

Burgh cash hopes

Countdown is on to business case handout

By Steve McElroy

THE final push for a share of £10 million for Helensburgh town centre and waterfront regeneration projects was made this week.

The town's bid for the vital cash was submitted today (Thursday) by Helensburgh Partnership in their efforts to pursue the major investment — from Argyll and Bute Council — for the burgh.

Other towns — Campbeltown, Oban, Rothesay and Dunoon — are also each submitting an Outline Business Case (OBC) for the funds, with external consultants appointed to write an objective one for each town.

Another external consultant has been engaged to score the OBCs and is due to report on June 6. The final decision on the allocation of the funds will be taken at the council meeting on June 26.

All of the towns appointed a Project Board to take forward their case, with the Helensburgh



ON COURSE: Derek Anderson, of the Helensburgh Partnership, and Councillor James Robb.

Partnership taking on the role here. If successful, the Helensburgh OBC would bring £7.5 million of council investment to revitalise the town and the downstream investment could be several times that.

Derek Anderson, Chief Executive of the Partnership, said: "This has been a town

effort. We have been working constantly on the OBC since the consultants visited Helensburgh at the beginning of April.

It has taken a lot of time and endeavour but we are almost there.

"Our in-depth knowledge of the local issues has helped guide the work carried out by the

consultants. Also, having clear, deliverable projects has enabled us to build a very powerful case for Helensburgh. This is all about increasing expenditure within the town.

"These projects will kick-start Helensburgh's revival and signal that the turnaround has begun. All we need now is the council to give us the green light and we can get off and running."

There are three elements to the OBC: a more pedestrian friendly town centre with innovative shared surfaces, improved traffic management and a park-and-ride feasibility study; a redesign and redevelopment of the West Bay Esplanade and an upgrade and enhancement of Kidston Park and its facilities.

Representatives from the Partnership and the council have been working closely with the consultants, Cogent SI and Smiths Gore, to ensure they have the strongest possible OBC.

Councillor James Robb, Chairman of Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee, commented: "Helensburgh has a compelling case for the council investment and I expect us to be

one of the successful towns.

"The work of the Helensburgh Partnership over many months has created a low risk, high return investment that, on completion, will bring lasting economic and community benefits, a better town centre for shopping and leisure, a refurbished esplanade with improved public spaces and a rejuvenated Kidston Park with modern facilities.

The pier car park was specifically excluded from the submission as plans for its future use have yet to be developed.

"I would like to thank the many individuals and organisations that contributed to the submission. This is a wonderful example of what can be achieved with a shared vision, hard work and a unified approach.

"There has been much progress over the last few months with local councillors working together to ensure a fairer deal for Helensburgh and Lomond. I expect that to continue but a winning OBC will be a significant step forward."

For a progress report, log on to: www.helensburghpartnership.co.uk.