



City Centre Streetscape & Traffic Management Programme

Works on the long-awaited regeneration of Inverness City Centre are due to get underway early in the New Year.

Since the public consultation took place in May, The Highland Council and City Partnership staff have been busy putting the necessary legal and contractual arrangements in place. Traffic Orders to change the flow of traffic, parking and loading in the "Old Town" are being advertised. The process of procuring the project management, final design, engineering and contractor services for the £6m improvement programme has begun. 30 enquiries were received in response to the initial advert in the Official Journal of the European Commission (we have to follow strict European rules for a project of this scale). Initial proposals were due back by 31 July 2005, and a 2-stage tender and interview process will be conducted during August to select the team of specialists needed to implement to programme to the high quality standards required. We hope to make and announce the appointment in September.

All going well, physical work on

the ground should commence with a new pedestrian crossing across Bridge Street, from Castle Wynd to Church Street, and work on Church Street itself in January 2006.

We are currently gathering a lot of data to inform and influence the final design and exact nature of the traffic management and landscaping changes. Traffic counts, vehicle queuing lengths and pedestrian movement patterns will be analysed in August and a range of other indicators identified to help plan, and later measure, the impact of the improvements. But it is not just about facts and figures. The opinions of local people who use the streets are vitally important too. That is why, on 1st September, a group from 15 local organisations has been invited to conduct a Community Street Audit of Church Street to give their perspective on how the environment can be improved for those shopping or exploring the Old Town on foot.

This exercise is being facilitated by an organisation called Living Streets. More information about this can be found at www.livingstreets.org.uk.

Greeninverness

David Andrews, Project Officer for greeninverness moved on to new pastures in the private sector in June. The post is currently being advertised and a new officer should be in place by early autumn.



Public Art Officer

The award of city status, and growth of investments planned in the public realm and major buildings provide huge potential to introduce more creativity into local design, and be more inspirational within our surroundings. A Public Art Plan has been drafted and in collaboration with HI-Arts, INBSE (and hopefully Highland 2007) we aim to recruit a Public Art Officer to take the plan forward by October 2005. The officer will be based in the City Partnership Office in Bank Street.



Real-Time Passenger Info.

New bus shelters are being installed at Queensgate, Falcon Square and along the route to the Airport and Ardersier to introduce instant electronic updates on when the next bus is due to arrive. HI-Trans are leading on this project and, if it proves successful and popular, we could see this rolled out to other routes.

Ness Islands Enhancement

Proposals to upgrade the footpaths, disabled access, lighting and interpretation on the Islands are being developed. Some tree thinning work is also required. A brief for producing an interpretive strategy was been put out to tender early August and improvement work should start early next year.

City Vision Annual Report

The full 2004/05 Annual Report is available from the City Partnership Office.





What is Inverness City Heritage Trust?

Inverness City Heritage Trust is a new charitable organisation with a particular interest in the historic built environment.

The Trust was launched in May 2005 with the specific aim to co-ordinate a programme of conservation work funded by grant assistance. It is hoped that this new grant scheme will help to revitalise the centre of Inverness and bring some underused buildings back into use.

The Trust will also give advice, produce publications and organise events and exhibitions for people interested in the history of buildings and architecture in Inverness.



Where does the Trust operate?

The main focus of the Trust's work is in the centre of Inverness but we can get involved with building projects all over the Conservation Area from Friars Bridge all the way to the Ness Islands.

If you know of a building that you think we should look at or want to discuss your own property, let us know!



What sort of things can we fund?

We have committed funding from the Scottish Executive through Historic Scotland for the three years, 2005-2008. After this date, we hope that the Trust will be able to become more self sufficient by attracting funding from other sources.

Owners of buildings within the Inverness Conservation Area, like all property owners, are responsible for the repair and maintenance of the fabric of their buildings. However, the traditional materials and craftsmanship required to preserve such buildings often demands extra expenditure when compared to modern buildings of a similar size. Inverness City Heritage Trust

grants are intended to help meet this additional cost, and to assist with the reinstatement of original features.

The grant schemes currently operating are as follows:

Comprehensive Grants Scheme: will involve a range of external repairs to allow an unused/ underused buildings to be brought back into use.

Grants for comprehensive repairs to property within the Inverness Area can attract up to 40% of the grant eligible costs. The annual budget for this grant scheme is £150,000 and is allocated on a first come, first served basis.

A **Small Grants** scheme is also in operation. This works on the same principle as the comprehensive grants scheme but is targeted at smaller properties or properties where the scope of the works to be undertaken are limited to one or two specific repair issues. Grants will be set at 50% of the grant eligible costs with a grant ceiling of £5,000 per applicant.

A number of grants for properties in Inverness will be announced shortly – watch this space!

To find out more about ICHT, please call **01463 723538**

