

The Highland Council

City of Inverness Area Committee – Thursday 5th March

Agenda Item	9
Report No	CIA/7/15

Draft Inverness Old Town Conservation Area Management Plan

Report by the Director of Development and Infrastructure

1. Background

- 1.1 Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to designate as conservation areas parts of their area which are of special historic or architectural interest the character and/or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Once designated a conservation area places a statutory duty on the local planning authority to have due regard to the desirability to preserve or enhance the character and or appearance of the designated area when considering proposed developments. The planning authority also has a statutory duty to publish, from time to time, proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their designated conservation areas.

The three conservation areas in Inverness were revised in 2006 and a detailed conservation area character appraisal was produced at this time. This character appraisal divided the substantial conservation area designations into several distinct character areas. One area, referred to as the Old Town, incorporates Castle Street and the area surrounding the Castle northwards through the city centre taking in Church Street and Academy Street running as far north as Glebe Street and Douglas Row which forms part of the Inverness Riverside Conservation Area.

Highland Council have a current stage one pass with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a Townscape Heritage (TH) Scheme for Academy Street in the Old Town character area. Townscape Heritage Funding is a two stage bidding process and following the stage one pass Highland Council are required to work up the proposed THI scheme into detail to gain an approval at stage two. This stage two application is to be submitted to the HLF by 31 May 2015 and if successful the project will commence late September 2015.

2. Managing Inverness Old Town conservation area

- 2.1 A requirement of the HLF is that the area to be funded through the TH programme has in place a detail conservation management plan(CAMP) prepared in line with best practice and clearly demonstrating how the

investment in the area will be protected in the long term.

Proposals for the enhancement and preservation of conservation areas should be published from time to time. In line with the statutory duties placed upon the local planning authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

- 2.2 The criteria for HLF funding is also strongly based on community engagement and social inclusion. As such it is essential that, again in line with good practice, the Council can demonstrate that the CAMP has been developed and adopted following detailed public consultation.

Therefore in line with the statutory requirements, best practice guidance and the requirements of the heritage Lottery Fund, Independent Consultants have been appointed to produce a Conservation Area Management Plan(CAMP) for the Old Town Character Area of the Inverness Riverside Conservation Area.

3. Progressing the Draft Inverness Old Town CAMP

- 3.1 Best practice guidelines from Scottish Government recommend community engagement in the designation and future management of conservation areas. Equally it is a requirement of heritage led regeneration funding that all schemes and proposals are focussed on community benefit and engagement.

Therefore, subject to members approval, it will be necessary for the Draft Inverness Old Town CAMP to under go a period of public consultation prior to final adoption and notification to Scottish Ministers.

Subject to member approval, the draft management plan will be published for public consultation for a minimum period of six weeks.

The consultation will include press adverts, posting on the Council website, copies available in libraries, service points and Council offices. Additionally the proposals will be circulated to a compiled list of interested parties and key partners/stakeholders including amongst others Historic Scotland, Heritage Lottery Fund, Highland Historic Building Trust, Inverness City Heritage Trust and, of course, Inverness BID.

Following the public consultation exercise all comments will be recorded and considered and if necessary the draft management plan amended accordingly prior to the final version being brought back to committee for formal approval.

At that stage the Inverness Old Town Conservation Area Management Plan will be referred to the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee for adoption as Supplementary Guidance to the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan.

The final version of the CAMP will be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland and will form of the contractual documentation of any Townscape Heritage Initiative Funding for the Academy Street TH Scheme.

4. Implications

- 4.1 There are no wider implications to existing resources associated with this report. The cost of consultation will be met by existing budgets and all time and work associated with this process is within existing capacity.
- 4.2 This report simply presents draft proposals and documents for public consultation and therefore does not present any implications for the Council in terms of legal implications, equalities, Climate Change/Carbon Clever, Gaelic and/or Rural issues.

Committee will be aware that conservation area designation places statutory duties on the local authority. However, in this case the proposals simply relate to the management of an existing designation therefore there are no new implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

<p>It is recommended that members approve the draft Inverness Old Town Conservation Area Management Plan for public release and consultation to inform a final version for later approval and formal adoption by Committee.</p>

Designation:

Date: 16th February 2015

Author: Kerry Hawthorne

Background Papers:

Inverness Old Town Management Plan (To be available for Members from 25th February 2015)