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**Report to Clackmannanshire Council**

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**Date of Meeting: 22 August 2019**

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**Subject: Town Centre Capital Fund**

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**Report by: Strategic Director (Place)**

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**1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1. This report is to inform Members of the process proposed to identify Town Centre Capital Projects which may be eligible for all or part of the £683,000 awarded to Clackmannanshire by the Scottish Government as part of its £50 million Town Centre Fund announced on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.
- 1.2. The Town Centre Fund is supporting Councils to ensure their town centres are more diverse, sustainable and successful in the face of changing and evolving retail patterns.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Council agree :
  - (a) to utilise the Town Centre Capital Fund to deliver the initial projects (1-5, Table 1, paragraph 2.12) identified through the Town Centre Masterplanning process such that they are at least legally committed within the required timescale (31 March 2020) and
  - (b) explore other external funding opportunities with key stakeholders for projects emerging through the Masterplanning process to achieve wider town centre transformation.

**3.0 Considerations**

**Background**

- 3.1. The Scottish Government is committed to supporting town centres face the challenge of changing and evolving retail patterns, and is investing in town centres so that they can be sustainable and thriving places for communities to live, work and enjoy.
- 3.2. The Scottish Government's Town Centre Action Plan published in 2013 focused on national and local solutions, encouraging action across public, private and community sectors. The Town Centre First Principle was subsequently agreed,

which requested that government, local authorities, the wider public sector, businesses and communities put the health of town centres at the heart of proportionate and best value decision making, seeking to deliver the best local outcomes regarding investment and de-investment decisions, alignment of policies, targeting of available resources to priority town centre sites, and encouraging vibrancy, equality and diversity. It committed to a collaborative approach which understands and underpins the long term plan for each town centre.

- 3.3. The Council shared the ambition to support the vitality and viability of local town centres and continues to invest in specific regeneration opportunities (e.g. King Street/Speirs Centre, Alloa & Main Street, Clackmannan). Indeed, the Council also continues to explore the scope for additional investment to transform Alloa Town Centre as part of its involvement in the City Region Deal.

### **The Aim of the Fund**

- 3.4. The aim of the Town Centre Fund 2019-20 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, the fund will contribute to **transformational** investments which drive local economic activities and re-purpose town centres to become more diverse, successful and sustainable.
- 3.5. The Fund aims to deliver against the themes of the Scottish Government's Town Centre Action Plan, including:
- Accessible Public Services
  - Town Centre Living
  - Vibrant Local Economies
  - Enterprising Communities
  - Digital Towns
  - Proactive Planning

### **Identification of Projects**

- 3.6. Local authorities are expected to make investment decisions in the context of national and local commitments to town centres including:
- the Town Centre First Principle
  - the Scottish Government's Town Centre Action Plan
  - the Place Principle.

It is also expected that investment decisions are based on approaches which are collaborative and place based with a shared purpose, and make use of tools and support of the Scottish Government, Scotland's Towns Partnership, Scottish Futures Trust, Scottish Enterprise and Architecture and Design Scotland.

- 3.7. There are a range of tools and resources to support how local authorities can understand, audit, plan, and improve their town centres. It is expected that they will use these to ensure investment decisions are based on an understanding of town centre performance and ownership; shared visions and plans with local communities, partnership and stakeholders fully engaged, and identification of physical infrastructure changes that will contribute to maximisation of investments and achievement of those visions.

- 3.8. The Council have already used some of these tools for Alloa Town Centre. In September 2015, Scotland's Towns Partnerships and EKOS Economic and Social Development published an audit of Alloa Town Centre, and during the first few months of 2019 a Place Standard exercise was carried out for Alloa Town Centre. The Place Standard is a framework designed to support communities, public, private and third sectors to work efficiently together to assess the quality of a place. The findings of this exercise are expected shortly.
- 3.9. As well as being the baseline on which the success of the Town Centre Capital Fund will be measured, the summary and key points of these pieces of work will be integral to identifying **appropriate, transformational** projects and informing investment decisions.
- 3.10. The key criteria on how the fund can be spent, is that it must be for capital expenditure for transformational projects. The grant may fund a wide range of investments which deliver against the themes of the Scottish Government's Town Centre Action Plan and the Alloa Town Centre Audit. The Town Centre Fund provides an opportunity to build on work already undertaken in the town centres and add value to realise transformative ambitions.
- 3.11. In Alloa Town Centre the fund will help to deliver projects which will be transformational, deliverable and address existing Town Centre issues such as sustainable transport, congestion, pedestrian connections and anti-social behaviour. Delivery of these projects will in turn lead to the next stage of town centre transformation to include other areas which form part of the broader Town Centre Masterplan such as Alloa South, the Leisure Bowl/Greenfield area, the police station, the town hall area and West End Park. This round of funding therefore forms part of the bigger picture for Alloa Town Centre.
- 3.12. The ongoing consultation exercise on Alloa Town Centre, in partnership with Alloa First, CTSI and Architecture and Design Scotland has helped identify projects 1-5 in the table below as being transformational, and important catalysts to the further transformation and regeneration of Alloa Town Centre. They are considered to best achieve the aims of the Scottish Government's Town Centre Fund and are based around the themes of, Arriving, Connecting, Unlocking, Meeting/Learning and Socialising.
- 3.13. Project 6, new car parking at Alloa train station may contribute to transformational change in the future. However, this will be dependent on other related actions, such as an agreed parking strategy, the location or re-location of public transport hubs and interchanges, the impact of increasing numbers of electric vehicles and other opportunities for future land use/re-use in the town centre, as mentioned in paragraph 3.10 above. This would also use 93% of the full £683,000 award on one project.

**Table 1 : Potential TCRF Projects**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Improvement</b>
<b>1. Active Travel Hub</b>	Lack of easily identifiable arrival point and visitor information and public toilet	3 <sup>rd</sup> sector led project to create active travel hub and visitor information centre involving innovative re-use of vacant building and streetscape enhancement [indicative cost contribution £200k]*
<b>2. King Street</b>	Barrier to easy access from north Alloa and Sauchie to town centre, inadequate connections	Enhance safe crossing opportunities on desire lines and associated environmental improvements [indicative cost £186k]
<b>3. Link between King Street and Drysdale Street</b>	Poor, unattractive and hard to find pedestrian link to Drysdale Street	Complete route to/from station and provide a safer crossing point [indicative cost £138k]
<b>4. Shillinghill</b>	Anti-social gathering and poor connections to the college	Re-model social space and improve physical and visual connections to college [indicative cost £100k]
<b>5. Bank Street</b>	Poorly functioning public space adjacent to restaurants and cinema	Re-model open space, improve connections and open up area [indicative cost £50k]
<b>6. New station car park</b>	Parking capacity at station	Provide new car park north of station [indicative cost £635k]

\* Potential for part funding from other sources

### **Administration of the Fund**

- 3.14. Clackmannanshire Council have been awarded £683,000, from a national 'pot' of £50 million, based on an equal weighting of the number of towns in a local authority and the local authority population. The grant is to be paid quarterly in April 2019, July 2019, November 2019 and March 2020 and used in the financial year 2019-20. If the grant is not used in the financial year 2019-20, any unused grant is to be repaid to the Scottish Government unless otherwise agreed in writing by Scottish Ministers. It is expected that work will be completed, or at least work or contracts signed or commenced within 2019-20.
- 3.15. The grant is for capital expenditure which is additional to that which is already or would otherwise be allocated to the 2019/20 budget, and should not substitute for existing spend. The 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) which would, if incurred by the Council, be capital expenditure.

- 3.16. The Council shall keep the Scottish Ministers informed of the use of their grant through the submission of a third quarter return in November 2019 and a year end return, and an end of year report which details financial expenditure; *shows how this was additional to existing spend*; profiles delivery; and, outlines anticipated impact and outcomes and how these will be measured. The final report will also contribute to a wider publication to describe how local authorities have delivered the Town Centre Fund and share learning. The two returns will show estimated and actual spend by the financial year end. It is expected that the Scottish Ministers will be notified as soon as possible if an underspend is anticipated, and the return in November 2019 will be crucial in highlighting any risk of underspend.
- 3.17. The Council will be required to submit interim and end of year reports on how the fund is used and will require further future monitoring to measure improvement. An important monitoring tool will be the Your Town Audit developed by Scotland's Towns Partnership. In this respect, Clackmannanshire Council is well placed as Alloa is one of the towns for which such an audit has already been carried out, and this should be used as a baseline for measuring the success of the Town Centre Capital Fund.

### **Conclusion**

- 3.18 Projects 1-5 are considered to be the best options and would provide transformational change in a number of locations within the town centre, with several of the outputs deliverable within the TCRF budget and timescale, and derive from initial stakeholder engagement on the town centre masterplan. Projects identified with 3<sup>rd</sup> sector input will also benefit from input from other funding sources, adding value to the TCRF contribution.

### **4.0 Sustainability Implications**

- 4.1. The principles of sustainable development will be a consideration for the feasibility study, along with the contribution to delivering the Council's objectives on sustainability and climate change, as set out in the Clackmannanshire Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy. The proposal will be assessed for its contribution to achieving the Council's objectives for economic, environmental and social sustainability.

### **5.0 Resource Implications**

- 5.1. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes
- 5.2. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes
- 5.3. There are no additional staffing requirements associated with this work.

### **6.0 Exempt Reports**

- 6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes  (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No

## 7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

### (1) Our Priorities (Please double click on the check box )

- Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all
- Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life
- Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential
- Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish

### (2) Council Policies (Please detail)

## 8.0 Equalities Impact

- 8.1. Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations? Yes   
No

## 9.0 Legality

- 9.1. It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

## 10.0 Appendices

- 10.1. Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

None

## 11.0 Background Papers

- 11.1. Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)  
Yes  (please list the documents below) No

Town Centre Capital Grant 2019-20 - Offer Letter 7 March 2019

**Author(s)**

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**Approved by**

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