

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

12 June 2019

TOWN CENTRE FUND

Report by Depute Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer (Report No. 19/170)

The purpose of this report is to outline options to utilise the new ring-fenced Scottish Government Town Centre Fund for 2019-20.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 In December 2018, the Scottish Government announced that it would provide a new ring-fenced £50m Town Centre Fund for 2019-20 within the local authority capital settlement. On 7 March 2019, a letter was received detailing that £1,983,000 had been awarded to Perth and Kinross Council (Appendix 1) based on the overall population and the number of towns with a population of at least 1,000 (Appendix 2).
- 1.2 The letter stated that the Grant is to enable local authorities to stimulate and support place based economic investments which encourage town centres to diversify and flourish, creating footfall through local improvements and partnerships. Specifically, this fund will contribute to transformative investments which drive local economic activities and re-purpose town centres to become more diverse, successful and sustainable.
- 1.3 In particular, the grant will fund a wide range of investments which deliver against the themes of the Town Centre Action Plan including town centre living and supporting town centres to be vibrant, accessible and enterprising places. This could include re-purposing buildings for housing, retail, business, social and community enterprise, services, leisure, and culture, tourism and heritage; and, improving access and infrastructure. The aims of the Town Centre Fund are therefore:
- town centre living
 - vibrant local economics
 - enterprising communities
 - accessible public services
 - digital towns
 - proactive planning
- 1.4 The letter also noted that there were conditions linked to the award of funding and these are outlined in sections 8 – 19 of Appendix 1. Further clarification was sought by the Head of Finance from COSLA in terms of the conditions of the Grant. As a result, following discussion with the Scottish Government, it was confirmed on 1 April 2019 that the grant can be used for Third Party Capital Expenditure and to enhance existing projects.

1.5 It was also confirmed that the expectation was to have a plan for spending the Grant by November and not to have spent the Grant by this time. It is expected that work will be completed or, at least, work or contracts signed or commenced within 2019-20.

1.6 A workshop was held for all elected members on 25 March 2019 and 34 attended. This outlined the purpose and conditions of the Grant and provided an opportunity for the elected members present to bring forward proposals for their wards. It was also suggested that criteria should be applied to each proposal and these were agreed, at the workshop, as :

- deliverability
- ability to meet the Town Centre Fund aims
- cost/benefit ratio
- mitigating future revenue impacts on the Council's budget
- previous capital investment (over the last 5 years).

1.7 Following on from the workshop, officers have then used this criteria to undertake a prioritisation process, ranking the potential projects into low, medium and high categories dependent on overall impact. Where there is no match with the Town Centre Fund aims, proposals are noted as being not applicable.

1.8 All the projects, the screening against the criteria listed in paragraph 1.5 and officers' views on ranking are contained in Appendix 3.

2. PROPOSALS

2.1 A total of 30 potential projects were noted at the meeting. Elected members were also encouraged to come forward with further proposals but no others have been received to date. From the analysis undertaken, there are four projects which are seen to fully meet both the purpose of the Grant and the criteria agreed with elected members at the workshop in March.

2.2 These are:

Proposal	Ward	Indicative cost
Community and cycling hubs, Coupar Angus	2	£200,000
Connecting Loch Leven with Kinross Town Centre	8	£800,000
Contribution to costs linked to Drummond Arms, Crieff	6	£600,000
Development of events space – Pitlochry	4	£383,000
Total indicative costs £1,983,000		

2.3 In addition, all four projects have been developed with the involvement of local communities and/or businesses.

2.4 It is, therefore, proposed that officers develop these four projects further with the relevant community. There are, however, some risks involved in progressing these, particularly in relation to deliverability within the funding timescale and available resources. The projects will be monitored by officers and reported back to this Committee, including if there are issues with any project.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The report provides the background to the Town Centre Fund and outlines the purpose, along with the conditions, which are to be applied to projects funded as a result of the ring fenced capital monies. It also outlines the work undertaken by officers, following a workshop with elected members in March 2019.

3.2 It is recommended that the Committee:

- i) notes the background to the report in relation to the Scottish Government's Town Centre Fund;
- ii) approves that the Town Centre Fund monies be allocated to the four projects listed in paragraph 2.2; and
- iii) requests the Depute Chief Executive (Chief Operating Officer) to bring back a report to a future Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on progress with the Town Centre Fund projects.

Author

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Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Jim Valentine	Depute Chief Executive (Chief Operating Officer)	3 June 2019

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	No
Strategic Environmental Assessment	No
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	No
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	No
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	No

1. Strategic Implications

1.1 This report supports the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

Corporate Plan

1.2 This report supports the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities:

- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

Revenue

2.1 There are no revenue costs associated with this report.

Capital

- 2.2 The report details the £1,983,000 allocated to Perth and Kinross Council through the Town Centre Fund as part of the local authority capital allocation.

Workforce

- 2.3 None.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.4 There are no immediate implications in respect of asset management arising from the recommendations of the report.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
(i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 3.4 The proposal recommended in this paper has been considered under the Act and the pre-screening has identified that the proposal will have no environmental effects, it is therefore exempt. The reason for concluding this is that the recommendation in this report will have no direct environmental effects as currently the proposals are not fully formed.

Sustainability

- 3.5 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.

- 3.6 The proposals and recommendation in this report will have positive impacts as they relate to funding to support sustainable development and integrate with requirements to link the allocation of funding with planning and economic development policy and assessment for community, environmental and economic impacts where appropriate

Legal and Governance

- 3.7 The Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted and is in agreement with the contents of this report.

Risk

- 3.8 Risk to the Council will be mitigated in respect of proposed to management and governance arrangements requiring scrutiny and audit of proposals in relation to planning and economic development policy and assessment for community, environmental and economic impacts where appropriate.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Head of Finance and the Head of Legal and Governance have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report. Elected members have been consulted with through a workshop held in March 2019.

External

- 4.2 There has been no external consultation in the preparation of the report.

5. Communication

- 5.1 The report, if agreed, will require communication with the local elected members, the communities and the businesses involved

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.