

**The Highland Council**  
**Lochaber Area Committee**  
**26 August 2014**

Agenda Item	<b>8</b>
Report No	<b>LA/25/14</b>

## **Update on Town Centre Action Plan**

### **Report by Director of Development & Infrastructure**

#### **Summary**

This report updates Members on the feedback from a consultation event aimed at addressing Town Centre Regeneration in Fort William, and subsequent progress on the preparation of a Fort William Town Centre Action Plan. This will set out a portfolio of preferred projects to increase footfall in the town centre and is intended to assist in applications for funding towards delivering such improvements.

A draft version of the Fort William Town Centre Action Plan is now being prepared reflecting the outcomes of the event. This report seeks approval for a draft version of the Town Centre Action Plan to be finalised and published for consultation. The consultation will enable officers to consider any comments in progressing the Action Plan towards adoption as non-statutory Supplementary Guidance.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 Members will recall that in late 2013 the Council was successful in securing a bid from Scottish Government to undertake a series of design workshops targeting town centre regeneration. During April and May 2014 the Council held events in Nairn, Tain and Fort William which involved working closely with local communities to identify the best ways of maximising footfall and delivering town centre regeneration.
- 1.2 The Fort William Town Centre Action Plan event engaged a range of stakeholders and generated a shared vision for the town centre's future. During the 2 day event participants were involved in a range of sessions that sought to draw out their aims and aspirations for the future of the town centre, and prioritise. The events were well attended, attracting representatives from a range of local businesses, community councils, community organisations, volunteer groups and local schools. The event concluded with a leaflet being circulated setting out the preferred projects and proposals agreed by those in attendance.

## **2 Action Plan Proposals**

- 2.1 A Town Centre Action Plan is now being developed which sets out details of the 14 proposals identified at the event, with indicative short, medium and long-term. These are shown in **Appendix A** :

#### **Short-term proposals focused on:**

- Create promenade by reducing the width of the A82 dualled section;
- Tidy up the High St:
  - -High St improvements
  - -Shop fronts

- -Greening
- -Lighting
- -improvement to facades to rear of High St buildings
- Consider options for provision of canopy at Cameron Square & potential for other covered walkways
- Undertake traffic management review of High Street

Other short term proposals include; improving signage for pedestrians and the establishing of a joint town team to progress initiatives.

## 2.2 **Medium-term proposals focused on:**

- Improving High St links to waterfront;
- Create gateways with public art;
- Improve station entrance and approach;
- MacRae's Lane – improve linkage to High St and create meanwhile spaces for Arts/Craft activity;
- Conversion of Tweeddale House to flats/student accommodation.

Other medium term proposals include; review development potential of vacant properties/upper floors, create a cycle lane from Nevis Centre to High St via Middle St and planning of more events to attract visitors to High Street.

## 2.3 **Long-term proposals seek to:**

- Create western pier & marina;
- Improve pedestrian link to the Old Fort;
- Develop police station site with western pier to create gateway;
- Create cultural scheme at east end of promenade;
- Future redevelopment of St Mary's school site.

## 3. **Progress to date/Timescales**

3.1 An early draft report has been prepared by a consultant team and is being finalised for public consultation. The consultation will enable officers to consider any comments in progressing the Action Plan towards adoption as non-statutory Supplementary Guidance, subject to Members' approval.

3.2 The formation of the Fort William Town Team is welcomed and noted as is their early progress in undertaking improvements to the town centre environment. The Council will consult with all community groups, who contributed to the Action Plan events, on the draft Action Plan.

## 4. **Fit with the Programme for the Highland Council**

4.1 The work outlined in this report contributes to commitments within "Working together for the Highlands", in particular supporting the development of urban centres and putting local communities at the forefront of these processes.

## 5. **Implications**

5.1 There are no known implications for equalities, resources, legal, carbon clever, risk, Gaelic or rural arising from this report.

## **Recommendation**

The Committee is invited to:

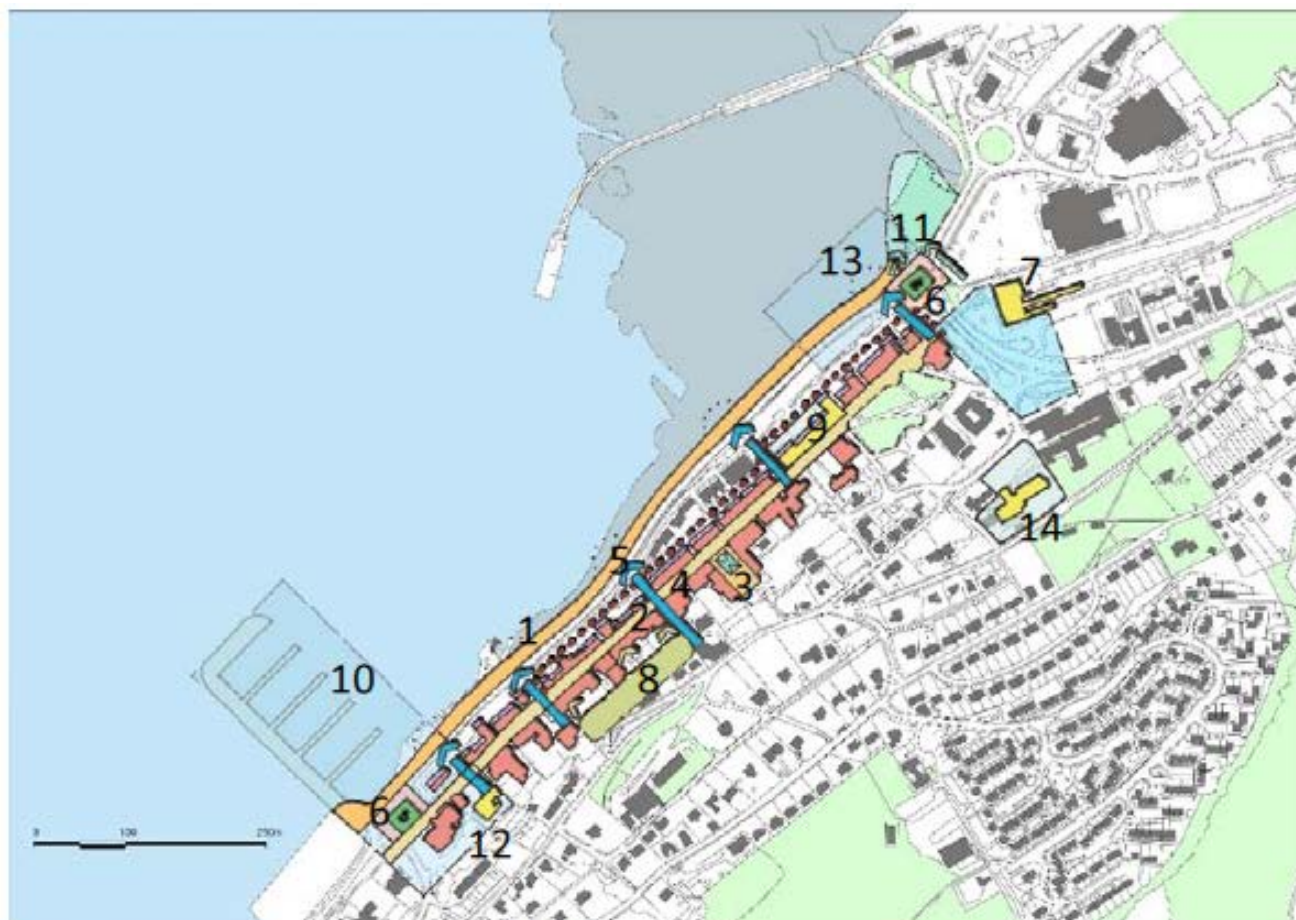
- i. Note the shared priorities identified by participants at the Town Centre event;
- ii. Agree that a draft version of the Fort William Town Centre Action Plan be finalised and published for consultation, based on the structure and format presented at Committee; and
- iii. Agree that Members and officers work in collaboration with community representatives in delivering the outcomes identified.

Designation: Director of Development & Infrastructure

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> August 2014

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**APPENDIX 1  
FORT WILLIAM TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN - PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED**



**Short term**

1. Create promenade by reducing the width of the A82 dualled section
2. Tidy up the High St:
  - High St improvements
  - Shop fronts
  - Greening
  - Lighting
  - Renovate/improve High St backs
3. Canopy at Cameron Sq & other covered walkways
4. Undertake traffic management review of High St

Other short term proposals include; improving signage for pedestrians and establishing a joint town team.

**Medium term**

5. Improve High St links to waterfront
6. Create gateways with public art
7. Improve station entrance and approach
8. MacRae's Lane – improve linkage to High St and create *meanwhile* spaces for Arts/Craft activity
9. Convert Tweeddale House to flats/student accommodation

Other medium term proposals include; undertaking study to review development potential, creating a Cycle lane from Nevis Centre to High St via Middle St and planning more events.

**Long term**

10. Create western pier & marina
11. Improve pedestrian link to Fort
12. Develop police station site with western pier to create gateway
13. Create cultural scheme at east end of promenade
14. Redevelop St Mary's school site