

The Highland Council
Lochaber Area Committee
25 November 2013

Agenda Item	4
Report No	LA/10/13

Regeneration and Creation of Event Space, Cameron Square, Fort William

Report by the Corporate Manager

Summary

This report summarises progress on the creation of an events area at Cameron Square, Fort William

1. Background

- 1.1 In March 2012, the Highland Council (with assistance from HIE) commissioned a feasibility study to consider the regeneration of Cameron Square, Fort William, to create a higher quality streetscape incorporating a bespoke events area.
- 1.2 This was in direct response to the trading difficulties facing High Street businesses and the understanding that by increasing footfall this would help to provide a more sustainable retail environment.
- 1.3 Capita Symonds carried out the feasibility study and their designs were subject to wide community consultation, culminating in a public meeting at the end of June 2012. Subsequent consultation was carried out with neighbouring businesses and one specific design option was shown as a clear favourite – the ‘amphitheatre’ option.
- 1.4 However, the one element on which there has been no agreement is a covered area for the Square and therefore at this time it has been agreed not to install any covering but provide fixings should events’ organisers have their own awnings etc.

2. Costs

- 2.1 The estimated cost of the project was £540,000.
- 2.2 Funding was made available for the project from the Scottish Government allocation of £3 million to Highland Council for ‘shovel-ready’ projects.
- 2.3 After tendering, a contract has now been awarded to P1 Solutions Limited with start on site for the main contract expected early in the New Year.

3. Outcomes

- 3.1 The anticipated outcomes from this scheme are as follows:
 - a) effective ‘completion’ of the High Street given both east and west ends

have been revitalised through the Town Centre Regeneration Funding in 2010;

- b) increased footfall in the High Street, creating the economic environment to help High Street businesses thrive;
- c) enhanced social and community confidence – it is almost twenty years since Cameron Square was redeveloped and now looks tired and dated;
- d) environmentally, the scheme will use high quality, low maintenance materials with the use of new lighting technologies which require little maintenance and lower power usage;
- e) there is increasing demand to have more town centre events, but currently this is difficult to support as there is no space open enough to allow a large crowd to gather safely. This project will give Fort William an enhanced reputation as a town which takes a pride in itself and offers an excellent venue as a host for events; and
- f) this development supports the Outdoor Capital of the UK's drive to attract more visitors to the area.

4. Future Works

- 4.1 The budget has not allowed for the inclusion of bespoke artwork in the Square, although use of artwork from the community-led underpass artwork project is being incorporated. There is now an opportunity to consult with local arts groups to ascertain if there is any will to provide more artwork in the area and investigate how this could be funded.
- 4.2 In addition, a local group wishes to install a bronze Model T Ford, and have indicated they are willing to raise the necessary funds to do this (circa £80,000). Foundations and lighting ducts are being installed as part of the main contract to allow the sculpture to be easily installed at a future date.

5. Implications

- 5.1 There are no known resource, legal, climate change, risk, carbon clever or equalities implications as a result of this report

Recommendation

Members are invited to:

- i. note and welcome the progress being made on the regeneration of Cameron Square

Designation: Corporate Manager

Date: 4 November 2013

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