

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

3 October 2024

Report by Director of Environment

PLACE BASED INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2024/25 AND UPDATE ON OTHER
REGENERATION FUNDING

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the changes to the Placed Based Investment Programme (PBIP) award from the Scottish Government for 2024/25 and our application for approval of continued funding for two existing projects. The report also provides an update on other Scottish and UK Government regeneration and infrastructure funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- (a) Note the changes to Place Based Investment Programme funding to Local Authorities in 2024/25;
 - (b) Note the new, reduced bidding process for funding in 2024/25;
 - (c) Seek approval for the continuation of two projects outlined in the report; and
 - (d) Note the updates on other regeneration and infrastructure funding.

BACKGROUND

3. The Scottish Government announced in their Programme for Government in February 2021 that a new Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) would be introduced over the 5-year period of the next parliament.

4. The aim of the PBIP is to ensure that all place-based investments are shaped by the needs and aspirations of local communities and accelerate the delivery of improved connectivity, more town centre action, community led regeneration and community wealth building.

5. At a national level, the Scottish Government allocated a total of £140m capital investment to the PBIP for the period 2021-2025. Local Government expected to receive the following amounts over the 5 year period: £38m in 2021/22; £33m in 2022/23; £23m in 2023/24; £23m in 2024/25; and £23m in 2025/26. The funds were allocated on a weighted formula based on the number of towns and population in a local authority area and deprivation indices.

6. East Renfrewshire Council was originally awarded £635,000 of capital grant funding for the financial year 2021/22. Based on the annual pro-rata calculation, for subsequent years the Council received capital grant funding of £551,100 for 2022/23, £385,000 in 2023/24 and £385,000 was due in each of the remaining 2 years of the programme. This represented a total funding programme for East Renfrewshire Council of £2.34m over the 5-year period.

7. The Scottish Government contacted Local Authority Chief Executives on 11 July 2024 confirming that there was ongoing uncertainty around PBIP funding allocations for 2024/25 and that Local Authorities would not receive their full allocation for this year. No funding would be released to support any new projects and Ministers had authorised the release of an element of the funding up to a maximum value of 50%, in order to protect the value for money of projects already in progress.

8. To support decisions on what funding will be released, the Scottish Government has indicated its intention to fund only those ongoing projects which need additional resources to progress to completion. Local Authorities have been asked to complete a template to identify their priority regeneration projects that have already started and are in need of funding to ensure continued progress to completion.

REPORT

9. There are two ongoing projects within the East Renfrewshire Council area that meet the Scottish Government's published criteria that have been submitted in our template return. It is our understanding that the Scottish Government intends to provide further clarity on the 2024/25 allocation of capital funding for local authorities under the PBIP by the autumn.

10. The two projects referred to in the return are set out below:

Applicant	Project	Project Overview	PBIP Grant request
East Renfrewshire Council	Thornliebank playing fields access improvements	The Council is making phased upgrades to the playing fields and park, as part of the Thornliebank Local Action Plan. Works to be carried out include upgrades to pathways, installation of new handrails, creation of a disabled parking space and seating. This will complement previous work carried out in 2023/24 which included the new play park with accessible equipment suitable for children with disabilities.	£98,950
Off Grid Community (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation - SCIO)	Off Grid Community Facilities Improvements	Off Grid Community, based in Clarkston, aims to enable families to access play and education in an outdoor setting with a particular interest in supporting the neurodivergent community. Funding will support the provision of a greenhouse, wood burning stove, fencing, landscaping and improvements to site storage. This forms part of wider improvements already carried out on the site which included accessible pathways to allow wheelchair access and construction of a Geodome to enable a community growing project.	£17,545
Total			£116,495

11. In preparation for the anticipated funding round in 2024/25, a bidding process was arranged and nine bids for funding were received and assessed. Of these, seven projects were initially recommended for funding. Two of these are the ones put forward for funding under the revised criteria and detailed above. Five can no longer be funded under the PBIP. These are improvements to Clarkston and Barrhead town centres, redevelopment of the vacant Cowan Park bowling club for community sports use, new CCTV provision in the area

and a winter light show in Barrhead. Two projects were not recommended for funding. Please see Annex 1 for list the full list of seven projects that were proposed in the 2024/25 bidding round and that were either recommended for support and cannot now be funded or were not recommended for support.

12. The Economic Development team will write to applicants and update them on the Scottish Government's funding decisions. The Economic Development team will continue to provide assistance to the selected projects, to find alternative funds, however, it is recognised that this will be difficult, given the public sector's wider fiscal challenges.

UPDATE ON OTHER REGENERATION FUNDING

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT REGENERATION FUNDING

13. As well as there being changes to the PBIP for 2024/25, the Scottish Government has also paused funding on its key capital regeneration programmes, specifically the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF), the Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme (VDLIP) and the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF). These programmes have played a crucial role in delivering local economic regeneration outcomes in recent years and have supported numerous projects which have brought significant benefits to local communities. These projects have often brought buildings or areas of land that have been subject to decades of decay and decline back into use, across Scotland's most deprived and vulnerable communities.

14. The pausing of regeneration funding has had a significant impact on local authority place-making priorities and local community assets. The continued uncertainty and subsequent closure of funding – one third of the way through the financial year - has had a significant impact on these projects. Without access to external funding sources, it is unlikely that these projects will proceed.

15. There are no like-for-like alternative funding schemes to the RCGF, the VDLIP, the PBIP or RTIF. The impact of the continued withdrawal of these key programmes will lead to the stagnation of local authority regeneration efforts, infrastructure improvements and the stalling and potential loss of projects that will transform communities.

UK GOVERNMENT SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

16. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was a fixed term initiative and is scheduled to close in March 2025. The UKSPF has been an important part in delivering local economic development outcomes since its implementation and has supported numerous and impactful projects across the themes of Communities and Place, Local Business Support, People and Skills, and Adult Numeracy. Should the UKPSF not continue, beyond its currently scheduled programme end in March 2025, there will be significant disruption to local authorities, particularly in relation to staffing, project delivery, local business growth, supporting vulnerable communities, employability provision and delivering capital projects.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

17. East Renfrewshire Council was originally allocated £385,000 in Placed Based Investment Programme funding for 2024/25. As this has been withdrawn, the Council has now submitted a bid for £116,495 grant funding for the two projects listed in paragraph 10 of this report. This represents a potential loss of £268,505 if the two projects submitted are supported or a total loss of £385,000 if they are not supported.

18. There will be significant implications for activity and funding if there is no new or extension to the UKSPF programme beyond March 2025. East Renfrewshire Council was awarded £2,722,202 for the 3 year programme from 2022-23-2045-25 and has used this effectively to support the three core interventions of People and Skills, Communities and Place and Support for Local Business. The Council was also awarded £568,227 for the Multiply programme for the same period. If the UKSPF is not extended or replaced, the Council will have £3,290,429 less funding for important regeneration initiatives across the period 2025/26-2027/28. It should be noted that other similar funds to support regeneration and community groups have also been withdrawn.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

19. Consultation has taken place with a range of key stakeholders within the community and across Council services.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

20. There are a variety of job roles which are dependent on UKSPF funding. These include but are not limited to Employability Officers, Project Managers, Multiply Officers, UKSPF Co-ordinator, and jobs in the private and third sector. In total there are 20 posts at risk if there is no new or continuation programme post March 2025. This includes East Renfrewshire Council staff, procured business partners and other delivery partners. These are fixed-term roles, and the Council does not have the funding required to extend these positions beyond March 2025 without UKSPF support. There are real concerns that valuable expertise, experience, and local knowledge will be lost if the Council is not in a position to extend these temporary contracts, as staff will seek alternative employment. Notice of contract termination to those staff on temporary contracts will have to be issued by December 2024 if there is no confirmation of extending the programme post-March 2025.

21. There are no property, legal, IT, Subsidy Control, equalities, sustainability and climate change implications associated with this report.

CONCLUSIONS

22. It is disappointing that the Scottish Government is unable to provide the full £385,000 previously allocated to East Renfrewshire Council under the PBIP for 2024/25. The potential reduced allocation of £116,495 will, however, support the continuation of two priority projects in the area. The PBIP was announced as a five year programme, and plans were made accordingly, including, engagement with local stakeholders. The curtailment of the programme in 2024/25 will have an impact on our ability to support regeneration projects identified as priorities by our local communities. It should be noted that year 5 funding in 2025/26 may also be at risk and that no new bids will be called for until future funding is confirmed by the Scottish Government.

23. These programmes have played a crucial role in delivering local economic regeneration outcomes in recent years and have supported numerous projects which have brought significant benefits to local communities. These projects have helped our residents into employment, supported new and growth businesses in the area and brought buildings or areas of land that have been subject to decades of decay and decline back into use, across East Renfrewshire's most deprived and vulnerable communities. The Economic Development team will continue to work with partners on approaches to placemaking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

24. It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- (a) Note the changes to Place Based Investment Programme funding to Local Authorities in 2024/25;
- (b) Note the new, reduced bidding process for funding in 2024/25;
- (c) Seek approval for the continuation of two projects outlined in the report; and
- (d) Note the updates on other regeneration and infrastructure funding.

Director of Environment

Further information can be obtained from Michaela Sullivan, Head of Place, 0141 577 3116
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September 2024

APPENDIX 1

Placed Based Investment Programme 2023-24

Total requests submitted: £428,346

Project Name	Applicant	Project Summary	Amount	Panel Comments	Ward
Business Premises Improvement Scheme	I Love Clarkston Business Improvement District	<p>Aimed at creating inviting shop fronts, the initiative supports modifications, refurbishments, and signage improvements.</p> <p>Anticipate being able to fund up to 10 business improvements with shop front grants of £5,000.</p> <p>Introduce an Accessibility Improvement Scheme, offering up to £1,000 to enhance access to premises.</p>	£60,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fits with the aims and objectives of the programme • Has been identified as a priority through the preparation of the Clarkston Local Action Plan • Will provide improvements to the town centre • Design guide to be approved by East Renfrewshire Council • Only non-statutory accessibility improvements to be funded • Priority should be given to improvements that will have the greatest impact to town centre aesthetic • This will be the first phase of shop front improvements. Anticipated that the BID will access future funding opportunities so more shops in the town centre can benefit from this scheme 	Ward 4 - Clarkston, Netherlee and Williamwood Ward 5 - Newton Mearns South and Eaglesham
Cowan Park Community Sports Hub	East Renfrewshire Council (Economic Development)	<p>This project aims to refurbish the building formerly known as Cowan Park Bowling Club and create a community sports hub.</p> <p>Works include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading all toilet facilities; upgrading the changing rooms; alterations to the kitchen area and servery; replacing lead pipework 	£123,346	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fits with the aims and objectives of the programme • Re-use of the building has been identified as a priority in the Barrhead Local Action Plan • Will bring back empty property back into use for the benefit of the local community • Propose to match fund with East Renfrewshire Council Regeneration Capital budget, £128,546, to take total funding available to £250,000 	Ward 1 - Barrhead, Liboside and Uplawmoor

Winter Wonderland Light Show	All About Barrhead Business Improvement District	<p>The aim is to elevate footfall and draw visitors from beyond to the local area. The Christmas lighting project aims to foster repeated visits, and extend dwell time within the town.</p> <p>This initiative is designed to stimulate local spending and enhance business participation, contributing to a vibrant community atmosphere.</p>	£31,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fits with the aims and objectives of the programme • Has been identified as a priority in the Barrhead Local Action Plan • Will provide further seasonal attraction in the town centre • Will complement other works being planned for the town centre • Will increase footfall to town centre and increase spend to benefit local businesses 	Ward 1 - Barrhead, Liboside and Uplawmoor
New Public Space CCTV Cameras	East Renfrewshire Council (Community Safety Service, Business Operations & Partnerships Department)	<p>In partnership with Police Scotland, an exercise was undertaken in 2023 to identify new locations where communities would benefit from CCTV cameras. This resulted in a list of 10 location with the top 2 being identified below and subject of this application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auchenback / Barrhead South - Aurs Rd, Springfield Rd. • Newton Mearns – Maidenhill, Southern Glasgow Orbital. 	£50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fits with the aims and objectives of the programme • The project will support the delivery of services provided by Community Safety, which contributes to Outcome 4 of the Council's Outcome Delivery Plan that '<i>East Renfrewshire residents live in safe and supportive communities</i>'. • It would also support the Council's joint Anti-Social Behaviour approach with Police Scotland and the terms of reference for the Council's multi agency Safer East Ren Partnership, by assisting to tackle acts of criminality and anti-social behaviour. 	Ward 1 - Barrhead, Liboside and Uplawmoor Ward 5 - Newton Mearns South and Eaglesham
All About Barrhead Business Improvement District	Town Centre and Welcome Banners	The proposal aims to install lamp post banners throughout Barrhead's town centre, transitioning from the current scattered placement in targeted areas to a comprehensive coverage strategy.	£14,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fits with the aims and objectives of the programme • Has been identified as a priority in the Barrhead Local Action Plan • Demonstrates a place based approach. • Compliments other regeneration projects taking place in Barrhead 	Ward 1 - Barrhead, Liboside and Uplawmoor

		Aim to foster a sense of togetherness and unity among residents and businesses, addressing concerns about the perceived fragmentation of the town centre and ensuring that Barrhead is portrayed as a cohesive whole.			
Sub total			£278,346		
Not recommend for approval					
Clarkston After School Service Limited	Clarkston After School Service - Riverside Development	The project aims to increase capacity by 33% (from 33 to 44 places) through the installation of a 15m x 9m wood clad sustainable energy efficient and well insulated modular building to provide a much-needed space for the after school service and other community groups. Creating additional before and after school care places.	£100,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not fits with the aims and objectives of the programme Has not been identified as a priority in the Clarkston Local Action Plan Needs longer term lease from land owner to secure the investment. Investment in a private business with limited wider community benefit. This seems like a sound business, employing many local people and providing a much-needed service locally. The application is weak from a place-based perspective and cannot demonstrate sufficient community involvement 	Ward 4 - Clarkston, Netherlee and Williamwood
The Retail Trust	Facilitating equality of access at Crookfur House	To repurpose a disused building of the Hugh Fraser Estate site, demolish the building immediately adjacent to Crookfur House To create tarmac parking bays (including disability bays), EV charging, and bicycle store	£50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has not been identified as a priority in the Clarkston Local Action Plan Reliant on a number of funders to match fund and uncertainty if all other grant applications would be successful. Organisation has reached subsidy control threshold having received funds already from PBIP and ERREF. 	Ward 5 - Newton Mearns South and Eaglesham

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning permission and other consents would need to be in place. • Asbestos considerations would need addressed, this is a statutory obligation so could not be funded by PBIP. • The need for additional parking has not been justified in terms of numbers of additional spaces required. 	
Sub total			£150,000		
Totals submitted			£428,346		