



**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
24 OCTOBER 2023**

SUBJECT: CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION REVIEW 2023

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND
FINANCE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The report asks the Committee to consider the Cullen, Archiestown, Portknockie, and Findochty Conservation Area Character Appraisals, and thereafter agree to issue the appraisals and proposed boundary changes for public consultation. The report also asks the Committee to note the success of the Windows Repair and Replacement Windows Grant Scheme.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (E) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the review and preparation of Local Development Plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee;

- (i) approve the draft Cullen, Archiestown, Portknockie, and Findochty Conservation Area Character Appraisals and proposed boundary changes as set out in Appendix 1 for public consultation for a 12 week period;**
- (ii) agree that a further report on the consultation response be brought to a future meeting of this Committee with a view to adopting the appraisals as material considerations in the determination of planning applications and agree to final boundary changes; and**
- (iii) note the success of the Windows Repair and Replacement Grant Scheme.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) have a statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to designate as conservation areas parts of their areas which are of special historic or architectural interest the character and/or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance, as well as to undertake reviews.
- 3.2 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) seeks to protect and enhance historic environment assets and places through Local Development Plans, and to enable positive change as a catalyst for the regeneration of places. In this regard LPA's should designate and review existing and potential conservation areas which should be supported by conservation area character appraisals. The review will also form part of the Evidence Report which is being prepared for the Moray Local Development Plan 2027.

4. CHARACTER APPRAISALS

- 4.1 The conservation areas (Cullen, Archiestown, Portknockie, and Findochty) discussed in this report have not been reviewed for some time, with several having not been reviewed since their initial designation. The Moray Council appointed built heritage consultants LDN to undertake a review of these 4 conservation areas.
- 4.2 Character appraisals have been prepared for each conservation area which provide an understanding of the special qualities of each area. While a character appraisal has previously been prepared for Cullen, it is important to have updated appraisals to keep them relevant and to take into account changes that may have occurred over time. The appraisals also provide updated design guidance to support good conservation practice for homeowners and agents, assist Development Management decision making, and to make recommendations on potential boundary changes (**See Appendix 1**).
- 4.3 The main aims of the draft character appraisals that have been prepared are;
- To identify the key components that contribute to the character and special interest of a conservation area;
 - To identify opportunities for enhancement and key challenges facing the area;
 - Provide design guidance to inform property owners on how to make appropriate changes and alterations to their properties;
 - To make recommendations on proposed boundary changes; and
 - To become material considerations in the determination of planning applications once fully adopted.

5. BOUNDARY CHANGES

- 5.1 The character appraisals that have been undertaken provide a thorough assessment of the special qualities of each conservation area as well as a

review of each boundary. The table below provides a summary of the proposed boundary changes. **Appendix 2** provides a map showing the current and proposed boundaries;

Archiestown	Removal of modern housing stock from the designation.
Cullen	<p>Split the existing large conservation area (named the Seatown conservation area) into two separate designations ie the Seatown conservation area and the Planned Town conservation area. This is based on their distinctive architectural character and heritage.</p> <p>The Planned Town conservation area will be extended to link with the existing Victoria Street conservation area.</p> <p>Modern housing stock will be removed from Victoria Street.</p> <p>Extend the boundary of the Planned Town Conservation area to take in the southeast side of Seafield Street and York Place.</p>
Findochty	Removal of Castle Street, Seafield Street, Mid Street, and Burnside Street from the conservation area. This section of the conservation area is severed from the rest of the conservation area by Strathlene Road and is detached from the rest of the conservation area.
Portknockie	No change.

- 5.2 It is proposed to undertake a 12 week public consultation on the proposed boundary changes starting on 1 November 2023. The character appraisals and proposed boundary changes will be published on the Council’s website and the consultation will be advertised through press release, social media, and emails. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) will be consulted as part of this process.
- 5.3 Properties that are being proposed to be included or removed from any conservation area will be notified.
- 5.4 Following the public consultation all comments received will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee along with proposed final changes to the boundaries for agreement.

6. WINDOWS REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT GRANT SCHEME

- 6.1 At a meeting of Moray Council on 10 August 2022 (para 20 of the minute refers), it was agreed to allocate funding from the Place Based Investment Programme towards a small grant scheme for the fitting or repair of windows in conservation areas.
- 6.2 The Windows Repair and Replacement Grant Scheme was set up to help homeowners repair and replace traditional windows in their property. It was open to any property that was located within one of Moray’s 18 conservation areas that met the eligibility criteria for windows on principal elevations or elevations that front a street that contribute to the wider character of the conservation area.

- 6.3 Windows are a key and integral component to the design of any traditional and historic building. They also significantly contribute to the wider overall character and appearance of streets and conservation areas. However, windows are elements of a building that can easily be changed and therefore they are extremely vulnerable to inappropriate and unsympathetic changes particularly with an ever increasing desire to make older properties more thermally efficient. The cumulative effect of loss of traditional windows poses one of the most significant threats to our heritage, not just too individual buildings, but also our conservation areas.
- 6.4 In total eight grants were awarded to properties in Garmouth, Findhorn, Portknockie, and Findochty. The grants helped homeowners replace non-traditional and/or windows that were in disrepair with traditional timber double glazed windows.
- 6.5 **Appendix 3** shows before and after pictures of several properties that received grants showing the benefit to the character of each property and wider conservation area as a result of the installation of traditional windows. For several recipients the grant has acted as a catalyst for other works to their property which has enhanced the building and the conservation area.
- 6.6 At a meeting of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee on 5 September 2023 (para 10 of the draft minute refers) it was agreed that funding from the Place Based Investment Programme 2023/24 would go towards a conservation area grant scheme across Moray which is subject to a separate Information Report being presented to this Committee. Following this approval a scheme similar to the one discussed in paragraph 6.2 above will be launched later this year.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The MLDP 2020 is a vital aspect in supporting and facilitating the Council's priority for economic growth. The Plan also aims to deliver other key aspects of Moray 2026, including the conservation and enhancement of Moray's high quality and historic environment. The character appraisals seek to support these key aims.

(b) Policy and Legal

It is a statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 of the Council as a Planning Authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas

(c) Financial implications

Allocated funding from the Place Based Investment Programme was used to implement the Windows Repair and Replacement Grant Scheme. Consultants were appointed to undertake the conservation area designation review which was covered by the Strategic Planning and Development budget.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

The conservation area review forms part of the evidence report for the MLDP 2027 and is part of the workload for Strategic Planning and Development. The Windows Grant Fund Scheme will be delivered by Officers from Strategic Planning and Development. This will have to be balanced with the significant workload associated with Strategic Planning & Development and preparing the MLDP 2027.

(f) Property

None

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

None

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

The Windows Grant Scheme Fund supports homeowners improve the thermal efficiency of their homes by supporting the installation of windows using traditional materials.

(i) Consultations

Consultation has taken place with the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), the Head of Economic Growth and Development, the Legal Services Manager, the Equal Opportunities Officer, the Principal Climate Change Officer, and the Democratic Services Manager have been consulted and comments received have been incorporated into the report.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Character appraisals have been prepared for Findochty, Cullen, Archiestown and Portknockie as part of a review of Moray's conservation areas. The appraisals identify the key components that contribute to the character and special interest of each conservation area and identify potential changes to the boundaries of each designation.

8.2 The character appraisals and proposed boundary changes will be subject to a 12-week public consultation. The responses will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee for consideration along with the final boundary changes for approval.

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Background Papers:

Ref: