

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET28 November 2019Report by Director of EnvironmentTOWN CENTRE CAPITAL FUND**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet of the allocation of Scottish Government's Town Centre Capital Fund to East Renfrewshire Council and to seek approval to allocate the available funds to the projects detailed in Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Cabinet is asked to:
- (a) note the background and objectives of the Town Centre Capital Fund; and
 - (b) approve the projects identified in Appendix 1.

BACKGROUND

3. In March 2019 the Scottish Government and COSLA announced a £50 million fund for improving Scottish town centres. The Fund has been shared between the 32 local authorities and is based on the number of towns and population in each local authority area.

4. The purpose of the Fund is to "stimulate and support place based economic investments which encourage town centres to diversify and flourish, creating footfall through local improvements and partnerships". Specifically, the Fund is intended to contribute to transformative investments which drive local economic activities and re-purpose town centres to become more diverse, successful and sustainable.

5. East Renfrewshire Council has received an allocation of £981,000 for capital expenditure on town centre projects. This grant should not be a substitute for existing spend and if the grant is not used in the financial year 2019-20, it requires to be repaid to the Scottish Government. It is a requirement that contracts should be signed within 2019-20 and payment completed by September 2020.

6. Grant may also be used to fund third party capital expenditure either directly or through the provision of grants to third parties (public sector bodies, private sector bodies or individuals).

REPORT

7. Staff have attended a series of guidance events and received supporting information issued by Scotland's Towns Partnership. The Scottish Government advises that investments should be based on local priorities and should extend to localities with a population of 1,000 or more. The sort of activity and projects that could create economic improvements include:

- Projects clearly linked to a long term strategy or vision and how this can build on the distinctiveness of the place.
- Partnership and collaborations with a range of organisations including private companies and community organisations in order to maximise sustainability, impact and leverage.
- Low carbon and sustainable interventions to reduce car usage, improve cycling, leisure and pedestrian links, creation of strategic and high quality greenspace infrastructure, town and city parks.
- Strategic digital infrastructure linking businesses, public sector, communities and key stakeholders into social media and marketing platforms.
- Acquisition of buildings, land or site assembly in the town centre as part of a strategic vision.

8. To ensure a collaborative approach, an initial "Call for Ideas" was issued to key stakeholders within East Renfrewshire Council town and neighbourhood centres to give partners the opportunity to help shape the plans.

9. A good response was received and a number of proposals were considered before a shortlist was drawn up. A wide range of evidence was used in order to design specific projects based on need including Town Centre Audits, reports using the Place Standards toolkit and previous community charrettes. In prioritising the proposals, particular consideration was given to:

1. The conditions of the grant offer, as set out by the Scottish Government (there is a requirement to report at various intervals throughout the grant period including a final report on completion of all projects);
2. The geographical spread of grant across the Council area;
3. The economic benefits and outcomes of each project;
4. The need for any particular project; and
5. The time constraints of the funding to ensure any projects can be delivered within the agreed timescales.

10. Ultimately, using the criteria set out above, priority was given to a mix of initiatives ranging in scale and content some of which would ensure "quick wins" and some that may take longer to realise economic impact. A list of proposed projects is attached (Appendix 1).

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

11. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Project implementation will be funded through the Scottish Government Town Centre Capital Fund.

12. The Council must comply with the conditions of the grant, as set out in Scottish Government guidelines.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

13. Consultation has taken place with a range of key stakeholders within the community.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

14. There are no equalities, IT or staffing implications associated with this report.

CONCLUSIONS

15. The Town Centre Capital Fund provides an excellent opportunity to deliver significant investment to key areas of East Renfrewshire and has been a catalyst for stakeholder engagement which will help provide direction for future investment and collaborative working.

16. Appendix 1 identifies key projects which it is considered will deliver most benefit to a spread of areas in compliance with the terms of the Scottish Government grant offer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

17. The Cabinet is asked to:

- (a) note the background and objectives of the Town Centre Capital Fund;
and
- (b) approve the projects identified in Appendix 1.

Director of Environment

Report Author: Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services)
phil.daws@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Convener contact details

Councillor Tony Buchanan
(Leader of the Council)

Office: 0141 577 3107
Mobile: 07976 360398

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Town Centre Fund Proposed Schemes (following Initial Stakeholder Engagement)

Location	Proposal	Cost	Rationale	Proposed by	Lead for project	Additional funds
Barrhead (Main Street and surrounding area)	Intelligent Lighting	£300,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of a wider strategy to transform Barrhead and the Main Street (signage, de-clutter banners etc, access, green network, Carlibar Park, Cowan Park). • Public safety (safety, lighting and CCTV top priorities from Locality Plan). • Future proofing – ability to link with Internet of Things (wifi, cameras, 24hr power supply). • Costs reduced. • Easier maintenance, better accountability. • Environmental benefits – Co2, energy consumption, light pollution. • Remote monitoring, management and control. 	ERC Environment	Roads	
East Renfrewshire	Town Centre Rationalisation of street furniture	£30,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of redundant street furniture. • Installation of new street furniture. • Improve aesthetics by simplifying the streetscape. • Improve wayfinding and street signage. 	ERC Environment Barrhead BID		BID making improvements to the area
Newton Mearns, Barrhead Road	Formation of signalised junction (to provide access	£170,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to a new town centre council house build site, which would not be possible without investment in the junction. 	ERC Environment The Avenue	Roads	Housing Revenue Account/ Community

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	to Council house new build site)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make better use of a gap site (linking to a wider ambition to enhance Newton Mearns town centre). • Encourage greater footfall to The Avenue. • Safer for people to cross. • May reduce reliance on car for local people (Town Centre Living). • Cost based on access study undertaken in 2018. • Identified in LDP as a housing site. 			Sums (if required)
Newton Mearns Capelrig Road and Fairweather Park	Access and infrastructure improvements from The Avenue across Capelrig Road to Fairweather Hall and playpark. Park improvements including Park.	£200,000 (indicative budget which includes design work - consultant report will advise)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implementation of a scheme to improve accessibility and infrastructure between The Avenue and Fairweather Park to maximise the combined place. • Raise awareness of the wider Newton Mearns town centre as a combined shopping and leisure destination. • Increase footfall from the family/event market. • Supports current and future private sector investment. • Improved facilities for the public at Fairweather Hall/Park. • Groundworks, new paths, benches etc. in preparation for a new playpark in 2020/21 designed by the community and match funded by Developer Contributions. • Greater use of the park. • Movement between the park and 	The Avenue New River ERC Environment	Neighbourhood Services and Roads	Active Open Space/ Developer Contributions

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			the Avenue in order to attract more people to visit, shop and stay longer to play in the park/use the local facilities.			
Various locations throughout East Renfrewshire	Winter Lighting	£200,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of a strategic winter lighting approach that covers all main shopping centres in an inclusive way, forming a recognisable East Renfrewshire identity. • Towns and neighbourhood centres will be more attractive during the winter season, improving the community sense of place and encouraging town centre footfall during the winter season. • Increased footfall encourages local spend and supports local businesses (including the BID areas). • Improved efficiency with a sustainable, long term design. Use of energy efficient LED string lights for the full winter period that can be installed permanently and only switched on for the winter period. Complimented by energy efficient winter motifs and tree lighting, all guaranteed for 5 years. • Taking a more planned approach to winter lighting provision would allow ERC resources to be better prepared and scheduled. 	BIDs The Avenue Roads and Transportation Service	Roads	

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Neilston	Blooming Neilston	£40,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital elements such as planters and public realm improvements that support planting and small-scale environmental interventions match funded by NDT. • Enhance the visual attractiveness of Neilston, improve public realm and sense of pride encouraging people to spend longer in the village centre. • Increased footfall increases community spirit and encourages local spend, supporting local businesses. • Develop a legacy of community-based mechanisms for ongoing care and development. 	Neilston Development Trust (NDT)	Neighbourhood Services (with support from NDT)	Potential that NDT or community groups could source match funding.
Eaglesham	Place making improvements at Glasgow Road shops	£40,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in the streetscape to improve pedestrian and cycle access around the Glasgow Road shops. • Improvements to the street scape and visual attractiveness will encourage pride in the place, leading to greater use of the neighbourhood centre. 	Council (Roads) Community representative	Economy and Infrastructure (with input from Roads)	