

## The Highland Council

City of Inverness Area Committee – 2nd June 2015

Agenda Item	9
Report No	CIA/28/15

### Inverness Old Town Conservation Area Management Plan

#### Report by the Director of Development and Infrastructure

##### Summary

Following the previously approved public consultation period this report presents the consultation responses and amendments to the Draft Inverness Old Town Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP) for Members information and consideration. The report presents the proposed final version of the Inverness Old Town CAMP with a recommendation for members to approve and adopt it as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

#### 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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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 character 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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.

- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 In line with the statutory requirements, best practice guidance and the requirements of the Heritage Lottery Fund, independent consultants were appointed to produce a Conservation Area Management Plan(CAMP) for the Old Town Character Area of the Inverness Riverside Conservation Area.
- 1.9 Members will recall that the Inverness Old Town CAMP document was approved by City of Inverness Area Committee for public consultation at the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015. This consultation exercise has now been carried out and two public responses received.

## **2. Consultation, responses and revisions**

- 2.1 The CAMP was added to the Councils website and made available in Council offices, service centres, the library and the museum. The consultation period ran from 25<sup>th</sup> March to Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May and was advertised in the local press and sent out to key stakeholder groups. Two consultation responses were received within the consultation period.
- 2.2 The two responses received were from Inverness Civic Trust and Inverness BID. Both responses were overall positive and supportive of both the Old town CAMP and the wider regeneration efforts of the Council within the area.
- 2.3 The response from the Civic Trust raised some concerns in relation to current signage, refuse practices and planning enforcement. The Trust response goes on to offer suggestions for improvement including lighting of buildings, good practice incentive schemes and better implementation of legislation and controls.
- 2.4 The Inverness BID response welcomes the CAMP and acknowledges the importance of heritage within the city centre. BIDS response asks for additions to the CAMP to ensure that the focus of the document is ensuring that management of the conservation area is led by supporting successful business.
- 2.5 It is also suggested that there be some revisions to specifically link the

Inverness Old Town CAMP to the Inverness City Centre Development Brief which is currently under review.

2.6 The final version of the Inverness Old Town CAMP presented to Committee has taken account of all of these suggestions and comments and has been revised accordingly.

### **3. Progressing the Inverness Old Town CAMP**

3.1 Following the public consultation exercise the Old Town CAMP has been revised to take account of all comments received and to ensure that it better compliments other emerging Council policy documents.

3.2 Committee are now asked to approve the Inverness Old Town CAMP as non-statutory supplementary planning guidance. If approved, the Old Town CAMP becomes a material consideration in the determination of planning, listed building consent and conservation area consent applications within the designated area.

3.3 Approval and adoption of the Old Town CAMP demonstrates a commitment by the Council to appropriately manage the Old Town part of the Riverside conservation area in line with the specific recommendations of section 6 of the plan.

### **4. Implications**

4.1 There are no direct wider implications to existing resources associated with this report. 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 for the Council in terms of legal implications, equalities, Climate Change/Carbon Clever, Gaelic and/or Rural issues.

4.2 Members should be aware that the implementation of the management plan may have some indirect implications for the Council. This will include asking developers to deliver necessary management plans where relevant to their individual scheme proposals, prioritising the recommendations of the CAMP in the development of Council policy, utilising existing funds and seeking new external funding where appropriate to deliver the recommendations of the Inverness Old Town CAMP.

4.3 Finally the Inverness Old Town CAMP will be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland and will form part of the contractual documentation of any Townscape Heritage Funding approved for the Academy Street TH Scheme.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that members approve the Inverness Old Town Conservation Area Management Plan as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Designation:

Date: 19 May 2015

Author: Kerry Hawthorne

### **Background Papers:**

Inverness Old Town Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP)

Summary of amendments to original documents

Full consultation responses.

(To be available from 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015)