

Scottish Government Charrette Programme 2015

Rothesay Charrette Proposal

1. Introduction.

This submission is made by the Scottish Regeneration Forum for and on behalf of the Rothesay Alliance for Action.

The Rothesay Alliance for Action, a community engagement process commissioned by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and delivered by the Scottish Regeneration Forum has been active in Rothesay since February 2015 at which time HIE approved the outcome of the earlier SURF feasibility study.

The need for change in Rothesay and Bute was recognised in the Single Outcome Agreement and the Community Plan and endorsed by the findings of the feasibility study. A process such as the Alliance was acknowledged as a method whereby change might be achieved. The Alliance process has been used elsewhere in Scotland and has been a catalyst for the engagement of national organisations and resources through SURF's contacts and networks.

The Alliance process has been the subject of presentations at the Area Committee and the Council's Senior Management Team, most recently a presentation was made to the Bute and Cowal Area Community Planning Group.

The Alliance represents the interests of a variety of groups including business, community and 3rd sector representatives.

The Alliance aims to find a way of achieving more for Rothesay and Bute by encouraging groups to work together on agreed issues. The group has met several times since the beginning of the year, the group's first public meeting took place on Wednesday 2nd of September when the Community began to identify the issues that they wish to take forward and the priorities that they wish to set.

2. Project vision and aims.

The nature of the proposal, including the current stage in the process of regeneration of the town centre.

Rothesay is the main town on the island of Bute. The population of Bute is 6498, the population of Rothesay is 4859 (2011 Census). The islands population has declined 10%.

The Surf feasibility study identified a number of themes which affected Rothesay as a place to live and visit. Amongst these were.

- The town's general appearance. This is recognised to be improving, but there appears to be no present clear strategy for how best to consolidate the enhancements made to date and for further progress;
- Issues of ownership of properties and resultant restrictions to achieving shared improvements
- for the whole town;
- The overhang of redundant but listed buildings. How many can the town sustain? What is the viable future for these buildings? Should they/can they all be retained?
- Planning policies are not felt to be sufficiently supportive of aspirations for developments in the town centre.

There has been investment in the town over the last few years, significant among these have been the THI project at Guilford Square and the recently commenced project to refurbish the Pavilion, in addition to the Public sector involvement, there has been private sector activity. The Mount Stuart Trust is investing in the refurbishment of their historic buildings in the Town Centre and a local developer has acquired the derelict Royal Hotel for development.

The Heritage lottery fund has recently invited a stage 1 application for a 2nd phase TH project. It is envisaged the charrette will play a significant part in shaping this project.

The Charrette is intended, amongst other things to be a vehicle which will find ways of linking these previous investments and act as a catalyst for community led improvements in the town.

The relationship between the town's general appearance and the decline in tourism, one of the Islands main economic activity areas, was seen by most respondents as being one of the factors in the overall decline in the functioning of the Town, as was the absence of a development strategy for the Town which recognised its unique status as an urban environment on a small island.

At What point in the process is it proposed the charrette will take place.

The Argyll and Bute local development plan contains objectives with which the Charrette proposal is consistent.

Key objective A is to make towns more attractive places where people want to live work and invest.

Key Objective C is "to work in partnership with local communities in a way that recognises their particular needs to deliver successful and sustainable local regeneration."

Bute and Cowal 2.2.1

The island of Butefacing numerous challenges given their falling population level and fragile economies it is important that the LDP capitalises on existing and new opportunities to assist further town centre regeneration to create sustainable economic growth.

2.2.2

By 2024 Bute.. will be a place that enjoys a revitalised town centre.

It can clearly be seen that the Charrette proposal not only is consistent with the Council's Local Development Plan but will be a major asset in delivering that plan.

Argyll and Bute has a comprehensive Community Plan. Amongst its specific outcomes are clear references to Rothesay and its Town Centre:

Outcome	10 year aspiration	Progress to be made in 3 years
1) In Argyll and Bute the Economy is thriving	Regeneration activity in Dunoon and Rothesay has transformed them into thriving local economies	A clear strategic and holistic focus on the Regeneration challenges in Dunoon and Rothesay will begin to show positive results and opportunities through improved connectivity being realized, increasing activity in the housing market and inward investment success

6) people live in safer stronger communities

Our town centres are thriving and vibrant. Regeneration of the built environment enhances the competitiveness of Argyll and Bute

Communities and public sector partners work collaboratively to make the best use of our natural and built environment and our culture and heritage with clear plans for development in place and investment underway

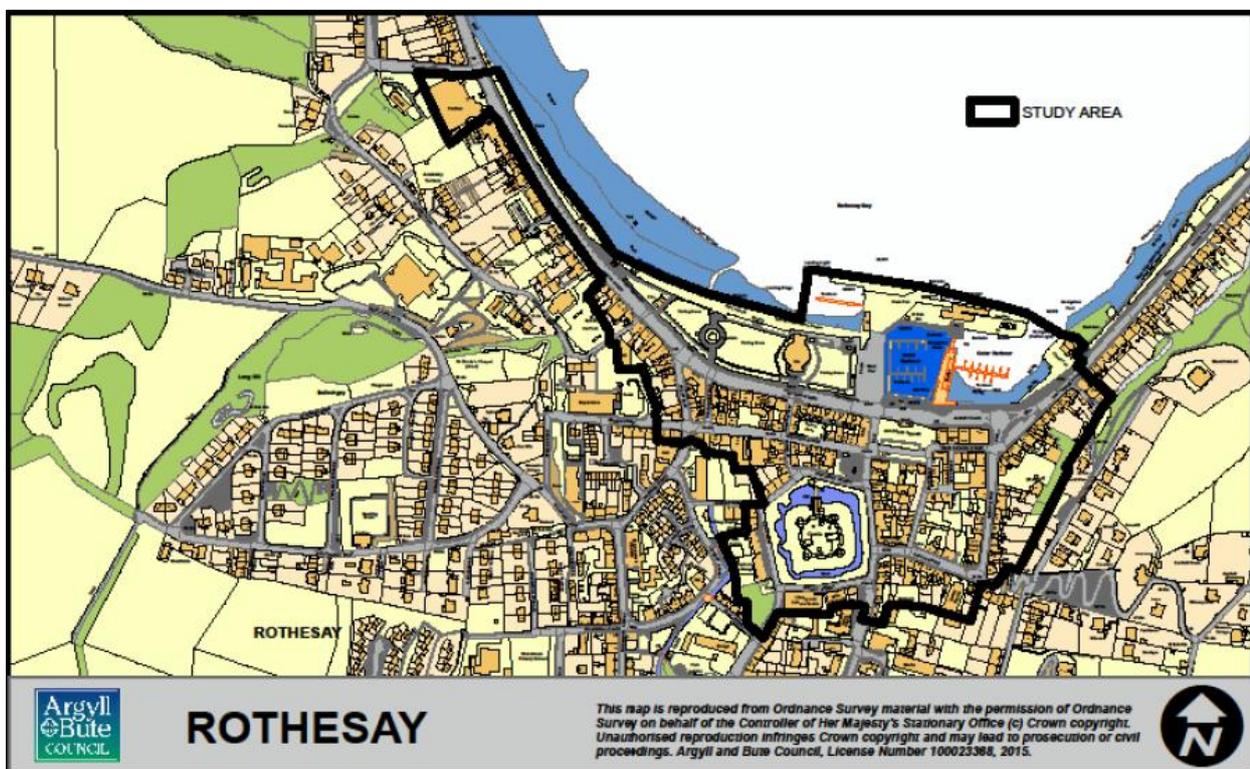
The Alliance led Charrette will fit within the Context of the Community Plan and help deliver some of the objectives, particularly since it will be the community itself which is identifying the

The Rothesay Charrette will set itself in the context of the key principles of the Space Standards

- distinctive;
- safe and pleasant;
- easy to move around;
- welcoming;
- adaptable; and
- resource efficient.

The location and scope of Rothesay Alliance Charrette

The Rothesay Charrette will encompass the centre of Rothesay, including its historic core and extending as far as the Pavilion. In this way it will link the existing and proposed TH projects and the catalyst project of the Pavilion. It will consider the links between pedestrian needs and road user needs, the aspirations for changing the tourism experience on arriving on the island and options for increased pavement activities.



Key issues that the Charrette will be expected to deal with

1. Develop a masterplan for Rothesay Town Centre
 - a. Review existing regeneration
 - b. Identify new opportunities for regeneration, rehabilitation or development
2. Create proposals for improving circulation within the town centre and movement between the town centre , the waterfront and the Pavilion
 - a. Explore methods of encouraging footfall in the town centre
 - b. Explore the issue of car borne activity
 - c. Explore methods of improving the pedestrian experience
3. Define opportunities and funding for delivering improvements to the Town Centre
 - a. Improve the physical appearance of the Town Centre
 - b. Improve the quality of the built environment
 - c. Achieve alternative uses for vacant shops and sites

Alignment with the aims of the Scottish Government's Policies

The Rothesay Alliance proposal is rooted in Scottish Government Policies and has taken a holistic approach to these. The Rothesay approach is about putting the Community at the heart of an approach which puts its town centre first and which seeks a sustainable future.

Against a background of falling population and concern for the economy of the Island, the Alliance has taken the view that it is important to align with the Scottish Government policies which intend to help the community move forward, it believes that its intention are wholly consistent with these policies and in particular, Community Empowerment. The Alliance is in a good position to deliver the aims and outcomes of this set of policies.

Wider community benefit

The Alliance has active involvement of a wide range of actors engaged in Regeneration. The Alliance is actively supported by

- Health both at the NHS level and the 3rd Sector
- Business, Council HIE and the private sector
- Community Council Isle of Bute Trust
- Youth, School, Youth Workers and 3rd sector
- Private individuals

The issues covered by the Alliance are directed by this diverse group ensuring that the Alliance is not a single issue group but is grounded in the wider community.

3 Suitability and Benefits

How will Charrette working benefit the project?

The findings of the Surf Feasibility study found that despite previous attempts at a coordinated approach to the issues affecting Rothesay, there was an almost universal view that people would support another approach to the issues:

- Many of the respondents were able to point to previous example of attempts that failed;
- It was suggested that some of these efforts failed because they lacked broad enough support, were not embedded in the community, or were not followed through;
- Any new approach would need to have broad support from, and be founded on, Rothesay.
- Almost all of the respondents thought that a group – a community led alliance focused on the town in a holistic way – was necessary to deliver any meaningful change in Rothesay.

It was felt that there was no clear vision for the town and its future, which people could understand and get behind:

- One of the most significant issues was that there was no cohesive clear vision for Rothesay;
- It was generally agreed that in the absence of such a shared vision, a variety of projects and strategies may be pursued in isolation and potentially in contradiction of each other;
- Notwithstanding the significant endeavours of groups such as Fyne Futures and the Pavilion Project, it was felt that more could be collectively achieved for all if there was a sufficiently shared vision for the town.

The charrette process provides a means whereby the issues can be addressed and the Community can take ownership of the process.

Process and Engagement

Buy in of Key Stakeholders

It is generally accepted that a community led alliance focused on the town in a holistic way – was necessary to deliver any meaningful change in Rothesay because there was no clear vision for the town and its future, which people could understand and get behind:

- One of the most significant issues was that there was no cohesive clear vision for Rothesay;
- It was generally agreed that in the absence of such a shared vision, a variety of projects and strategies may be pursued in isolation and potentially in contradiction of each other
- It was felt that more could be collectively achieved for all if there was a sufficiently shared vision for the town.

The essence of an alliance for action is that it seeks to undertake individual and group interactions with local regeneration project activists, workers and relevant agency officers with a view to establishing priorities and potential leadership models. SURF has established a community-based consultative and reference group to drive the local Alliance for Action development; and to work with Argyll & Bute Council and Highlands & Islands Enterprise to establish mutually manageable and effective working protocols, define the physical projects that the community wishes to undertake and to set these in the context of the general wellbeing of the town.

The Rothesay Alliance is made up of members of the community council, representatives of some of the biggest employers in the town, representatives of the 3rd sector, RSL's, the Council, Health and some private individuals.

It is a combination of the public, private and community, centred on Rothesay and focussed on physical change as a catalyst for wider improvement.

Work is currently in train to involve young people, those at school and those who have left, in the process of identifying change for the future of their town.

The Alliance has undertaken surveys and held Community meetings to identify the areas of change which the people of Rothesay aspire to, these meetings will continue to develop and will be used as part of the Charrettes process which is seen as a vehicle for taking the work of the Alliance on to the next level .

The Alliance is aware of the Governments Town Centre First principle and regards this as a key component in delivering change within Rothesay by using the charrette to give a sharper focus to their endeavours to protect and enhance the distinctiveness of Rothesay and encouraging the CPP partners to do the same.

Key personnel

Brian MacDonald, Scottish Regeneration Forum will act as client for the project for and on behalf of the Rothesay Alliance for Action.

Support is anticipated from Argyll and Bute Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Procurement process

The Alliance will follow the Scottish Government procurement process and appoint a multi-disciplinary team comprising the skills required for a charrette and the expertise in public / private funding opportunities. The procurement process will be carried out in conjunction with Argyll and Bute Council

Amount of grant requested

The application is submitted on behalf of an embryonic Community Alliance which is currently unfunded. The application is therefore for £25k from an anticipated expenditure of £30k. The Alliance will approach other bodies for support for the balance. An application has been made to the Bute Estate trust and a decision is expected in the near future.

It is accepted that this level of funding is at the higher end of the spectrum but as a community group addressing the issues of Town Centre Regeneration from a standing start in March 2015 without direct financial support or resources currently it is felt appropriate.

Discussion have taken place with the Council at Senior Officer which have confirmed that in the absence of a direct financial contribution, practical assistance is being provided from the Council and community planning partners in terms of

1. Officer time, support from planners, estates staff, community development and Community planning is available to the Alliance
2. Involvement of young people will be facilitated by Rothesay Academy, the Councils Youth workers and Argyll College

3. Access to venues such as the school and community facilities will be provided as appropriate
4. Mapping facilities and reprographics will be made available as required.

Appropriate venues in the Town Centre will be sought, publicity will be provided by the Buteman whose editor is a member of the Alliance

4 Outputs and Implementation

Taking the Charrette forward

It is intended that the Charrette will deliver a significant masterplan which will identify;

- Actions required to deliver the Masterplan
 - Vision
 - A town centre which performs better for local people, tourists and visitors
 - A town centre which is attractive and encourages tourism and day trippers
 - Goals
 - Improvements to
 - The public realm
 - The shopfronts in the town centre
 - Circulation within the Town centre
 - Connections with the Pavilion
 - Connections with the seafront
 - Route map to achieve the goals
 - Identification of Core Objectives
 - Definition of the projects
 - Prioritisation of the projects
 - The organisations and individuals involved
 - The towns Traders and businesses
 - The Community Council
 - The Alliance
- Partnerships
 - Council
 - HIE
 - Community Planning Partners
 - Private Sector
- Financial requirements
 - Funding options
 - Identification of existing and proposed funding sources
 - Public Private Partnerships

- Agreements between parties

Management.

The process will be delivered by the Rothesay Alliance who will manage the process after the completion of the Charrette and who will seek to implement the Masterplan. The Alliance has begun the process of developing a strategic coordinating role within Rothesay. At the public meeting in early September the need for such a strategic role was recognised. In a written response, one of the young people consulted identified that one of the requirements for taking Rothesay forward was "A Community working together to appropriate professional standards", the Alliance can deliver this strategic coordination.

The Alliance will be supported by the Scottish Regeneration Forum who will continue to provide professional support and assistance.

Milestone	September 2015	November 2015	December 2015	January 2015	Feb 2016
Submission of charrette proposal to Scottish Government					
Appointment of charrette consultant					
Charrette publicity					
Charrette Event					
Publication of Town Centre masterplan and action programme					