

Aberlour Town Centre Improvement Plan

August 2022

Vision

To enhance Aberlour town centre into a green, healthy and inclusive place that is easy and safe to move around for people of all ages and abilities.

The Vision is supported by a series of objectives set out below:

- Remove pedestrian and cyclist barriers between the Square and Alice Littler Park to create an inclusive environment that is easy and safe for all abilities and ages to move around.
- Support the enhancement of Alice Littler Park to be a green, vibrant and inclusive place for everyone.
- Provide further opportunities for electric vehicle and bike charging points, cycle parking and storage.
- Investigate the feasibility of providing public Wi-Fi in the town centre.

The Square



Proposed Outcomes

- Undertake high quality public realm improvements to remove existing barriers to pedestrian and cyclist movement between the Square and Alice Littler Park.
- Upgrade seating areas to be all-inclusive.

Aims/Purpose

This projects seeks to enhance the public realm around the Square to create a safe space for pedestrians and cyclists.

Connections between the Square and Alice Littler Park are shared spaces with pedestrians and vehicles. The main connection, outside Aberlour Parish Church, can become congested and conflict can arise. By creating a defined lane for pedestians using street materials, the project would create a safer environment for all users.

Seating areas will be upgraded to be all-inclusive.

Alice Littler Memorial Park - Play & Recreation



Proposed Outcomes

- Remove existing play equipment and replace with open, inclusive playpark that caters for all abilities.
- Upgrade path network to create accessible connections around the park and into the town centre.
- Upgrade access to picnic benches and seating areas to be all- inclusive.

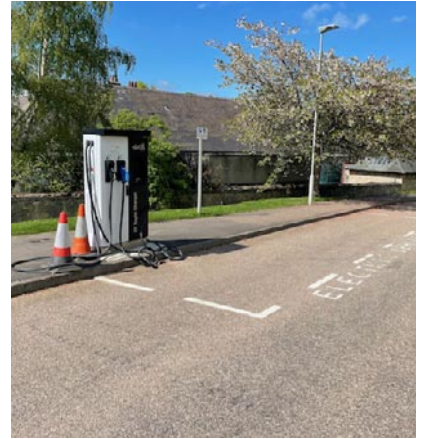
Aims/Purpose

The project aims to support the transformation of play and recreation in Alice Littler Park into an all-inclusive and welcoming area that promotes health and wellbeing for all ages and abilities. The Park is currently in the process of a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) to Aberlour Community Association (ACA). The project seeks to support ACA in achieving their aspirations, which align with wider objectives associated with the principles of Town Centre Improvement Plans.

The playpark equipment will be replaced to create an inclusive and accessible playpark that caters for all abilities at the same time. The equipment will be vibrant and sustainable, making it an attractive and engaging area for children to play.

The path network will be upgraded to encourage further use and create an accessible network around the park and into the town centre. Access to picnic benches and seating areas will be upgraded to be all-inclusive.

Carbon Conscious and Active Travel Provisions



Proposed Outcomes


- Provide additional electric vehicle (EV) and bike charging points.
- Upgrade cycle parking and storage provisions.

Aims/Purpose

The project aims to build on carbon conscious and active travel provision in the town centre. Recent investment in a Speyside Low Carbon Hub has seen improvements in Aberlour to the Speyside Way, installation of bike repair stations and the provision of a hybrid electric car and two electric bikes for hire.

The project will investigate the potential to increase the network of EV chargers within the town centre for use by both residents and visitors. The facilities will be located at key destinations such as public car parks and on-street.

Existing cycle parking/storage provisions are limited and unmaintained. Provisions will be upgraded and additional facilities provided in key locations. There will also be further facilities for storing and charging electric bikes.



Buckie Town Centre Improvement Plan

August 2022

Vision

To improve and enhance Buckie town centre making it an attractive, safer, greener, and well connected place for people to use and relax and for businesses to thrive.

The Vision is supported by a series of objectives set out below:

- Improve entranceways into Cluny Square through public realm enhancements.
- Improve pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the town centre to support active travel and enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Explore opportunities to transform vacant sites and buildings and bring them back into use for residential purposes.
- Create an attractive town centre through the enhancement of the public realm to support new and existing businesses.
- Embrace Buckie's coastal and fishing heritage through the public realm and heritage interpretation panels.
- Develop a Lighting Strategy to enhance the visual appearance and showcase Buckie's heritage and public spaces to create a vibrant town centre.
- Improve digital connectivity and investigate the provision of public Wi-Fi within the town centre.
- Develop a Shopfront Improvement Scheme to ensure that traditional shopfronts are retained and improved to reflect the historic character of the town centre.
- Explore opportunities to make the town centre more inclusive and pedestrian friendly through a review of parking provision and disabled parking spaces

Cluny Square Enhancement



Proposed Outcomes

- Improve the entranceways into Cluny Square through improvements to the public realm to create an attractive, inclusive, pedestrian friendly space.

Aims/Purpose

Cluny Square is in the heart of Buckie's Town Centre, and also the start/finish of some local walks, including the Speyside Way walk. The Square is a very busy junction with East Church Street, West Church Street, High Street and North High Street running off it. It splits into 4 quadrants, and 3 of these are currently used as car parks, which makes Cluny Square dominated by cars. The Buckie War Memorial, seating area and attractive flower beds are located at the fourth quadrant.

It is proposed to improve the entranceways into Cluny Square through improvements to the public realm. Public realm improvements are proposed on the southern entranceway into the square which is a busy pedestrian area and is often congested particularly outside of the Post Office. It is proposed to redesign this area through the use of hard landscaping and different materials to make it into a more attractive, inclusive, pedestrian friendly space. This would include widening the footway to make it much easier for people of all mobilities to move around.

Although the project only seeks to improve the entranceways of Cluny Square, it would not stop or hinder potential enhancement projects for the quadrants coming forward in the future following a wider review of parking provision and disabled parking within the town centre. To ensure consistency, the project will be part of an overarching Public Realm Strategy to create a more holistic approach to the town centre reflecting Buckie's history and heritage. As part of those projects, lighting for the War Memorial, enhancement of the 2 old bus shelters on North High Street, signage and an interactive board located at the Square are all proposed. Having these plans in place is important if it is decided to make changes to the quadrants in the future.

West Cathcart Street

Proposed Outcomes

- Investigate traffic control measures in West Cathcart Street.

Aims/Purpose

The Council's Transportation Service will undertake further surveys to monitor vehicle speeds to inform whether traffic control measures are required. This proposal has been included in the TCIP following concerns raised during the public consultation regarding the speed of traffic on West Cathcart Street.

Public Realm Strategy



Proposed Outcomes

- Redesign Buckie town centre to create an attractive civic space which encourages active travel and embraces Buckie's heritage.
- Implement cohesive and consistent public realm improvements.

Aims/Purpose

The public realm is a key part of the town centre and is formed of all areas of publicly accessible open space. It should interlink the key components of the town centre to create an attractive space which people can enjoy. The aim of the project is to take a holistic approach to improve the public realm and the attractiveness and vitality of the town centre. This will encourage people to come and visit the town centre and engage in social interaction by providing high quality spaces.

The project will build on Buckie's history and heritage, guide users towards key places and spaces such as the High Street, East and West Church Street, the Speyside Way, the Harbour; and improve connections to other key assets, such as Ian Johnstone Park. This will aim to boost tourism to Buckie and make the town centre an attractive and vibrant place with a sense of character and identity. This will boost pride in the town and support its economic vitality, making it an attractive place for future investment.

The strategy would include incorporating public art into hard landscaping (by improving paving), soft landscaping (including planting at Cluny Square and the Speyside Way), street furniture (seating areas at Cluny Square), wall art and murals (a trail of art and murals in Cluny Square leading onto the harbour), and lighting (to highlight key buildings and pieces of art and create a series of safe and welcoming trails). The strategy would include projects such as doric and memory walks; creating walks with seating areas and investigating food growing, allotment opportunities at East-West Church Street to enhance the living of older people. These projects will reflect the history of Buckie creating a sense of place and will provide talking points in the town centre, encouraging visitors and providing navigation benefits. A key area for public art opportunities will be the old bus shelters leading onto the Harbour from Cluny Square, which have the potential for murals which celebrate Buckie's history and tell the story of the town.

Street furniture could be improved in key areas in the town centre, most notably Cluny Square, although there are other opportunities at the start/finish of the Speyside Way. This would create attractive places for people to stop and enjoy, promoting social interaction, increasing footfall in the town centre and encouraging people to spend more time in the town centre, which will support local businesses. This will also promote active travel and encourage healthy lifestyles. Additional or upgraded benches and seating, street lighting, flower pots and flower beds, litter bins, cycle racks, bollards and signage will create an attractive town centre. Street furniture can contribute to and showcase the local history and heritage, and should be robust and durable so it becomes a long standing part of the town centre. It can contribute towards the identity of the town centre and can enhance a sense of place.

Seating should provide an opportunity for social interaction. At Cluny Square and the start/finish of the Speyside Way, there is an option to provide seating in areas which will be highlighted as part of the Lighting Strategy to transform dark and underused areas into safe and welcoming spaces for people to use and spend time in the town centre.

Waymarking is a key element to guide people around the town centre, and will promote active travel and more pedestrians travelling in the town centre. Signage connecting attractions are currently out-of-date and in need of updating, e.g. the information board at Cluny Square. There are opportunities for new signage at Cluny Square and at the start/finish of the Speyside Way, which would provide a focal point for visitors and tourists.

Soft Landscaping such as planting can transform the feel of the town centre and can help create links through key routes, while contributing towards biodiversity. Hedges or planting can have the effect of screening parking in areas like Cluny Square, making the area more attractive and creating a visual barrier from cars. In areas like the start/finish of the Speyside Way, this can contribute towards the creation of a more attractive area which encourages community use.

Hard landscaping such as improvements to paving and differentiation in street materials can create a more pedestrian friendly environment, which will encourage more people to walk. This will prioritise active travel and improve access for people with mobility issues.

Lighting Strategy

Proposed Outcomes

- Lighting to be used to showcase Buckie's built heritage and cultural features.
- Create a safer and attractive town centre for users.
- Lighting to be used to emphasise key routes to encourage people into the town centre.
- Prepare a comprehensive Lighting Strategy.

Aims/Purpose

The project will assist in the objectives to create a vibrant and attractive town centre.

Lighting can take the form of individual art forms or sculptural pieces to create an attraction, be designed into the public realm or street furniture, or highlight whole or parts of individual buildings. To avoid a piecemeal approach to Town Centre Improvements a holistic approach must be taken to ensure that it takes cognisance of other projects highlighted in the masterplan ie Cluny Square enhancements, public realm improvements.

Buildings

Buckie contains a number of traditional buildings for which lighting can be added to highlight and showcase. This could take the form of highlighting individual buildings, such as those fronting Cluny Square. Highlighting buildings and their traditional architectural features not only helps to make the town centre feel safer in the darker months but it also contributes to reinforcing the sense of place.

Movement

Lighting can also be used to reinforce key routes and guide users through spaces by creating safe and welcoming routes. In conjunction with wider public realm improvement (see separate project) this could be used at key locations such as Cluny Square and the streets leading out of it which are key and well used routes and would help to encourage people into the town centre.

Creative lighting can be used to showcase and open up other surrounding streets that feed into the town centre such as Blairdaff Street, Newlands Lane, East Cathcart Street and Cluny Place.

Public Realm

Any Lighting Strategy must take account and be embedded in any Public Realm Strategy. This will ensure creative lighting is integrated into the fabric of the streetscene and be embedded in any other public realm improvements.

Vacant & Derelict Buildings

Proposed Outcome

- Redevelop derelict buildings and find potential use for derelict sites in close proximity to the town centre to benefit the town.
- Explore opportunities through working with land and property owners to bring the land/properties back into use.

Aims/Purposes

OPP2 Blairdaff Street



The Old Lemonade Factory is considered to be suitable for residential redevelopment which should be compatible with the residential character of the surrounding area as set out in the Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2020. The site is located just outside of the town centre boundary identified by the MLDP 2020, but its close proximity to the town centre, shops and bus route would make it an ideal residential property. It could be redeveloped for affordable housing in line with Scottish Government and Moray Council aspirations.

OPP3 Barron Street



This site has been vacant for a while due to contamination issues including a fuel tank, gasworks and boatyard. The nearby commercial buildings, in particular the fish processing activities need to be taken account of when redeveloping this site. Given its close proximity of the town centre, this could be an ideal residential development respecting the scale of adjoining properties and the character of the area.

Other Vacant and Derelict Buildings

The Council will explore opportunities to bring vacant buildings back into use through identifying and engaging with property owners. This work will be ongoing.

Shopfront Improvement Scheme

Proposed Outcome

- Develop and implement a Shopfront Improvement Scheme.

Aims/Purpose

A Shopfront Improvement Scheme, with a design guide, will be developed to improve and maintain the quality and visual appearance of Buckie's shopfronts. This will strengthen the town's rich historic character and help to promote the town centre as a destination. Improving the shopfronts will enhance its appeal to customers as well as visitors and will encourage further investment by boosting business confidence. This will be achieved through improving signage in line with the design guide by making repairs and renovating shopfronts.

Digital Infrastructure

Proposed Outcomes

- Increase digital connectivity.
- Provide residents, visitors and local businesses with easy internet access.

Aims/Purpose

Opportunities for the provision of public Wi-Fi within the town centre will be investigated. This would increase digital connectivity and provide easy internet access to residents and visitors. The access to public Wi-Fi could be connected to virtual notice boards in order to help leading people through the town centre and promoting key areas. Local businesses could also benefit and use the digital infrastructure for online promotion and marketing.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points and cycle parking/storage



Proposed Outcome

- Provide additional electric vehicle (EV) charging points and cycle parking and storage to promote environmentally conscious travel and healthier lifestyles.

Aims/Purpose

Additional electric vehicle (EV) charging points and cycle parking and storage will be added to car parking areas, such as Cluny Square, and other car parks surrounding the town centre. This will encourage the use of electric vehicles and encourage people to cycle, and help to create a greener, healthier town centre.

Speyside Way



Proposed Outcomes

- Improvements to the start/finish of the Speyside Way.
- In conjunction with other projects (e.g. Public Realm Strategy) improve the start/finish of the Speyside Way to create an attractive area that can be enjoyed and will lead people into the town centre.

Aims/Purpose

The project will utilise public realm improvements to create an attractive place to stop and enjoy the start/finish of the path.

Improved signage will provide clear direction and other public realm improvements such as seating and soft landscaping will make an attractive area for people to stop and enjoy. This will form part of a holistic approach which will connect the area with other nearby proposed public art at Cluny Square and leading onto the Harbour. This will create a sense of place on the path and lead visitors to other key destinations in the town.

There is also an opportunity for planting, either flowers or a community garden, possibly with raised beds and food growing opportunities. This would create a community area within the currently empty green space, which would encourage members of the community to spend time in the area and promote social interaction.

The Speyside Way path is in close proximity to the town centre, and the path is bordered by gardens. Due to the constraints of the path, in terms of space and lack of natural surveillance, few improvements can be made to the path itself.

Gateways

Proposed Outcome

- Create attractive high quality gateways into Buckie town centre that showcase the heritage and history of the town.

Aims/purpose



Tesco roundabout

The town centre can be approached from the A942, High Street. Visitors entering Buckie this way are greeted by a roundabout, which is currently unwelcoming and have little impact apart from Buckie's Darling, a new sculpture inspired by the heritage of Buckie. There are opportunities to further enhance the roundabout and light up the sculpture to create an attractive, welcoming entrance into Buckie leading into the town centre.

Barhill Road roundabout

Recent growth in Buckie has been focused at the west side of town within the Buckpool area along Barhill Road. From these recent housing developments, the town centre can be approached via Barhill Road. Visitors entering Buckie from the A98 towards Barhill Road are greeted by an unwelcoming roundabout. As a result of further growth planned within this area of Buckie, improvements to this roundabout will add to a positive feel and welcoming first impression when entering Buckie and travelling towards the town centre.



Vision

Dufftown is an attractive traditional Scottish town situated in the heart of Speyside on the banks of the River Fiddich. Dufftown is known as the 'Malt Whisky Capital of the World'. The town centre is a thriving place that capitalises on its associations with the whisky industry and supports businesses and services for residents and visitors, alike.

The Vision is supported by a series of objectives set out below:

- Support the refurbishment of the Clock Tower and develop it into a Heritage Museum that showcases Dufftown's heritage, attractions and events or any other appropriate sustainable use.
- Improve the public realm at the Square and create an attractive area around the Clock Tower through hard and soft landscaping, seating and public art.
- Explore the potential to light up important focal points such as the Clock Tower
- Redevelop the Old Bank to encourage affordable living in the town centre with potential for retail/commercial space on the ground floor and explore opportunities to bring other unoccupied buildings into use through identifying and engaging with owners.
- Develop a Shopfront Improvement Scheme to enhance the appearance of Dufftown's main thoroughfares (Balvenie Street, Conval Street and Fife Street) that converge at the Clock Tower.
- Investigate the potential for cycle parking and a bike hire area at the Square and additional EV charging points in the wider town centre.
- Improve digital connectivity and investigate the provision of providing public Wi-Fi in the town centre.
- Explore the opportunity to make the town centre more inclusive and pedestrian friendly through a review of parking provision and disabled parking

Refurbishment of the Clock Tower



Proposed Outcome

- Refurbished Clock Tower that is a focal point within the Town Centre and develop into a Heritage Museum that showcases Dufftown's heritage, attractions and events (or for any other sustainable use that is identified).

Aims/Purpose

The project provides the opportunity to refurbish and reuse the vacant Clock Tower which is a prominent and iconic building that sits at the heart of the town centre and is a focal point for visitors and the community. Dufftown and District Community Association acquired the Clock Tower in 2020 with the aim of restoring the landmark building and turning it into a tourist attraction. The Community Association are currently seeking funding from a range of sources including Historic Environment Scotland and local distilleries to finance the high costs of refurbishment. Given the benefits the refurbishment of the Clock Tower would bring to Dufftown, and Moray as a whole, in terms of attracting tourists and supporting local businesses, this proposal is supported by the Council who will work with the Community Association to identify further sources of funding. Other uses that provide a sustainable future for the Clock Tower will also be supported.

Supporting the refurbishment of the Clock Tower will also ensure the building does not fall further into disrepair and that it will remain an iconic focal point for future generations as well as safeguarding the heritage of Dufftown which contributes to the history of Moray, as a whole.

Improvement of Public Realm at the Square



Proposed Outcomes

- Improve the appearance of the public realm at 'The Square' around the Clock Tower to create a more attractive, accessible and pedestrian friendly environment for visitors and the community to spend time in.
- Explore the potential to light up the Clock Tower.
- Provide cycle parking and a bike hire area at 'The Square' and explore opportunities for additional EV charging points in the wider town centre.
- Investigate the feasibility of providing public Wi-Fi and water top up tap.

Aims/Purpose

Whilst the Square is well-maintained with attractive planting, the area lacks a cohesive approach to paving, landscaping, street furniture (benches, bins) and signage which contributes to a cluttered appearance. The central 'island' with the Clock Tower has a variety of functions including seating (benches and picnic tables), planting (large raised stone planters, barrel planters, potted shrubs), signage (road signs, storyboards, black direction signs and a community notice board) and a variety of paved surfaces (paved slabs and tarmac). It is proposed to redesign this area and create a cohesive theme where all elements complement each other. This will complement the refurbishment of the Clock Tower and create a more attractive and accessible environment for people of all mobility's to spend time.

Differentiation in street materials, planting and furniture will give the Square a clearer function and create a more pedestrian friendly environment. Integrating ground level waymarking that ties in with a heritage or other trails could also help reduce the clutter of multiple signs in the area. A review of car parking in the centre of Dufftown and an audit of signage will be required to inform proposals. The feasibility of providing public Wi-Fi will be investigated.

To support the transition to a net zero carbon economy the potential for e-bike charging at the Square will be explored along with additional cycle parking and a dedicated bike hire area. Opportunities for additional EV charging points within the wider town centre will be explored.

Reuse and Refurbishment of the Old Bank and other Vacant/Derelict Buildings



Proposed Outcome

- Redevelop the Old Bank as a mixed use or residential development.
- Explore opportunities to transform other vacant and derelict buildings in the town centre by identifying and engaging with property owners.

Aims/Purpose

The Old Bank is currently vacant and situated in a prime location on the corner of the Square. The Old Bank is a traditional stone building with many interesting architectural features. The proposal would involve working with the owner and interested parties to bring the property back into use for residential development and potentially commercial/retail space on the ground floor. Opportunities to bring other vacant buildings around the Square and the wider town centre back into use will be explored by identifying and engaging with property owners either for commercial or residential opportunities. This would help to create a more attractive town centre and provide opportunities and more choice for people to live in the town centre. Living in the town centre also reduces reliance on the car which helps to reduce carbon.

Shopfront Improvement Scheme



Proposed Outcome

- Prepare a design guide and develop a Shopfront Improvement Scheme for premises on Balvenie Street, Fife Street and Conval Street to enhance the visual appearance of Dufftown's traditional shopfronts on the main routes and strengthen and improve the town centre's existing historic character.

Aims/Purpose

This proposal provides an opportunity to enhance the appearance of the main streets into Dufftown that converge at the Clock Tower. Shopfronts play an important role in the appearance of the town centre and coupled with improvements to the public realm will create an attractive environment in which people wish to spend time. This helps to support local businesses by making Dufftown an even more appealing visitor destination and boosting business confidence. The proposal would involve developing a design guide for shopfront improvements and a funding scheme, similar to those developed for Keith and Forres through the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS). The scheme would cover the replacement of shopfronts and historical features.



Vision

Strengthen the unique sense of place of Forres Town Centre by creating a high quality experience of shops, attractions and facilities for the community and visitors. Promote Forres as a place that is welcoming and pleasant to spend time in, that is green and easy to get to on foot and by bicycle.

The Vision is supported by a series of objectives set out below:

- Support the refurbishment and regeneration of Forres Town Hall.
- Create a high quality heritage interpretation trail attraction for visitors and the community to engage with.
- Improve public realm to create opportunities for social interaction and enhance key approaches into the High Street through the lanes linking into car parks.
- Develop a Shopfront Improvement Scheme to ensure that traditional shopfronts are retained and improved to strengthen and enhance the character of the historic High Street.
- Promote sustainable travel and improve pedestrian experience, including a review of parking provision and disabled parking in the Town Centre.
- Re-purpose vacant and derelict buildings to reduce the number of empty properties and increase number of people living in the town centre. This will include exploring opportunities to transform vacant buildings by identifying and engaging with property owners.
- Improve digital connectivity and investigate the potential for public Wi-Fi in the Town Centre
- Explore opportunities for additional EV charging points and cycle parking and storage.

Support the Refurbishment and Regeneration of Forres Town Hall



Proposed Outcome

- Support the refurbishment and regeneration of Forres Town Hall to create a community hub including performance area, event space and co-working space.

Aims/Purpose

This project proposes the transformation of Forres Town Hall an iconic building within the High Street to create a community hub. The entire building will be refurbished to create a modern multi- purpose performance space, event space and co-working spaces with improved access to the upper floors. This supports the community's vision for the future of the building and the ambitions of Forres Area Community Trust (FACT) who now own the Forres Town Hall.

Heritage Interpretation Trail



Proposed Outcomes

- Create a high quality heritage interpretation trail attraction for visitors and the community to engage with.
- Promote and celebrate the heritage of Forres to encourage more visitors to Forres High Street.
- Develop a coherent, co-ordinated and well-connected heritage journey through Forres town centre working with local heritage groups.

Aims/Purpose

This proposal aims to reconnect the community and visitors with the history of Forres and former famous residents. There is an opportunity to create an interpretation trail from Nelson's Tower, Sueno's Stone, Witches Stones through the High Street incorporating the Tolbooth, Falconer Museum (The Falconer Museum is currently closed and the Council is seeking an alternative delivery model) and linking to Castlehill with themes around Macbeth. This could be in the form of interpretation panels and QR codes with a supporting app.

The interpretation trail needs to be connected to public realm improvements, lighting strategy, shopfront improvements, Heritage and Place Programme and other forms of interpretation to ensure an integrated approach and shared vision for the town centre. There are various local heritage groups that will have an interest in the development of an interpretation trail.

Green Infrastructure and Food Growing



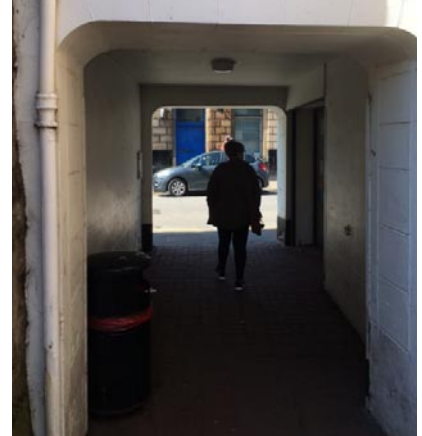
Proposed Outcomes

- Incorporate landscape planting along the High Street creating a green network connecting existing green spaces.
- Embed opportunities for food growing where possible into landscaping proposals within public space in the town centre.
- Utilise landscaping in combination with public realm improvements to create a sense of place and attract visitors into the town centre.
- Work with local community groups including Incredible Edibles and Forres in Bloom to develop proposals.

Aims/Purpose

The project aims to incorporate high quality landscaping throughout the town centre, creating a green network linking Grant Park with Castlehill. Landscape planting will provide additional seasonal colour, enhance biodiversity and attract pollinators. High quality landscaping will improve the attractiveness of the streetscene and reinforce a sense of place and where needed help to mitigate the impact of parked cars. Local community groups already maintain existing planters and proposals will seek to ensure any proposals are complementary to what is already in place.

Public Realm Improvements



Proposed Outcomes

- Implement a comprehensive and co-ordinated programme of high quality public realm improvements including seating, signage, lighting and street materials.
- Enhance key approaches into the High Street through the lanes linking into car parks, utilising interpretation panels, streetscape improvements and landscaping, prioritising Co- op and Town Hall lanes.
- Improve public spaces to increase the number of visitors, time spent in the town centre and increase spend in High Street shops and services.

Aims/Purpose

Forres has an attractive town centre, however existing signage and street furniture is looking tired and needs to be replaced alongside improvements to the condition of pavements and street materials in civic space around the Mercat Cross and Tolbooth.

Public Realm

The provision of high quality seating within attractive public spaces will create opportunities for social interaction and meeting outdoors. The streetscape works will consist of widening pavements where needed, introducing new, higher quality paving materials and setts/paviors into the street alongside landscaping in rejuvenated public spaces at Tolbooth Street and the Mercat Cross.

Lighting

Key buildings could be lit up to enhance the attractiveness of the town centre and showcase the heritage of Forres including Falconer Museum, Mercat Cross, Tolbooth (it is noted that some of these may already be lit). Lighting proposals will be considered in conjunction with the heritage interpretation trail and any Heritage and Place Programme projects to ensure a holistic approach and maximising the cumulative impacts of projects.

Lanes

The lanes giving access to the High Street are unattractive and unappealing and need to be improved with the addition of new lighting, street materials and interpretation exploring the heritage of Forres to support increased use and create a welcoming first impression of the town centre. Key lanes include the Co-op which needs repairs to street materials, drainage, high quality lighting and the addition of interpretation panels on the walls. The lane down the side of the Town Hall is also in need of attention, it is currently dominated by wheelie bins but there is an opportunity to enhance by introducing discreet storage and landscaping to make this an attractive route.

Regeneration of Historic Buildings and Shopfront Improvement Scheme



Proposed Outcomes

- Introduce a historic building grant scheme to repair and promote the regeneration of key properties to strengthen and enhance the character of the historic High Street.
- Invest in shopfront improvements to support the growth of local businesses, improve the streetscene and improve the image of the town centre amongst locals and visitors.
- Encourage additional investment in the town centre.

Aims/Purpose

The project aims to address some of the problems identified in the town centre, including the poor condition of many of the historic buildings. Unlike other towns in Moray, Forres has not benefitted from a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS). Repairing and promoting the occupation of historic buildings and reinstating architectural detailing will contribute to preserving and enhancing the character of Forres.

The introduction of a Shopfront Improvement Scheme in Forres will also help improve the area's image, help to define a stronger sense of place, and encourage a greater number of shopping visits. The presence of quality shopfronts reflecting the historic character of the Forres Conservation Area will make the area feel more welcoming to local residents and visitors alike.

There is a clear overlap with other identified projects including public realm improvements and the heritage interpretation trail that will all assist in improving public spaces and the streetscene.

Sustainable Travel and Creating Streets for People



Proposed Outcomes

- Explore the feasibility of providing a safe cycle lane connection through Forres High Street.
- Provide high quality cycle parking in prominent locations in the High Street with supporting infrastructure including facilities for charging electric bikes, drinking water fountain, high quality seating areas, toilet provision and bike repair station.
- Provide additional electric vehicle (EV) charging points in suitable locations within the town centre to support the change to electric vehicles.
- Explore opportunities for Tolbooth Street to be more pedestrian friendly and the creation of a larger civic space to host events and provide opportunities for outdoor eating and entertainment.
- Where feasible address narrow pavements and widen sections of the High Street to support a wider range of users and enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Explore reconfiguration of car parking arrangements within the High Street including disabled badge holder parking provision and promote park and stride from nearby car parks.

Aims/Purpose

The aim of this project is to increase the number of residents and visitors walking or cycling in and around Forres town centre. The provision of supporting infrastructure including secured cycle parking can help increase journeys made by bicycle.

Addressing barriers such as narrow pavements, accessibility and using high quality street materials can help increase number of people choosing to walk instead of using the car.

Vacant & Derelict Buildings



Proposed Outcomes

- Repurpose key vacant buildings on the High Street and edge of the town centre to provide affordable housing, student accommodation and tourism accommodation.
- Reduce the number of empty properties and increase the number of people living in Forres town centre.
- Explore opportunities to transform vacant buildings by identifying and engaging with property owners
- Redevelop buildings with the ambition to be carbon neutral.

Aims/Purpose

This project aims to bring vacant properties back into use. There are a number of former buildings sitting empty in and around the town centre. There are also a significant number of empty properties at first floor level above shops sitting empty, many of which are for sale.

Key buildings include the former Clydesdale Bank located at the Mercat Cross, the former Tesco site at Caroline Street and the Auction Mart at Tytler Street.

Redeveloping these buildings would create more activity within the High Street and would create opportunities for living close to shops and services and reduce car dependency. Bringing these buildings and sites back into use can also support the town centre alongside creating a more appealing and attractive entrance into the town centre.



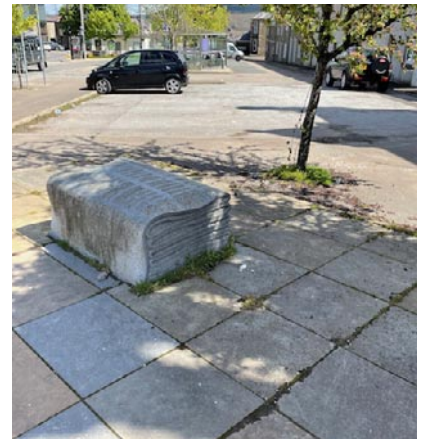
Vision

Reflecting on its traditional character and built heritage, the improvement plan will enhance the town centre to make it an attractive, safer, and greener place for people to use and enjoy as well as providing a high quality environment for businesses to locate and thrive.

The Vision is supported by a series of objectives set out below:

- To enhance Reidhaven Square through enhancements to the public realm.
- Embrace Keith's heritage through a Public Realm Strategy and heritage interpretation panels.
- Develop a Lighting Strategy to enhance the visual appearance and showcase Keith's heritage and public spaces to create a vibrant town centre.
- Improve the signage within the town centre providing clear directions to all of Keith's attractions and amenities and create a stronger link between the Strathisla Distillery and the town centre.
- Develop a Shopfront Improvement Scheme to ensure that traditional shopfronts are retained and improved to reflect the traditional character of Mid Street and the conservation area.
- Improve digital connectivity and investigate the provision of public Wi-Fi in the town centre.
- Explore the potential for additional EV charging points and cycle parking and storage in the town centre.
- Explore the opportunity to make the town centre more inclusive and pedestrian friendly through a review of parking provision and disabled parking.
- Explore opportunities to transform vacant buildings and bring them back into use through engaging with property owners.

Reidhaven Square Enhancement



Proposed Outcomes

- Undertake high quality public realm improvements (signage, street materials, seating, public art) to create an attractive and inclusive space for people and businesses to utilise.
- Create an attractive entrance into Mid Street.

Aims/Purpose

The project seeks to enhance and improve Reidhaven Square so that it becomes an attractive space. While it is understood that Keith is in a rural location and residents and visitors need space to park their cars, the square is dominated by car parking within each of the quadrants which limits space for pedestrian and civic use. Any future project will have to balance the needs of these parking requirements and any proposed improvements. The quality of the public realm is poor with a lack of consistency to seating and planting with improvements in the past being done on a piecemeal basis.

Public realm improvements and the use of high quality street materials will create potential outdoor space for businesses to utilise or for public events to be held. The ability to hold potential markets in this key civic space would draw on Keith's heritage as a market town but also support local businesses.

High quality public realm improvements will also allow for improved signage and heritage interpretation boards (subject to separate projects) which will guide visitors to local amenities such as the Strathisla Distillery and the Railway Station. As part of any enhancement scheme further tree planting and soft landscaping could be undertaken to soften the visual appearance of the Square and make it more attractive.

The enhancement of the Square also provides the opportunity to create an attractive entranceway into Mid Street. Improving the public realm in this area will improve Mid Street's overall visibility which will encourage and guide people and visitors to use the local shops.

Keith town centre benefits from a number of existing public car parks within close proximity to the town centre. Improving these car parks will ensure that there is minimal impact on the economic vitality of the town centre with people still able to park within close proximity should they choose to. The opportunity for additional EV charging points and cycle parking and storage will also be explored.

Heritage Trail & Waymarking



Proposed Outcomes

- Improve connectivity between tourist attractions and the town centre.
- Develop a more “formal” tourist or heritage trail in conjunction with the community, local heritage groups, and schools.
- Develop heritage trail.

Aims/Purpose

As part of bringing a consistent and up-to-date approach to the public realm and signage across the town centre (see Public Realm Strategy project), the project seeks to provide clear routes for visitors to navigate around the town and strengthen connections to local attractions and Keith’s built heritage. In particular, this project seeks to improve the connectivity from popular tourist attractions such as the Strathisla Distillery and the Keith & Dufftown Railway.

As well as improving signage and public art to achieve this, an innovative solution would be to develop a more “formal” heritage trail. This could draw on the success of the recent Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) and involve local heritage groups and schools so that it is supported and promoted by the local community.

Shopfront Improvements



Proposed Outcome

- Develop and implement a Shopfront Improvement Scheme.

Aims/Purpose

The project seeks to improve and enhance the quality and design of Keith's shopfronts to reflect the historic character of the town centre and conservation area. The appearance of shopfronts play an important role in the character of individual buildings and the wider area.

A Shopfront Improvement Scheme, with a design guide, will be developed and implemented to retain and improve the visual appearance of Keith's traditional shopfronts and strengthen the town centre's existing historic character. Improving shopfronts will further promote the town centre as a destination by enhancing its appeal to visitors, customers as well as assisting in encouraging further investment by boosting business confidence.

The project will seek to achieve this through renovating shopfronts, making repairs and improving signage, in line with the Keith Mid Street Conservation Area: Character Appraisal & Action Plan.

Longmore Hall



Proposed Outcome

- Redevelop and enhance the Longmore Hall.

Aims/Purpose

The proposal seeks to update and improve the existing Longmore Hall to provide additional space and opportunities for residents and local community groups to utilise. There is currently space in the Hall that is not being used which could be improved to provide additional space for future community uses.

Vacant & Derelict Buildings



Proposed Outcome

- Reduce the number of empty properties in the town centre and bring vacant and derelict buildings back into use.

Aims/Purpose

The project aims to explore opportunities with property owners to bring vacant properties back into use and redevelop buildings for residential, commercial, and if suitable potential community uses. Bring vacant properties back into use creates a more attractive town centre as often these buildings are in a state of disrepair. It will help to support the town centre by making it an attractive space for people to live and for businesses to locate in order to support the local economy.

Public Realm Strategy



Proposed Outcomes

- Develop a Public Realm Strategy which respects and embraces Keith's heritage.
- Improve connectivity between key attractions and the town centre through the use of public art, in conjunction with the Heritage Trail & Waymarking project.

Aims/Purpose

The project seeks to embed public realm, including art, which embraces Keith's heritage through the town to create an attractive and vibrant town centre with a sense of place. In conjunction with the Heritage Trail & Waymarking project, public realm will help direct people to and between key attractions in the town centre.

The strategy will provide the overall design concept which will then inform the physical enhancements (such as hard and soft landscaping, street furniture, planters, features and signage).

Lossiemouth Town Centre Improvement Plan

August 2022

Vision

Lossiemouth is a key tourist destination with a vibrant, attractive and inclusive centre that both visitors and residents can enjoy and where local businesses thrive.

The Vision is supported by a series of objectives set out below:

- Improve the public realm along the Esplanade and Clifton Road and create a cycle hub to support active travel.
- Reinvigorate the Old Station to encourage more activity and use.
- Improve the public realm along Queen Street to create a more pedestrian friendly and inclusive environment.
- Provide a refreshed and consistent approach to signage and waymarking throughout Lossiemouth.
- Explore opportunities to transform any vacant buildings and bring them back into use through engaging with property owners.
- Explore opportunities to make the town centre more inclusive and pedestrian friendly through a review of parking provision and disabled parking.
- Investigate opportunities for the provision of additional EV charging points within the town centre.

Reinvigorate the Esplanade and Clifton Road (NW)



Proposed Outcome

- Reinvigorate the Esplanade by improving and redesigning the public realm to enhance accessibility, encourage active travel and create an attractive seafront.

Aims/Purpose

The project aims to reinvigorate the public realm along the Esplanade and along Clifton Road around the shops/café's etc. The location of the new access bridge to East Beach gives an opportunity to reinvigorate this area to enhance accessibility and create an attractive sea front. The aim is to boost visitors to the area and encourage them to visit the cafes and shops.

Whilst the proposal for the new East Beach bridge includes changes to the paths and signage the extent of work is limited and wider improvement to public realm in this area would create a more welcoming, vibrant and attractive space. Designs must propose a consistent, fresh approach to signage, street furniture, public art, lighting and planting that also ties in with the Old Station to improve the general appearance and attractiveness of the Esplanade. A review of car parking and signage will be completed to inform proposals. Proposals must investigate and address any issues identified with undermining.

Introducing high quality paving materials to widen paths, new planting and street furniture would create an attractive link from the car parks to East Beach and shops/cafes. Providing new seating would encourage people to use the space to rest, take in views, picnic or enjoy ice cream. The feasibility of providing public Wi-Fi along the Esplanade will be investigated.

A cycle hub to support active travel will provide cycle parking, e- bike charging and cycle repair station. The hub structure will have an unique aspirational design to create a focal point within the Esplanade area. Along the Esplanade there are opportunities to positively promote the Moray Coastal Trail including signage and within the public realm.

There is also potential for refurbishment of the Esplanade public toilets.

A longer term project to redesign the public realm and traffic calming along this north western section of Clifton Road would help to enhance the existing outdoor café culture and encourage use of the shops. Proposals would look at parking arrangements widening pavements, more attractive traffic calming measures and safe crossing points from the Esplanade.

Redesign Old Station



Proposed Outcome

- Redesign the Old Station to encourage more activity and use, including replacement play park.

Aims/Purpose

Reinvigorate the Old Station to encourage more activity and use.

The area around the Old Station is looking tired and is underused compared to other parts of the sea front. The location of the new access bridge to East Beach gives an opportunity to reinvigorate this area increasing its use and functionality.

The current level changes limit accessibility from the car park and the flexibility of the area for community events. The redesign must address these issues. The functions of the area must be clear to encourage greater use of the area i.e. seating area, event space, play area, view point, community garden, outdoor gym equipment. Consideration will be given to the potential for covered outdoor performance space within the redesign.

The former station building itself provides opportunities to redevelop this to provide a community and/or tourist facility. Sustainable uses for the Old Station that would not detract from existing businesses will be explored.

Play and recreation opportunities within the centre of Lossiemouth will be enhanced by upgrading the play area at the Old Station. Providing an all-inclusive and welcoming play park promotes health and wellbeing for all ages and abilities. The equipment will be vibrant and sustainable, making it an attractive and engaging area for children to play. Sensory equipment will be incorporated. Community involvement into the requirements and final design proposed.

Designs must propose a consistent, fresh approach to signage, street furniture, lighting and planting that ties in with the Esplanade to improve the general appearance and attractiveness of the sea/harbour front. Opportunities to increase EV charging should also be considered.

Queen Street Public Realm Improvements



Proposed Outcome

- Reconfigure Queen Street to help create a more pedestrian friendly environment.

Aims/Purpose

Queen Street plays an important role with a number of shopping and retail services located along this road. The Co-op has recently re-located to the former cinema opposite James Square.

Queen Street is a wide, relatively straight road and traffic calming would help to slow traffic and make crossing easier. Redesigning the street with new paving, planting (trees and shrubs), and pavement widening would help create a more pedestrian friendly environment. Queen Street is also a key route for tourists into the centre of Lossiemouth and new waymarking will help direct people.

Heritage Trail & Waymarking



Proposed Outcomes

- Refreshed and consistent approach to signage and waymarking throughout Lossiemouth.
- Heritage trail supported by a visitor app.

Aims/Purpose

Project aims to set out a strategy to provide a consistent and fresh approach to signage and waymarking throughout Lossiemouth.

Providing clear tourist routes to key attractions and tourist accommodation will aid navigation around the town. New signage, potentially incorporating ground level waymarking, would be used to guide people around Lossiemouth. Public art could also be used as way to direct and link different parts of the town e.g. from the Stotfield Hotel/Golf Course to Queen Street to the harbour and to the Esplanade and East beach.

Developing a formal heritage trail taking visitors around Lossiemouth using a range of waymarking and interpretative techniques would build on Lossiemouth's role as a tourist destination. The trail could be supported by a "Visit Lossiemouth" app. The accessibility of the trail and signage must be considered at the outset including the design, language, height and position.