

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET16 June 2022Report by Director of EnvironmentREGENERATION CAPITAL GRANT FUND 2020/21 – COWAN PARK ENTERPRISE  
AND COMMUNITY HUB**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet on the progress of the Cowan Park Enterprise and Community Hub which is funded through the Scottish Government's Regeneration and Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) and Council resources and subsequent increased costs in relation to project delivery.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. The Cabinet is asked to:
- (a) note the progress of the Cowan Park Enterprise and Community Hub project
  - (b) note the increased capital work costs and additional funding of £200,000 secured from the Scottish Government; and
  - (c) note the urgent variation to the contract to allow the project to be completed.

**BACKGROUND**

3. The Cowan Park Enterprise and Community Hub was the result of a successful bid to the Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund.

4. The total cost of the awarded contract was £890,000. Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund programme provided £499,000 and East Renfrewshire Council's contribution of £391,000 was approved and reflected in the Council's General Fund Capital Programme for 2021/22 and 2022/ 23.

5. This community backed project comprises the creation of an Enterprise & Community Hub through the regeneration of the partly derelict Cowan Park Gate Lodge property situated in Cowan Park Barrhead. The Hub will provide a much needed space for the delivery of skills development, training and improving employability prospects by third sector organisations. It will also allow vital opportunities for community capacity building, increased support for social enterprises & community groups and health & wellbeing benefits for residents.

6. Whilst East Renfrewshire Council are the lead on this project, the management of the hub will be undertaken by a third party, Include Me 2 Club.

7. Due to external factors outwith the Council's control there has been an increase in contract costs.

## REPORT

8. The project included a full renovation of the lodge to encompass a workshop, office & meeting space, public toilets, kitchen and café and is now scheduled to open in June/July 2022.

9. The delivery of this project has been challenging. The project has resulted in increased contract costs of £228,700. This was due to a combination of factors experienced since the start of the project;

- collapsed main sewer requiring rerouting and renewal to main road connection
- increases due to Covid experienced as manpower and material shortages and delays,
- increases due to necessary scope enhancements - e.g. end user adjustments to expand toilets and increase disabled car parking .

10. The additional works were required to complete the project in difficult circumstances.

11. However, the Council's Economic Development team were able to secure a further £200,000 in grant funding from the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund programme to offset this additional cost. The balance of £28,700 can be found from existing budgets from within the Environment Departments section of the Council's General Fund Capital for 2022/23 through the use of unallocated provisional sums.

12. It was not possible to seek prior approval from Cabinet for the contract variation as required under Standing Orders Relating to Contracts prior to the May 2022 elections and therefore details of this are being brought to the first available Cabinet meeting post-elections. Variations greater than £100,000 must be reported to Cabinet for approval prior to the variation being instructed. As the variation was urgently required to ensure the completion of the project, approval was sought and obtained from Councillors Buchanan and Bamforth.

## FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

13. The total cost of the project is now £1,118,700. Scottish Government's RCGF programme contribution will be £699,000 and East Renfrewshire Council's contribution is now £419,700 with £391,000 already approved and allocated within the existing General Fund Capital Programme with a further £28,700 being secured through adjustments to the 2022/23 General Fund as outlined above. This approach is supported by the Head of Accountancy and is in accordance with the Councils Financial Regulations.

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

## CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

15. Consultation has taken place with a range of key stakeholders including the Council's Property and Technical Services, Legal and Procurement teams and the Scottish Government.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

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

## CONCLUSIONS

17. The increased allocation of Regeneration Capital Grant Fund resources and additional capital funding from the Council will allow this project to be completed. The project will deliver significant investment within Cowan Park by renovating a prominent, derelict building into a functioning community asset. The creation of an Enterprise and Community Hub will improve local residents' access to community services, social inclusion, increase opportunities for community involvement in enterprise development and support employment and volunteering opportunities for local residents and in particular those with additional support needs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

18. The Cabinet is asked to:

- a) note the progress of the Cowan Park Enterprise and Community Hub project
- b) note the increased capital work costs and additional funding of £200,000 secured from the Scottish Government; and
- c) note the urgent variation to the contract to allow the project to be completed

Director of Environment

Further information can be obtained from: Michael McKernan, Economic Development Manager, [michael.mckernan@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:michael.mckernan@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

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