position of the scheme to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on a six monthly basis.

All grant funding is in place as part of the Lochgilphead CARS budget, including the Historic Environment Scotland grant and Council match funding which includes an element of Private Sector Housing Grant.

The scheme also relies on contributions from private building owners.

The total common fund will be £1,606,096

The total funding to be committed is: £1,257,400

- 6.3 Legal - None
- 6.4 HR - A dedicated project officer has been recruited for the duration of the project. Staff salaries are included within the project budget.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty - None
  - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics - None
  - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - None
  - 6.5.3 Islands - None
- 6.6 Risk - That the grant schemes are undersubscribed or that projects run over Time or budget. These risks will be carefully monitored and mitigated by the CARS project officer as schemes progress.
- 6.7 Customer Service - The Council is responsible for administering the CARS grants on behalf of Historic Environment Scotland and for ensuring due diligence in the performance of its duties.

**Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth –**

**Kirsty Flanagan**  
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19 April 2021

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**APPENDICES**