

Elected Member Technical Note

Report by: Thomas Glen, Depute Chief Executive – Place, Neighbourhood & Corporate Assets

TN Number 016-21

Date: 26 April 2021

Subject: Regent Gardens Project – Kirkintilloch Town Centre

Responsible Officer: David Gear, Place & Business Development Manager

Publication

This Technical Note will be published on the Council's website following circulation to Member. Its contents may be disclosed or shared outwith the Council.

Details:

1. The purpose of this technical note is to update Elected Members on work associated with the improvement of Regent Gardens and consultation that will be undertaken to help inform detailed designs and a recommended option to progress to final detailed design stage and construction (subject to available funding).
2. In a report to Place, Neighbourhood & Corporate Assets in October 2020 (ref: **PNCA/070/20/DG**) Officers were instructed to continue to progress the Regent Gardens project. Since then Officers have worked closely with the Kirkintilloch Community Council (KCC) to examine possible design solutions for Regent Gardens and adjoining areas which respond to earlier engagement undertaken as part of the project.
3. Throughout 2019, there was a staged approach to consultation with the local community including online via the KCC website and Facebook page, and display and discussion points at town centre events including the KCC community gala and the 2019 Kirkintilloch Canal Festival. The response was significant with over 1,400 responses received. This provided a clear set of outcomes that people wished to see delivered by any improvements to the space and surrounding connections. It provided concepts and a range of considerations to inform further design work.
4. At that stage the main parts of the project were identified as: 'Gardens area' with flexible spaces for socialising, events, seating, incidental play, and greenery; 'Connection to Peel Park' joining up town centre open space and connecting to nearby green and play space; 'Union Street widening/closure' using a small area of Union Street at the Cowgate end to give a better connection to the Town Hall,

and increased space for people-focussed activity; and 'Regent Gardens Canopy' either through temporary canopy structures or longer term a fixed canopy to give greater flexibility for year-round events.

5. Officers have procured a consultant design team who have progressed 'outline' designs (to a RIBA stage 3 level) with a focus on the gardens area and section of Union Street at the Town Hall. The designs show an improvement to the gardens to enable greater use of all parts of the space for socialising, events and play. The section of Union Street has been re-designed to create a lower speed environment, but currently maintains two lanes of traffic.
6. The delivery of the project is expected to employ a phased approach, where improvements to the Garden and eastern section of Union Street would be undertaken as a first phase. Some examples for possible coverings in Regent Garden are also being looked at which could be detailed and delivered in the later phase. Wider connections between Regent Gardens and Peel Park have been initially examined but would be required to be considered as a later phase, with further design work and testing likely to be required.
7. The Kirkintilloch Community Council have been part of the project process, and helped ensure designs coming forward uphold what was said in previous engagement and consultation.
8. The draft outline designs will be shared locally via the KCC along with a short questionnaire to gather opinions. The plans will be made available on the KCC website and Facebook page. The KCC have prepared a short video to summarise key information from previous engagement on the project and the outline design proposals for the gardens. This consultation work will include a short online survey to ask people if they feel the designs have provided:
 - better space for entertainment, markets and events;
 - options for informal/incidental play;
 - space for socialising, meeting up and keeping people at the heart of the town;
 - improved links with the Town Hall by improving the section of Union Street at Regent Gardens;
9. The short questionnaire will also ask if people still feel pedestrianising this section of Union Street should be looked at longer term to create a larger central traffic free space; also if improved linkages and better pedestrian access from the Gardens to Peel Park are still important.
10. The online consultation information will be widely shared including with stakeholders such as local businesses and local groups who were previously engaged on the project.
11. The consultation is expected to start at the end of April and run for up to three weeks. Following which the information gathered will be used to help inform and finalise outline designs and costs.
12. Updates on the project, including outcome of the consultation, a recommended costed designs option and funding options will form the subject of a future report

to Council, the Policy & Resources, or the Place, Neighbourhood & Corporate Assets Committee, as appropriate.

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