



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.
- Increase landscaping through the High Street through the introduction of street trees to connect Grant Park through the High Street to Castlehill and embed opportunities for food growing.
- 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.
- Re-purpose vacant and derelict buildings to reduce the number of empty properties and increase number of people living in the town centre.

Support the Refurbishment and Regeneration of Forres Town Hall



Proposed Outcome

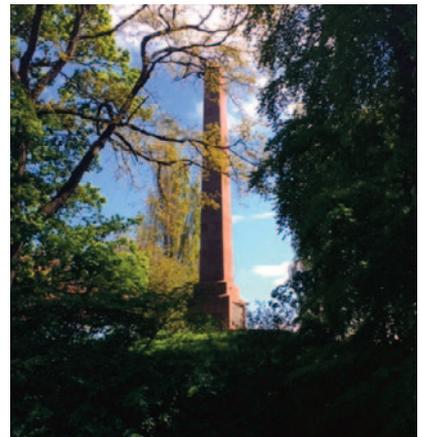
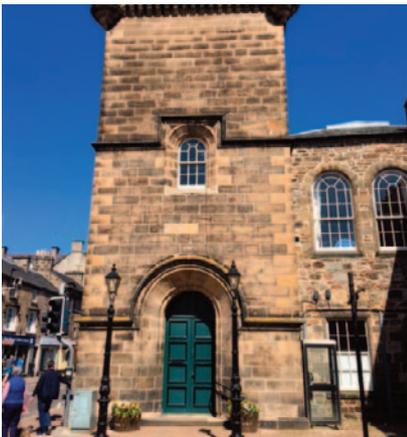
- Support the refurbishment and regeneration of Forres Town Hall to create a community hub including performance area, event space and co-working space.

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 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, CAR scheme 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



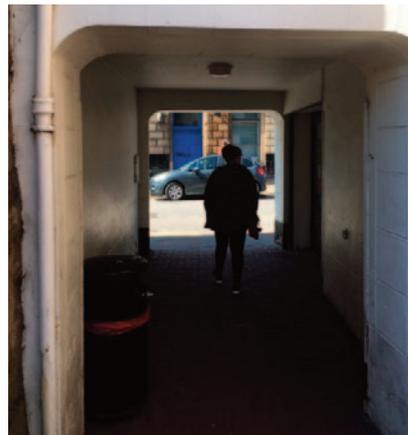
Proposed Outcomes

- Incorporate street trees and landscape planting along the High Street creating a green network connecting existing green spaces.
- Embed opportunities for food growing into landscaping proposals within public space in the town centre.
- Incorporate blue/green infrastructure to create a rain garden within a rejuvenated public space at Tolbooth Street.
- 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. Native species trees and shrubs 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 CAR scheme 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.

CARS 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 opportunities for creating a safe and attractive cycle lane connection through Forres High Street connecting to the Dava Way and Findhorn to Kinloss cycle routes.
- 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.
- Address narrow pavements on sections of the High Street to support a wider range of users.
- 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 a safe cycle route through the town centre, alongside supporting infrastructure including secured cycle parking can help increase journeys made by bicycle. Connecting into popular recreational routes is intended to encourage more visitors to the town centre. 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.

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 bank buildings and hotel 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. In addition to this, there is also a cluster of vacant properties on the western approach into the town centre including the site former Pedigree Cars showroom, Victoria Hotel and Nicholson building. Bring 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.

