

executive summary

1 The Colzium-Lennox Estate is an important community amenity with a remarkable assemblage of heritage features in a compact, diverse and attractive landscape setting.

2 The Estate is used by local residents for a range of casual recreational activities especially short walks and informal activities. It is cherished and well respected by the local community who are keen to see the Estate, and especially the House, improved in order to encourage the wider use and provide better facilities.

3 North Lanarkshire Council have managed the Estate with care since it assumed responsibility for Colzium since 1996. The council recognise, however, that improvements are needed and that the House, in particular, is an underutilized resource.

4 the vision

The vision is to establish Colzium as a high quality visitor attraction harnessing the Estate's unique heritage and sense of place in a way that fully utilises the potential of the House for conferences, meeting and weddings and the grounds for quiet, casual enjoyment in a way that enhances opportunities for community use and events whilst developing the Estate as the focal point for tourism and wider public enjoyment of the Kelvin Valley.

5 In Autumn 2001 the Council commissioned this development plan. The aims of the study are to:

- Identify a future development strategy for the House and Estate based upon systematic market research and an assessment of the inherent strengths and weaknesses of the resource.
- Develop a concept that has the potential to produce a revenue income for the Council to help offset the annual running costs and any future capital improvements.
- Establish how the House and the Estate can be developed as a high quality visitor attraction whilst retaining its strong linkage with the local community and respecting the covenants that mean free access to local people.
- Prepare a development schedule, action and marketing plan together with an indicative business plan.

6 principles

The review and consultation process has identified a number of baseline principles that should be adopted as the framework for the future development of Colzium. These principles reflect (a) a broad consensus of public opinion, (b) the legal constraints imposed by the original deed of gift, and (c) provide a strong foundation for sustainable development and the creation of a quality visitor experience.

The recommended principles are:

- The public should continue to have free access to the Estate but that charges can be applied for certain facilities.
- There needs to be more management of traffic in the Estate with greater controls on traffic movement creating a traffic free environment.
- There needs to be more public amenities and facilities for families available on a daily basis.
- The inherent character, heritage and natural features of the Estate must be conserved and interpreted building upon the existing character landscape areas.
- The Council must ensure that through the development plan system and planning control the integrity of the Estate is not compromised.
- Colzium should become the focal point of and the gateway for the exploration of the wider countryside in the Kelvin Valley, especially Banton Loch, the Kilsyth Hills and the Millennium Link thus helping to develop the tourism potential of the area.

7 objectives

The objectives set for this project are to:

- Agree a development strategy and action plan by Summer 2002.
- Prepare a detailed and costed refurbishment plan for the House and the Theatre by Autumn 2002.
- Prepare a detailed landscape plan by December 2002 and use it to apply for Heritage Lottery Funds.
- Secure capital funding for the project by Spring 2003.
- Open the refurbished House as a Conference venue by Spring 2004.
- Commence work on a phased programme of landscaping in Summer 2003.

8 There is a very real market potential for Colzium to achieve viability and sustainability as a quality venue for conferences, business meetings, weddings and other special events. In order to attain this goal a major refurbishment of the House is required.

9 The Estate grounds (parkland, woodland and walled garden) has strong market appeal as a country park type attraction. There is scope to grow visitation from the current 45,000 per annum to 70,000. This can be achieved by:

- Improving facilities.
- Enhancing the grounds.
- Better marketing.
- Providing interpretation of the heritage and natural history of the site.

10 There is a real opportunity for the Colzium-Lennox Estate to become a major 'hub' of recreational and tourist activity in the Kelvin Valley. This can be achieved by:

- Bringing Banton Loch within the management of Colzium as an extension of the visitor experience.
- Establishing linkages with the Forth-Clyde Canal and other local attractions.
- Stimulating overnight stays associated with developing the House and Estate as a venue.

11 A total capital expenditure of £1.8 million over three years is required to create the facilities necessary to achieve the Vision. Each year up to 200 events could take place in the House and some 20 events in the Grounds.

12 Significant potential exists to work with important partners to realise this potential including:

- Scottish Enterprise Lanarkshire.
- The Marie Curie Foundation.
- Scottish Natural Heritage.
- The Local Community.

13 Some 50 jobs will be created or maintained directly by this project, together with a further 20 - 25 jobs elsewhere in the community. In addition this project could result in upwards of £0.75 million of visitor spending per annum in the area.

14 A concerted effort is now needed with clear leadership and direction with North Lanarkshire Council to bring this plan to reality. It is an approach that will create a first class facility of benefit to the local community and of strategic significance to the Council.

15 Colzium can be the catalyst for wider economic regeneration in Kilsyth and the Kelvin Valley. This is an important heritage and amenity resource that deserves investment and wider acclaim.