Business case for Whithorn Trust Community Asset Transfer

45-7 George Street, Whithorn, Newton Stewart, DG8 8NS

[Background 2](#_Toc168856396)

[Condition of the Building 3](#_Toc168856397)

[The Background to the Proposal 4](#_Toc168856398)

[Cold Case Whithorn 4](#_Toc168856399)

[The Benefits of Whithorn Collection Research 7](#_Toc168856400)

[Current Status 9](#_Toc168856401)

[The Proposal 9](#_Toc168856402)

[Archaeological Tourism 10](#_Toc168856403)

[Stakeholders 11](#_Toc168856404)

[Business Case and Costs 11](#_Toc168856405)

[Funding Plan 13](#_Toc168856406)

[Policy Alignment 14](#_Toc168856407)

# Background

The Whithorn Trust has been a tenant of the building at 45-7 George Street ever since it was purchased by the then Regional Council in 1988 to serve as a visitor centre, at the time of the Whithorn Excavations. After renovations in 1989, the building housed a large audio visual presentation, exhibition, and acted as the gathering point for tours, which left from the rear of the building, across the yard which had been acquired as part of the previous owner’s landholding, and across to the live excavations (1986-1991). This was re-paved by the District Council and new “Superloos” erected to serve the large numbers of visitors.

The interior layout has been changed slightly since, to accommodate a café and the upstairs Discovery Centre was added in the 1990’s. The Trust also altered the layout of the kitchens owing to safety concerns for staff and reduced the AV room, as technology changed over time.



Figure Lease plan showing area rented by the Trust

The 25-year lease last revised by the Council in 2004 is due to end in the foreseeable future. The lease was a full repairing lease; at the time of signature in 2004, the rent was at the time offset by a significant revenue contribution by the Council towards the running of the Trust. This has reduced by around 90% since that date and the Trust’s rent now exceeds the Discretionary Grant which has been offered by Area Committee in recent years.

In 2004, there were fewer public buildings being taken over by the community; since then, other buildings in Whithorn have been taken over under a variety of arrangements agreed with different organisations. As far as we are aware, none of these organisations were given a full repairing lease.

# Condition of the Building

A condition survey was carried out at the same time as the renewal of the lease in 2004. Since that time, energy costs have changed significantly, and the deteriorating condition of the roof and windows was having a significant effect on the Trust’s energy costs and its carbon footprint. An assessment of the Trust’s energy efficiency rating and a series of recommendations for improvement were obtained from Business Energy Scotland.

The Board resolved to make improvements over several years, applying for capital improvement funds mostly from Museums Galleries Scotland; these are available at a higher level of grant to Accredited Museums, from different MGS funding streams, differing from year to year. The following is a table of the investments made by the Trust within the last ten years.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Source of funds** | **Date** | **Contractor if appropriate** | **Cost** | **Total incl VAT** |
| New steel security door to rear with push bar for fire exit | MGS | 2017 |  | 2394 | 2394 |
| Replacement of windows on the upper floor | MGS | 2020 | Baird’s Windows  Newton Stewart | 4855.60 plus VAT | 5826.72 |
| Planning costs for consent | MGS | 2020 | Tom Sweenie | 600 plus Vat | 720 |
| replace 3 storage heaters | MGS | 2020 |  | 679.10 plus VAT x 3 | 2444.76 |
| new sills and repainting front elevation windows, including scaffolding | MGS | 2021 | Gary Flannighan, Whithorn | 900 | 900 |
| Replacing rear external door to Discovery Centre, small under-ramp door and minor putty repairs to other windows | MGS | 2021 | Robin Templeton, Whithorn | 1760 | 1760 |
| Replacement window with ventilation | MGS | 2021 | Baird’s windows, Newton Stewart | £2076.29 | 2076.29 |
| Planning fee for consent | MGS | 2021 | Tom Sweenie | £522 | 522 |
| Deep flow gutters to rear where overflows occurred | MGS | 2021 | Robin Templeton, Whithorn | £450 | 450 |
| Replace rear office roof and insulate | MGS | 2022 | Whithorn ReBuild | £ 1833.33 | 2199.96 |
| Replace felt roof with insulated fibre glass roof; two new storage heaters upstairs | MGS | 2023 | Tommy Gibson, Stranraer | £ 42495 inc VAT for roof | 43470 |
| Plans for Replacement of shop frontage | CLLD | 2023-4 | Simpson and Brown Architects | 21480 | 21480 |
| Replacement of Shopfront | MGS | 2023-4 | To be procured | 60,000 | 60,000 |
| Replacement of shopfront and thermal performance glazing | SOSE | 2024-5 | To be procured | 20,000 | 20,000 |
| **Total raised by the Whithorn Trust and spent on the building** | | | | | 164,243.73 |

The Trust has therefore fulfilled its obligations under the lease and enhanced the building through improving thermal performance and running costs, in order to keep the charity sustainable under increasing budgetary pressures.

# The Background to the Proposal

## Cold Case Whithorn

The Trust expressed interest in a Community Asset Transfer through a stage 1 application as early as 2016-7. The intervening years have been spent productively in assessing the archaeological collection, its potential benefits to education and the community, the national profile of Whithorn and to economic development of the South Machars.

The Whithorn Cold Case project, 2018-2025, has been a complete reinvestigation of the 52,000-strong archaeological assemblage, resulting from excavations between 1986 and 1991. A map of a city

Description automatically generated The archaeological collection of Dumfries and Galloway, of which Whithorn’s assemblage forms a large part, has Recognised status, meaning that is of national significance, attracting potentially higher levels of funding to support its care, interpretation and display. The collection has been stored, since the excavations, at Stranraer Museum Stores, in environmentally-controlled conditions and under the curatorship of the Dumfries and Galloway Museums Service. Nonetheless, the collection had remained essentially sealed and its sheer volume was actually a barrier to research, while the packaging was in need of complete renewal, as was the digital record, which was recorded in two different and incompatible databases.

Figure Excavations at Whithorn over time

Since 2018, the Trust has been fortunate to secure funding from MGS, DG LEADER, and most recently the Sainsbury Family Charitable Trust and Pilgrim Trust, for the complete repackaging, recataloguing and re-examination of the collection, appointing a Collections Manager, Bronwyn Chomitz, since 2018 (with an interval during Covid) to lead this work.

One of the driving forces behind this need to reopen what was dubbed the the Whithorn” Cold Case” was the questioning by leading academics of the conventional wisdom surrounding Whithorn’s origins, the date of the earliest monastery, the nature of changes to population over time, and the record of health and disease over the more than one thousand years of Whithorn’s continued existence on the same site, from Early Christian to High Mediaeval times. Dr. Adrian Maldonado, now a Galloway Hoard researcher with National Museums Scotland and then academic at Universities of Chester and Glasgow, led these questions and recognised the potential of the large assemblage of human remains to be scientifically tested and to give decisive answers to questions of chronology and origin which were formerly only a matter for speculation. Whithorn’s human remains assemblage is one of the largest in Scotland : protocols of excavation have now changed and it is unlikely that such large numbers of individuals would today be excavated. But this wholesale method of excavation has left us with a vast untapped dataset for exploring questions of early mediaeval history and, by implication, the origins of Scotland, which is unparalleled.

While in the 1990’s the Whithorn assemblage could be tested only by using large amounts of collagen, today’s scientific testing of C14 dates requires merely grammes of material, is far less destructive and far more accurate. This type of test is now amplified by stable isotope analysis which offers insights into diet and mobility, offering exciting prospects for exploring issues of social status, access to food, and the question of the resilience of local populations during supposed changes to demographics eg. through migration during the Northumbrian period. Further advances have also opened up the prospect of ancient DNA (aDNA) analysis, leading to uncovering of family relationships and the possibility of facial reconstructions, including the hair and eye colour of people who lived more than 1000 years ago. Incremental stable isotope analysis is a new technique which enables fine-grained analysis of an individual’s diet over time, and, when obstetric burials are analysed, may offer conclusions about mother and child health.

The Trust has recognised that this potential for its collection to offer real advances to human knowledge about the early origins of Scotland, the way in which Christianity was adopted and why, and about human health and disease over time, presented the opportunity for Whithorn’s research to have national and international prominence, to offer unique opportunities to derive benefits in terms of STEM learning for local schools, and to offer a wealth of new storytelling and interpretation for visitors, thereby driving more visitor footfall and economic benefit for Whithorn and area.

Dr. Adrian Maldonado, National Museums Scotland, has been the research lead on archaeology for Whithorn Cold Case and selected samples for C14 testing at Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre at East Kilbride. Dr. Shirley Curtis Summers, University of Bradford, has been the osteologist and palaeopathologist in charge of stable isotope analysis. While much of the research still remains to be published, the results already known have changed the way we look at Whithorn’s development and therefore that of early Scotland :

* Whithorn’s earliest phases, when there is evidence of Christian practice and belief, do not resemble a monastic settlement. Activity on the site is confirmed in the mid 5th Century, but burials are surrounded by evidence of feasting, suggesting a thriving and outward-looking settlement with Romanised practices, international contacts and trade, and literacy
* The advent of the monastery, according to burial evidence, comes in the late 600’s – with Northumbrian impact earlier than previously believed
* The local population remains resilient, buried alongside newcomers and in elite positions, with some indigenous burial practices being adopted by the newly organised Northumbrian monastery
* Later evidence of disease such as leprosy and syphilis offers insight into the diseases for which pilgrims may have visited Whithorn, in search of a cure.

To support a second wave of testing, this time on artefacts rather than human remains, the Trust was able to procure further funds from the Community Renewal Fund in 2022 to examine materials particularly from the Northumbrian period, in order to investigate the structure of the Northumbrian church and burial chapel. This investigation led to equally significant results : the earliest stained glass in Scotland was tested and chemical signatures found which were identical with glass from Jarrow and Wearmouth, incorporating Roman glass from Palestine and Egypt. Tufa from the Northumbrian wall was tested, revealing that it was gathered from the vicinity of St Ninian’s Cave, used in wall mortar to produce the “shining white” effect which, Bede states, was the origin of Whithorn’s name, Candida Case. These important results are being used currently to inform the Trust’s plans for future interpretation on site.

A third phase of the Cold Case involved tackling its most delicate artefacts, the ferrous metal assemblage, at risk of loss through corrosion since it was unearthed three decades ago. Two members of the Cold Case team were mentored by a professional conservator from AOC Archaoelogy in the conservation of metals, the removal of older treatments that were no longer considered appropriate and the disposal to academic institutions where the object was beyond retrieval and not of high significance. Staff were trained in the use of microscope, cleaning techniques and a decision-tree for determining priority treatments, and this training was offered across DG Museums Service.

Finally, the excavation paper archive had been at Historic Environment Scotland’s archive centre since the mid-1990’s. Some boxes were retrieved for digitisation by the Cold Case team, including a professional archivist, and include important site photographs and skeletal recording sheets which are currently being worked on. Dozens of boxes remain in Edinburgh.

## The Benefits of Whithorn Collection Research

During the Whithorn Cold Case project, the Trust formed partnerships across the country, especially as publications began appearing and the increasing accessibility of the collection became known among archaeologists and scientists. Those involved in analysis include the following institutions:

1. University of Bradford
2. University of Liverpool John Moores
3. National Museums Scotland
4. University of Aberdeen
5. Napier University
6. University of Durham
7. Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre
8. Historic England
9. University College London
10. Sheffield University
11. The Crick Institute, University of Cambridge
12. University of St Andrewx

The project deliberately included STEM learning classes for Whithorn School, the Douglas Ewart High School and Stranraer Academy, including

* Visits by osteologists to schools to look at evidence for health and trauma which can be found on human bone
* Forensics classes at Whithorn School
* DNA classes at Whithorn School
* A visit for Higher students from Stranraer Academy to SUERC Laboratories to view testing of Whithorn material
* Creative writing by Douglas Ewart High School students telling the stories of facially reconstructed individuals
* Filming of artefacts by media classes at the Douglas Ewart High School and participation by other pupils in demonstrations of crafts skills relating to these objects, supported by Whithorn ReBuild youth employability scheme. The resulting films, “A History of Scotland in 10 Whithorn Objects” were screened to the school and later to the public. They were part of the reason for the Trust’s winning the “Museums Change Lives” award in November 2023.
* Free public lectures have been held each year of the project, both online (during Covid) and in person, with collaboration with Wigtown Book Festival, to disseminate the results of the research.

The Trust has used the scientific research to enhance its displays, tell new stories and engage with new digital technology, increasing Whithorn’s prominence, leading to more footfall, underpinning our viability as a charity and supporting existing and potential jobs :

* Four facial reconstructions have been created by Dr. Chris Rynn, formerly director of Dundee University’s anthropology and forensics Masters programme. These include two known individuals, Bishops Henry and Walter of Whithorn, and are currently on display in the Visitor Centre. They are displayed as the backdrop to the loan of the 12th Century Whithorn Crozier in an exhibition which opened in 2024. Two of the reconstructed indiviuals are unknown: a young woman of 21 dating to the 1400’s and an unknown clergyman with cleft palate. The latter was the first example of a person with this facial condition being reconstructed in the UK. The launch of their facial reconstructions achieved national and international recognition in the media, reaching as far as Russia and South America, with hundreds of thousands of hits on Facebook and coverage by scientific journals, including the Smithsonian.
* Imagined biographies created by school pupils and adult storytelling competition winners are on show in the exhibition.
* Details of the Northumbrian church and burial chapel revealed by research have been used by the University of St Andrews to recreate the buildings of the time and this has been made into a visitor Time Travel app, now available through QR codes on the site (stances created by local young sculptor from the Whithorn ReBuild project)
* Discussions of the future interpretation of the Northumbrian church are underway with HES, Addyman Archaeology, and leading craftspeople.

# Current Status

The collection is now well organised, packaged and the data has been cleaned by Napier University computer science students. Interest in the academic community remains high, as confirmed by Dr. Maldonado :

“*In the last five years, the Trustees have fielded a growing number of research requests which have grown organically, well beyond the specific aims of the original Cold Case project. Now beyond the early medieval cemetery, new projects on the stained glass, the imported ceramic and glass vessels, the metalworking debris, mortar and lime deposits and more are continuing to emerge independently. Access to the collection remains of paramount importance to the efforts to refresh the museum display and advance archaeological research, for which the Whithorn assemblage is of national significance*.”

The deployment of a mere fraction of the collection’s potential has resulted in social, educational and economic benefits. However, the building in which the majority of the collection is housed, Stranraer Museum Stores, has issues relating to its own maintenance and the long-term future of this facility for the storage of sensitive items is uncertain, unless there is significant investment.

The paper archaeological archive remains, at least by and large, in Edinburgh at HES Archives. The archive was in the care of the Whithorn Trust until the mid 1990’s but was then removed to Edinburgh for safekeeping; no further analysis or digitisation of the paper archive was carried out. The central Edinburgh archive is being reorganised and some items may not be accessible until 2027.

There remain disparate Whithorn archaeological items in a variety of collections across the country, sometimes because of historical accident. For instance, Aberdeen University has the skeletal remains of around 150 individuals which were sent for research purposes some decades ago and not retrieved. Items from the original excavations of the 1890’s may be in the collections of Glasgow Life at Kelvingrove and may include important items which have not previously been subject to scientific investigation.

# The Proposal

Over the last five years, the Trust has leveraged the assets represented by the Whithorn archaeological collection to create

* National partnerships and interest from academics and students, which are of high value to a remote rural community
* Genuine contributions to the study of human health and disease over time
* National and international media attention
* School classes in STEM learning, creative writing and media studies
* Public lectures, including collaboration with the Book Festival and Oyster Festival
* Enhanced interpretation, some of which is already on display
* A more diverse representation of the mediaeval population and a new story about Whithorn’s emergence, reach and international contacts
* Investment in new digital interpretation to engage different demographics

These represent the early-stage results, supported by funding which the Trust was able to obtain from a variety of sources. The likelihood is that these will only grow as results are published.

The Trust would now like to apply for the Community Asset Transfer of the leased property at 45-7 George Street as a new home for the entire archive, paper and archaeological, where an environmentally-controlled accessible storage facility can be built, enabling the long-term care of the newly unified collection and facilitating scholarly access, behind-the-scenes tours for the public to enhance understanding of Scottish archaeology and conservation processes, and learning for both Primary and Secondary Schools in the area.

## Archaeological Tourism

We would accompany the archive centre with setting up an archaeological field school to be based at the Trust’s new facility and investigating the rich heritage of the Machars, through the provision of archaeological training each year, which would also drive visitor numbers, spending and sustainable tourism for the area. The proposal for an archaeological learning centre would be aligned with South of Scotland Enterprise’s current support for enhancing public interest in the assets of the Roman Iron Age across the South of Scotland, including the economic benefits of archaeological tourism : the Trust’s CEO is the current chair of the archaeology group. The Roman Iron Age consortium of tourism and archaeology specialists rgues that this era is to the South of Scotland what the Neolithic is to Orkney and that, ultimately, the quality of Roman Iron Age remains are worthy of World Heritage status. To argue for this, centres of archaeological excellence and hubs for public engagement need to be identified : Whithorn is one of those already identified as having the reputation, the outstanding archaeology, the potential for servicing visitors, and the accommodation to facilitate archaeological tourism.

Beyond the environmentally controlled storage, we would propose having study areas for scholars, specific education zones designed to provide the right environment for lectures, seminars, and other learning opportunities. These activities will also generate benefits associated with archaeological field schools related to well-being, skills development and volunteering.

The best current example of a remote but highly significant archaeological site generating economic benefit for a rural island is the Ness of Brodgar digs on Orkney. Not only has it contributed significantly to the development of heritage tourism on the island, but it has brought Orkney’s rich prehistory to a global audience and seen a marked increase in visitor numbers. Archaeology has helped transform Orkney’s economy. By 2017 more than half (62%) of visitors were “heritage tourists”, with 40% citing archaeology as the main reason for their visit. At a local level, the research has resulted in a growth in archaeological engagement, helping local communities understand and appreciate their heritage.

Archaeologically-led regeneration will involve galvanising the research interest which already exists and generating study visits, but also promoting the rich surrounding archaeological landscape, for training digs (for university students and the interested public) and for casual visitors. An integrated archive and study centre offers the prospect of partnerships with universities seeking placements and summer field schools for archaeology students – including foreign students – and the possibility of long-term partnerships with archaeological departments. Highly technical research will be facilitated by the accessibility of the Whithorn Archive and deliver the direct benefits of visits, spending and publication, but such results will also be disseminated through new interpretation and storytelling for our museum, which we aim to renovate. Academic research generates a ripple effect of interest over many years, but it can also generate public lectures, schools topics, group and class visits, and archaeological volunteering opportunities. On Orkney, extensive media coverage also had a substantial impact locally by embedding Neolithic archaeology – and archaeology as a whole –in the community through societies, museum groups, volunteers and, in particular, school projects and classes. This has seen a greater engagement with heritage, archaeology and community-based research

# Stakeholders

To date, we have held discussions with

* Dumfries and Galloway Council Museums Service
* Historic Environment Scotland – operations and Archives
* AOC Archaeology
* New Practice – consultants for the Whithorn Place Plan
* Simpson and Brown, Architects
* Dr. Adrian Maldonado, National Museums Scotland
* South of Scotland Enterprise

# Business Case and Costs

In 2024, the Whithorn Trust received business support funds to fund an Outline Business Case created by Stantec UK Ltd for its Masterplan for Growth. Among the projects examined by the consultants were the proposals for the redevelopment of 45-7 George Street. At the same time, RJN Partnership provided QS services to give high level costs for the archive centre.

This business case was developed on behalf of the Trust to demonstrate that the proposals meet market demands, will deliver value for money, and that its risks can be appropriately managed. Consistent with HM Treasury Green Book (2020) guidance, this OBC has been structured around the ‘five-case model’ – Strategic, Economic, Financial, Commercial and Management. The detail of the arguments will not be reproduced in full here.

The **Strategic** case outlines the various benefits at which the project aims:

* Increased visitor numbers to Whithorn and the wider Dumfries and Galloway region;
* culltivating a deeper cultural appreciation for Whithorn's rich historical legacy;
* develop educational programs in archaeology and history,
* sparking interest among young people and
* fostering future research in Whithorn;
* promoting archaeological skills and understanding
* drive local economic growth to better cater to visitors.

In combination, this will result in both direct and indirect job creation. The Strategic case is set against the background of Whithorn’s systemic income and employment deprivation : Compared to other datazones in South Machars, Whithorn ranked the lowest overall in both 2016 and 2020. Income levels have declined significantly, placing Whithorn residents in the 12% most deprived datazones in Scotland in 2020. While employment deprivation has improved slightly from 2016, it still ranks on the lower end compared to the rest of Scotland. Whithorn also still faces challenges in education and skills, access to services, and housing. Dumfries and Galloway (4.1%) has a slightly elevated proportion of young people who do not participate in education or employment compared with the Scottish average (3.6%). A higher rate of non-participation means that more young people are not learning or developing skills needed for employment and if sustained will add to existing skills shortages.

**Financial** : The total cost of the Research Centre is estimated by RNJ Partnerships at £620,000. This will offer provide 520 m² of space split evenly at 260 m² on each of the internal ground floor and internal first floor areas.

We will be issuing a construction tender, potentially requiring some specialist understanding of curation-related requirements on ventilation, lighting and insulation.

The **Commercial** case highlights the potential of Whithorn's historical and archaeological significance to attract visitors, aligning with emerging trends in experiential and emotional tourism post-pandemic. While the archaeological archive centre is more likely to bring in educational tours and high spending academics and is not directly aimed at increasing the number of tourists, nevertheless, the collection – as outlined above – is core to the inspiration and renewal of material Museum over time and will be essential to refreshing the attraction and attracting visitors.

By 2028, we are forecasting fees from academic access requests / sampling at £4000 p.a. and fees from the archaeological field school to be around £80,000 per year. We estimate that curation of the collection will employ 1.5 FTE. As part of the overall development plans for the Trust, however, greater visitor footfall will imply more staffing in other aspects of the business, eg. Café and tour guides. We also aim to partner with local social enterprise, All Roads Lead to Whithorn, to package archaeological study trips and field school stays with their bunkhouse and active travel offer.

**Wellbeing impact** : Research undertaken by the London School of Economics on behalf of the DCMS into valuing the wellbeing impacts of culture and sport found that the value per attendance of a person partaking in a cultural activity, such as visiting a museum or heritage site, was between £46 and £62. This is not a willingness to pay estimate; these are values in addition to any price paid to participate such as entrance fees and represent the equivalent amount of money participants would need to pay in order to derive the same wellbeing impact that is generated via engagement in culture activities.

In terms of **procurement**, the Trust will follow good practice guidelines and ensure legal compliance, value for money, and empowerment of local suppliers. The procurement process involves developing a sourcing strategy, issuing tenders, evaluating submissions, and awarding contracts. The Trust aims to maximize community benefits, engage local suppliers, and adopt a Community Wealth Building approach to economic development.

**Sustainability** is a key consideration in procurement, with a focus on minimising environmental impact, promoting local recruitment and training, and involving SMEs and third-sector bodies.

Consideration within the construction contracts

will be given to:

* Limiting energy and water consumption during delivery.
* The use of non-toxic substances and renewable materials.
* Disposal, reuse and recycling options at the end of life.

Incorporation of recycled or part recycled goods and energy efficient products.

* Encouraging local recruitment and training of staff employed in the delivery of the contract.
* Involving Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Third Sector Bodies and Supported Businesses.
* Promoting innovation – innovation in the design and delivery of public services, procurement of innovative goods and services and use of innovative procurement processes.
* Every contract shall provide that no goods, products or services shall be supplied which may endanger the health of any person, cause significant damage to the environment during manufacture, use or disposal, which consume a disproportionate amount of energy during manufacture, use or disposal, which cause unnecessary waste, or which contain materials derived from threatened species or environments

**Subsidy Control Compliance**

The Subsidy Control Act sets out conditions for public authorities that provide subsidies to businesses. In Scotland this is issued as the Scottish Public Finance Manual (SPFM). A subsidy refers to a grant, a tax break, a loan, or other form of financial assistance paid from public resources.Six principles are derived from the Trade and Cooperation Whithorn Trust, Masterplan for Growth Outline Business Case Agreement and broadly require that subsidies benefit wider society and contribute to public policy objectives. The Act

* Says that subsidies must be proportionate and necessary, must stimulate change in behaviour of the beneficiary, and be the right means to achieve public policy objectives. The benefits of a subsidy must outweigh any negative impact on competition and investment in the UK and internationally. The Act adds a UK-specific principle that authorities must design subsidies in a way that minimises any negative effect on competition and investment within the UK. Additional principles apply to subsidies related to energy and environment.
* Says that public authorities should not grant a subsidy unless the subsidy principles are met. Information about subsidies must be included on a public subsidy database. The UK Government plans to publish further guidance about the practical application of subsidy control principles and other requirements of the Act in due course.

A full subsidy control assessment will be included when the case for funding is fully developed. For now, the working assumption is that while the construction project will provide a distortion in the market due to Whithorn being better placed to attract more visitors in future as a result of them, this will not necessarily detract from other visitor attractions in the area as the story of Whithorn is a qualitatively different proposition and will serve to attract new visitors to the area.

# Funding Plan

A full funding strategy has not yet been developed and will depend on the successful outcome of the CAT Stage 2 application.

However, examination of possible sources of funding has pinpointed:

1. The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Fund – Whithorn’s Place Plan is still in development ( June 2024) but Borderlands offers the potential for capital projects in Whithorn and four other Borderlands towns.
2. Wolfson Foundation
3. National Lottery Heritage Fund
4. MGS

# Policy Alignment

1. **National Planning Framework 4** (NPF4), 2023 NPF4 is Scotland’s national spatial strategy to 2045. It sets out policy ambitions for improving people’s lives by making sustainable, liveable, and productive places. It plays a key role in Scotland’s delivery of the UNSDGs as well as national outcomes. Policy 7C stresses how proposals are only supported when it preserves the character and historic interest of the site. Policy 7M stresses how proposals that restore sites on the Buildings at Risk will be supported. Policy 25A supports proposals which contribute to local or regional community wealth building strategies consistent with local economic priorities. Policy 27A supports proposals that enhance and improve the vitality and viability of town centres. Policy 27B supports proposals for uses such as leisure, community and cultural activities which generate significant footfall in town centres, consistent with the town centre first approach. Policy 30A supports proposals for new or extended tourist facilities. The projects align with several policies within NPF4. The proposal will retain the façade of the original building which aligns with Policy 7C. The archives centre aligns closely with Policy 30A as its presence in the town will contribute to significantly enhanced tourist facilities. As part of the Trust’s overall plans for the future, it will support the regeneration of Whithorn Town Centre and so is in close alignment with Policy 27A and 27B.
2. **Scotland’s National Strategy for Economic Transformation,** 2022 This strategy sets out the ambitions that by 2032, Scotland’s economy will have significantly outperformed the previous decade in both economic performance and in reducing structural economic inequalities. Furthermore, it aims for Scotland to become a wellbeing economy which thrives across economic, social and environmental dimensions. This strategy aims to reorient the economy towards wellbeing and fair work, to deliver higher rates of employment and wage growth, and improve health, cultural and social outcomes for disadvantaged families and communities. Chapter 2. Entrepreneurial People and Culture. *To create a culture in which entrepreneurship is encouraged, supported.* The document specifically refers to how Scotland occupies a position of global leadership in creative industries, major events and tourism, which draw on Scotland’s long-standing cultural assets and reputation. The importance of our collection will showcase historical and cultural assets in Scotland, adding to the rich tapestry of cultural offerings that characterize Scotland. This reinforces Scotland's longstanding cultural assets and reputation as a heritage tourism destination on a global scale.
3. **Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment**, 2023 : This strategy sets out a vision of how the historic environment can be understood, valued, cared for and enjoyed, for the benefit of people today and future generations. There are two key aims that particularly resonate with this project: 2) Empowering resilient and inclusive communities and places; 3) Building a wellbeing economy. The project contributes significantly to Objective 2 as the project actively engages the local community by providing a space for cultural experiences, gatherings, and educational activities. This involvement fosters a sense of ownership and pride, contributing to the empowerment of the community. This fosters social cohesion, resilience, and inclusivity by creating spaces where people can connect and share in the collective identity and history of Dumfries and Galloway. The project also contributes to Objective 3 as it will stimulate economic activity by attracting schools and visitors. The impact of the archaeology campus as a whole contributes to the local economy through spending on accommodations, dining, and local businesses, supporting the development of a wellbeing economy.
4. **Strategy for Dumfries and Galloway 2022 – 2030** This strategy sets out the council’s vision and roadmap to support culture in the region. The strategy has three stated ambitions: ‘Our people’, ‘Our places’ and ‘The differences we make’. Ambition 1 and 2 are particularly relevant to the project: ▪ Our people: Our region will support creative and heritage practitioners to explore, grow and take risks in the pursuit of excellence. Dumfries and Galloway will be well-known for community-led cultural activity, where barriers to take part and enjoy culture are removed, and where people of all ages have access to creativity, culture and heritage to support their learning and wellbeing. ▪ Our places: Places across Dumfries and Galloway will celebrate, preserve and promote our natural, built and living heritage, where culture shapes and transforms the areas we live in. Our People: This fosters excellence in cultural endeavours by offering opportunities for the community to discover more about its historic identity. The building will provide accessible spaces for people of all ages, supporting learning and overall wellbeing. Ensuring access to creativity, culture, and heritage across Dumfries and Galloway, contributing to both education and cultural significance. Our Place: The project will actively contribute to celebrating, preserving, and promoting Dumfries and Galloway's heritage. These initiatives, acting as cultural landmarks, shape and transform the local areas, enhancing the region's overall identity. By integrating cultural elements into the built environment, the project ensures culture shapes and transforms communities, fostering a sense of pride and connection emblematic of the rich heritage that Dumfries and Galloway has.
5. **South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy, 2021** The Regional Economic Strategy is the local economic strategy for the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership consisting of Dumfries and Galloway Council, Scottish Borders Council and other regional stakeholders in the South of Scotland. The strategy has a commitment to: “Look after and enjoy local nature, history, art and music” Key themes that are particularly relevant include: ▪ Theme 1: Skilled & Ambitious People ▪ Theme 3: Rewarding & Fair Work ▪ Theme 4: Cultural & Creative Excellence The project supports these objectives as it will significantly improve the historical education delivered by the museum and will add a new heritage asset that can be enjoyed by the local community and visitors. The archive centre will help to meet one of the stated goals of Theme 4 “Boosting Culture & Heritage Assets” as these three projects will represent significant new culture and heritage assets for the community and the region.
6. **Dumfries and Galloway LDP 2,** 2019 LDP2 sets out the council’s spatial strategy and planning framework under which they would like to see the area developed. The project aims to safeguard and ensure the longevity of significant archaeological and historic assets in the region through the establishment of a new archive facility designed securely to house and display these valuable artifacts. Relevant policies include: Policy HE3: Archaeology a) The Council will support development that protects significant archaeological and historic assets, and the wider historic environment from adverse effects. Policy HE8: Enabling Development New development which, through cross-financing, will result in the re use of a Listed Building or another identified historic asset(s) through restoration, adaptation or repair. The project not only protects these assets from potential deterioration but also provides a dedicated space for their storage and for public access, enhancing public accessibility and appreciation and will generate revenue which can be used to ensure their future. Another facet of the project involves the adaptive reuse of the original façade of a building on George Street. The upper floor of the Trust has been unusable by the general public owing to accessibility constraints. These will be resolved as a result of this project, bringing the building back into full productive use. Locating the new archive facility in the old museum building avoids unnecessary construction and keeps an existing building in use, retaining embodied carbon.