

Gorebridge Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme: Appointment of Council Representatives**Report by Dr Mary Smith, Director Education, Communities and Economy****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1** This report seeks to appoint Council Members as representatives on the Project Team for Gorebridge Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS).

2 Background

- 2.1** At its meeting on 26 February 2013, the Planning Committee noted the successful bid to Historic Scotland for the Gorebridge CARS project. It agreed to formally enter the Council into a contract with Historic Scotland to deliver the CARS project over a five year period commencing on 1 April 2013 and that work should commence on the development stage of the project involving the Council's community partners and other stakeholders.
- 2.2** As previously advised to Members, the Gorebridge CARS project is a partnership between Historic Scotland, Midlothian Council and Gorebridge Community Development Trust, the main funders being Historic Scotland and Midlothian Council.
- 2.3** The aim of the project is to provide grant assistance for the repair and restoration of identified historic buildings within Gorebridge Conservation Area. The scheme also allows for some public realm improvements and for training and education to increase awareness and understanding of Gorebridge's history and heritage.
- 2.4** A Project Manager has been appointed to implement the scheme and is currently based in Gorebridge one day per week which will increase to 3 days per week after June this year. The scheme was officially launched at an event in Gorebridge on 10 October 2013 and contact has been made with many of the owners of buildings that are eligible for grant aid.
- 2.5** It has been agreed with Historic Scotland that management of the scheme should be carried out with the assistance of a Project Team. This will be similar to the way in which the Dalkeith Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)/CARS was managed. It is envisaged that the Gorebridge CARS Project Manager will report to the Project Team and the grants will be submitted and assessed by the Project Team. A short paper setting out how the project will be managed is appended to this report.
- 2.6** It is proposed that the Project Team should comprise:

- three Council members for the Midlothian South Ward;
- three members of Gorebridge Community Development Trust;
- one Council officer; and
- the Gorebridge CARS Project Manager.

The Project Team will meet to assess grant applications and other project initiatives such as the training plan and community engagement schemes. It is likely that there will be four to five meetings a year.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

There are no resource implications arising directly from this report.

The CARS funding package as previously agreed (Planning Committee, 28 August 2012 and 25 February 2013) is as follows:

Agreed CARS funding package

Direct funding from Midlothian Council	£ 50,000
Developer Contributions from Midlothian Council	£ 45,000
Confirmed Historic Scotland CARS grant	<u>£ 548,500</u>
TOTAL funding (excluding contributions in kind)	£ 643,000

Contributions in kind, including those from the community	£ 55,000
TOTAL funding	<u>£ 698,500</u>

3.2 Risk

The appointment of all three Council Members for the local ward to the Project Team should help to mitigate risk in terms of project management and should ensure that the business of the Project Team can continue to be conducted timeously, should individual team members be absent on occasion.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

The report is relevant to the following themes:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☒ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☒ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

3.4 Key priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The project will contribute to both the economic growth and positive destinations priorities. It will make Midlothian a more attractive place for doing business and will safeguard and enhance the amenity of the Main Street in Gorebridge, helping to support the retail and other businesses which operate from that location. A range of training and education activities are planned as part of the project. They will be aimed at building professionals, local residents and local businesses and will involve Edinburgh College and Newbattle High School. A Year

4 work experience student from Beeslack High School is currently participating in project activities once a week for six months.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

This project will contribute towards the priority to regenerate and improve Midlothian's town and village centres.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Encouraging eligible property owners to take part in the project will improve the external fabric and appearance of properties in Gorebridge Conservation Area and help secure the long term future of the buildings. Owners will be encouraged to attend workshops highlighting the importance of building maintenance in terms of preventative and remedial measures.

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Consultation has been undertaken with the Gorebridge Community Development Trust. The Trust has confirmed its support for the project and provides office space for the Project Manager. Further consultation will be undertaken during the development phase of the CARS scheme. The strong support of the local community was a key factor in securing the CARS funding from Historic Scotland.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required for the project as the building grants are awarded on the basis of condition and importance in the Conservation Area and on the streetscape. The terms of the funding grant from Historic Scotland are strictly laid down and monitored.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

Gorebridge Main Street was designated a Conservation Area in 1978 in recognition of the fact that it possesses a complete set of 19th century houses and shop fronts that form an important part of Midlothian's heritage. The Gorebridge CARS project will help secure the repair and improvement of a number of important buildings for the future.

3.10 IT Issues

There are no IT issues arising from this report.

4 Recommendation

- 4.1** It is recommended that the Council agrees that the three Council Members for the Midlothian South Ward be appointed to the Gorebridge CARS Project Team for the duration of the scheme.

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Background Papers: Planning Committee report: 26 February 2013
Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme for Gorebridge

Declaration Box

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Title of Report: **Gorebridge Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme: Appointment of Council Representatives**

Meeting Presented to: Council 25 March 2014

Author of Report: Rod Lugg, Gorebridge CARS Project Manager

I confirm that I have undertaken the following actions before submitting this report to the Council Secretariat (Check boxes to confirm):-

- √ *All resource implications have been addressed. Any financial and HR implications have been approved by the Head of Finance and Integrated Service Support.*
- √ *All risk implications have been addressed.*
- √ *All other report implications have been addressed.*
- ☐ *My Head of Service (in Director's absence) has endorsed the report for submission to the Council Secretariat.*

This report is in public and has an education interest.