

Burgh is still on course for cash

HELENSBURGH'S bid to to secure regeneration cash still looks to be on track, despite concerns over funding.

By Tracy-Ann Carmichael

Councillors on the Argyll and Bute authority's powerful executive committee pledged to see that the Burgh has enough money to see the outline business case (OBC) document — essential to the town's bid for funding to aid the process — through to completion.

There had been fears there would not be enough cash left in the coffers to complete the blueprint because Helensburgh does not qualify to be awarded further monies from the £300,000 pot to allow the completion of outline business cases.

The Burgh had earlier been handed a £100,000 council cash injection to fund The Helensburgh Partnership — the agency charged with spearheading regeneration projects.

At the time it was not known that there would be a need to complete the outline business case and there were concerns the agency would not have enough cash to fund it, as they have already completed an initial business case and other projects,

including a traffic management strategy, for the town.

But disaster was averted after council chiefs agreed to call an urgent meeting with Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire and The Helensburgh Partnership to discuss the funding situation.

They rejected a motion for £60,000 to be reserved in case there are problems funding Helensburgh's bid but have been praised for making provision for those involved in the cash bid to revisit the executive committee for assistance if finance proves to be a major stumbling block.

We told last week how Partnership chief Derek Anderson and Councillor Ellen Morton had voiced concerns over the OBC stage.

Campbeltown, Dunoon, Oban and Rothesay will all be awarded £75,000 each to fund their documents.

The Executive also set a deadline of April 30 next year for completion of OBCs, with evaluation of the cases being

carried out during May. Council officers will then report back to a future meeting of the executive committee, regarding arrangements for independent scrutiny of the bids.

Helensburgh and Lomond North Councillor Ellen Morton, a member of the Executive, commended council chiefs for their course of action.

She said: "There was a concern that Helensburgh might be disadvantaged by the February deadline but the leader of the council gave an assurance that if there was any difficulty in funding with Helensburgh's completion of the OBC, that the issue would come back to the executive for discussion.

"They want Helensburgh's OBC to come out of the Partnership budget.

That money was given well over a year ago when we had no knowledge that this would be coming.

It's unfortunate that the lack of clarity has caused a problem that would have been better avoided but the important thing is to make sure that we get enough money together because we already have our partners in place, which the other towns don't have."