



Isle of Man Natural History & Antiquarian Society

Tynwald Select Committee on Built Heritage
c/o Ms Francisca Gale, Research and Scrutiny Support Manager
Office of the Clerk of Tynwald, Legislative Buildings
Finch Road, Douglas, Isle of Man IM1 3PW

Tynwald Select Committee on Built Heritage 2022

The Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society welcomes Tynwald's recognition of the importance of the Island's historic built heritage and appreciates the opportunity to engage with and contribute to this Select Committee.

Please find enclosed our initial submission.

We would also request that IoMNHAS be afforded an opportunity to address and present evidence to the Select Committee in person.

The Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society has been in existence for over 140 years and is now the oldest society on the Island with a relevant special interest in natural and cultural heritage; it has a membership of over four hundred, derived from all walks of Island life, who share a passion for its many natural and historical assets. We therefore trust that our concerns will be accorded appropriate weight when the Select Committee deliberates and reports.

Dave Martin
President, Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society
20th July 2022

Please reply to Secretary@manxantiquarians.com

Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society
IOM Charity no. 428
Hon. Secretary – Pauline Stewart, 95 Malew Street, Castletown IM9 1LX
secretary@manxantiquarians.com www.manxantiquarians.com



Isle of Man Natural History & Antiquarian Society

Tynwald Select Committee on Built Heritage 2022

Whilst many of the following issues are intertwined, we have grouped them by topic below; we have included specific policy suggestions (R.xx) and parallels / example of good practice from other jurisdictions (OP.xx) at the end of this submission.

Introductory remarks

1. IoMNHAS believes that the single biggest factor is that the value and impact of the Island's built heritage is under-valued both by the Manx Government and many Island residents.
2. Built Heritage is a key aspect of the Island's distinctive and superior quality of life, which is becoming an increasingly important selling point for the Island, in a context where our tax advantages have eroded and international hostility to offshore centres is escalating. This impacts on: residents' wellbeing, attracting tourists, attracting new residents, and attracting business – all of which make a contribution to the Island's economy and to Manx Government revenue.
3. A major weakness is that the scale, and therefore value, scarcity, and vulnerability/plight, of the Island's built heritage is not known.
4. We cannot, indeed should not, attempt to 'preserve' all buildings – the emphasis should be on encouraging continued use with appropriate updating, or finding new uses and new lives for buildings, whilst preserving features – external and internal – that contribute our environment and heritage.
5. A raft of environmental concerns need to be weighed – including built heritage's contribution to the wider landscape, the embodied carbon in standing buildings, and the need to prioritise genuine brownfield re-use / redevelopment over greenfield loss.
6. Support is needed, but it need not be all financial. Education, expert guidance and advice are all needed too. Furthermore, the Manx Government needs to set a good, rather than bad, example.

7. IoMNHAS welcomes that the Select Committee is considering the wider issue of Built Heritage and not just focusing on buildings on the Protected Buildings Register. Whilst action is needed in relation to some aspects of the Protected Buildings Register, and Conservation Areas, these together only cover a tiny fraction of the Island's vulnerable, and diminishing, built heritage.
8. The appointment of the Registered Buildings officers within DEFA P&BC is of course most welcome, as are attempts to make a start on the backlog of buildings to be added to the Protected Buildings Register – but there is a need for 'Conservation Officer' resource(s) in that Department as well who can devote time to built heritage outwith Registered buildings etc.
9. Where changes to Planning policy are required, we would urge the Select Committee to propose changes to the Strategic Plan to take these on board; and similarly propose amendments to regulations (e.g. Interested Party Status, financial support) or primary legislation where appropriate.

Value and Context

10. There is no idea of the breadth, or scarcity, of remaining built heritage on the Island. In the Isle of Man Government's 'Action Plan for Reform of the Planning System' (as part of / in compliance with the 'Programme for Government'), approved by Tynwald on 15th May 2018, Tynwald agreed that "Undertake an audit of the Island's built heritage assets. To ensure we conserve and celebrate the Island's best and unique architecture." to be completed "by the end of December 2020." (last line, page 5, GD 2018/0031). This has yet to be delivered.
11. IOMG needs to identify value of built heritage to IOM – for visitors and residents, society and employment; and then indirectly to IOMG in revenue and societal terms.
12. There is a noticeable gap, when/if built heritage is considered, it is often with the most blinkered eyes on a single-structure basis; whereas built heritage exists within and is part of the wider historic landscape
13. There is a need for Education – planners, policy-makers, politicians, professional and trades, general public. Too many applications which disclose intent to impair built heritage are being approved; the impression is that – sometimes despite representations which point out the inappropriateness of certain matters – the officers concerned don't recognise the impact or decide to blithely ignore the impact.

14. Regional distinctiveness is important. This isn't (just) in terms of 'Manxness', different regions of the IOM have distinct building characters from the local materials, such as Peel sandstone, Castletown limestone, 'shore-stone' on the Northern Plain, etc. The Island should not be reduced to a "blandscape" by the use of uniform materials.
15. Farmsteads contain – or have contained - some of the Island's most significant built heritage. Farmsteads – even if out of public view – need equally careful consideration as townscapes.

Policy

16. IoMNHAS would wish to draw attention in the strongest possible terms to the impact of the reduction, by DEFA, of eligibility for Interested Party Status. This is bad enough in purely Planning terms, as these arbitrary restrictions are being used to prevent full and proper participation in the whole planning process by those with valid concerns. This arbitrary barring though has much more serious impact in the case of the Island's built heritage; whilst a developer may secure a twenty metre buffer strip around a site to preclude almost everyone from full participation, it may only be a specialist group which identifies and tries to bring concerns over built heritage to light – the current arbitrary restrictions on full participation in the whole planning process must be removed.
17. IOM Government needs to complete the designation of Conservation Areas, in each case approved by Tynwald, but whose promulgation has been scandalously and grievously delayed - some have been outstanding for over two decades.
18. The scandalously long-overdue Consultative Committee (Town & Country Planning Act 1999, §40) needs to be brought into operation, this would give a voice for those concerned over built heritage.
19. The Island needs Housing Action areas to encourage people to buy in conservation areas, so avoiding development on green-field sites.
20. Churches and Chapels are one of the most at-risk sectors of our built heritage. With falling congregations leading to places of worship falling out of their original use, the Planning system needs to support sensitive modifications and ways of finding new lives for those buildings.
21. Proliferation of inappropriate 'improvements' – possibly because their impact is not recognised by Planners (e.g. UPVC windows) needs to be curtailed.

Support and Guidance

22. Support is not necessarily (just) financial.
23. DEFA P&BC needs to be able to provide Pre-Application advice resource for the public. There are property owners who wish to 'do the right thing – they need a source of independent advice within discussion with Planning Department who can provide guidance on built heritage aspects, not just 'conventional' planning.
24. The various guidance notes, etc. published by Planning are significantly out of date – both in content and scope. They need updating, not least to include ways of sympathetically reducing energy usage in older properties.

Financial – heritage building repair/maintenance

25. A modicum of financial support needs to be re-instated, to support property owners with the extra cost of doing work to heritage standards on properties which are on the Protected Buildings Register or to standards required for buildings that sit in a Conservation Area. (*see OP.1 & OP.2 below*)
26. Any financial support should reflect *caveat emptor* – see, for example, OP.1 below: “For newly acquired buildings, it is normally assumed that the purchase price took into account the cost of any necessary repair and modernisation works. The buyers will then be expected to cover the cost of any repairs.”
27. Financial support should be awarded only for types of specialist repairs, not just 'normal' repairs, and only for those extra costs relating to conserving heritage aspects – i.e. Conservation funds used to exist as a means of covering 'extra costs' of owning a building which is on the Protected Buildings Register or in a Conservation Area.
28. If possible, support could be extended to older buildings which are not on the Protected Buildings Register / in Conservation Areas (*see OP.3 & OP.4 below*)
29. Financial support need not be grants, perhaps IOMG could offer 'loans' for equity in the property if they are material amounts.
30. Work needs to be done to a suitable standard, but to avoid excessive costs and delays, support should not be dependent on building work being done by registered-tradesmen, providing standards are met.
31. There is a need to recognise the benefit to the Manx economy of trained labour and local spending.

Financial – heritage building mortgage purchase retentions

32. Retentions by banks and other lenders are apparently at times huge in IOM in comparison with UK. Such retentions discourage buyers who would wish to take on, care for, and give new life to older properties – benefitting our environment both visually and in terms of embodied carbon.
33. Lenders need to be encouraged to facilitate the sustainability of the existing housing stock, to see this as more important. IOMG needs to engage with main lenders to understand and try to improve how they are approaching this issue. Lending criteria (on which retention fees are based) must not be allowed to work against conservation.
34. If lenders won't change their approach irrespective of what IOMG say, then IOMG could provide bridging finance until the banks release retentions and these funds used to repay the IOMG bridging finance.
35. To address problem of individual property owners not being able to progress a building project through their banks/lenders, the Government could possibly underwrite the shortfall rather than give grants to meet the gap. This could be repaid over a given period (five years?). This would be a most worthwhile investment by IOMG in not only the Island's housing stock, but also aid in retaining the carbon embodied in our built heritage.

Designation of Protected Buildings Register / Conservation Areas

36. Our Built heritage is not just residential or other buildings, it includes structures and also the impact of, and to, their context – be that to neighbouring properties, the street scene, or the wider landscape.
37. Only the tiniest fraction of built heritage is on the Protected Buildings Register; and Registration cannot cover all built heritage. Whilst we must not be too focused on Registered Buildings or those in Conservation Areas, the treatment of, and support for, RB and CA do – or at least should – though demonstrate best practice.
38. Creation of Conservation Areas and adding buildings to the Protected Buildings Register must be taken out of political control and based purely on facts.
39. There should be a period of five years of legal protection following Registration. Current legislation allows (i) an appeal immediately following Registration, and (ii) an application for demolition at any time after Registration.

40. To avoid future problems, when buildings are added to the Protected Buildings Register, the listing should revert to the previous practice of providing a plan with a definitive red line denoting the extent of the area(s) covered by the listing; rather than solely relying on a narrative description whose wording can be subject to interpretation.
41. The Island could consider graduation / different grades of registration to indicate some sense of which buildings are more 'valuable' in heritage terms. This would illuminate priorities.
42. However, even if not necessarily adopting 'graded' system, the Island could introduce list of properties/buildings/structures for which any application needs extra scrutiny. This could conceivably also include restriction of item(s) permitted under the PDOs.
43. We are aware that some would advocate greater importance should be given for buildings close to roads/ where they are visible in the landscape – but IoMNHAS would not support this as (i) some of the Island's greatest treasures may have survived until now as they haven't caught a developer's eye, and (ii) a sub-standard / more destructive application must not be condoned on grounds that it would be hidden where few can see it.

Demolition

44. In Planning terms, unless a building is on the Protected Buildings Register or in a Conservation Area, demolition is largely a free-for-all. Building Control can control *how* it is demolished and collateral impact on connected buildings, but in most cases there is no mechanism to control whether a building *should* be demolished.
45. Even with only a 'light touch', all demolition needs to fall within Planning, not just Building Control. It is recognised that all not all buildings can, nor should, be saved – but at present there is no opportunity for awareness, let alone consideration of whether demolition is warranted.

Currently on the Island, the only buildings for which Planning consent is required prior to demolition are those which are on the Protected Buildings Register, or in a Conservation Area, or if a building is connected to one not being demolished.

In England, demolition is generally permitted without Planning permission, but public notice must be given for 28 days, during which time the local authority can decide to effectively 'call-in' and insist on a full planning application being submitted for what on the Island we would term Building Control reasons. (*see OP.6 below*)

At a minimum, the Island should adopt a similar policy, requiring 28 days public notice; but the Manx legislation/regulations should empower Planning to call it in for Planning (*should* it be demolished) not just Building Control (*how* will it be demolished) reasons.

46. We must stop blanket destruction of built heritage by 'demolition by planning condition'. In many cases, where, say, a recent dwelling is being replaced, it is entirely appropriate that a condition be made that approval for a new dwelling is contingent on the removal of the previous one to prevent proliferation of dwellings in the countryside.

However, there is a centuries-old tradition, and history, that is being destroyed by blanket / blind application of this type of condition. In times gone by, if a farmhouse was outgrown, a new one would be built and the existing one passed to a younger family member, or to accommodate a farm manager/worker; and then maybe later for use as a store. In this way, the story of a farm could be seen and read.

Measures to protect against proliferation in the countryside are most definitely welcome, but need to be used on a case-by-case basis.

47. Demolition-by-neglect is not being prevented. The 'excuse': "...yes, it has been Registered for years, but it is now it has deteriorated to such a state that we can only demolish it" should never be an accepted ploy for RB owners to obtain demolition consent.
48. On the Island, not least on Government's own properties, we are seeing the deterioration of, damage to, or destruction of built heritage as a result of 'short-term-ism' in maintenance / neglect until it falls apart (then just stick plastic or plywood over it / lazy longer-terms fixes – e.g. just entomb it in concrete).
49. In the event demolition (or indeed significant internal destruction) is approved, DEFA Planning do sometimes already require that a photographic record is to be made; but (i) sometimes these surveys are just the developer's set of "look at all the cracks so we must demolish it" photographs rather than a record of all the features; (ii) these photographic records are not always retained in an appropriate form, or not retained at all, by Planning; (iii) these images – a record of our built heritage – are not accessible.

Enforcement

50. Lack of legislation relating to building dilapidation does not appear to be the issue – it is the enforcement that is lacking in many cases. There is much that is already in Manx legislation, just not being enforced.
51. It is obvious that enforcement is carried out, with varying degrees of diligence and varying degrees of success, by both central government and local authorities. Consider centralising enforcement with planning so that the whole Island is managed under the same rules and ensuring that there are the powers to carry out enforcement – but that must be adequately resourced, and accountably managed, with service standards.
52. Constructive neglect should be addressed. All efforts to should be made to encourage property owners to maintain Registered Buildings and Buildings in Conservation Areas. If advice and encouragement don't work, then enforcement needed to force maintenance/repairs.
53. Enforcement should not be limited to just fines; it must be able to force owners to rectify deterioration, especially if caused by neglect. If neglect has led to loss of part or all of such a building – or it has been wantonly demolished despite protection – there should be powers to force re-building (as is occasionally enforced in England). Enforcement should also be able to penetrate corporate veils, back to beneficial owners; and breaches should be proportionately penalised. It would appear at present that there are circumstances where a developer can make a decision that it is financially worthwhile to pay a penalty for un-authorized demolition in order to make a profit from a site. Much stricter penalties are necessary, possibly including application of, or the equivalent of, the Proceeds of Crime Act.

Building Control

54. Need to realise the constraints in upgrading an older building, and not allow unrestricted 'improvements'.
55. Building regulations should not be allowed to trump other considerations / serve as an excuse - e.g. buy, say, a 200 year-old building then get permission to demolish because it doesn't have a damp-proof course.
56. Need to stop Building Control being able to over-ride Planning restrictions or conditions without publicity/accountability.

Environmental / Societal

57. Maintenance of the Island's built heritage has manifold environmental, social and societal benefits.
58. Tynwald's commitment to, and indeed example set by the investment via the Manx Development Corporation (MDC) in re-use of Brownfield sites is welcome; such re-use of brownfield sites instead of the destruction of greenfield sites is environmentally as well as visually beneficial.
59. There were concerns that Tynwald's initial commitment to brownfield site re-use was focused solely on re-using cleared sites; but the principle applies – possibly even more – to re-use of standing buildings as well. In this regard, the example by MDC in respect of refurbishment and a new life for the former Nurses' Home is most welcome. All IOMG's Brownfield policies need to include, indeed focus on, retention and enhancement of standing properties.
60. Re-use / re-purposing of existing buildings retains the embodied carbon and avoids the carbon cost in demolition/rebuilding. This contributes to the Island's overall carbon reduction strategy and the principles in the UNESCO Biosphere.
61. The Carbon impact should be considered in any planning application; this will highlight the carbon embodied in our buildings – heritage and otherwise – and the carbon cost in their demolition.

It should be noted that the Corporation of the City of London has just issued a draft Planning Advice Note (draft published 7th June 2022, expected to be finalised in Q3/2022) which will require that each and every planning application - from minor modification to demolition and replacement – must include a carbon impact assessment; and for options including demolition, it must also quantify the excess carbon cost over refurbishment. *(see OP.5 below)*

62. Support for improvement of older properties, which will of course include heritage properties, is a 'quick win' in many ways – increasing the available housing stock, improving the built environment and hence attractiveness and quality of life, and minimise carbon costs. *(see OP.3 & OP.4 below)*
63. In particular, policies which encourage, and financial support for town-centres, including 'live above the shop' help keep residential stock in use, help preserve historic streetscapes, and keep town centres from becoming dead outside shopping hours. *(see OP.3 & OP.4 below)*

Recommendations

General

- R.1 Completion of the audit of the Island's built heritage assets (last line, page 5, GD 2018/0031).
- R.2 Assessment of the value of the Island's built heritage.
- R.3 Government to set a good example in care of the built heritage it owns.
- R.4 Education – recognition, value, context; and not just 'Manxness' but regional distinctiveness within the Island.
- R.5 Appoint the Consultative Body T CPA 1999 §40.

Planning policy

- R.6 Interested Party Status – remove the arbitrary restriction that prevents full participation in all stages of the Planning process.
- R.7 Recognise the Embodied Carbon stored in our stock of buildings (heritage and otherwise).

Designation

- R.8 Promulgate and implement the Conservation Areas already identified in local/area plans already approved by Tynwald.
- R.9 Designation of Registered Buildings, and determination of any appeals relating to removal from the Protected Buildings Register, should be entirely fact-based and removed from political control. Any appeals etc. should be determined by an Inspector.
- R.10 Designation of Conservation Areas should be removed from political control.
- R.11 When a building/structure etc. is added to the Protected Buildings Register, reinstate previous practice of providing a plan with a definitive red line denoting the extent of the area(s) covered by the listing.

- R.12 Once a building is added to the Protected Buildings Register no application for demolition can be made within five years.
- R.13 Introduce an additional 'lite' / 'watch list' Registration where buildings/structures are placed on a list whereby applications receive extra scrutiny and possibly reduced PDO rights.

Demolition

- R.14 All demolition to be subject to public notice period and allow 'calling-in' for Planning consideration, not just Building Control.
- R.15 Remove practice / ability whereby Building Control can approve or require demolition where Planning had specified it was to remain standing.
- R.16 If Planning impose a condition requiring Recording, (a) ensure it is completed to appropriate standard, (b) ensure that record is retained and accessible.

Support

- R.17 Provide 'printed' and in-person guidance.
- R.18 Re-instate financial support for appropriate repairs, whether by grants, loans, or under-writing.
- R.19 Investigate excessive / deterrent mortgage retentions on older properties; if necessary instigate top-up loans or under-writing,

Enforcement

- R.20 Should be properly funded, with performance standards.
- R.21 Should be able to enforce restoration if neglect has led to deterioration or collapse through neglect.
- R.22 Should be able to apply meaningful penalties.
- R.23 Enforcement to extend to Government-owned heritage buildings if neglected.

Building Control

R.24 Need to ensure 'improvements' don't go against Planning principles or conditions.

Environmental

R.25 Introduce Carbon Assessments as per the Corporation of the City of London example.

R.26 Progress Housing Action areas, particularly in Conservation Areas and historic streetscapes.

R.27 Promote re-use rather than destroy-and-replace.

R.28 Promote residential re-occupation of historic streetscapes, especially town centres.

Appendix – Relevant policies in other Jurisdictions

OP.1 Historic England – Repair Grants

GRANTS FOR LISTED BUILDING REPAIRS & CONSERVATION

Grants for repairs to listed buildings are increasingly hard to find. Grant-giving organisations, such as Historic England, are focused on funding nationally important buildings or buildings on the Heritage At Risk Register which are only viable with grant funding.

NEW SCHEMES TO HELP REVIVE & PROTECT

Early in 2017, Historic England launched a new £6 million funding scheme to help revive and protect historic buildings and locations across the UK. Through this scheme, local authorities will be given access to grants to repair historic buildings, as well as the skills to care for and maintain the building for years to come.

This initiative will see a huge variety of historic buildings rehabilitated and restored as houses, or as commercial and community spaces. One of the chief aims of Historic England is to use these restoration projects to attract tourists to new British locations, thus providing an economic boost to local communities. If this potential is realised, it could lead to better local and government legislation to protect listed properties.

For newly acquired buildings, it is normally assumed that the purchase price took into account the cost of any necessary repair and modernisation works. The buyers will then be expected to cover the cost of any repairs.

Heritage Lottery Fund cannot normally help private owners, although it can assist Building Preservation Trusts or charities in the rescue of a building that eventually passes into private ownership. The UK Association of Building Preservation Trusts is comprised of non-profit organisations, often rooted in local communities, who seek to protect and preserve heritage buildings. These groups tend to focus their resources on much deteriorated local sites.

From: <https://www.lpoc.co.uk/help-advice/grants-for-listed-buildings/>

OP.2 Scottish Government – Historic Environment Repair Grants

Under the Historic Environment Repair Grant programme we normally offer grants from £10,000 - £500,000 to support conservation-standard repair projects across Scotland which secure the original fabric of historic buildings and ancient monuments using traditional materials and skills

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/media/5283/advisory-standards-conservation-repair.pdf>

OP.3 Dumfries & Galloway Council, Scotland

Town Centre Site Grants

£500,000 of Town Centre Living fund will support ongoing work aimed at improving the sustainability and vibrancy of our town centres by encouraging the refurbishment of empty properties, repurposing of derelict sites and providing homes for our communities.

The fund aims to enable projects which meet local housing need and wider regeneration outcomes.

Applications can be submitted by registered charities, community groups, private developers who are taking forward projects supported through Scottish Government initiatives and Registered Social Landlords who are taking forward projects to deliver affordable housing.

We will consider funding for a range of works that enables development including surveys, site clearance and infrastructure provision. Applications will be assessed on their ability to deliver a number of priorities:

- contributing to regenerating town centres
- increasing the supply of affordable housing
- bringing empty properties back into use

The intention of this element of the Town Centre Living Fund is to increase the supply of affordable housing in the region's town centres and settlements by bringing empty properties back into use and regenerating brownfield sites. The fund places these centres of population at the core of our financial decision making and seeks to deliver the best local outcomes through investment of available resources. By taking this approach and providing homes for our communities, the fund will support ongoing work aimed at improving the sustainability and vibrancy of town centres and settlements.

Empty Properties

An allocation from the 2022/23 Town Centre Living Fund has been allocated to tackle the problem of empty properties. The geographical scope has now been widened for owners of empty properties in town centres to include a total of 47 settlements across the region to help bring them back into use as affordable housing.

A 50% grant rate will be made available to eligible properties with maximum award of £20,000 based on works costing £40,000. The grant will be subject to the standard grant conditions set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006.

This scheme is open to private landlords and private owners who intend to occupy the property subject to the following conditions: -

- Once works are completed, the property must either:
- be made available for letting at or below the Local Housing Allowance rate for a minimum of five years following completion of the works; or
- be occupied by the owner or their family for a minimum of five years.

- For the period of five years, following the payment of an empty property grant, the owner must prove to the Council on an annual basis the property is still being made available for private let at the Local Housing Allowance Rate or being occupied by the owner or family.
- Properties can be residential or unused commercial space above shops that have previously been used as residential accommodation.
- Properties need to have been empty for at least 1 year.
- 10% of the grant award will be withheld until the landlord provides documentary evidence the property is occupied

Below Tolerable Standard Grants

£300,000 of the fund has been allocated to tackle properties that fail to meet the Tolerable Standard. To meet the tolerable standard a property must meet the following criteria:

- The main fabric of the property is structurally stable.
- There is an adequate supply of wholesome water and if there is a sink with a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water.
- The property has toilet facilities available for the exclusive use of the occupants of the house.
- The property is substantially free from rising or penetrating damp.
- The property has a fixed bath or shower and a wash hand basin, suitably located within the house and each has a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water.
- The property has an effective system for the drainage and disposal of foul and surface water.
- The electric supply meets safety regulations
- The property is insulated well enough
- There is suitable ventilation, natural and artificial light, and heating
- It has a proper entrance

In cases of major works being required to meet the tolerable standard, such as roof replacement or structural remediation, assistance would also be provided to install smoke and heat alarms where required. Where technically feasible, the objective would be to support the addition of hard wired alarms

<https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/17435/Town-Centre-Sites>

OP.4 Fife Council, Scotland

Town Centre Building Improvement Grants

The Town Centre Development Unit have opened a new round of the Town Centre Building Improvement [TCBI] Grant scheme for 2022-23. Made possible by an allocation of £200,000 from the Scottish Govt Placed Based Investment Programme, this capital fund has similar criteria to last year's Building Improvement Grant.

The TCBI grant is discretionary. It is to support small town centre businesses & the owners of town centre business property undertake capital improvement works.

The main features of the Town Centre Building Improvement scheme:

- For business property located within one of Fife's key town centres or other local centre boundaries.
- Small Town Centre Businesses and business property owners can apply
- The grant can fund: **Shop front improvements, internal refit/reconfiguration of premises , and upper floor conversions**
- The minimum grant that can be awarded per eligible premises is £6,000 up to a maximum of £10,000, with a 90% intervention rate. i.e. for a £6,000 grant the works must cost at least £6,667, exc VAT, with Fife Council funding 90% (£6,000) and the business funding the other 10% (£667).
- Eligible costs include capital improvement/ development works, professional fees.

Eligibility

- Have no more than 10 business outlets in a business chain across Scotland
- Have a cumulative turnover of less than £10,000,000
- Be located within one of the town or local centre boundaries in Fife, as defined in the Local Development Plan. This will be determined by post -code check. Unfortunately, property located outside these central areas within settlements is not eligible. With a limited budget and a need to prioritise town centre locations, it is not feasible to make this grant fund available for all small business property in Fife.

Exclusions include:

- Building repair & maintenance works,
- Furniture,
- Portable equipment,
- Statutory fees (Planning & Building Warrant)
- VAT.

<https://www.investfife.co.uk/town-centre-building-improvement-grant-2022-23-now-open/>

OP.5 Corporation of the City of London Requirement for carbon impact audits

The City of London Corporation has today (7 June 2022) agreed to consult on a pioneering new draft Planning Advice Note looking at carbon considerations in major development schemes.

The 'Whole Lifecycle Carbon Optioneering' guidance will assist with pre-application procedures and discussions, giving clarity of purpose to applicants and a framework to define reduced carbon footprints.

It will be incorporated into a formal 'Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document' which will address issues such as carbon reduction, energy efficiency and climate resilience in the commercial built environment. A draft of the wider guidance is expected to be considered by the City Corporation's Planning and Transportation Committee later in the year.

The initial draft Planning Advice Note was approved today and will be consulted on for six weeks from mid-June.

The draft Planning Advice Note includes:

- An expectation that developers assess the whole life-cycle carbon emission impacts of a scheme at an early stage (before designs are finalised), appoint experienced consultants and enter into discussions with City Corporation planning officers.
- An expectation that developers consider the whole life-cycle carbon emissions for a range of options, such as minor refurbishment, major refurbishment, extension and new build.
- A proposed method of consistent reporting of whole life-cycle carbon emissions in the commercial built environment, which is in line with the GLA's adopted guidance.
- A dashboard to increase understanding of information about carbon emissions to inform decisions taken by the City Corporation's Planning and Transportation Committee.

<https://news.cityoflondon.gov.uk/city-corporation-to-consult-on-world-leading-embodied-carbon-planning-guidance/>

The PAN [Planning Advice Note] sets out how a proposal for a new development should go through an 'optioneering' exercise. The assessment looks at different types of refurbishment that retain existing fabric, as well as a more substantial redevelopment of the site, involving demolition. The WLC [Whole Lifecycle Carbon] PAN standardises the facts and figures that will need to be submitted with a planning proposal – including a dashboard to easily show how the options compare.

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/planning/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/whole-live-carbon-planning-advice-note-consultation>

OP.6 UK Town & Country Planning Act 1990 §55 Control of demolition

How do I get prior approval for demolition?

Before undertaking demolition which is permitted development under [Part 11 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) \(England\) Order 2015](#), as amended, you must apply to the local planning authority, providing a written description of the proposed demolition. At the same time you must put up a site notice about the proposed demolition. The local planning authority will then determine whether prior approval is required for the method of demolition and any proposed restoration of the site. The local planning authority may then grant or refuse the prior approval. If, within 28 days of your application, the local planning authority has given no indication of whether prior approval is required or not, the demolition may begin without prior approval.

....

Note – demolition is not permitted by Part 11 where the building has been rendered unsafe or uninhabitable by the action or inaction of anyone having an interest in the land on which the building stands, and can be made secure through repair or temporary support.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/when-is-permission-required> (updated 4 Jan 2022)