

TOWN CENTRE FUND UPDATE

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Two tranches of Town Centre Capital Funding from Scottish Government have been received totalling £1,686,000.
- 1.2 This funding is subject to specific criteria, and is therefore allocated to capital regeneration projects with a town centre focus that meet with programme guidance. The combined funding of £1,686,000 must be fully committed by 31st March 2021, meaning projects need to have been completed, started on site, or at the very least have a signed contract in place by the end of the financial year.
- 1.3 At their meetings of 27th June 2019 and 22nd October 2020, the Council agreed to a total twenty-eight region-wide projects that would be supported by this funding. These twenty eight projects are currently at different stages of delivery. Five projects have been fully completed to date. The total value of the 28 project is over £9m.
- 1.4 Current programme expenditure amounts to £616,420. To avoid having to return any unspent funds to Scottish Government, all projects must be complete by 30th September 2021. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on each Town Centre Funded projects, which are described in paragraph 4.4.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.5 Members of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee are invited to consider the contents of this report.

TOWN CENTRE FUND UPDATE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on Town Centre Capital Funding from Scottish Government.
- 2.2 Twenty-eight, Town Centre Fund projects have been agreed by Council to be funded from the combined funding of £1,686,000. The status of each is outlined in paragraph 4.4 below.
- 2.3 The scope of each project meets the criteria and guidance established for the Fund by the Scottish Government. In order to comply with timescales, all funds must be committed by 31st March 2021, and all projects must be completed by 30th September 2021. The uncertainty created as a result of the covid-19 pandemic therefore creates a substantial element of risk, which will require continued and regular monitoring and mitigation measures to ensure every effort is made to meet relevant timescales.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee are invited to consider the contents of this report.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 As part of the 2019-20 budget settlement to Argyll and Bute Council, and as part of Scottish Government's 2020-21 economic recovery stimulus package, which is

particularly aimed at supporting construction activity across Scotland, Scottish Government has provided Argyll and Bute Council with two tranches of Town Centre Capital Funding. The Funding has a cumulative value of £1,686,000 and is earmarked for 28 specific projects that are spread across our Main and Key town centres. The total value of the 28 project is over £9m.

- 4.2 The region-wide projects were agreed by Council at their meetings of 27th June 2019 and 22nd October 2020. The funding is subject to specific criteria, and is therefore allocated to capital regeneration projects with a town centre focus that meet with programme guidance. Funds must be fully committed by the end of the financial year and projects must be completed by 30th September 2021 to comply with the terms of the funding.
- 4.3 Current programme expenditure amounts to £616,420. The programme is currently on track to commit the remaining funds by the end of this financial year and to deliver the projects by the September deadline, but timelines are subject to the impact of the latest lockdown and the unknown effects of this, most notably in relation to the construction industry and supply chains.
- 4.4 Table 1 provides an overview of each project, and includes an anticipated timeline for delivery as this currently stands. The position with regard to each project is being continually reviewed. Whilst a number of the projects are being delivered via third parties the majority are projects being delivered by the Council.

Table 1.

PROJECT & TOTAL VALUE	STATUS	DESCRIPTION	TIMELINE (delivery following contract award)
Rothesay pontoons £553k	Contract Awarded	New pontoons, fingers and access bridge, using a tubular piles mooring system, to allow berthing for larger yachts.	Apr – Aug 21
Bute public art welcome sign £25k	Procurement on track to meet 31 March 2021	Bespoke artist designed welcome sign.	Apr – Sep 21
Rothesay canopy £30k	Procurement on track to meet 31 March 2021	Bespoke all weather canopy to be sited in Montague Street Gardens to support outdoor dining and markets.	Apr – Aug 21
Argyll and Castle Gdns, Dunoon, illumination and enhanced sound capability	Complete	Enhanced lighting of bandstand area, and upgraded electrical box to allow for enhanced sound capability, as well as	Complete

£200k		illumination of Castle House, the west elevation of Dunoon pier, Highland Mary statue and Dunoon War Memorial.	
Queen's Hall illumination, and remedial work to bandstand as well as new staging, Dunoon £45,500	Procurement on track to meet 31 March 2021	Repairs to the bandstand to allow for additional staging components to be purchased to enhance usage of the bandstand. Purchase of a gobo holder to allow projected light sources, as well as the illumination of the Queen's Hall fly tower.	Mar – Sep 21
Helensburgh wooden pier (1) enhanced pedestrian access, benches and (2) interpretation board £85k	(1) Complete (2) contracts awarded	Works have improved safe access to the wooden pier by creating a continuous level surface and installation of a guardrail. Necessary structural repairs and replacements of damaged cope, intercostal beam and deck bearers were also undertaken. The plinth and plaque for the interpretation board will match, and form part of, the Clyde Sea Lochs Trail.	Jan – Apr 21
Hermitage Park refurbished community garden glasshouse, new potting shed and mobile staging equipment Part of a £2.36m project.	Complete	The community garden has been enhanced with a new potting shed and refurbished glasshouse, and events in the park will be able to utilise a mobile staging kit.	Complete
Third Party Grant to Helensburgh Community Hall Ltd to help the organisation (1) purchase and (2) make repairs to a building to be run as a Community Hub and Wellbeing Centre Part of a £200k project.	(1) Complete (2) Procurement on track to meet 31 March 2021	The not for profit community organisation has purchased the property and will use the grant to facilitate repairs.	Jan – Jul 21

Howie Park (1) new MUGA, new items of play equipment and (2) additional car parking £90k	(1) Procurement on track to meet 31 March 2021 (2) included within spring works programme	(1) Design and build contract for 28 x 14 MUGA, and 3 items of playpark equipment. (2) 8 new parking spaces.	(1) Apr - Sep (2) Feb - Apr
Tobermory Harbour wall enhancements £300k	Complete	Stretch of Tobermory Harbour wall repaired, increased in height with new coping, and replacement guardrails installed.	Complete
Tobermory Harbour Floodgate £20k	Procurement on track to meet 31 March 2021	New floodgate.	Apr – May 21
Oban town centre wayfinding enhancements £44k	Planning	Third party grant to BID4Oban to install 13 noticeboards and 6 fingerposts.	Mar – Apr 21
Oban welcome signs £14k	Third party grant contract awarded	Third party grant to BID4Oban to install 8 double-sided signs, and 1 welcome sign, to be located at Oban gateway entrance and North Pier pontoons.	Jul – Sep 21
Oban wi-fi capital equipment £21k	Third party grant contract awarded	Third party grant to BID4Oban to update equipment to enhance wi-fi capability.	Mar – Apr 21
McCaig's Tower, Oban, public realm enhancement £13k	Specifying works	Third party grant to BID4Oban to enhance the amenity of the area.	Jan – Mar 21
Oban motorhome mitigation measures £13k	Location considerations	Third party grant to BID4Oban to create a waste disposal unit at a suitable location.	Apr- Sep 21
Rockfield Centre, Oban Part of a £3m project.	Complete	Third party grant to Oban Communities Trust towards the refurbishment of The Rockfield Centre.	Complete

Oban Shopfront Improvement Scheme £40k	Call for applications	4 grants awarded.	Jan – Jul 21
Tobermory Shopfront Improvement Scheme £70k	Call for applications	3 grants awarded. 9 applications in progress.	Jan – Jul 21
Campbeltown Shopfront Improvement Scheme £80k	Complete	32 grants awarded.	Jan – Jul 21
Dunoon Shopfront Improvement Scheme £30k	Call for applications	5 grants awarded.	Jan – Jul 21
Tarbert Shopfront Improvement Scheme £60k	Call for applications	2 grants awarded. 4 applications in progress.	Jan – Jul 21
Helensburgh Shopfront Improvement Scheme £60k	Call for applications	2 grants awarded. 4 applications in progress.	Jan – Jul 21
Lomond Shopfront Improvement Scheme £60k	Call for applications	1 application in progress.	Jan – Jul 21
Lochgilphead/Ardrihaig Shopfront Improvement Scheme £60k	Call for applications	7 applications in progress.	Jan – Jul 21
Bowmore Shopfront Improvement Scheme £60k	Call for applications	2 applications in progress.	Jan – Jul 21
Bowmore public realm enhancements £85k	Included within the summer works programme	The pavement enhancements will be targeted at the shopping streets of School St, Shore St and Main St.	Jun – Aug 21
Lochgilphead Front Green Part of a £1.53m project.	Procurement on track to meet 31 March 2021	Town Centre Funding will support flood prevention measures.	Apr – Sep 21

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The purpose of the Town Centre Fund is to support town centre focussed regeneration that can aid in efforts to stimulate economic recovery, particularly through support to the construction sector and town centre retailers. Projects have been chosen for their ability to support the vitality of our town centres, and where possible are linked to a town centre action plan that has been taken forward through a place making initiative.
- 5.2 A key constraint of the Fund are the tight timescales. The latest lockdown therefore creates a significant risk, the impact of which will be closely monitored and every effort made to mitigate against budget or time overruns as a consequence.
- 5.3 The Town Centre Fund programme is already making a meaningful difference to our area through the projects completed to date. The ongoing projects will also serve to help with economic recovery, and in making our places more attractive in which to live, work, visit and invest.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – The projects support, Town Centre Action Plan and Town Centre First Principles. The place-based regeneration activity supports the ambitions of the, Outcome Improvement Plan and the Local development Plan, as well as the Council's, Economic Strategy and Economic Recovery Plan.
- 6.2 Financial - Of a total budget of £1,686,000, £616,420 has been spent to date. All funds are required to be committed by 31st march 2021. The programme contingency of £62,100 has been allocated to Rothesay pontoons project to support a shortfall in funding and to ensure that the project can be delivered within the required timeframe.
- 6.3 Legal – Where third party grant is offered, it will be offered via a contract.
- 6.4 HR - None
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: (please refer to guidance on Hub)
 - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics - None
 - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - None
 - 6.5.3 Islands – Projects have been identified for the main towns of Islay, Mull and Bute.
- 6.6 Risk – The restrictions currently in place in an effort to control the spread of coronavirus covid-19 poses a significant risk to the projects. The inability to fully plan for such unforeseen events, and the impacts of such, is likely

to be reflected somewhat negatively within the deliverability of projects, particularly in terms of costs and timescales. The completion deadline for all projects is 30th September 2021. Any unused grant is to be repaid to the Scottish Government, unless otherwise agreed in writing by Scottish Ministers.

6.7 Customer Service - None

**Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth,
Kirsty Flanagan**

Policy Lead, Alastair Redman

11th January 2021

For further information contact:

Lorna Pearce, Senior Development Officer, Transformation Projects and Regeneration Team

Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth

APPENDICES

NONE