

AGENDA ITEM NO 7

KIRRIEMUIR CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME -

STEERING GROUP – 19 AUGUST 2014

CARS Small Grants Scheme - Proposed Boundary Review (July 2014)

Existing Situation

There continues to be interest from building owners in the Small Grants Scheme under Kirriemuir CARS however this has not been reflected in the number of grant applications to date (four within Year 1). Part of the reason for grant applications not coming forward has apparently been difficulty on the part of owners in obtaining quotes from contractors for grant eligible works.

Enquiries from property owners within the designated town centre boundary have been followed up and now that professional agents have been engaged, the likelihood is that a number of more significant grant applications may potentially come forward within the next few months.

Interest has also been expressed by a number of property owners whose buildings are currently located outwith the priority area, but still within the Conservation Area boundary ([see attached Map 1](#)).

(Please note: larger scale coloured maps will be distributed at the meeting)

At the present time, the owners have been advised that any application for grant assistance would be recommended for deferral by the CARS Steering Group as priority is to be given to applications within the town centre boundary.

As with other CARS projects, it is quite common to have a priority area or a group of priority buildings on which to concentrate investment with public funding. However given the overall extent of the conservation area in Kirriemuir, this has resulted in a considerable number of buildings being excluded from the scheme at the present time. Whilst this obviously results in some dismay amongst owners that their proposed works are not able to benefit from public funding, more significantly, this will result in an underspend of the small grants budget given that the uptake of grant applications within the priority area has initially been slow.

Since the start of Year 2 in April, no small grants have been awarded and it is therefore recommended that the current priority town centre area be reconsidered in light of the above.

Options

A number of options are put forward for consideration by Members, as follows:-

Option 1 - no change and leave current boundary as is:-

Advantage: concentrates funding and works to buildings within designated town centre boundary with greater visual impact and town centre enhancement.

Disadvantage: restricts any grant applications for remainder of Conservation Area and removes opportunity for buildings facing onto but currently outwith the designated boundary e.g. east side of Schoolwynd and north side of Reform Street to apply for grant funding.

Option 2 - include a limited number of properties adjacent to the existing town centre boundary where some interest in the grant scheme has been shown:-

Advantage: logical inclusion of buildings on opposite side of main thoroughfares through town where property owners have expressed interest and which would have a positive visual impact on the character of the area i.e. Reform Street/ St Malcolm's Wynd/ Schoolwynd/selected buildings in Kirkwynd/ top of Tannage Brae and junction of Glengate/ St. Malcolm's Wynd (incl. Seceder Hall).

Disadvantage: restricts in part, grant applications for remainder of Conservation Area.

Option 3 - to include all buildings in Option 2 and extend boundary to include frontage of buildings facing onto Roods:-

Advantage: as per option 2 and greater visual impact of improved frontages on main routes through town centre and Conservation Area.

Disadvantage: disperses grant funding to much wider area, diluting the impact at an early stage of the CARS project, at the expense of the town centre.

Option 4 - to include ALL properties within the Conservation Area:-

Advantage: retains principle of CARS to offer funding to all properties within the Conservation Area boundary and includes all owners who have expressed interest in grant scheme.

Disadvantage: funding dispersed throughout the conservation area would also include properties within backland locations with limited visual impact where public benefit would be restricted.

Option Appraisal ([see Map 2](#))

Given the interest expressed from property owners outwith the current boundary and the need to fully utilise the small grants budget (total £213,000), it is recommended that the priority area boundary be revised to include buildings which form a logical visual extension to the current area. **Option 1** to retain the current boundary is not considered to be viable.

The boundary at present ([see Map 1](#)) encompasses the historic core of the burgh but runs midway down St Malcolm's Wynd, Reform Street, Schoolwynd and Kirkwynd, omitting buildings on the outer side of these streets.

Option 2 would include the north side of Reform Street (nos. 2 - 28 even nos.); the east side of Schoolwynd (Gairie Inn and nos. 1 - 19); nos. 5 and 7 Brechin Road;

nos. 21 and 25, 26 and 28 Marywell Brae; nos. 1 - 13 Kirkwynd; 1, 3, 4 and 5 Tannage Brae; nos. 36 - 46 Glengate (incl. Seceder's Hall and former St. Ninian's Church) and nos. 1 - 7 (odd) St. Malcolm's Wynd. There have been expressions of interest from owners of a number of these buildings (as shown on plan) and all are located adjacent to the current town centre boundary where any potential repair/reinstatement works would have a positive impact on the street scene and the character of the conservation area in general. One building in particular, the Category B listed Seceder Hall, one of the oldest buildings (1779) of historical importance within the Conservation Area is in a backland location and only partially seen in passing. However, initial works have been started to remove the render finish and restore the building to its original appearance which could be furthered by the owner if grant assistance was made available. It is recommended that the revised boundary include this building for the purpose of grant funding. Two other building groups, nos. 2 - 16 Reform Street and 26 - 28 Marywell Brae form key focal points when viewed on approach but are currently in poor physical condition ([see photo pages attached](#)). It is recommended that the revised boundary include these buildings for the purpose of grant funding.

Option 3 would include the buildings mentioned above and extend the boundary to include the frontages of buildings facing onto The Roods. This would incorporate most of the main public thoroughfares through and around the town centre to generate maximum public benefit from any environmental enhancement. The majority of these properties are in residential use and in reasonably good physical condition. Any grant eligible works would likely include window repairs/traditional replacements, roofing and stonework repairs. However the impact of grant monies spent on repairs would be diluted by the extent of the area involved and it is most likely that the small grants budget would be spent prematurely.

Option 4 to include all buildings within the boundary of the conservation area would achieve maximum spending of the small grant budget within a much shorter timescale but to least effect as it would not concentrate funding at any desired location.

Recommendation

The likelihood is that if all Priority Projects go ahead as anticipated, the Small Grants budget will not be supplemented by any subsequent reallocation of funds from the overall budget. The current funding allocation for Small Grants (£213,000) should therefore be used to provide the maximum visual and environmental benefits to the historic townscape in Kirriemuir.

It is recommended that Option 2 be pursued in the short term (with immediate effect) to concentrate spending and to achieve a greater visual enhancement of the town centre area, followed by a further annual review in Year 3 (August 2015) to consider Option 3 as a means to maximising spending of the Small Grants Scheme budget. Should Option 2 be agreed by the Steering Group, it is proposed that revised publicity measures be undertaken such as the CARS web pages and a dedicated mail drop for all properties now included within the revised priority boundary.