

To: Economy and Regeneration Policy Board

On: 19 March 2024

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Regeneration Funding Bids Update 2024

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report updates the Board on progress in respect of external funding bids and delivery of key regeneration projects and presents the programmes being developed in 2024.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board:
- (i) Approves the list of proposed projects for the 23/24 allocation of the Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP);
 - (ii) Notes the progress and continuing actions to deliver projects from the range of regeneration funds identified in the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 In recent years the funding of regeneration projects has been reliant on support from national government and other external sources, often with 'match-funding' coming from the Council. A report to the Economy and Regeneration Board of 23 May 2023 outlined the range of external capital funds available and programmes under development.
- 3.2 In this context and over the past year officers have continued to progress various regeneration projects, programmes and strategies with the support of external funding from the UK and Scottish Governments as well as government agencies such as Visit Scotland and SEPA. This has supported efforts to regenerate and revitalise our town centres, support our communities and promote sustainable economic growth across Renfrewshire.

3.3 This report details the various funding streams which the Council have accessed and applied to over the past 12 months.

4. Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (Scottish Government)

4.1 The Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) is one of the longest running funds available to local authorities having been offered annually since 2014. Renfrewshire Council has previously secured support from this fund for the Russell Institute, Paisley Learning and Cultural Hub and Paisley Museum.

4.2 The RCGF has also supported projects led by community led organisations (with the grant being passed to the Council to manage), such as those promoted by Linwood Community Development Trust, Active Communities, Johnstone and most recently the PACE Youth Theatre in Paisley.

4.3 The RCGF is an annual competitive fund open to all 32 Scottish local authorities. The fund is always heavily subscribed, meaning that many projects that are put forward are not funded.

4.4 The Board of 23 May 2023 approved the list of proposed bids to the RCGF for the 24/25 round of the scheme, as set out below. Applications were submitted in June 2023 and officers were invited to progress further detailed 'Stage 2' bids for two projects - Erskine Improvements and Foxbar Community Growing Space – which were submitted in November 2023.

Table 1 24/25 RCGF Application Projects

Potential RCGF Projects	Location	Summary
Erskine TC Improvements	Erskine	Creator of incubator / business space within Erskine TC.
Foxbar Community Growing Space -	Foxbar, Paisley	Development of a new community growing space at the site of the former St Paul's PS site in Foxbar, supporting delivery of a key priority from the community led Foxbar Local Place Plan. The project supports wider regeneration outcomes in relation to promoting active lifestyles, contribution to net zero targets and community food growing.
Castle Semple – Extension to visitor centre	Lochwinnoch	Applied for previously but not successful. Application was amended to consider recent consultation / visioning and create and enhance space at the visitor centre.
Ferguslie Park – The Making Of	Ferguslie, Paisley	Development at 'Neighbourhood Centre' zone including Pump (cycle) Track, supporting delivery of a key priority from the community led 'Making of Ferguslie' Local Place Plan.

- 4.5 In early 2024 Scottish Government advised the Council that following a reduction in the regeneration capital budget, a review is underway of the delivery of the RCGF and associated programmes. This has delayed a decision on the applications outlined above however officers will continue to monitor the situation and provide an update at a future board.

5 Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme (Scottish Government)

- 5.1 The Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme (VDLIP) is a multi-year Scottish Government fund which supports the transformation and reuse of long term vacant and derelict sites.
- 5.2 The Economy and Regeneration Board of 23 May 2023 approved the submission of a VDLIP application to support delivery of the Making of Ferguslie, the community led Local Place Plan for the neighbourhood. An application was submitted in June 2023 for the transformation of 2.69ha of land within the Belltrees area of Ferguslie Park as a multi-functional greenspace providing for natural play, activity space and improved active travel connections within the neighbourhood and beyond.
- 5.3 Officers were invited to progress a further detailed Stage 2 bid, which was submitted in November 2023. As with the RCGF applications, due to the reduction in the regeneration capital budget any decision on this application has been delayed. Again, officers will monitor the situation and provide an update a further board.

6 Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP; Scottish Government)

- 6.1 Since 2019 the Council have used funding from the PBIP (and its previous iteration, the Town Centre Regeneration Fund) to accelerate capital investment, supporting delivery of actions within our town centre strategies, community led regeneration proposals and community led place plans such as the Making of Ferguslie, to accelerate the Council's overall placeshaping agenda.
- 6.2 Through this fund the Council have supported and delivered a wide range of projects across Renfrewshire including community led projects such as the creation of a community well-being hub and bike shop, restoration of various listed buildings and vacant commercial units as well as enhancements to public realm.
- 6.3 The Council's 23/24 PBIP funding totalled £723,000. The following table sets out the projects proposed for the 2023/24 budget to be delivered in 2024, which continue to closely align with progressing the Council's placeshaping strategy.

Table 2 Place Based Investment Fund Projects 2023/24 awards, summary update at March 2024

Project summary	Estimated Cost	Estimated Completion
<p>1. Regeneration Grant Funding</p> <p>Additional funding to support the existing Retail Improvement Scheme (to supplement the Council motion), Historic Buildings in Villages Grants scheme and Vacant Shops Grant Scheme.</p>	£100,000	Winter 2024
<p>2. Erskine TC enhancements</p> <p>Public realm improvements supporting the delivery of the Erskine Town Centre Strategy.</p>	£140,000	TBD
<p>3. Castle Semple enhancements</p> <p>Works to demolish existing toilet block and construct a new block/cycle hub facility.</p>	£360,000	Winter 2024
<p>4. Wallace Monument</p> <p>Soft landscaping works around the monument including new shrub and bulb planting, treeworks and areas of wildflower meadow supporting local biodiversity, alongside more formal grass areas as a space for local community events.</p>	£43,000	Summer 2024
<p>5. Whitehaugh Barracks and Garages</p> <p>Funding to support the Western Desert Recce Group in their restoration of the barracks into a museum. Specifically, funding will be used for immediate repairs to the garage block enabling the buildings to become wind and watertight for occupation and for activity to commence.</p>	£80,000	Autumn 2024

7 Council Motion (29 February 2024)

- 7.1 At the full Council meeting held on the 29th of February 2024, additional monies were allocated to support regeneration projects. £70k was allocated to supplement the existing Retail Improvement Scheme (RIS) and £50k to the development of the Oakshaw Heritage Trail.

- 7.2 The RIS allocation will be used to support a future run of the scheme in 2024 and officers will explore how best to use the heritage trail allocation, potentially looking at replacing modern lampposts on Oakshaw Street with those in the traditional style.

8 Shared Prosperity Fund (UK Government)

- 8.1 The Council have received funding from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). Further details can be found in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Year 1 Report paper which is dealt with in a separate Board report.
- 8.2 The Regeneration and Place Team are leading on the Communities and Place element of the fund. To date funding has been used to supplement the Council's new Sustainable Communities Fund proving capital and revenue investment to a number of projects including Whitehaugh Barracks, India Tyres Playing Fields and Howwood Park Pavilion.
- 8.3 The SPF has also been used to fund feasibility and capital works to support the delivery of the Making Of Ferguslie local place plan. This has included developing design proposals for the Belltrees and Neighbourhood centres and funding capital improvement works to the St Ninians Community Hall.
- 8.4 Funding also been used to assist in the development of a new Vision for Johnstone Town Centre as well as emerging proposals for public realm enhancements around Erskine. It also funded a structural condition study for the Steeple Buildings in Kilbarchan.
- 8.5 Officers will continue to use the funding to support the communities and place investment priority which aims to strengthen the social fabric of Renfrewshire's communities.

9 Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (Visit Scotland)

- 9.1 In March 2022, the Council successfully applied to Visit Scotland to receive funding from the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) to produce an infrastructure plan for Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. The plan focuses primarily on Castle Semple but also includes Muirshiel Country Park and strategic linkages to Renfrewshire's towns and villages.
- 9.2 This plan has been used as a basis for a further application to RTIF in September 2023 to secure funding for a design grant for a new toilet block/cycling hub at Castle Semple.
- 9.3 Officers have been in discussions with Visit Scotland as to whether there is any future RTIF funding available. No announcement has been made as Visit Scotland assess the funding implications of the recent Scottish Government budget announcement.

10 Water Environment Fund (SEPA)

- 10.1 The Board of 23 May 2023 noted that SEPA has identified an opportunity for the restoration and improvement of the Candren Burn within Ferguslie Park, Paisley, contributing to delivery of the Making of Ferguslie local place plan.
- 10.2 Funds have been secured from SEPA's Water Environment Fund (WEF) to support a feasibility study which could lead to multiple benefits, including improvements to the physical and ecological condition of the water body and enhanced climate resilience.
- 10.3 Officers with assistance from SEPA and the Green Action Trust are currently in the process of procuring a specialist consultant to carry out the study, which is anticipated to progress over spring and summer 2024.

11 Heritage funding (Historic Environment Scotland, National Lottery Heritage Fund)

- 11.1 As noted in the 23 May 2023 paper to this board officers had previously submitted unsuccessful place-based applications to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES) to fund the development phase of the 'Renfrewshire Villages Loop: Kilbarchan to Johnstone. Reviving Dynamic Heritage' project.
- 11.2 Feedback from the funding bodies indicated that a further place-based bid around Johnstone Town Centre could be considered in respect of NLHF and that there could be scope to complement this with a project focused bid to HES. Officers will consider submitting expressions of interest in the context of the emerging Johnstone Town Centre Vision and will provide an update to the Board as appropriate.

12 Next Steps

- 12.1 Officers will continue to seek out external funding opportunities to fulfil our main priority of regenerating and revitalising Renfrewshire's towns, villages and rural locations, helping to develop places where people want to live, work, visit and spend time.
- 12.2 Progress on funding applications and delivery of associated actions will be reported to Board at regular intervals as appropriate.

Implications of the Report

- 1. **Financial** – No additional funding is sought. All funding is accounted for within existing Council budgets and external funding.
- 2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None.

3. **Community/Council Planning –**

Creating a Sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy – delivery of projects and submission of funding applications supports the Council’s wider placeshaping agenda, improving quality of place, our neighbourhoods and town centres.

4. **Legal** – None.

5. **Property/Assets** – None.

6. **Information Technology** – None.

7. **Equality & 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.

8. **Health & Safety** – None.

9. **Procurement** – None.

10. **Risk** – None.

11. **Privacy Impact** - None.

12. **COSLA Policy Position** – Not Applicable.

13. **Climate Risk** – Not Applicable.

List of Background Papers

- (a) Regeneration Funding Bids Update 2022. Economy and Regeneration Policy Board, 14 June 2022.
- (b) Regeneration Funding Bids Update 2023. Economy and Regeneration Policy Board, 23 May 2023.

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