

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Director of Strategic Change and Communities
to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel
of 5 March 2024**

Subject: Girvan's Story, Heritage and Place Programme

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Service and Partnerships Performance Panel with an update on activities and outline key programme events in regard to Girvan's Story, Heritage and Place Development Phase activities over the next year.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:

2.1.1 acknowledges the progress made to date in terms of a successful grant funding application to Historic Environment Scotland and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, including recent formal Permission to Start; and

2.1.2 otherwise notes the contents of the report and supports the approaches and activities set out in this report.

3. Background

- 3.1 There is a clear priority of need to address issues pertaining to the built environment in Girvan. Recent engagement and strategies (Girvan Place Plan and Girvan Place-based Strategy) have identified the challenges faced by Girvan and the role community action will take in addressing these. These documents particularly highlight the role heritage has in regenerating Girvan. Girvan's heritage plays a key role in developing a sense of identity and pride; attracting visitors and promoting mental and physical wellbeing through improved public spaces and buildings.

- 3.2 Historic Environment Scotland (HES) launched the Heritage & Place Programme (H&PP) that aims to contribute to the development of vibrant and sustainable places in Scotland, through community-led regeneration of the historic environment. HES encourage applicants to apply to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) to part match-fund applications to their own H&PP. The application is a two-part process. A pass on the first-round application leads into an approximate 12-month development phase, which concludes with a second-round (final) application. A successful second round application would lead into the delivery phase (circa five years).

- 3.3 First round applications were submitted under delegated authority to HES and NLHF in late 2022 to develop projects in the Town Centre, specifically Dalrymple Street and Knockcushan Street. Associated projects were identified across the conservation area and seafront areas.
- 3.4 Applications were approved by HES and NLHF in Spring 2023 and The Girvan's Story Project was awarded £170,000 in development stage funding.
- 3.5 A Project Officer was appointed in September 2023, and Permission to Start granted by funders in December 2023 and January 2024. A procurement process is now underway to appoint consultants including a Design Team and Heritage Consultant.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 The project aims to breathe new life into the historic core of Girvan, which without a programme of significant and co-ordinated investment is likely to deteriorate further, with the possibility that some of the town's key heritage assets will be lost. Therefore, central to the Girvan's Story project is the aim to build the resilience of the historic environment through building improvements, repairs and minor adaptations to reduce the effects of lack of investment (compounded by the economic challenges associated with the town) and climate change.
- 4.2 A Conservation Accredited architect will be appointed to lead a design team in developing fully costed repair schemes for priority buildings and a small grants scheme. Community Wealth Building colleagues will support the end users of these buildings through the development of business plans/feasibility studies which demonstrate viable and sustainable end uses.
- 4.3 A traditional skills audit will be undertaken and the findings used to inform a traditional skills training plan. Opportunities for collaboration with local organisations such as Dumfries House and Culzean as well as the Council's Employability & Skills will be investigated.
- 4.4 The project will consult and engage with a wide range of people through the development phase to understand the needs and aspirations of the local community, with a particular focus on young people as the future custodians of the town's heritage. A number of pilot events will be delivered for the purposes of testing what works well and encourages different groups to become involved with the project. Pilot activities and training will also be used to support community groups in building their capacity.
- 4.5 A partnership board with representatives of a number of community groups has been established so that input can be received from the start of the development phase. Monthly meetings will be held, chaired by a representative of Girvan & District Community Council.
- 4.6 The final submission for Delivery Stage is planned for December 2024, with an interim review scheduled 3 months in advance. This will be subject of a Cabinet paper in advance of submission.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

- 5.2 Procurement of consultancy services will be subject to tender rules and procedures and subject to approval. Procurement is planned as follows:

Activity	Route	Anticipated Start
Design Team (Conservation Accredited Architect & QS)	2	April
Materials Audit	1	March
Traditional Skills Audit	1	March
Traditional Skills Training Plan	1	March
Conservation Area Management Plan	1	June

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications from Development Phase activities.

7. Human Resources Implications

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

- 8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

- 8.2.1 The risks associated with rejecting the recommendations is the missed opportunity to identify and advance priority regeneration projects on a key theme identified through various consultation exercises.

9. Equalities

- 9.1 The proposals in this report allow scrutiny of performance. The report does not involve proposals for policies, strategies, procedures, processes, financial decisions and activities (including service delivery), both new and at review, that affect the Council's communities and employees, therefore an equality impact assessment is not required.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

- 10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - The Scottish Government Gateway will be contacted in terms of any potential SEA Requirements and the assessment of environmental impacts (SEA / EIA (Economic Impact Assessment)) and reporting.

11. Options Appraisal

- 11.1 An initial range of priority projects were identified through the Place Plan, Place-based Strategy and consultation with Officers and Elected Members. The finalisation of priority projects is a key aspect of the Development Phase work and will be undertaken in coordination with the Project Board and Funders and further consultation over the next year.

12. Link to Council Plan

- 12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priorities 1, 2 and 3 of the Council Plan: Spaces and Places/ Moving around and the environment (Outcome 1), Live, Work, Learn (Outcome 2) and Civic and Community Pride (Outcome 3).

13. Results of Consultation

- 13.1 There has been extensive public and stakeholder consultation that informed the Place Plan and Place-based Strategy, which informed the applications to HES and NLHF. Further consultation is scheduled over the Development Phase.
- 13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Alec Clark, Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Culture and Rural Affairs, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

Background Papers **None**

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