

**CONSULTATION - HELENSBURGH TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA
PROPOSAL**

3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Members to endorse a consultation exercise that asks local people whether they would support the idea of a Helensburgh Town Centre Conservation Area and whether they would make any amendments to the initial proposed boundary.
- 3.2 The rationale for a conservation area has been established through initial analysis undertaken to inform a bid to Historic Environment Scotland (HES) for Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) funding, and through the Helensburgh Making Places exercise. The merits of a conservation area requires further exploration, and it is best practice to consult on the proposals. A six-week consultation period is therefore proposed to run between 1st May and 12th June 2019.
- 3.3 The eligibility criteria for a CARS project requires that the town centre is covered by a conservation area. The bid was submitted on the basis of townscape analysis that evidences Helensburgh's town centre as being an area of special character and historic interest, with a number of buildings in need of substantial upgrading. If funding were to be secured for a CARS scheme, the project would be expected to contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of the town centre by supporting private owners to make repairs to historic buildings, particularly those in substantial need of repair. The decision has been deferred by HES to allow for a conservation area to be further explored and potentially implemented.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is recommended that Members of the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee:
- a) Endorse a six-week consultation period on the potential for a Helensburgh Town Centre Conservation Area designation; and
 - b) Note that consideration of the Helensburgh Town Centre application for CARS funding has been deferred until early 2020 and relies upon a town centre conservation area having been designated.

5.0 DETAIL

- 5.1 Conservation areas are designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. Conservation areas are designated with a view to preserving and enhancing areas of significant townscape

- Would you be supportive of a conservation area that were to cover part of Helensburgh Town Centre?
 - Do you think the proposed Helensburgh Town Centre Conservation Area boundary is appropriately drawn?
- 5.6 Officers will meet with representatives from both Helensburgh Community Council and Helensburgh Chamber of Commerce to advise on the scope of the consultation on 30th April 2019.
- 5.7 It is best practice to consult on a proposed conservation area designation and it is hoped that the community see this favourably. The results from the consultation, and the rationale for a conservation area would be taken to PPSL as a next step towards designation.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Initial scoping work has indicated that the designation of a Helensburgh Town Centre Conservation Area would serve to protect the town's distinctive character and special interest and that there is merit to warrant consultation with the community on the principle of such a designation.
- 6.2 A conservation area designation would also enable a currently deferred application to Historic Environment Scotland under their Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme programme to be fully considered in the early part of 2020 and which, if successful, would result in £2m of investment in historic built fabric in need of repair in Helensburgh's town centre over a five-year period.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Policy - The Outcome Improvement Plan and Local Development Plan support town centre regeneration and a diverse and thriving economy. The outcome from consultation activity would form part of the LDP review process.
- 7.2 Financial – A request for £1.5m has been made to Historic Environment Scotland for a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme for Helensburgh. At the meeting of 21 February 2019, and as part of the budget setting process, Council agreed to a financial contribution to a potential Helensburgh CARS to the value of £500,000.

- 7.3 Legal - There is a statutory designation process to follow whj 6.523.183B2.5see52383
no

- 7.6 Risk – Should the council choose not to pursue a conservation area designation, the CARS application will not be considered by HES as the eligibility criteria will not have been met.
- 7.7 Customer Service – Consultation activity will attempt to engage in various different ways with a view to reaching as many people as possible.

Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure, Pippa Milne

Policy Lead, Sustainable Economic Growth, Councillor Aileen Morton

29 March 2019

For further information contact:

Lorna Pearce, Senior Development Officer, Transformation Projects and Regeneration, 01700 501 374