MEETING OF ANGUS COUNCIL – 5 SEPTEMBER 2019

TOWN CENTRE FUND 2019/20 – PROPOSED PROJECTS

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**ABSTRACT**

This report advises members of the results from the recent consultation on options for using the additional funding of £1.080m provided by the Scottish Government under the heading of the Town Centre Fund. The report makes recommendations on a shortlist of projects to be taken forward albeit these will require to be subject to further assessment of costs and timescales in some cases.

**1.      RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.1      It is recommended that the Council:-

a)      note the contents of this report and in particular the aims of the Town Centre Fund and the four significant factors which need to be taken into account in determining the Council's approach to use of the Fund as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report;

b)      note the assessment process used by officers to identify a project shortlist and those projects recommended to be pursued as outlined in Section 3 and Appendix 2 of this report;

c)      note that those projects recommended to be pursued will require further investigation to establish detailed costs, firm timescales and procurement options and in some cases will require detailed discussion with businesses, community groups and other partners;

d)      note that in light of c) above it may not be possible to deliver all of the recommended projects and some flexibility on the final projects delivered is likely to be required to ensure the available funds in each burgh are utilised in full and to best effect;

e)      note the summary outputs from the consultation process in Appendix 1;

f)      note the shortlisted and not shortlisted projects for each burgh set out in Appendices 3a to 3g;

g)      agree that the projects to be pursued using the 2019/20 Town Centre Fund be those which are numbered with a "G" designation (e.g. G1) and shaded green in Appendices 3a to 3g;

h)      agree that the projects numbered with an "R" designation (e.g. R1) and shaded amber in Appendices 3a to 3g form a reserve list for each burgh so that these projects can, if funds allow or recommended projects prove undeliverable be implemented instead;

i)      agree that the projects numbered with an "N" designation (e.g. N1) and unshaded in Appendices 3a to 3g not be taken forward at this time;

j)      delegate authority to the Director of Communities, following consultation with local ward members, to determine (i) when any projects recommended under paragraph g) prove undeliverable and (ii) where any projects from the reserve list for each burgh can be implemented either because funds allow or because any project(s) recommended under paragraph g) prove undeliverable

k) delegate authority to the Director of Communities, following consultation with the Directors of Legal and Democratic Services, Finance and, Infrastructure to take the necessary steps to deliver the projects approved by the Council and to establish suitable governance arrangements in doing so; and

l) note that a progress update report on delivery of the projects using the Town Centre Fund will be provided to the Policy & Resources Committee in January 2020.


## 2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Reference is made to Report 217/19 submitted to the Council meeting on 20 June 2019 which provided full background on the Town Centre Fund. The Council has been allocated £1.080 million from this Fund. 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 is expected to contribute to transformative investments which drive local economic activities and re-purpose town centres to become more diverse, successful and sustainable.

2.2 The grant can be used to fund a wide range of investments which deliver against the themes of the Town Centre Action Plan. The themes in the Town Centre Action Plan include:-

- Town Centre Living
- Vibrant Local Economies
- Enterprising Communities

- Accessible Public Services
- Digital Towns
- Proactive Planning

2.3 Significant Factors Impacting on Council's Approach
Report 217/19 advised members of four significant factors which impact on the Council's options for use of the Fund. These are:-

*A) Time Constraints*
If the Council does not use the grant in the financial year 2019/20, unused grant is to be repaid to the Scottish Government unless otherwise agreed in writing by Scottish Ministers. The grant conditions state that it is expected that work will be completed; or, at least work or contracts signed or commenced within the 2019-20 financial year. Government guidance also states that they expect any work falling beyond 2019/20 to be completed early in the next financial year up to a maximum of 6 months after the year end. This means all funding must be fully spent by no later than 30 September 2020.

This is a significant constraint on what may be practically possible to deliver within the timescales set down and restricts to an extent the options and projects the Council can pursue.

*B) Capital Funding*
The Fund is providing capital resources to the Council and so must be used for capital purposes. This means it can't be used to fund revenue expenditure and that restricts the projects and options available.

*C) Must be Additional*
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. This means the Council must identify projects which are new and / or are currently unfunded.

*D) Impact Assessment*
The Council is the funding recipient and must account to the Scottish Government on its use of the funding. The Council will be required to submit 3 reports to Scottish Government on its use of the Town Centre Fund in November 2019; April/May 2020 and October 2020.

2.4 In summary the Council must use the Fund for capital purposes, on new projects, must substantially deliver or progress these during 2019/20 (effectively over the next 6 months) and will be required to measure impact and report on this to Scottish Government.

2.5 Based on Report 217/19 the Council agreed to the following approach to distribution and consultation:-

   o   Distribution Option 1 - Share Fund across 7 main burgh towns based on population; and

   o   Project Identification and Public Consultation Option 3 - Council identifies potential projects from previous engagement, seeks public/business input on these projects and public/business ideas for other projects via Social Pinpoint then decides which go ahead

2.6 Distribution Option 1 results in the following shares:-

| Town | Population | %age | Funding Share |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arbroath | 23,911 | 28.9 | £312,294 |
| Brechin | 7,201 | 8.7 | £94,050 |
| Carnoustie | 11,386 | 13.7 | £148,709 |
| Forfar | 14,099 | 17.0 | £184,142 |
| Kirriemuir | 5,912 | 7.1 | £77,215 |
| Monifieth | 8,224 | 9.9 | £107,411 |
| Montrose | 11,958 | 14.4 | £156,180 |
| **Towns Total** | **82,691** | | **£1,080,000** |

## 3. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS TO IDENTIFY RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

3.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is a summary of the results of the consultation from analysis of Social Pinpoint which shows the number of visits and comments. This also shows at a very broad level some themes which emerged.

3.2 All of the projects and suggestions which have come forward from the consultation have been reviewed by a cross-service group of officers. The officer group applied an initial filter to all of projects and suggestions to prepare a project shortlist. Projects were not shortlisted for the following reasons:-

   a. Project is not capital spending – a requirement of the Fund criteria
   b. Project likely to increase the Council's revenue expenditure – the Council's revenue budget is under significant pressure with multi-million pound funding gaps projected for future years - on this basis projects which would add to those funding gaps have been excluded
   c. Project likely to duplicate what is already there or where no capital spend is needed
   d. Project doesn't support Fund intentions / main criteria or has unclear timescales or impact
   e. Project likely to require extensive permissions and so high risk to delivery within timescale
   f. Project is too large to deliver with the funds available

3.3 A number of projects and suggestions lacked clarity or detail as to the intention of the consultee so officers have necessarily had to apply judgements about what the projects and suggestions might entail. It must be emphasised that projects which have not been shortlisted have in several cases been because of the constraints applying to this Fund rather than the project not having merit. Some suggestions not shortlisted may be capable of delivery through other means by working with communities.

3.4 Those projects which were shortlisted were then assessed using the assessment criteria and scoring matrix approved by Council in June. This is attached as Appendix 2 for ease of reference. The officer group assessed each shortlisted project against each criteria to generate a total score for each project. With 9 criteria and a maximum score of 3 for each a maximum score of 27 was possible.

3.5 Appendices 3a to 3g attached to this report present on a burgh by burgh basis those projects which have been shortlisted, the results (score) from the assessment process for these projects and commentary where appropriate. The Appendices also show likes and dislikes for shortlisted

projects but this must be viewed with caution because the numbers of likes and dislikes will have been influenced by when a suggestion was posted on Social Pinpoint and how many people subsequently saw it. Shortlisted projects have been shown in order (highest scoring first).

3.6     Appendices 3a to 3g also show the projects on a burgh by burgh basis which were not shortlisted and the reasons for this together with additional comments where relevant. The Appendices therefore capture all projects and suggestions received. A small number of projects were suggested on an Angus-wide basis for every town – these have been included in the shortlist for each burgh and ranked accordingly.

3.7     Appendix 3 to Report 217/19 outlined potential projects suggested by Council officers as a basis for consultation. These projects have been subject to the same filtering and assessment process as those projects suggested through the consultation process with the exception of the project around de-cluttering town centres which received a muted response in the consultation and would be in conflict with many of the other suggestions which have now come forward. That project has therefore been removed from further consideration.

## 4.     RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

4.1     As outlined in Section 3 every project and suggestion received has been reviewed and those shortlisted have been scored and ranked. Given the limited funds available in each burgh it is expected that only a small number of projects will be able to be delivered. On this basis the Council is recommended to approve those projects in Appendices 3a to 3g which have been numbered with a "G" designation (e.g. G1) and shaded green. This would mean 3 to 6 projects being pursued in each burgh.

4.2     Those projects recommended to be pursued will require further investigation to establish detailed costs, firm timescales and procurement options and in some cases will require detailed discussion with businesses, community groups and other partners. **It is emphasised that it may not be possible to deliver all recommended projects once these have been investigated further** e.g. if the funding available proves insufficient or if permissions / land can't be secured in a timely manner. Projects will be pursued in their priority order.

4.3     In light of the issues highlighted in paragraph 4.2 it may not be possible to deliver all of the recommended projects and some flexibility on the final projects delivered is likely to be required to ensure the available funds in each burgh are utilised in full and to best effect. With this in mind the Council is also asked to agree that the projects numbered with an "R" designation (e.g. R1) and shaded amber in Appendices 3a to 3g form a reserve list for each burgh so that these projects can, if funds allow or recommended projects prove undeliverable be implemented instead.

4.4     Members are also asked to delegate authority to the Director of Communities, following consultation with local ward members, to determine (i) when any approved projects prove undeliverable and (ii) where any projects from the reserve list for each burgh can be implemented either because funds allow or because any project(s) recommended under paragraph g) prove undeliverable. This will provide flexibility to make decisions with input from local members and minimise the potential for delay in decisions being made and projects progressed.

4.5     Members are also asked to agree that the projects numbered with an "N" designation (e.g. N1) and unshaded in Appendices 3a to 3g not be taken forward at this time.

## 5.     OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

5.1     Council is asked to authorise relevant officers to take the necessary steps to allow those projects ultimately agreed by Council in this report to be taken forward. In some cases this may mean the Council undertaking a facilitation role to support businesses or community groups rather than being the direct deliverer. Suitable governance arrangements will also need to be established so that the Council can comply with the reporting and accountability arrangements to Scottish Government.

5.2     To keep members informed of progress it is intended to bring an update report to the Policy & Resources Committee in January 2020.

5.3     An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 4.

**6.     FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1     On the basis of the information currently available no significant additional financial implications for the Council are expected to arise from the recommendations in this report. Should the further investigation of recommended projects indicate a change in this expectation this will be brought back to members for consideration.

6.2     Members will appreciate that considerable work remains to be undertaken to ensure recommended projects can be delivered on the ground within the timescales required. This will require a significant input from officers. The intention is to seek to manage this additional workload from existing staff and budget resources but this may impact on capacity to discharge other work.

6.3     The Town Centre Fund has the potential to allow additional external funds to be levered in and this will be investigated further for the recommended projects in each burgh.

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## Appendix 1 - Town Centre Fund – Social Pinpoint  – End report

### Arbroath

In terms of engagement within Arbroath, if we assumed that all visitors to the page were from Arbroath (not likely), it has been visited by 2% of population and 0.2 have generated comments.

| Total Visits | Unique Users | Avg Time (min) | Unique Stakeholders | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1245 | 473 | 1:52 | 40 | 77 |

The comment themes are quite spread though promoting tourism and condition / use of high street shops feature quite prominently. Also, the extension of the market, or harnessing its success were noted also, as was the benefit of public murals.

Council projects
'Decluttering Streets and Improving Accessibility' – No discussion on this project. 4 'likes' and 1 'dislike'
'Hard landscaping improvements along the High St and nearby streets' – Mixed response to this project, concerns around not representing what Arbroath town needs. 2 'like', 3 'dislike'.

Popular posts / Ideas
*Improve façade and ground of old DWP building.*
*Create active travel hub at the Harbour.*

### Brechin

In terms of engagement with Brechin, if we assumed that all visitors to the page were from Brechin (not likely) then 6.1% of the population have visited the page and 0.3% have submitted comments.

| Total Visits | Unique Users | Avg Time (min) | Unique Stakeholders | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1198 | 446 | 1:39 | 22 | 82 |

Wide range of themes with empty shops, condition of shops, promoting tourism, and pedestrianisation slightly more prominent than others in comments.

Council projects
'De-cluttering Streets and Improving Accessibility' – Mixed response, some comment around bins clogging up the street, traffic management (pedestrianisation) to assist. 4 'likes, 5 'dislikes'
'Improvements to the steps and surrounding areas down to the river' – Generally negative response, not thought necessary. 1 'like' and 12 'dislikes'

Popular posts / Ideas
*Expand pedestrianisation of high street and return it to its once thriving weekly market.*
*Chase up absent landlords. Use empty units as temp retail for new start business while looking for permanent lets. Graphics on empty unit windows to promote city. Repairs to building facades. (NOT flicks etc.)Level up paths. Repaint lights/utility boxes etc. Paint hardware shop steps. Paint murals on building ends. New tourist info points inc more history.*

# Appendix 1 - Town Centre Fund – Social Pinpoint – End report

## Carnoustie

In terms of engagement, if we assumed that all visitors to the page were from Carnoustie (not likely) then 7.1% of population engaged with 0.3% offering comments.

| Total Visits | Unique Users | Avg Time (min) | Unique Stakeholders | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2250 | 813 | 1:37 | 38 | 78 |

Mix of themes expressed though tourism featured prominently as did the need for new or improved public amenity space, as well the physical connections within the town.

Council projects

'Decluttering Streets and Improving Accessibility' – Mixed response, more negative, but no real comments around why it wasn't a good idea.  10 'likes' and 18 'dislikes'

'Improvements to landscaping around Carnoustie library' – Mixed response, more negative, but no real comments around why this wasn't a good idea other than charrette preference for removing the wall, 15 'likes' and 25 'dislikes'

'Improvements to the underpass leading to the golf course/beach' – Mixed response, more positive, with suggestions on how it could be done i.e. local artworks, use CCDT ideas  55 'likes' 31 'dislikes'

Popular posts / ideas

*CCTV around Play Park*
*Heritage trail, including high street, with information points and seating*
*A facelift/makeover of the High Street, including clearing out vegetation from gutters, de-cluttering pavements, repainting shop fronts and possibly new uniform shop signage to improve the overall appearance and attractiveness of the area. Better directional signage to key locations would also be useful for visitors.*

## Forfar

In terms of engagement if we assumed that all visitors to the page were from Forfar (highly unlikely) then 4.2% of population visited page with 0.1% providing comments.

| Total Visits | Unique Users | Avg Time (min) | Unique Stakeholders | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1555 | 598 | 1:48 | 21 | 46 |

Popular themes related to new play park facilities for kids as well as boosting tourism, with Christmas decorations featuring heavily too.

Council projects

'De-cluttering Streets and Improving Accessibility' – Mixed response, no comments on specific proposal.  3 'likes, 6 'dislike'

'Improving the environment around the West Port lights' – No real engagement in terms of comments but generally negative view. 2 'likes' 12 dislike'

Popular posts / ideas

*Adapt lampposts along North Street to allow Christmas lights to be put here by Forfar Action Group*
*New or improved play park facilities, different locations offered e.g. Reid / Steel park, Loch.*

**Kirriemuir**

In terms of engagement, if we assume that all visitors to page were from Kirriemuir (highly unlikely) then 6.3% of town's population have visited the page with 0.9% providing comments.

| Total Visits | Unique Users | Avg Time (min) | Unique Stakeholders | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1013 | 370 | 2:04 | 30 | 55 |

The comments are mixed in theme though harnessing digital technology and promoting tourism slightly more prominent than others, with parking quite prominent also.

Council projects

'De-cluttering Streets and Improving Accessibility' – Mixed response though bins featuring prominently in terms of creating clutter, looking for solutions here. 2 'like's and 4 'dislike'

'Repair of wall at St Colmes Close' – Generally negative response, concerns around cost, rationale, and preference for other projects or removal of wall, bins mentioned again. 1 'like' and 4 'dislike'

Popular posts / ideas

*Rock and Roll museum for Kirriemuir, celebrating the legacy of Bon Scott and also the wider Scottish history of popular music, and folk.*

*Landscape the area to the right of the entrance to Bellies Brae car park, opposite the Bon Scott statue, and make it a memorial garden to Sir Hugh Munro.*

**Monifieth**

Highest levels of engagement here, If we assume that all visitors to page are from Monifieth (highly unlikely) then 13.4% of population visited page with 1.2% providing comments.

| Total Visits | Unique Users | Avg Time (min) | Unique Stakeholders | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3391 | 1101 | 1:49 | 59 | 98 |

Most popular idea by some distance was paying for, or contributing towards, all weather football pitches at Riverdale. Perhaps a concerted effort to push this. Outwith this comments vary through a variety of themes though improving shopping square is prominent, particularly the flat roofs, or better use of space.

Council projects

Declutter Streets and Improving Accessibility – Mixed response but more positive than negative. 12 'likes 10 'dislikes'.

Improvements to hard landscaping around the High Street – Generally negative response. 2 'likes' 21 'dislike's'.

Environmental improvements to the links to the beach – Mixed response, slightly more negative than positive, 10 'likes, 14 'dislikes'.

Popular posts / ideas

*Contribute some funding to the overall cost for building an all-weather surface at Riverview pitches x 2*

*Regen of seafront*

## Appendix 1 - Town Centre Fund – Social Pinpoint – End report

### Montrose

In terms of engagement, if we assume all visitors to the page were Montrose residents (highly unlikely) then 2.9% of population visited page with 0.2% providing comments.

| Total Visits | Unique Users | Avg Time (min) | Unique Stakeholders | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 948 | 343 | 2:09 | 25 | 55 |

Comments are along a range of themes though connections in the town centre, both the historic closes and from the railway station were fairly prominent, high street facades, general attractiveness, traffic management, and public murals also noteworthy.

Council projects

Declutter Streets and Improving Accessibility – no engagement other than for specific examples of actions. 1 'like', 1 'dislike'

Environmental improvements to the historic closes – Generally positive response. 21 'likes' 3 'dislike'

Popular posts

*Improve Route to High Street from Train Station via Hume Street, as per Morevival.*

*Less road space and more given over to pedestrians and get more greenery on the street.*

**Appendix 2 – Assessment Criteria and Scoring Matrix**

| Criteria | High (3) | Medium (2) | Low (1) | None (0) (no evidence to support the relevant criteria) | Score | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Strategic Fit**<br><br>To what extent does the project fit with and deliver against the aims and themes of the Town Centre Action Plan<br><br>• Living Vibrant Local Economies<br>• Enterprising Communities<br>• Accessible Public Services<br>• Digital Towns<br>• Proactive Planning | There is a good fit with the themes and aims of the Town Centre Action Fund.<br><br>The project is delivering against a high number of outcomes / objectives. | There is a good fit with the themes and aims of the Town Centre Action Fund.<br><br>The project is delivering an acceptable number of outcomes / objectives. | There is a limited fit with the themes and aims of the Town Centre Action Fund.<br><br>The project is delivering limited outcomes / objectives. | | | |
| How does the project stimulate and support place based economic investments which encourage town centres to diversify and flourish, creating footfall through local improvements | There is a good fit with supporting place based economic investments and is delivering several initiatives to create footfall.<br><br>The project is delivering a high number of outcomes /objectives. | There is a good fit with supporting place based economic investments and is one initiative to create footfall.<br><br>The project is delivering an acceptable number of outcomes /objectives. | There is a limited fit with supporting place based economic investments and it is unlikely the initiative will create footfall<br><br>The project is delivering limited outcomes /objectives. | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How does the investment decisions contribute to national and local commitments to town centres including the Town Centre First Principle; and more recently, the Place Principle | There is a good fit  to national and local commitments to town centres including the Town Centre First Principle; and more recently, the Place Principle<br><br>The project is delivering a high number of outcomes/ objectives | There is a good fit to national and local commitments to town centres including the Town Centre First Principle; and more recently, the Place Principle<br><br>The project is delivering an acceptable number of outcomes/ objectives | There is limited fit to national and local commitments to town centres including the Town Centre First Principle; and more recently, the Place Principle<br><br>The project is delivering a limited number of outcomes/ objectives | | | |
| **Evidence of Match Funding**<br><br>Has match funding been confirmed?<br><br>If not when is this expected? | The project has match funding in place and has provided written evidence of confirmation. | The project is sourcing or has match funding pending but it is yet not confirmed. | The project has no match funding confirmed. | | | |
| **Evidence of partnership working/collaboration**<br><br>Is there evidence of working in collaboration with private and/or public stakeholders? | The project has provided strong evidence of working in partnership and collaboration with private and/or public stakeholders | The project has provided good evidence of working in partnership and collaboration with private and/or public stakeholders | The project has provided limited evidence of working in partnership and collaboration with private and/or public stakeholders | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outputs and Impacts**<br><br>Are there clearly demonstrated project outputs and impacts in line with the fund priorities | The project demonstrates many positive outputs and impacts in line with the fund and meets the outcomes of the Council Plan.<br><br>The project is delivering a high number of outputs/impacts. | The project demonstrates some positive outputs and impacts in line with the fund and meets the outcomes of the Council Plan.<br><br>The project is delivering an acceptable number of outputs/impacts. | The project demonstrates limited positive outputs and impacts in line with the fund and meets the outcomes of the Council Plan.<br><br>The project is delivering a limited number of outputs/impacts. | | | |
| **Capacity to deliver**<br><br>Can the project be delivered and comply with the fund guidelines in 2019/20 | The project is well developed, with permissions in place and can be committed and delivered in 2019/20 | The project is well developed, with all or some of permissions in place and can be committed and part delivered in 2019/20 | The project is not well developed, with all or some of permissions in place and can be committed and part delivered in 2019/20 | | | |
| **Project need/demand**<br><br>There is a demonstrated unmet demand for the project | The project has presented strong and comprehensive evidence of need or a gap in provision. | The project has presented significant evidence of need or a gap in provision | The project has presented limited evidence of need or a gap in provision | | | |

| Value for money

Does the project represent good value for money in return for investment? | The project demonstrates good value for money. | The project demonstrates fair value for money. | The project demonstrates low value for money. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

- **Living** – footfall is key to achieving thriving, successful towns centre; and, the best footfall is residential for people who will use shops, services, and will care for its safety and security in the evenings
- **Vibrant Local Economies** – creating a supportive business environment including the involvement of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and other local partnerships
- **Enterprising Communities** – social enterprise, services, arts and events; and, community empowerment and community based activities which increase the health, wealth and wellbeing of town centres
- **Accessible Public Services** – creating and accessing public facilities and services, supported by economic, service and transport hubs
- **Digital Towns** – exploiting digital technology and promoting Wi-Fi infrastructure to enable access to information, data analytics, marketing opportunities, branding, and communication with the wider world
- **Proactive Planning** – land reform and supporting the creation of sustainable, low-carbon and connected places which promote natural and cultural assets, designed in partnership with local communities and key stakeholder