

Item: 19

Policy and Resources Committee: 27 November 2018.

St Margaret's Hope Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme.

Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider dedicated project resources for progressing a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme within St Margaret's Hope.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That, on 9 October 2018, the Council resolved that the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure should submit a note of interest to Historic Environment Scotland confirming that the Council was interested in operating a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme project within St Margaret's Hope between 2020 and 2024.

2.2.

That, should the application to Historic Environment Scotland be successful, an up to date Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will require to be produced, together with fully developed details of any priority projects or any public realm improvements.

2.3.

The proposal that a temporary post of Assistant Planner, at an estimated cost of £28,900 to £31,700 per annum, be established in order to produce the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, undertake community engagement in respect of the project and identify additional sources of external funding.

2.4.

That the Development and Infrastructure Service is not able to identify any surplus capacity within existing revenue budgets to meet the costs associated with the temporary post of Assistant Planner.

It is recommended:

2.5.

That a project budget of £36,700, to be met from the Renewables, Regeneration and Redevelopment Fund, be established in order to progress a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme within St Margaret's Hope.

3. Background

3.1.

At its special meeting held on 26 September 2018, the Development and Infrastructure Committee considered the possibility of progressing a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme for St Margaret's Hope.

3.2.

The Committee subsequently recommended:

3.2.1.

That the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure should submit a note of interest to Historic Environment Scotland confirming that the Council was interested in operating a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme project within St Margaret's Hope between 2020 and 2024.

3.2.2.

That the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure should submit a report, to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, regarding funding required to progress the application to Historic Environment Scotland's Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme in respect of a project for St Margaret's Hope.

4. Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes

4.1.

In accordance with the decision of Council referred to at section 3.2.1 above, additional discussions were held with Historic Environment Scotland regarding a potential application for Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme funding in respect of St Margaret's Hope. It was advised that, owing to the interest in the scheme, in order to be successful it would be necessary to prepare an up to date Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan; to fully develop the details of any priority projects or any public realm improvements; and to undertake the necessary public consultation in advance of an application being made.

4.2.

Historic Environment Scotland has advised that a new round of funding will be opened in 2019 for projects to commence in 2020. The anticipated start date for the project would therefore remain the same as if an application were submitted in the 2019 window with a request that the start date be deferred as originally intended, with the additional benefit that the project would have an additional year to run (2020 to 2025).

4.3.

Following the departure of the Council's Assistant Planner (Historic Environment) in 2017, and disestablishment of the post in favour of making the post of Access Officer permanent, no capacity currently exists within the Planning Service to undertake this work. As such, it would be necessary to recruit an officer, on a temporary basis, to produce the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, undertake community engagement in respect of the project and identify additional sources of external funding.

5. Corporate Governance

This report relates to the Council complying with its financial processes and procedures and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

6. Financial Implications

6.1.

The report identifies that the lack of capacity to develop the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme has arisen through the Service utilising the capacity that had existed to fund an Access Officer post on a permanent basis. The cost of employing an Assistant Planner on a temporary basis will range from £28,900 to £31,700 for a G6 post and a dedicated budget of £5,000 to cover administration costs and any costs associated with survey work. On the basis that the Service is not able to identify any capacity within existing Service revenue budgets, if the Committee wishes to proceed, this report seeks a dedicated project budget to cover these costs.

6.2.

The actual cost to the Council of delivering the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme will not be known until specific projects are identified. However, Historic Environment Scotland has provided the following advice:

- Priority projects and small grants where the Local Authority is the owner cannot ordinarily seek more than 25% funding from Historic Environment Scotland contributions without there being a strong case for why this might be more. Typically, we would expect that grants would be offered at around 60% - 75% of eligible costs with the remainder coming from the grantee.

- Education and awareness activities can be requested at any level although as normal we would expect to see a contribution from the Local Authority.
- Traditional skills training again can be requested at any level, with Local Authority contributions, but the total request to Historic Environment Scotland under this must be at least 5% of the total funding requested.
- Public realm works are the same again with requests at any level with Local Authority contributions to make up the required funding although the total request to Historic Environment Scotland must be no more than 20% of the total ask and there must be strong evidence that the works are appropriate.
- CARS officer and other admin funding can be requested again at any level with Local Authority contribution to match fund but typically we see these at around 10%-15% of the total Historic Environment Scotland funding requested.

6.3.

All efforts will be made to identify funding partners during the development stage of the project to minimise the contribution that the Council must make directly and to maximise investment within the Conservation Area. However, no present budget exists for the project and a source of funding will need to be identified if the scheme is to be delivered.

6.4.

Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme projects were previously developed by the Planning Service in-house team with match funding contributions committed through the Renewables, Regeneration and Redevelopment Fund. It would be possible to provide the budget of £36,700 sought by this report from the Renewables, Regeneration and Redevelopment Fund.

7. Legal Aspects

There are no significant legal implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

8. Contact Officers

Gavin Barr, Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure, extension 2301, Email Gavin.Barr@orkney.gov.uk

Roddy Mackay, Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services, extension 2530, Email Roddy.Mackay@orkney.gov.uk

Stuart West, Planning Manager (Development and Marine Planning), extension 2816, Email Stuart.West@orkney.gov.uk