

**ANGUS COUNCIL - 11 FEBRUARY 2021**

**TOWN CENTRE FUND – PROGRESS UPDATE**

**JOINT REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES AND THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

**ABSTRACT**

This report advises the Council of the latest progress on delivering the projects funded through the Town Centre Fund.

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- a) Note the latest update on Town Centre Fund projects as set out in this report and in Appendix A;
- b) Note that in some burghs a small number of reserve project options have been identified by officers which can be implemented should any planned projects be unable to use the funding allocated within the required timescales or where not all funding has been committed to date;
- c) Note that conclusion of the Town Centre Fund programme can be completed using the existing delegation and flexibility arrangements already approved by members as set out in Section 4 of this report; and
- d) Note that a final update on all projects being delivered using the Town Centre Fund will be brought to the Committee later in 2021 once all monies have been expended by the 30 September 2021 deadline.

**2. INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 In June 2019 (Report 217/19 refers) members were advised of new capital funding awarded to the Council under the Town Centre Fund 2019/20. Members agreed to distribute the funding to the 7 main burgh towns based on population and agreed to undertake a public consultation exercise to gather project ideas and options from the public. In September 2019 (Report 289/19 refers) members agreed the list of projects to be taken forward in each town. In January 2020 (Report 25/20 refers) an update on the progress of projects to be funded using the Town Centre Fund was provided and members agreed some specific measures to manage the funding in a way which reduced the risk of it not being utilised in full. In October 2020 (Report 246/20) members approved the allocation of £387,000 of additional Town Centre Fund monies allocated to the Council as part of the Scottish Government's COVID-19 response, this sum being added to the original burgh allocations.
- 2.2 The Council's original funding allocation for Town Centre Fund (£1.080m) and the recent additional funding (£387,000) both have to be legally committed by 31 March 2021 and fully spent by 30 September 2021. These timescales remain very challenging especially with the recent further tightening of restrictions due to COVID-19.
- 2.3 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress with delivering the various Town Centre Fund projects across Angus including identifying a small number of reserve project options in some of the burghs as a safeguard to ensure these ring-fenced funds are utilised in full.

### **3. PROGRESS UPDATE**

- 3.1 Attached as Appendix A is a summary update of the current status of all projects which have been previously approved by Committee/Full Council or approved under delegated authority following consultation with local members. Appendix A provides the most up to date list of projects in all burghs along with comments on delivery progress. The Council is asked to note the latest position per Appendix A.
- 3.2 While the current expectation is that all planned projects as set out in Appendix A will be delivered within the required timescales there remains a risk with a small number of these which could mean they can't be delivered as planned. Some of these projects are being managed by others so are not within the Council's direct control. Officers have therefore identified a small number of potential reserve project options, mainly utilising the skills and expertise of our Parks Service, which could be implemented at short notice to deliver alternative projects should this become necessary to avoid any of the Council's Town Centre Fund allocation having to be returned to the Scottish Government. These reserve project options will still meet the Fund criteria and would in line with existing delegations to officers (see Section 4 below) involve consultation with local members before being implemented. Some reserve projects are intended to use uncommitted Town Centre Fund monies.

### **4. DELGATED AUTHORITY AND FLEXIBILITY MEASURES**

- 4.1 Through Report 25/20 members gave authority to:
- a) exceed the total funding allocated at that time (£1.080 million) by up to 2.5% (£27,000) – this to be funded from the Council's uncommitted General Fund Reserve if required; and
  - b) adjust the allocations to individual burghs by up to +/- 10%.

Both of these measures were intended to give flexibility to officers (working with local members) to deliver all of the agreed projects and were recommended solely to reduce the risk of some of the Town Centre funding going un-used and having to be returned to the Scottish Government.

- 4.2 Through Report 246/20 members agreed that no change to the value (£27,000) in point a) in paragraph 4.1 be made but also agreed that the +/- 10% flexibility be applied to the Revised Total Funding in Table 1 of Report 246/20 to take account of the additional funding allocated (£387,000).
- 4.3 In approving Report 25/20 members also agreed to delegate to the Director of Communities, following consultation with the Director of Finance and local members, authority to determine any further changes to the Town Centre Fund projects (including the addition of new projects if funds allow) to ensure delivery of the agreed projects and use of all of the funds available. Through Report 246/20 this Committee agreed that this delegation be extended to cover new projects utilising the additional funding provided (£387,000).
- 4.4 The above delegation and flexibility measures are considered sufficient to manage any remaining issues and risks with the Town Centre Fund projects from now until the Fund deadline in September 2021.

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no additional financial implications for the Council arising from the recommendations in this report. All projects will be funded using the Town Centre Fund allocations from the Scottish Government. A small allowance of £27,000 (previously approved in Report 25/20) is proposed to be continued to provide flexibility to ensure that the whole amount of Government funding can be fully utilised. In view of decisions made by Council in September 2020 on revisions to the 2020/21 revenue budget (Report 211/20 refers) should the £27,000 require to be utilised it would need to come from the Council's COVID-19 contingency as all other uncommitted General Fund Reserves have now been committed.

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# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

## SCREENING DOCUMENT

Name of Proposal

Town Centre Fund Update (Report 35/21)

Lead Department/Service

Communities/Finance

What is the aim of the proposal?

The aim of the Town Centre Fund 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. The Report to Council provides an update on those project proposals approved to date

Is this a new or a review of an existing policy, procedure, function or report?

Update on previous report

### Screening Process

1. Has the proposal already been assessed for its impact on age; disability; gender; gender re-assignment; pregnancy/maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion and belief; and sexual orientation? **If yes, go to 1 a. If no, go to 1 b.**

**1 a.** Unless there have been significant changes, no further action is required. **Please add your name, position and date below at 3.**

**1 b.** Does the proposal involve or have consequences for the people the council serves or employs? **If yes, go to 2. If no, go to 1 c.**

**1 c.** Please state why not

**The proposal is not relevant and no further action is required. Sign and date below at 3.**

**2.** Is the proposal relevant to one or more of the protected characteristics? **If yes, go to 2 a. If no, go to 2 b.**

**2 a.** Proceed to Step 1 of the Full Equality Impact Assessment on page 2.

**2 b.** Please state why not

**The proposal not relevant and no further action is required. Add your name, position and date below at 3.**

**3. Name:**

**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

## Step 1

Are there any statutory legal requirements affecting this proposal? If so please describe.

No

## Step 2

What data/research is available to assess the likely impact of the proposal?

The initial list of projects agreed by Council was following public consultation and a subsequent assessment process. Some projects proved not deliverable in practice and have been replaced by new projects. The criteria for the Town Centre Fund means some restrictions on what can be done and in what timescales.

## Step 3

Is there any reason to believe the proposal could affect people differently due to their protected characteristic i.e. age; disability; gender; gender re-assignment; pregnancy/maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion and belief; and sexual orientation? Please **place a cross** in each box that applies, and give details alongside.

Age

Disability

Potential projects include accessibility improvements which could benefit people with disabilities more than the general population

Gender

Gender Re-assignment

Pregnancy/maternity

Marriage and civil Partnership

Race

Religion and belief

Sexual orientation

## Step 4

Is there evidence to suggest that any part of the proposal could unlawfully discriminate against people? If so, how?

No

## Step 5

Can the proposal be seen to favour one section of the community

Yes  No

or deny opportunities to another?

Yes  No

If yes, please give details.

**Step 6**

Does the proposal advance or restrict equality?

Yes  No

If yes, give details

The projects being undertaken will improve accessibility, amenity and public safety and some of these will benefit people with disabilities more than the general population. Most of the benefit would however be for the population at large

**Step 7**

Are there any other actions which could have been taken to enhance equality of opportunity?

If so please state

None identified

**Step 8**

Based on the work you have done, rate the level of relevance being allocated to this proposal.

High  Medium  Low  Unknown

**Step 9**

If during **Steps 3 - 6** there has been an adverse impact identified, consider whether this can be justified.

Yes  No

If yes please give details.

If no, consider alternative ways of delivering the proposal to minimise negative impact or eliminate unlawful discrimination. Give details of the changes to be made to the proposal.

Public consultation and an assessment criteria based on the Fund aims has allowed a reasonably wide range of interests and inputs to be provided.

**Step 10**

Do you need to carry out a further impact assessment?

Yes  No

If yes, what actions do you need to take?

**Step 11**

Make arrangements to monitor and review the impact assessment.

**Step 12**

Publish impact assessment.

Where will the Equality Impact Assessment be published?

As part of the report to Angus Council 5 September 2019

Please state your name, position and date, and forward this pro forma either to your designated Equality Impact Assessment Co-ordinator, or if it refers to a committee report, it should be forwarded with the report to committee services.

Name: Ian Lorimer

Director of Finance

3 February 2021