

Campbeltown Town Hall Project

Progress Report

23 April 2012

The **Community Consultation- Needs Analysis** report has been finalised after feedback from the relevant stakeholders and Big Lottery. The main findings of the Needs Analysis are:

- 546 individual respondents completed the questionnaire accounting for almost 10% of the population of Campbeltown. 40 local businesses completed the Business Survey.
- Overall the vast majority of people felt that there was not the right mix of community facilities and activities available locally. Furthermore, the quality of existing facilities was deemed not to be up to the required standard by the majority of respondents.
- There was particular emphasis on the requirement for better provision of facilities for young people, parents with young children and the elderly.
- There appeared to be a need for suitably sized and appropriately located spaces for local artists and musicians and a variety of small sports, dance and fitness classes to undertake these activities.
- Similarly many small charities operating locally are seeking a suitable venue for regular fundraising events particularly Coffee Mornings and dances.
- On the commercial side, our survey indicated a lack of good quality office space in the centre of Campbeltown. There also appeared to be a significant market for a large function room in Campbeltown which would be a fitting venue for wedding celebrations, ceilidhs and similar events.

An **Options Appraisal** was undertaken to assess the ability of local community halls to meet the range of needs identified in our community consultations. An Options Appraisal Report has been completed and finalised after feedback from the relevant stakeholders. A summary of the Options Appraisal is as follows:

- After an initial review of 11 community use halls it was decided to concentrate on those most likely to be able to meet a variety of needs identified in the Needs Analysis.
- The following options were explored further and appraised against a set of criteria including: Cost/Leverage, Impact, Equity, Strategic Fit, Risks, Acceptability and Ease of Implementation.
 1. Town Hall
 2. Community Centre
 3. Old Courthouse
 4. Victoria Hall
 5. New Build
 6. Do Nothing
- The Town Hall Project was identified as the preferred option available to address the expressed needs of the Campbeltown community.

- Based on the appraisal of the various options against the criteria, a refurbished Town Hall would be better able to meet the needs of a wider range of groups and individuals than any other alternative facility locally.

A Final Draft of the **Campbeltown Town Hall Business Plan** has been completed. This comprehensive document presents a strong case for the viability of running the Town Hall as a community facility. The Business Plan established the following:

- Total costs for the refurbishment of the Town Hall estimated at £1.3M.
- Funding of £350,000 has been allocated to the project from the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI).
- Funding is being sought from Big Lottery - Growing Community Assets for the remainder of the costs (£950,000) and preliminary discussions have begun in this regard.
- Both Argyll & Bute Council and Campbeltown Common Good Fund have offered financial assistance towards the running costs of the Town Hall.
- With the right mix of community and commercial use, there exists the real potential to make the Town Hall a successful and self-sustaining community enterprise which will facilitate a material improvement in the quality of life for all members of the community.
- The vision of the Town Hall Project is to combine a range of uses which serve both the local residential community by short-term mostly daily hiring of spaces and the local business community by the provision of high end office space and conferencing facilities for lease in a central location. The flexibility to be able to accommodate a varied programme of uses on competitive (*affordable) terms will be a key part of the offering.
- Our conservative financial projections indicate that the Town Hall project would be able to generate a small surplus (approx £3500) each year which could go towards subsidising community activities.
- The Town Hall Project will rely on the establishment of a voluntary Town Hall Management Group headed by the key stakeholders and made up of representatives of potential user groups. Their primary role would be to oversee the running of the Town Hall and to develop a programme of activities to meet the needs of the community.

Most of the information required to complete the GCA Stage One Application Form has been gathered although some assumptions remain to be verified. We estimate that this application will be ready for submission by the end of May 2012.

- There will be a meeting on 30th April between ABC and SKDT to progress the set up of the Town Hall Management Group (steering group) to facilitate the progress of this important project.

Eric Spence 23/04/12