

**To: Leadership Board**

**On: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

---

**Report by: Chief Executive**

---

**Heading: Town Centre Capital Fund**

---

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report seeks to inform the Leadership Board on the allocation of the Scottish Government's Town Centre Capital Fund to Renfrewshire Council and seeks authorisation to allocate the available funds as to projects and initiatives set out in section 5 of this report.
- 

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Board:
- (i) Notes the background and objectives of the fund, and;
  - (ii) Agrees to take forward the projects identified in section 5 with a budget allocation of £1,459,000.
  - (iii) Delegate authority to the Head of Regeneration in consultation with the Convener to manage any potential over/underspends, from the indicative budgets presented, within the overall programme of projects and if necessary to bring forward substitute projects to ensure the complete commitment of the grant within financial year 2019/20.
- 

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 Following its December 2018 Budget the Scottish Government launched a £50 million Town Centre Capital Fund on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019. The fund is shared

between all 32 Scottish local authorities in 2019/20 on the basis of an agreement between the Government and Council Leaders which is based on the number of towns in a local authority area and its overall population. Renfrewshire Council will receive £1,459,000.

- 3.2 The purpose of the fund is to drive economic activity and improvements to town centres. Specifically it is intended that the fund contributes to transformative investments which drive economic activities and re-purpose town centres to become more diverse, successful and sustainable.
- 3.3 The fund will support capital expenditure which is additional to any already allocated in the 2019/20 budget and must not substitute for existing spend. The grant is to be used in the financial year 2019-20, with the conditions of grant clarifying that it must be spent or have work and contracts signed or commenced within 2019-20. The grant can be used to fund third party capital expenditure – to either other public sector bodies, private or third sector bodies or individuals.
- 3.4 The grant is being paid to local authorities quarterly in April, July, November and March. Compliance with grant conditions and progress on budget spend will be monitored by the Government by a return in November 2019 and at the year end.
- 3.5 The funding will support projects that align with the Scottish Government's Town Centre Action Plan. This includes bringing vacant buildings back into use for housing, retail, leisure, tourism and culture; improving access and infrastructure; and supporting community led regeneration initiatives in town centres.

#### **4. Project and initiative identification**

- 4.1 Within Renfrewshire five town centres are identified by the Local Development Plan and have supporting town centre strategies approved by the Council – Paisley, Johnstone, Renfrew, Erskine and Linwood. Of these centres the approach has been taken to prioritise project identification in Johnstone and Renfrew, this taking account of the allocated funding to regeneration projects in Paisley town centre and the relatively limited opportunities for substantive projects in Erskine or Linwood. Furthermore support has been given to projects that are being led by third sector organisations that will deliver outcomes that align with the purposes of the fund with on this basis one Paisley project identified.
- 4.2 The conditions under which the fund is being made available has required the identification of projects that are almost immediately deliverable. A set of projects has been identified and developed that align with national policy and local priorities, that meet the criteria for capital expenditure and that can be delivered within the strictly defined timescales, all to deliver the aims of the Town Centre Capital Fund.

## 5. Identified projects

- 5.1 Recommended projects are identified below and reflect the current circumstances of project definition and discussions with third parties. The split of funding is indicative at this stage and will be clarified as costs are confirmed and works tendered.

Project	Indicative budget
<b>1. Third party led - repurposing vacant town centre property</b>	
i. Former Police Station, Johnstone – funding contribution for Active Communities project requiring the community asset transfer of the Police Station (transfer decision July 2019).	£400,000
ii. Former toilet block Robertson Park, Renfrew - to support enhanced conversion to a cycle hub by a local social enterprise who have secured a community asset transfer of the building from the Council.	£50,000
iii. Support for PACE Youth Theatre to deliver a new performance base in a vacant property in Paisley. Funding would activate the project, delivering essential enabling works and become a match-fund to other funders.	£300,000
<b>2. Town centre presentation</b>	
i. Lighting enhancements to Houston Square, Johnstone including bandstand and war memorial, to enhance the quality of the night-time environment of the centre.	£80,000
ii. Gap site interventions in Johnstone – ‘stalled spaces’ projects particularly focussed on sites at High Street/George Street/MacDowall Street.	£40,000
iii. Lighting enhancements to Renfrew Town Hall and Cenotaph to enhance the quality of the night-time environment of the centre and potential gateway project at Bascule Bridge.	£100,000
iv. Repurposing vacant shop units in Dunlop Crescent, Renfrew - to deliver business start-up opportunities on the Start-Up Street or Creative Hub model delivered by the Council’s Economic Development team. Works would include the external canopy.	£60,000
<b>3. Active travel links</b>	
i. Connecting the Paisley/Renfrew Riverside cycle route to Renfrew town centre through Robertson Park – wayfinding and lighting through the park connecting the town centre to neighbouring residential areas and the cycle route for pedestrians and cyclists.	£180,000
<b>4. Enabling regeneration</b>	
i. Fund to support the refurbishment and reuse of vacant floorspace or sites within town centres - works could include repairs, accessibility measures, minor decontamination/clearance and in some circumstances allow for property purchase.	£249,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1.459 m</b>

## 6. Balances and replacement spend

- 6.1 Should there be any issues in securing spend within the timescales of the grant award, or if underspends are projected following tendering for work, officers will work to identify and progress replacement projects. Due to the constrained time limits on this fund the Board is asked to delegate authority to the Head of Regeneration in consultation with the Convener to manage budget variations and approve any other projects.
- 6.2 The Council will be required to report to Scottish Government on progress in November 2019. A project update will be presented to Leadership Board in December 2019.
- 

## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial –**  
An offer of £1,459,000 grant funding from the Scottish Government has been accepted by Renfrewshire Council.
2. **HR & Organisational Development – None**
3. **Community Planning –**
  - ***Reshaping our place, our economy and our future:*** Renfrewshire Council is working with stakeholders to maximise the opportunities for culturally-led regeneration, providing support to make best use of heritage assets.
  - ***Building strong, safe and resilient communities:*** working in partnership with local groups and organisations to achieve positive outcomes.
4. **Legal**  
None
5. **Property/Assets**  
Any acquisitions capable of being secured using this fund will progress through the recognised Council processes and with relevant Board approvals.
6. **Information Technology - None**
7. **Equality and Human Rights**
  - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of

the assessment will be published on the Council's website. An Equality Impact Assessment is being prepared as part of the project requirements

8. **Health and Safety** – None
  9. **Procurement** – A programme of contract processes will be developed with the advice of the Council's Procurement team to secure effective and best value project delivery.
  10. **Risks** - None.
  11. **Privacy Impact** - None
  12. **Cosla Policy Position** - Not applicable
- 

#### List of Background Papers

1. N/A
- 

**Author:** Stuart McMillan, **Regeneration Manager**  
[stuart.mcmillan@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.mcmillan@renfrewshire.gov.uk)  
0141 618 7850