SUMMARY OF DALMELLINGTON CARS APPLICATION - 30.10.15

1. BACKGROUND

Area of Focus

The area of focus is Dalmellington Conservation Area, which covers the historic core of the town. Our submission includes study documents prepared by Barham Glen Architects proposing priority buildings and public realm sites. Out with priority buildings/sites the key area for small grants in Dalmellington is considered to be the central area around the square, including High Street, Main Street, and High Main Street.

Dalmellington Conservation Area

Dalmellington Conservation Area was designated in January 1979. The boundary of the Conservation Area was reviewed as part of the development of the East Ayrshire Local Plan in 2010, and more recently as part of the preparation of the Draft Conservation Area Appraisal October 2015, a small alteration to the boundary has been suggested to include properties in Ayr Road. The Draft Consultation Area Appraisal is included as part of this submission. However, no further action has been taken to progress this matter pending public consultation. The current proposed timetable for this is to have an adopted Conservation Area Appraisal by June 2016. No Conservation Area Management Plan has been produced. It is proposed to obtain Cabinet approval for funding to undertake a Conservation Area Management Plan by April 2016 with the adoption by April 2017.

Enhancement Schemes

There is a strong community spirit in Dalmellington with a highly developed appreciation of their past. This has led to the community of Dalmellington forming The Dalmellington Futures Steering Group. The group includes representation from several other community organisations. The Steering group have carried out extensive community engagement and have produced The Dalmellington Parish Community Action Plan 2012-2017. The plan states the following:-

Dalmellington town centre has a strong identity and heritage, with a number of historic buildings and sites surrounding the main “square”.

The Dalmellington Motte shows that there has been a settlement here going back 1200 years, with Dalmellington being a crossing point in the river and the beating heart of Doon Valley for the last 900 years, dating back to medieval times with elements of the historic 18th Century core still in existence today.

Renovating and upgrading the town centre was the top priority for residents and businesses in the Community Views Survey. The Community Action Plan identifies the following main priorities for the Town Centre.

Main priorities:

Improve buildings and frontages in the Town Centre; Environmental improvements - less litter and more floral displays; Traffic and parking management; Support business development

The Dalmellington Partnership has undertaken a number of environmental improvement projects already and has approached East Ayrshire Council about planning requirements and potential funding for town centre improvements.

As part of the community's priority to improve buildings and frontages, and to understand the conservation area better The Dalmellington Partnership appointed Dr Lindsay Lennie to prepare an Historic Shop Appraisal, this was carried out in June 2012. Based on the recommendations in this report a shop front improvement scheme has been organised by the Dalmellington Partnership and to date this has seen external improvement to 6 shop fronts in Main Street. High Street, and High Main Street, Dalmellington. Within the Historic Shop Appraisal Dr Lennie recommended that:-

"A grant scheme such as a Townscape Heritage Initiative or Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme could help to improve not only the shopfronts but the wider townscape and tackle repairs and vacancy of redundant buildings"

Outwith the Conservation Area the Council has invested £900,000 to improve the facilities at Doon Academy, the secondary school for the Doon Valley.

Vacancy Levels within the Conservation Area

Within Dalmellington Conservation Area there are 5 fully vacant/derelict buildings from a total of 141 buildings this is a vacancy rate of 3.54%. Survey reports on Key Vacant/Derelict Buildings, including a photographic record of all the vacant buildings in Dalmellington Conservation Area were included with the original submission.

Building Condition within the Conservation Area

Wylie Shanks (Conservation Accredited) Architects were commissioned to carry out a preliminary external inspection of all historic properties in Dalmellington in order to identify the repair needs and broad-brush costs to maintain the external envelope in a structurally secure, wind and watertight condition.

The historic core of Dalmellington is based around Townhead, Main Street, High Main Street, and High Street. There is evidence that several of the original buildings still survive in the conservation area. However, the appearance of the area has been affected by a number of vacant and/or derelict buildings some of which are included in the **Buildings at Risk Register**.

1 New Street; 4-8 The Path; Building to the rear of 28 High Street; Building to the rear of 18 High Street; Ye Olde House, 5-9 High Street

All of these structures are historic, situated in prominent locations which, if in better condition with an active use, have the potential to make a very positive contribution to improve the character of the area. Poor quality shop fronts and insensitive signage can be seen throughout the conservation area. Informed guidance would encourage a better quality of design and improve the character of the area. The town centre is also affected by many instances of poorly maintained buildings; there are signs of ongoing disrepair to the physical fabric of the area. This issue is not unique to Dalmellington and is certainly not helped by the difficult economic times facing the property owners over the last few years.

There is the potential, through a proactive approach to significantly enhance the conservation area by repairing and conserving the existing poorly maintained building stock. There is a similar potential to bring vacant buildings back into productive use, whilst retaining their historic fabric.

Barham Glen Architects have subsequently been appointed to carry out more detailed surveys of key buildings and these have been passed to Armour Construction Consultants to determine realistic costs for the necessary works.

Employment & Deprivation Statistics

Due to the decline in the mining industry that was the major employer in the area up until recently, there is a continuing decline in the number and quality of available employment opportunities in the area.

There is no significant change to the statistics and the Economic & Market Appraisal submitted in the original submission. **However, Section 4 of the Vacant Properties Feasibility Study by Barham Glen Architects provides further Socio-Economic justification, including a SWOT analysis of the economic position of Dalmellington, particularly in relation to the re-use of key buildings.**

2. PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME (CARS)

The scope and purpose of the Dalmellington CARS scheme is:-

To help unlock the development potential of key buildings. A large scale conservation initiative including the rehabilitation of landmark buildings such as the former Ye Olde House, including 5-9 High Street through the CARS, will help to raise confidence in the area, attract investment and contribute to Dalmellington's regeneration as the service centre for the Doon Valley.

To ensure appropriate standards of repair works throughout the Conservation Area, using good quality materials and workmanship in order that the historic fabric is passed on to future generations in good condition. This would include reversing some of the inappropriate interventions such as the installation of upvc windows and rainwater goods, and would aim to help maintain and enhance the quality of Dalmellington's built environment and streetscape.

A threefold strategy is proposed to ensure the effective maintenance and repair of buildings:

1. Develop and implement a promotional campaign to raise the awareness of the rich built heritage of Dalmellington and to educate and encourage the owners and occupiers of buildings within the conservation area to regularly maintain their buildings. The campaign would set out the need for regular maintenance and key tasks, identify the problems which affect older buildings and provide guidance as to appropriate repairs.

2. Implementation of a grants scheme which meets the cost of using appropriate materials and workmanship in lieu of modern alternatives. This would cover both comprehensive building repair schemes and smaller scale works such as window replacement or masonry repairs. It is considered that the central area of the Dalmellington Conservation Area should be a priority in view of its architectural importance and general condition.

3. Training and educating local contractors about traditional repair techniques for historic buildings. This will comprise a series of CPD events and assistance to send relevant people, including professionals, contractors and volunteers on formal training courses. Given the high unemployment in the area there is the potential through such training to create additional employment opportunities for traditional building repair.

Priority Buildings: The original recommendations of the report on Dalmellington Conservation Area by Wylie Shanks identified which buildings merit priority attention, taking into consideration whether or not it is listed; the condition and prominence of the building; the prioritisation by local residents; and any inappropriate alterations. Through this process 6 priority buildings were identified in Dalmellington (excluding the two public realm projects dealt with below**).**

The Vacant Properties Feasibility Study by Barham Glen Architects examined the present condition and repair requirements and options for continuing use and enhanced community benefit of these priority buildings and sites in detail. Based on detailed building surveys realistic repair costs have been obtained and on the basis of these surveys, discussions with the owners/potential owners, and the associated costs they have recommended that the following sites be treated as priority projects:

5-9 High Street, Ye Olde House

1 New Street

4-8 The Path

1 High Street, The Doon Tavern

2 Church Hill, Cathcart Hall

Building Repair Small Grants Scheme: The original Dalmellington Conservation Area Building Appraisals also identify many non-priority buildings which could be progressed under a small grant scheme. The Vacant Properties Feasibility Study recommended that 6-8 Main Street should not be considered as a priority project, but rather as the potential recipient of a small/ medium-sized grant.

This study has also highlighted a number of other buildings in the town which could also be considered for inclusion in a CARS programme as priority or large projects. These include 7 Main Street, 2 High Street (Dalmellington Inn), 3-5 High Main Street (The Merrick, Cafe and Dancehall) and 18-28 High Street. A further possibility is the former band hall at 10 Main Street, for which a case could also be made for listing in recognition of Dalmellington Silver Band's importance in the social history of Scotland, and which should also be added to the Building at Risk Register, due to its current condition.

Public Realm Works: The Barham Glen Architect's Dalmellington Conservation Area Feasibility Study identifies two key public realm projects namely **(1)** the stone repair and re-pointing of **the category "B" listed Old Kirkyard** walls together with the repair and reinstatement of cast iron railings and gates, and the improvement of the approach and signage to the Kirkyard, **(2)** improvement works to the reinstatement to **the Motte which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument**. These could include the reinstatement of the steps to the top of the earthwork, improved access and signage, and the removal of inappropriately located conifer trees. There are other traditional features such as the cobbles at 18-28 High Street, and 10 Main Street that could also be reinstated under public realm works.

Training & Education: educating local contractors and consultants on appropriate repair techniques and encouraging their adoption will be developed. An 'Outline Training Needs Analysis' was included in the original CARS submission. A programme of interpretation and outreach in order to inform the people of Dalmellington about the history, architecture and importance of their historic buildings is also planned. An 'Education and Awareness Initiative' chart is also submitted as part of the submission. There are clear opportunities to tackle the current low employment and skill levels through CARS led initiatives by linking into projects which are being piloted elsewhere in East Ayrshire utilising contacts with Ayr College.

3. DALMELLINGTON CARS CONTRIBUTION TO THE WIDER SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC & REGENERATION STRATEGIES

Due to the importance of this element of our bid a separate report is included with the submission, the Executive Summary is reproduced here for ease of reference.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dalmellington is located in an area renowned for its outstanding natural environment where tourism is a growth industry and opportunity to exploit this is plentiful, however the lack of tourist infrastructure is preventing the town from capitalising on, and benefitting from, this growing sector. With the achievements of the Community Led Action Plan already in place, strong leadership is now required to tackle these more difficult issues and advance the aspirations of the community.

East Ayrshire Council's Local Development Plan identifies the CARS as a key way of tackling some of the vacant and run-down buildings in the town-centre, creating a focus, and acting as catalyst to encourage more discussion, further strategic planning and ideally more action regarding outstanding issues in and around the town. The sustainable ethos inherent in any CARS wholly supports the criteria of the designated Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere of which Dalmellington is a key town in a key location.

This report illustrates the existing developments that are already drawing visitors to the area and those with the potential to be developed further offering even greater tourism opportunities. Dalmellington has a history of strong community-led projects & action and already has a number of successful social enterprises and projects running within the town. Recent consultation has indicated that the community is wholly supportive of developing the tourism offer in and around the town and are committed to maximizing the towns potential in this regard. A newly formed Community Development Trust would be the ideal vehicle to steer the community to meet its aspirations while working with the Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere to achieve their mutually compatible aims.

A Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) is an essential catalyst required by Dalmellington, a town that in the past has and continues to suffer from severe economic deprivation. The community is engaged and supportive of the proposal and are in the early stages of forming a Community Development Trust (CDT) to work with the CARS in taking forward some of the opportunities and initiatives the appraisals and feasibility studies have identified.

A CARS for Dalmellington would be entirely consistent with the vision of the local community, that of Scottish Governments Regeneration Strategy and that of the Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere in that it will: -

• actively support a community which, over an extended period of time, displays clear signs of deprivation and disadvantage;

• contribute to town centre regeneration and vitality;

• help create and support jobs (and thereby support community wellbeing) in new and recently established businesses, and

• to foster a sustainable economy and society

A CARS for Dalmellington would readily support all 3 of the Scottish Government's Regeneration Strategy's outcomes:
In terms of **ECONOMIC REGENERATION** it will help the local economy by supporting growing

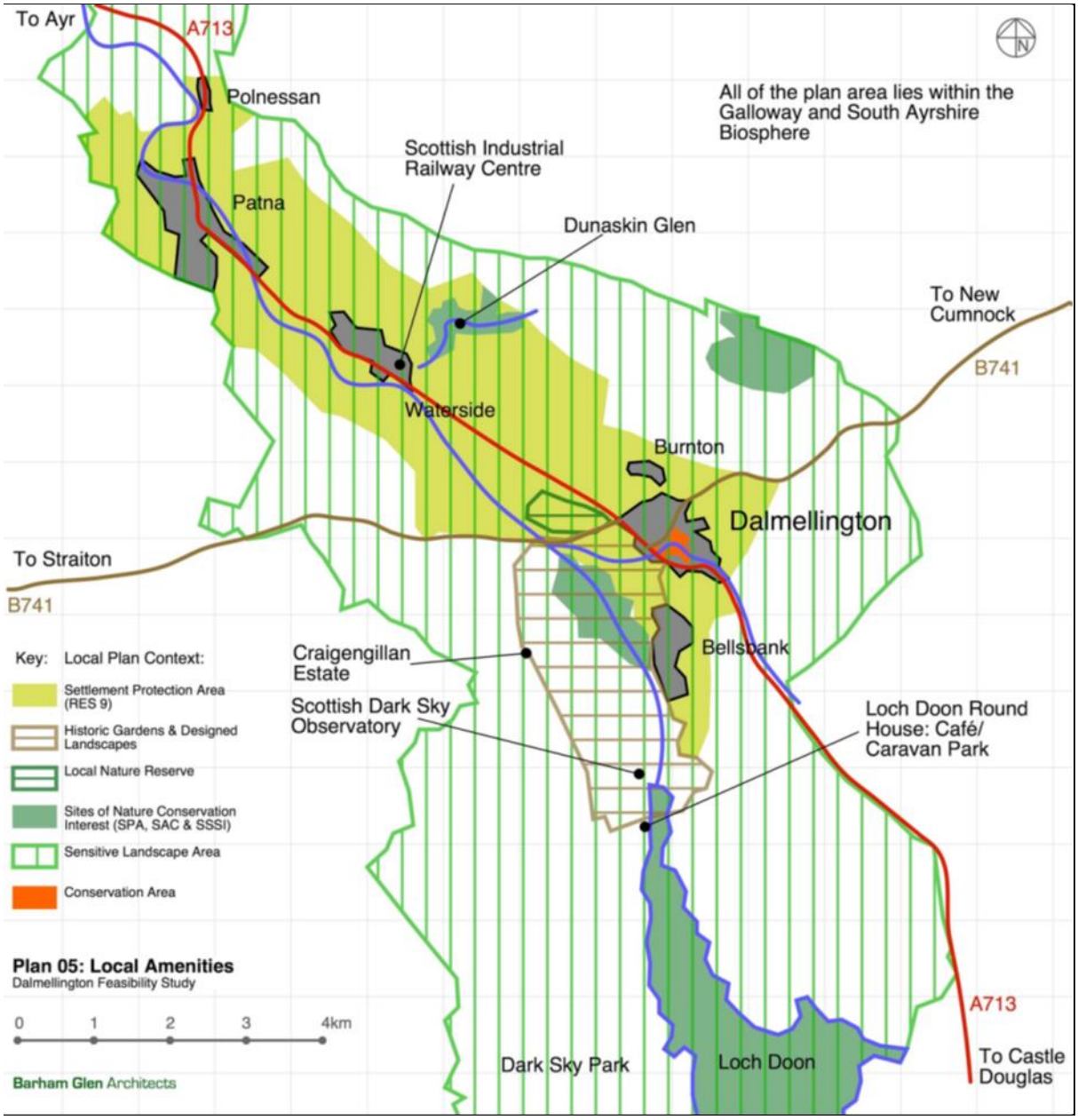
businesses and social enterprise; it will improve the physical infrastructure available within the town; it will bring new life into the heart of the town and it will encourage employment and therefore reduce welfare dependency;

In terms of **PHYSICAL REGENERATION** it will conserve and re-use a number of buildings and structures within the town; it will encourage the upgrading of interiors within historic properties; these will contribute to the vibrancy and attractiveness of the commercial heart of the town; and

In terms of **SOCIAL REGENERATION** it will involve working closely with the existing community organisations through partnership, it will encourage local people to participate in improving their own physical environment; it will respond to local needs and will support community aspirations established in the current Community Led Action Plan and the development of the new Action Plan.

In terms of planning and regeneration strategies a CARS for Dalmellington will be fully consistent with, supportive of and complimentary to the Dalmellington Parish Community Action Plan 2012-2017 along with East Ayrshire Councils newly adopted Local Development Plan where the vision is that ***"East Ayrshire will be a desirable place in which to live, work, invest and visit"*** and where Dalmellington "***will have established itself as a visitor friendly town, making the most of surrounding tourism and environmental opportunities".*** The sustainable development which a CARS creates supports the Spatial Strategy of the LDP. Successful place-making is also supported through CARS, and CARS is cited in the Plan as a catalyst for Town Centre Improvements to raise developer confidence in the area and the Tourism policies give particular support to sympathetic development which enhances the tourism offer of Dalmellington. The Dalmellington CARS, will also be supported by Built Environment Policies for Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Scheduled Monuments, together with the emerging Conservation Area Appraisal.

The Biospheres goals of Conservation, Learning and Development are also consistent and complimentary with CARS – with CARS supporting the Biospheres purpose of "testing and demonstrating sustainable development on a regional scale". A Dalmellington CARS will be the first CARS opportunity in Scotland to operate within a Biosphere providing a unique opportunity for knowledge exchange, networking, awareness raising and promotion in partnership with each other.


To Ayr
A713
Polnessan
Patna
Scottish Industrial Railway Centre
Dunaskin Glen
All of the plan area lies within the Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere
To New Cumnock
B741
Waterside
Burnton
Dalmellington
To Straiton
B741
Craigengillan Estate
Bellsbank
Scottish Dark Sky Observatory
Loch Doon Round House: Café/ Caravan Park
A713
To Castle Douglas
Dark Sky Park
Loch Doon
Key: Local Plan Context:
Settlement Protection Area (RES 9)
Historic Gardens & Designed Landscapes
Local Nature Reserve
Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SPA, SAC & SSSI)
Sensitive Landscape Area
Conservation Area
Plan 05: Local Amenities
Dalmellington Feasibility Study
0 1 2 3 4km
Barham Glen Architects

4. SCHEME COSTS

Barham Glen Architects were appointed to carry out detailed surveys of key buildings and these have been passed to Armour Construction Consultants to determine realistic costs for the necessary works. The costs below are based on these additional surveys of key buildings and sites and their associated costs.

Total Cost of the Scheme: £1,851,651

Total Eligible Cost of Repair Work to the Historic Fabric: £1,320,992

Funding Requested From Historic Environment Scotland: £599,863

East Ayrshire Council's Contribution: £561,739 (Approved by Cabinet 18 March 2015, a copy of the Cabinet Report and Minute of the meeting are provided as a supporting document).

Owner's Contribution: £159,391 on repairs, and a potential £422,136 on improvements/alterations (dependant on external funding).

See attached tables for proposed details.

5. SCHEME MANAGEMENT & PARTNERS

The intention would be to recruit a dedicated Project Officer with suitable practical experience in historic building conservation and membership of a recognised body such as the Institute of Historic Building Conservation. Additional expert advice would be provided where necessary through the appointment of external conservation accredited consultants, accredited under the RIAS (Architects) and RICS (Quantity Surveyors) schemes.

A number of community groups, including the Dalmellington Partnership and Community Futures Group are currently proposing to set up a Dalmellington Community Development Trust. There is potential for Dalmellington Partnership or the Dalmellington Community Development Trust to purchase a priority building within the Conservation Area and to develop it for community use or by a social enterprise company. CARS funding would likely be sought to support any proposal by the Partnership/Trust.

In addition it would be the intention to involve the local primary schools, Doon Academy and Ayrshire College in raising awareness of the history & heritage contained within both communities. It is proposed to further develop the links with Ayr College so that training courses to upskill local building contractors can be provided.

6. TRAINING & EDUCATION PLAN

The original proposal for promoting local community involvement, through delivery of training in traditional skills, education and promoting a more active culture of maintenance still applies to the revised scheme.

7. MEASURING SUCCESS

We would intend to measure success through key performance indicators such as:-

- Number of buildings repaired
- Number of vacant and derelict buildings brought into use
- Reduction in the number of Buildings at Risk
- Number of property owners getting involved
- Amount of Partnership Funding secured.
- Amount of Private Investment in the scheme projects.
- Number of training opportunities provided,
- Number of individuals sent on training courses,
- Number of educational opportunities provided – raising awareness.
- Increase in number of Conservation Staff in Local Authority
- Number of new businesses created.
- Number of new jobs created.
- Number of existing jobs secured.
- Assessment of the level of economic activity within the town centre.
- Assessment of the increase in community engagement in heritage issues.
- Increase in Cultural and Creative Activity.
- Reduction in crime, vandalism, litter within the conservation area.