

To: PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT		Subject: Conservation Area Appraisal and Listed Building Audit
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT		
Date: 16 <sup>th</sup> November 2005	Ref: PI/EPT/04/07/LN	

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval to commission consultants to undertake seven Conservation Area Appraisals and a Listed Building Audit for North Lanarkshire.

## 2. Context

- 2.1 Increasingly the value of the built heritage is being recognised within town centres and local communities. The built heritage defines the character of an area, reinforcing a sense of place, and provides a development framework for the future. Conservation areas and listed buildings are a fundamental part of North Lanarkshire's built and industrial heritage and have significant importance for education, recreation, tourism and the wider economy.
- 2.2 There is legislation and guidance to identify and protect conservation areas and the character of buildings of historical and/or architectural merit. Grants are available for the repair of listed buildings and the regeneration of conservation areas. However, successful preservation and management of conservation areas and listed buildings depends upon understanding the qualities of these assets.
- 2.3 Currently, there is a need for further information and assessment of North Lanarkshire's seven conservation areas and three hundred and twenty listed buildings. This has reduced the Council's ability to realise the benefits of conservation areas and listed buildings and has restricted the scope for accessing external funding. Information such as historical/architectural importance, community value, condition and ownership is essential for developing effective policy and making investment decisions regarding maintenance and enhancement.

## 3. Conservation Area Appraisals and Listed Building Audit

- 3.1 The Conservation Area Appraisals will develop a proactive approach to understanding the special characteristics, pressures and priorities of the seven conservation areas and will recommend action for regeneration and effective management. Supporting the conservation area appraisals, a listed building audit will provide a co-ordinated approach to specifically managing listed buildings within North Lanarkshire.
- 3.2 An assessment of the conservation areas and listed buildings would identify the key factors that define a their character and the issues that must be addressed to maximise their contribution to town centres and communities. They would also examine the relationships of the buildings and open spaces with the surrounding environment, including their role, needs and any perceived threats to the wider built environment.
- 3.3 Both the audit and appraisals comprise a desk study and a survey, which will collate information on each of the listed buildings and the conservation areas in order that informed decisions can be made about how to best manage this important resource.

- 3.4 To ensure the appraisals and audit represent Best Value particularly in terms of being complementary and consistently developed and to reduce duplication, it is important that the work is carried out as a single exercise by one consultancy.
- 3.5 Combining the appraisals and audit will allow the complementary and reinforcing pieces of work establish a framework for policy development and would provide opportunities to secure external funding from a range of sources including the Scottish Arts Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund. An important feature is that they would generate information to allow the Council to work in partnership with the private sector and community to ensure long-term investment.
- 3.6 It is proposed to invite the following consultants to undertake the Appraisals and the Audit:
- Alex Adamson
  - Austin-Smith, Lord
  - Charles Alexander Strang Associates
  - Morrison and Steadman Architects
  - Pollock Hammond Partnership
  - Robin Kent Architecture and Conservation

#### **4. Corporate Considerations**

- 4.1 The development of Conservation Area Appraisals and a Listed Building Audit has associated costs of approximately £75k, which will be funded by the Department's 2005/06 Capital Programme under the budget heading of Environmental Regeneration, and by funding from the Council's External Funding Group.
- 4.2 The cost implications of implementing actions resulting from the appraisals and audit including project delivery will be examined by the consultants as part of the process.
- 4.3 The appraisals and audit would however, provide opportunities to secure external funding from a range of funding sources including the Scottish Arts Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The appraisals and audit will provide scope for working in partnership with the private sector to secure effective management and enhancement of the historic environment.
- 4.4 The outcomes of the consultants work would support the significant investment that is currently being made in town centres and would reinforce the work being carried out on the Lighting Strategy and area wide initiatives such as the Kelvin Valley Action Plan, Image project and Tourism Action Plan.

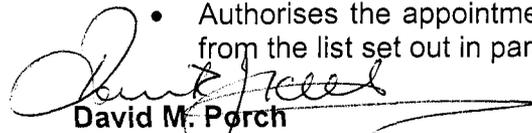
#### **5. Sustainable Development Implications**

- 5.1 The Government recognises the historic environment as a finite and non-renewable resource and seeks to encourage its sustainability through preservation and continued use. Conservation area enhancement, avoiding the neglect and loss of heritage including listed buildings and promoting the efficient use and reuse of the built heritage are fundamental ways in which North Lanarkshire Council can contribute, in a practical way, towards sustainable development.
- 5.2 Conservation and enhancement of conservation areas and listed buildings can contribute to the stability and quality of an area that can encourage inward and continued investment. They can also help promote an area as a visitor destination, which, in turn, can generate benefits through tourism and recreation. Collectively, this contributes towards making town centres and communities sustainable.

#### **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- Approves the development of Conservation Area Appraisals and a Listed Building Audit for North Lanarkshire by Consultants.

- Authorises the appointment of an appropriate consultant to undertake the appraisals and audit from the list set out in paragraph 3.6.



**David M. Porch**

**DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT**

Local Government Access to Information Act: for further information about this report, please contact Lyndsay Noble, 01236 616 242.