

Controversial Mercat Cross street furniture to be ripped out

THE NEWLY-INSTALLED granite structures at the Mercat Cross in Dornoch are to be taken away after they provoked outrage amongst the local community.

Highland Council has agreed that the four large granite bollards and circular plinth should be ripped out.

The move follows a meeting last week to discuss the hostile reception towards the structures which have only recently been installed as part of a £24,000 scheme of environmental improvements to the historic town centre.

Dornoch Community Council had been consulted prior to work starting on the scheme and had given their approval.

But shocked local people criticised the bollards and plinth as

too large and out of keeping with the surroundings.

The town centre – a conservation area – is small-scale and built of warm, yellow sandstone.

East Sutherland and Edderton councillor Jim McGillivray met with members of the community council last Thursday.

A local authority spokesperson later said: "All those involved are agreed that the final result on the ground is not successful and the granite stone structures will be removed."

Officials are now to consult further with community councillors on what should be put in their place to complete the Mercat Cross scheme.

The spokesperson added: "Revised designs at the Mercat Cross will include traditional street furniture more appropri-

ate to the historic setting."

Councillor McGillivray explained last week that the community council had not realised the impact the structures would have because the original plans were not in 3D.

Meanwhile the local authority will seek an alternative site for the granite structures which were designed to illustrate the old Scots measures in use before Imperial measures were introduced in 1824.

Said the spokesperson: "Dry goods like grain were measured in units called 'bolls' and 'chalders' which were represented by the volumes of the granite stones."

An interpretation panel expanding on this information will also now be relocated when an appropriate site is found.