Stromness THI wins regeneration award

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The project developed by Orkney Islands Council took first place in its category - Town Centre Regeneration – at last night's 2013 SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration. It was one of only three to be shortlisted from over 50 applications.

Chair of the Council's Development and Infrastructure Committee, Councillor James Stockan, said: "This award by a nationwide, independent industry network speaks volumes about the quality, reputation and success of the THI.

"I congratulate the whole community for engaging with us on this challenging but revitalising project – along with all the staff involved in making it happen.

"Recognition of this calibre is a fantastic achievement - it cements the THI's position as model of community regeneration and will help attract interest in Stromness and its unique built heritage."

Project Manager, Miriam Frier, said: "This award is a credit to the wider public in Stromness who've really embraced the project and helped ensure its success. The judging process was very thorough, including a visit by four members of the judging panel, and involved meeting with those who have worked with the THI project team and benefitted from the scheme during its lifespan.

"SURF is well respected in the regeneration field and this award is fiercely contended. We're thrilled to have received this acknowledgement of the scheme's success."

The Stromness THI has been underway in the Stromness Conservation Area since July 2009, and will finish in June 2014. The original £3.56m of THI funding has secured a total project investment value of £6.25m of public and private funding for Stromness.

Some £4.8m of work has been awarded to local businesses, and over 55 property grants have been awarded.

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: "Stromness town centre has been transformed over the last four years, with old buildings brought back into use and shop fronts restored. Yet the success of the THI goes far beyond the bricks and mortar. It has brought with it employment, skills training and tourism.

"The Heritage Lottery Fund is delighted to have been a part of this achievement and wishes the townsfolk of Stromness well as they approach the future with a renewed confidence."

Martin Ross, Historic Scotland's Project and Policy Manager said: "Historic Scotland is proud to have been a part of the Stromness regeneration project, enabling multiple heritage projects to deliver significant economic and social improvements. The re-use and repair of buildings will ensure a long term and sustainable future for the town centre. We are very pleased to see the Council's hard work recognised through the SURF awards programme."

The overarching aim of the Stromness THI is to aid the regeneration of the town centre, ensuring economic viability

through investment in the built heritage. The initiative is funded by HLF and other partners, notably Historic Scotland and OIC.

The HLF funded element is £1.44m and the total for the scheme approximately £3.426m.

Other delivery partners in the project are: Orkney College; Visit Orkney; Orkney Tour Guides Association; Construction Skills; Stromness Business Forum; Stromness Academy; Stromness Primary School; Scottish Arts Council.

Notes for editors

More about SURF
SURF is Scotland's independent regeneration network, with members ranging from local authorities, housing associations, health boards, academic institutions, and professional bodies to small community groups, voluntary organisations and charities.

It is a not-for-profit social enterprise company with an overall objective of providing a means for all organisations involved with Scottish community regeneration to share their knowledge and experience.