

Dufftown Town Centre Improvement Plan

December 2021

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.
- 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.
- Redevelop the Old Bank to encourage affordable living in the town centre with potential for retail/commercial space on the ground floor.
- 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 additional electric vehicle (EV) charging points, cycle parking and a bike hire area at the Square.
- Investigate the feasibility of providing public Wi-Fi in the town centre.

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.

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.

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 additional EV charging points, cycle parking and a bike hire area at 'The Square'.
- 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. 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 EV charging points (vehicles and e-bikes) at the Square will be explored along with additional cycle parking and a dedicated bike hire area.

Reuse and Refurbishment of the Old Bank



Proposed Outcome

- Redevelop the Old Bank as a mixed use or residential development.
- Consider opportunities for reuse or redevelopment of other vacant buildings around the Square.

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 back into use will be explored either for commercial or redevelopment 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.