

**LOCHGILPHEAD CARS – PROGRESS REPORT**

---

**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the progress of Lochgilphead Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) including a change to the priority building projects and a summary of the Argyll and Bute Traditional Skills Demo Day Roadshow event.
- 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.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee consider the content of the report.

**LOCHGILPHEAD CARS – PROGRESS REPORT**

---

**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the progress of Lochgilphead Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS). This includes a change to the priority building projects and a summary of the Argyll and Bute Traditional Skills Demo Day Roadshow event.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee consider the content of the report.

**4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1 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.

- 4.2 Lochgilphead CARS started on the 1st April 2020 with a full-time project officer in post. A launch event was planned for May 2020 but had to be cancelled following the outbreak of COVID-19. A virtual launch was held during the summer of 2020 using a dedicated web page. This was followed-up by direct communications with owners of priority buildings.

- 4.3 In August 2021 we launched the Small Repairs Grant scheme aimed at minor repairs to properties such as; roofs, chimneys, leadwork, doors and windows. We received seventeen expressions of interest. This included a number of significant repair schemes for tenement buildings located within the main target area (Argyll Street south and Colchester Square). Following further

investigations it was determined that a number of these properties are in a much worse condition than originally anticipated with significant repair costs. As a result, they cannot be considered under the Small Repair Grant scheme. Owners have been given support to form Owners Associations and to plan for future repair and works and regular property maintenance.

4.4 Priority Buildings – One of the key elements of a CARS is the named priority building projects. These buildings are agreed with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) during the development and application stages of the scheme as being the most suitable for repair and conservation works. Factors include; location, contribution to the built heritage and Place, current condition, listing and appearance. Grant funding is ring fenced to assist owners with the repair of these buildings subject to all grant conditions being met. The original project plan and budget for Lochgilphead CARS agreed with HES included funding for three priority building projects as follows:

- 1 Argyll Street
- 2-4 Argyll Street
- Tigh Mhicleoid (Colchester Square)

4.5 Following initial discussions with the owners of the priority buildings, 1 Argyll Street and 2-4 Argyll Street confirmed their interest in accessing the CARS grant funding identified against their buildings. These projects are now being progressed. The owner of Tigh Mhicleoid notified us that they did not wish to apply for CARS grant funding. This provided us with an opportunity to re-assess the properties and to identify if there are other buildings that should be identified as priority.

4.6 The last assessment of the properties was carried out during the development phase of Lochgilphead CARS in 2019. At this point, officers had a limited time to prepare and submit the CARS application to Historic Environment Scotland's Round 8 CARS programme. As a result of the time constraints it was not possible to carry out detailed assessments for each property. In light of this and the time that has passed, it was considered necessary/prudent to carry out an assessment of all properties within the CARS target area to ensure that we are working with the most up to date data. This work includes the properties that expressed an interest in the Small Repairs Grant. Following this assessment and analysis of the information, we are planning to upgrade the following two properties to priority building status (reallocating the CARS grant funding that was ring fenced for Tigh Mhicleoid):

- 6-10 Argyll Street
- 5-17 Colchester Square

The owners of both properties have formed Owners Associations, set-up joint bank accounts, commissioned detailed Tenement Condition Reports with Cost Plans and committed to working together to repair and maintain their properties. This follows the CARS guidance requirements.

4.7 Over the next year, our main focus will be on the delivery and completion of the revised list of four priority buildings. All are comprehensive tenement repair schemes:

- 1 Argyll Street – CARS grant funding has already been approved for this property and work is due to start on site this summer.
- 2-4 Argyll Street
- 6-10 Argyll Street
- 5-17 Colchester Square

The aim is to complete these four projects before the end of 2023. As per the agreed governance arrangements, reports will come forward to future meetings of MAKI for approval of these grants.

4.8 Small Repair Grants – Discussions will continue with the owners of other properties to develop minor repair works under the Small Repair Grant schemes. As per the approved governance arrangements for Small Repair Grants, officers will make recommendations to MAKI for grant levels over £10,000. Officers will have delegated authority to award grants up to the value of £10,000.

4.9 Traditional Skills Training – An important element of Lochgilphead CARS is the promotion and delivery of traditional and construction skills training to a range of stakeholders including; Lochgilphead High School pupils, Argyll College students, local contractors, building professionals and public sector staff involved in the repair and maintenance of historic buildings. We want to encourage young people to consider a career in construction and to upskill existing tradespeople. Highlights to date include:

- Argyll and Bute Traditional Building Skills Demo Day Roadshow – In partnership with high schools we delivered Skills Demo Day's in May 2022 across four towns (Lochgilphead, Dunoon, Rothesay and Helensburgh). Almost 200 pupils were given the opportunity to try their hand at construction skills including; stonemasonry, roof slating, thermal imaging and surveying. The event was funded via CARS budgets and partners included; Education Department; high schools, Developing Young Workforce (DYW) and the Scottish Traditional Building Forum. All four events were well received providing pupils with a unique insight into the construction industry.

- MAKI Pups – Construction Craft Technician students from Argyll College designed and manufactured play equipment for the MAKI Pups Nursery. The materials were funded via Lochgilphead CARS.
- An Argyll and Bute Construction Skills Audit has been completed. The final report will be available shortly and the results will help determine future training that we deliver. The report will highlight the current shortage of construction workers across various trades in Argyll and Bute and predict how this could impact on the construction industry.
- We are in discussions with DYW and Lochgilphead High School regarding the delivery of the new Build Your Future training programme: [Buildyourfuture \(dyw.scot\)](http://Buildyourfuture.dyw.scot)

Further training projects are currently being developed.

- 4.10 Education and Outreach Activities – Due to restrictions in place since early 2020 it has not been possible to deliver any public events yet but plans are being developed for a number of events and activities. This includes a public event aimed at owners of traditional buildings to provide advice and guidance on how to keep warm in older homes, improve energy efficiency and reduce running costs. A promotional campaign has been carried out to remind owners of the planning regulations that are in place within Lochgilphead Conservation Area and advice has been provided to owners to help them maintain their properties.
- 4.11 Lochgilphead CARS has also supported a number of other initiatives that have been delivered in-house to support town centres. This includes a Shopfront Improvement Scheme and several projects delivered under the Scotland Loves Local banner, these include:
- Shop Local campaign. Includes posters in local shops, banners in public places and a promotional campaign.
  - Google Accredited Photography Services – Commissioned a photographer to provide businesses with Google accredited photos (internal and external) to help improve their online presence.
  - Google My Business Training – Commissioned a company to run webinars to guide local businesses on how to present their businesses online.
  - Argyll and Bute Scotland Loves Local Gift Card – Designed to encourage local spending and support local businesses.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The delivery of four priority building projects will significantly improve the appearance and historic built fabric of Lochgilphead town centre, helping safeguard homes and businesses whilst providing a boost to the local economy.

## 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 is in post for the duration of the project. Staff salaries are included within the project budget.

6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:

6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics - None

6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - None

6.5.3 Islands –None

6.6 Climate Change – None

6.7 Risk – That the grant schemes are undersubscribed or that projects run over time or budget. Given the demand for grant funding, it is unlikely that the scheme will be undersubscribed. All risks will be carefully monitored and mitigated by the CARS project officer as the schemes progress.

6.8 Customer Service – The council responsible for administering the CARS grants on behalf of Historic Environment Scotland and for ensuring due diligence in the performance of duties.

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

Kirsty Flanagan

**Policy Lead Islands and Business Development:**

Liz McCabe

**For further information contact:**

Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth

[Fergus.Murray@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:Fergus.Murray@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

James Lafferty, Project Officer

[james.lafferty@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:james.lafferty@argyll-bute.gov.uk)