

**To: Leadership Board**

**On: 2 December 2020**

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**Report by: Chief Executive**

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**Heading: Extension to the Scottish Government Town Centre Fund 2020 - 2021**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report is to inform the Leadership Board of a further allocation of £527,000 from the Scottish Government's Town Centre Fund to Renfrewshire Council and seeks authorisation to allocate the available funds to projects and initiatives set out in Table 1 of this report. An update on the progress of Town Centre Fund projects identified in 2019 is also provided.
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## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that Board:

- (i) homologates the decision of the Director of Finance and Resources to accept the grant offer from the Scottish Government Town Centre Fund of £527,000;
  - (ii) agrees to take forward the projects identified in Table 1 utilising the funding award; and
  - (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 2020/21.
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### **3. Background**

- 3.1 In 2019 the Scottish Government launched its £50 million Town Centre Fund being shared across all Scottish local authorities on the basis of an agreement between the Government and Council Leaders, with Renfrewshire receiving £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. The Leadership Board of 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019 agreed a series of projects, all of which are now proceeding to site starts, or completions, having been delayed by the coronavirus restrictions. Section 6 sets out each project's progress as at the end of October 2020.
- 3.3 In its Programme for Government in 2020 the Scottish Government announced an £18 million extension to the Town Centre Fund to be distributed using the same rationale as the original fund and under the same terms and conditions of spend. Renfrewshire has therefore received an additional £527,000 to be spent, or at least committed via a works contract, by 31 March 2021. This additional funding is part of the package of measures designed to support local economies during and from the impacts of the measures in place to protect the population from the COVID-19 coronavirus. Local authorities have received guidance that, as far as they can, the funding should be used to support local construction and trades people.
- 3.4 At the request of the Government and in consultation with the Council Leader the Director of Finance and Resources has written a letter accepting the grant, doing so prior to the set deadline of 30 September 2020 and this has been acknowledged.
- 3.5 The fund will support capital expenditure which is additional to any already allocated in established budgets and must not substitute for existing spend. The grant can be used to fund third party capital expenditure – to either other public sector bodies, private or third sector bodies or individuals.

### **4. Additional project identification**

- 4.1 For this additional funding the critical concern is to identify effective regeneration projects that can be delivered in the very challenging timescales of the funding. A rapid project identification exercise has been undertaken in consultation with the Council Leader, Depute Leader and Group Leaders. Seven projects are identified and set out in Table 1 below.
- 4.2 The recommended projects 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.

*Table 1 Town Centre Fund (TCF) extension 2020 – 2021, recommended projects*

<b>Project</b>	<b>Rationale and notes</b>	<b>Indicative amount</b>
Johnstone festive lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Already scoped and costed by Environment and Infrastructure Services</li> <li>○ A preferred option has been agreed with Johnstone Community Council</li> <li>○ Installation possible for 2020 festive season</li> <li>○ Will complement the existing year-round lighting scheme funded by the TCF (implementing in autumn 2020)</li> </ul>	£40,000
Renfrew 'Start-up street'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pre-existing commitment to extending the start-up street or creative hub concept to Renfrew town centre</li> <li>○ Follow-up project to the existing TCF external refurbishment of Dunlop Crescent units owned by Council but vacant for several years</li> <li>○ The facility will create and support jobs in its locality</li> </ul>	£120,000
Erskine Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enabling community/cultural organisation occupation of a definable part of Erskine Leisure Centre</li> <li>○ Project team in place at Erskine Arts to enable quick spend on modifying spaces for their use</li> <li>○ Will diversify uses and facilities available in Erskine town centre</li> <li>○ A new third-party grant award will be made to Erskine Arts</li> </ul>	£100,000
PACE Exchange Theatre Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Builds on previous £300,000 TCF award allowing project to develop with the condition and structure of the building secured by the initial funding</li> <li>○ Contract award for Phase 1 works is imminent, potential to extend scope at short notice</li> <li>○ Will achieve occupiable space for PACE to take on partial occupation as future fundraising develops</li> <li>○ The existing third-party grant award will be amended to incorporate this additional sum</li> </ul>	£120,000
3 County Place, Paisley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fully designed but stalled tenement improvement on County Square</li> <li>○ £1M project with £360,000 TH. CARS2 heritage grant available</li> <li>○ Additional grant support would unlock the owner's available funds to deliver the project</li> <li>○ Would remove a significant vacant 'eyesore' on County Square bringing in new residential use</li> <li>○ A new third-party grant award will be made to the building owner</li> </ul>	£100,000

Project	Rationale and notes	Indicative amount
Shuttle Street, Paisley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two enhancements to support the continued success of hospitality uses in the street               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creation of a dedicated off-street bin storage and pick-up area for commercial waste collection</li> <li>2. Light canopy and entrance up-lighting – to support the creation of an attractive year-round atmosphere</li> </ol> </li> <li>Potential for additional grant funding for light projections</li> <li>Lighting scheme designed and costed; waste collection area can be mobilised and has the support of landowner</li> </ul>	£40,000
George Street/High Street corner, Johnstone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gap site boundary treatment to complement the existing TCF funded project on the opposite corner gap site</li> <li>Problematic site for development – an interim, low cost intervention would add to the local streetscape</li> </ul>	£7,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£527,000</b>

## 5. Balances and replacement spend

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 The Council will be required to report to Scottish Government on progress in November 2020.

## 6. Progress on projects identified in 2019

- 6.1 Table 2 overleaf summarises the progress made on the set of projects developed from the original TCF grant award of £1,459,000. A number of these projects have been delayed by the restrictions on the construction industry in place during 2020. The Scottish Government has recognised these difficulties and has extended completion requirements to September 2021.

*Table 2 Town Centre Fund projects 2019, summary update at October 2020*

<b>Project summary</b>	<b>Design</b>	<b>Tender</b>	<b>On-site</b>	<b>Complete</b>
<b>1. Third party led - repurposing vacant town centre property</b> i. Former Police Station, Johnstone – funding contribution for Active Communities. ii. Former toilet block Robertson Park, Renfrew - conversion to a cycle hub by Kustom Kruisers. iii. Former Mannequin's night club, Paisley – funding for PACE Youth Theatre to deliver a new performance and rehearsal base.	 ✓ ✓ ✓	 Nov 2020 ✓ ✓	 March 2021 January 2021 March 2021	 September 2021 May 2021 September 2021
<b>2. Town centre presentation</b> i. Lighting enhancements to Houston Square, Johnstone including bandstand and war memorial. ii. Gap site interventions in Johnstone – High Street/ MacDowall Street corner. iii. Lighting enhancements to Renfrew Town Hall and Cenotaph and gateway lighting project at Bascule Bridge. iv. Vacant shop units in Dunlop Crescent, Renfrew – external works delivered by available funding.	 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	 ✓ November 2020 December 2020 ✓	 December 2020 December 2020 March 2021 ✓
<b>3. Active travel links</b> i. Wayfinding, lighting and CCTV enhancement through Robertson Park, Renfrew connecting the town centre to neighbouring residential areas. NB Multiple tender packages	 ✓	 All by December 2020	 ✓	 All by April 2021
<b>4. Enabling regeneration fund - tackling vacant floorspace, sites and other project support</b> i. Contribution to shop unit refurb – 43-45 and 65-71 George Street, Paisley (Start-Up Street project) ii. Shop unit refurb – 71 High Street, 28 & 38/40 McDowall Street, Johnstone iii. Commercial waste bin storage – 55 High Street, Paisley iv. Contribution to Glen Cinema commemorative artwork v. Minor street furniture repairs, Johnstone	 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	 ✓ ✓ November 2020 April 2021 ✓	 ✓ ✓ December 2020 September 2021 ✓

## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial –**

An offer of £527,000 Town Centre Fund grant funding from the Scottish Government has been accepted by Renfrewshire Council.

Scottish Government Town Centre Fund grants awarded to the Council are monitored in accordance with the terms and conditions of grant. The Council will liaise with the Scottish Government to comply with drawdown and financial reporting requirements.

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** – N/A
  13. **Climate Risk** – N/A
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#### **List of Background Papers**

1. Report to Leadership Board, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019 – Town Centre Capital Fund
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