

**CAMPBELTOWN CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME (CARS)
FINAL REPORT**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with a review of the Campbeltown Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) Round 6. The project ended on the 31st March 2021.
- 1.2 This report also includes a final report on the overall programme of heritage led regeneration in Campbeltown town centre from 2007-2021 that led to Campbeltown town centre being named as the Most Improved Place in Scotland at the 2020 SURF Awards.
- 1.3 The main aim of Campbeltown CARS R6 was to build on the success of CARS Round 1 and the THI (delivered between 2007-2015) to provide a sustainable economic future for Campbeltown making it an attractive and vibrant place where people want to live, work, visit and invest. By securing additional funding CARS R6 original budget of £2.1million was increased to £2.9million. This enabled us to deliver 8 priority projects that helped safeguard the future of over 80 units (flats and shops) and associated jobs.
- 1.4 The completion of CARS R6 signals the end of an extensive programme of heritage led investment in Campbeltown town centre from 2007 to 2021 that included two CARS and one Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI). These projects delivered over £10million worth of repairs, transforming the appearance, built fabric and vibrancy of the town centre leading to Campbeltown being named as Scotland's Most Improved Place at the 2020 SURF Awards.

1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee:

- a) Consider the content of the report and agree that Campbeltown

CARS Round 6 has been successfully delivered as detailed in section 4.

- b) Note the additional building projects that have been delivered in addition to the original CARS projects as detailed in paragraph 4.4.
- c) Note the critical funding role that Historic Environment Scotland have played supporting the regeneration of Campbeltown.
- d) Note the critical role that the Campbeltown CARS priority building owners associations have had in the successful delivery of Campbeltown CARS (R6).
- e) Note the critical role All stakeholders have had who been involved in the the heritage led regeneration of Campbeltown town centre since 2007.
- f) Note that Campbeltown has been named Scotland's Most Improved Place at the 2020 SURF Awards.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

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

**DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC
GROWTH**

2 JUNE 2021

**CAMPBELTOWN CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME (CARS)
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2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with a review of the Campbeltown Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) Round 6. The project ended on the 31st March 2021.

2.2 This report also includes a final report on the overall programme of heritage led regeneration in Campbeltown town centre from 2007-2021 which led to over £10million of repairs to historic buildings and included:

- Campbeltown CARS Round 1 2007-2012
- Campbeltown Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) 2009-2015
- Campbeltown CARS Round 6 2015-2021
- Campbeltown Shopfront Improvement Scheme 2019-2021

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee:

- a) Consider the content of the report and agree that Campbeltown CARS Round 6 has been successfully delivered as detailed in section 4.
- b) Note the additional building projects that have been delivered in addition to the original CARS projects as detailed in paragraph 4.4.
- c) Note the critical funding role that Historic Environment Scotland have played supporting the regeneration of Campbeltown.
- d) Note the critical role that the Campbeltown CARS priority building owners associations have had in the successful delivery of Campbeltown CARS (R6).
- e) Note the critical role All stakeholders have had who been involved in the heritage led regeneration of Campbeltown town centre since 2007.
- f) Note that Campbeltown has been named Scotland's Most Improved Place at the 2020 SURF Awards.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Campbeltown CARS R6 started on the 1st April 2015 and was due to end on the 31st March 2020. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic Historic Environment Scotland (HES) approved a one-year time only extension to enable final activities to be completed including end of project reporting and evaluation work.
- 4.2 The main aim of Campbeltown CARS R6 was to build on the success of CARS Round 1 and the THI to provide a sustainable economic future for Campbeltown making it an attractive and vibrant place where people want to live, work, visit and invest.
- 4.3 The Campbeltown CARS budget included funding for external repairs to a number of priority buildings, a small grants scheme and an allowance for traditional skills training and complementary initiatives. Following discussions with HES it was agreed that the small grants scheme would be limited to several grants and that the small grant budget would be used to deliver additional priority buildings.
- 4.4 The original project budget was £2,170,422 including funding from Historic Environment Scotland (HES), Argyll and Bute Council, Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) and contributions from private property owners. Additional funding was secured from CHORD surplus funds, PSHG and private owners increasing the budget to almost £2.9million. This enabled us to grant aid major repairs to 8 priority buildings including 7 tenement properties and one backcourt amenity deck. In all this helped safeguard over 80 separate units (flats or shops) supporting a number of businesses and jobs. All work was carried out to a conservation standard using traditional methods and materials.
- 4.5 **Priority Buildings** - Working in partnership with officers from Housing Services, the following major projects have been successfully completed:
- **10-20 Longrow South** - Safeguarding 4 commercial units and 6 flats.
 - **9-15 Longrow South** (5 units) – Safeguarding 16 jobs and 2 flats.
 - **10-14 Main Street** (MacLean Place West - 8 units) – To date 2 vacant commercial units have been brought back into use and the third is due to open soon.
 - **22-30 Main Street and 2-8 Longrow South** (19 Units) – Safeguarding 4 businesses and one vacant commercial unit has been brought back into use as a new business. Two of the shopfronts have benefited from shopfront improvement grants. This project has won a number of national awards for bringing empty homes back into use.
 - **Amenity Deck Project** (30 Units) - This complex project was completed on budget in November 2018 following extensive development work. An innovative approach was used that led to the Council carrying out the work directly on behalf of the private owners. It involved the replacement of the failing back court amenity deck area which provides a drying area, refuse facilities and an amenity space for residents whilst forming a roof for 9 commercial units below. The failing roof had led to the closure of Macgochans Bar and threatened the future of Boots UK Pharmacy. The

project safeguards the future of 21 flats and 8 operational businesses that support 19 full time jobs and 14 part time jobs.

- **44 Main Street** (7 Units)
- **3 Longrow South** (6 Units) – The vacant bar at No. 40-42 Main Street/Longrow South has now been brought back into use as a seafood restaurant. This was made possible by the repairs to the tenement and to the rear amenity deck (see item 4 above).
- **Mafeking Place** (11 Units) – Additional funding was identified to deliver this project safeguarding a number of homes and businesses.

- 4.6 The last Town Centre Health check completed in 2013 listed 13 vacant commercial units in the CARS grant area of the town centre – all in tenement properties. Most of these units were vacant due to high-level communal repair issues such as failing amenity decks, leaking roofs and damaged rainwater goods. CARS funding enabled these properties to be fully repaired to a conservation standard. As a result a number of new businesses have opened including a seafood restaurant, a tearoom and a ladies clothing store. In May 2021 there was only 3 vacant units remaining and one of these is being refurbished. There is now an increased retail offer and bespoke shopping experience, with a real emphasis on shopping local and a café culture, especially during the tourist season.
- 4.7 In some cases additional works have been carried out to the common closes and backcourt amenity decked areas of these tenements, improving the living conditions. Private owners have made further investments in their respective flats carrying out internal refurbishments and installing doors and windows. This has led to a number of new tenants moving back into the town centre, many of whom work in town centre businesses. This has further improved the vibrancy of the town centre and led to a high demand for living accommodation.
- 4.8 **Traditional Skills Training** – 10 training courses were delivered in Campbeltown by specialist training providers. All courses were well attended by a mix of contractors, building professionals and public sector officers.
- 4.9 **Education Programme** – A number of training courses, seminars and other Events were delivered including; an architectural exhibition, historic walking Tours, shopfront merchandising initiative and an education project with a local primary school that included a theatre performance and a film.
- 4.10 **Final reporting and evaluation** work has now been completed and submitted to HES together with the evaluation report. See section 4.14.
- 4.11 **Campbeltown Town Centre Regeneration 2007-2021** – The completion of CARS R6 signals the end of an extensive programme of heritage led investment in Campbeltown that led to the town being named as Scotland's Most Improved Place at the 2020 SURF Awards.
- 4.12 **Highlights from CARS R1 and the THI include:**

- The £2M repair and conservation of Campbeltown Town Hall leading to an asset transfer and a high quality community facility.
- The conservation and repair of the derelict Old Schoolhouse that became Campbeltown Backpackers hostel.
- Repairs to a number of prominent tenement buildings leading to a number of vacant units being brought back into use.
- Extensive training and education programme.
- The formation of over 30 Owners Associations in tenement properties leading to planned maintenance and repair.

4.13 **2007-2021 - Some of the key statistics include:**

- 18 grants awarded totaling £3.25 million
- £10million being spent on town centre buildings (does not include The Picture House £3million)
- 40 buildings received grant funding
- 11 tenement buildings fully repaired safeguarding the future of 59 flats and 27 commercial premises
- Over 2,200m² of vacant floorspace brought back into use (including flats and shops)
- 42 shopfronts improved
- Engagement of 60 local contractors
- Opening of 10 new businesses
- Creation of 51 new jobs in the local economy
- Over 40 training courses and community events delivered and attended by over 2000 people
- The £3million renovation of The Picture House creating a modern facility – takes the total spend on buildings to over £13million
- Launch of the Discover Campbeltown App
- Formation of over 30 owners associations in tenement properties
- Winner of a number of awards including at national level.

4.14 **Evaluation Work** – In December 2020 Stantec UK were commissioned to prepare an economic evaluation of the Campbeltown projects from 2007-2021. The evaluation profiles the performance and outcomes from heritage led regeneration activity in Campbeltown. It establishes an evidence base to demonstrate the benefits realised and their impact locally to assist decision making regarding future investment in Campbeltown's regeneration.

4.15 The evaluation work included:

- A review of data and information to establish a baseline of knowledge and to identify any gaps.

- A series of 1-to-1 consultations were conducted via telephone with key stakeholder organisations including; Council, HIE, HES, Campbeltown Community Council and South Kintyre Development Trust.
- A public survey to capture additional data on changing perceptions of Campbeltown and regeneration impacts. See paragraph 4.16 for more information about the survey.
- An evaluation and impact assessment.

4.16 Some of the key results from the survey include:

- 428 responses received with the majority being from members of the public and the remainder from businesses and contractors.
- The survey found knowledge of Campbeltown's regeneration efforts is widespread, with most respondents (90%) indicating awareness of the regeneration projects
- 83% of respondents indicated that several or most of the places they visit in the town centre had been noticeably improved
- 98% of respondents stating they would recommend local businesses to family/friends/visitors.
- 90.21% said the regeneration projects have led to Campbeltown being an improved place
- 62.61% said they are more likely to visit the town centre due to the regeneration
- Nearly 90% of responding businesses noted the CARS/THI/Shopfront investment had been transformative for their business, with 45% indicating that the funding was 'very transformative'.
- Nearly 70% of business respondents said they would not have been able to complete their projects without support from CARS/THI/Shopfront funding
- 14 of the 16 building contractors who responded felt the works generated by the regeneration programmes had led to follow-on work.

4.17 As part of the legacy of Campbeltown's regeneration a digital brochure has been produced. The brochure contains information about the project, key statistics and a summary of the data gathered during the evaluation work.

4.18 **Campbeltown, Scotland's Most Improved Place 2020** – At the 2020 SURF Awards Campbeltown town centre won Scotland's Most Improved Place. Each year, SURF, Scotland's Independent Regeneration Network, and the Scottish Government team up to deliver the national SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration. The Campbeltown application was submitted in September 2020 and the project was shortlisted in October. A robust judging process was carried out by a panel of independent judges and the winning project was announced in February 2021 at a celebratory virtual presentation event. During 2021 SURF will be hosting several learning and

development events. These provide a further opportunity to highlight the regeneration activity in Campbeltown and throughout Argyll and Bute.

- 4.19 **Campbeltown Film** – As part of the SURF Awards judging process we were asked to produce a film telling the story of Campbeltown's regeneration. The film has been well received by the community and can be viewed on the council's website at: [Celebrating CARS funding \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](http://argyll-bute.gov.uk/celebrating-cars-funding)

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The focus for Campbeltown CARS Round 6 (R6) was to build on the success of CARS Round 1 and the THI with a particular focus on the repair of a number of key tenement buildings to help safeguard the future of town centre homes, businesses and jobs whilst creating opportunities for investment. By carefully allocating the original budget and securing additional funding it has been possible to fund repairs to 8 priority buildings, this includes 7 tenement buildings.
- 5.2 CARS R6 has proved to be a hugely successful heritage led regeneration project that has played a key role in enhancing the built fabric and appearance of Campbeltown town centre whilst enhancing the conservation area. It has provided further evidence that long term commitment to town centre regeneration projects with incremental investment can yield major improvements in the infrastructure and fabric of our towns providing attractive and vibrant town centers for businesses, residents and businesses, assisting the local economy and improving the quality of life for our local communities and visitors.
- 5.3 The success of the heritage led regeneration investment in Campbeltown was recognised at the 2020 SURF Awards with Campbeltown being named as the Most Improved Place in Scotland. [Campbeltown wins Scotland's most improved place \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](http://argyll-bute.gov.uk/campbeltown-wins-scotland-s-most-improved-place)

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 provided an update on the overall financial position of the scheme to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on a six monthly basis. A final update is included below:

The Campbeltown CARS Round 6 budget, includes funding from Historic Environment Scotland, the Council, PSHG and contributions from private building owners.

At the start of the project the total common fund including owners contributions was £2,170,422.
With additional funding from; CHORD, PSHG and private owners the final common fund will be £2,867,258.

All funding has now been committed.

Historic Environment Scotland	£990,000
Argyll and Bute Council	£500,000
CHORD Surplus Funds	£122,626
Private Sector Housing Grant	£573,880
Contributions from private building owners	£577,410
VAT reclaimed by private owners	£103,342

It should be noted that Historic Environment Scotland retain 10% of their £990,000 grant award until the final reporting and evaluation has been reviewed and signed off.

- 6.3 Legal None
- 6.4 HR Officer time to progress the project further.
- 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 Historic Environment Scotland retain 10% of their £990,000 grant award until the final reporting and evaluation has been completed.
- 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
Policy Lead Economic Development Alastair Redman**

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For further information contact:
James Lafferty, Development and Economic Growth
01586 559049