

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Subject: DENNY TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION  
UPDATE REPORT**  
**Meeting: EXECUTIVE**  
**Date: 30 SEPTEMBER 2014**  
**Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise of progress of the Denny town centre regeneration project including the results of a recent Stage 1 Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) bid made by the Council for the project and the implications of continuing to the next stage of this bid process.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council is proceeding with the regeneration of Denny town centre and recently submitted a Stage 1 RCGF Bid for £1.4m relating to Phase 1 of the development. The bid is for expenditure scheduled during financial year 2015/16. RCGF is a joint Scottish Government/local authority led scheme with an annual budget of £25m providing financial support for projects that help to deliver large-scale improvements and sustainable regeneration outcomes. On 26 June 2014 it was confirmed that the Council had been invited to proceed to the second stage of the process.
- 2.2 Following the success of this initial bid a Stage 2 Bid was submitted on 8 September. One of the main criteria for a successful award is that development can only start on site from 1 April 2015, with RCGF finance being utilised between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016. A decision on the RCGF award is anticipated in November 2014.

**3.0 PROGRAMME TIMESCALE & IMPLICATIONS OF RCGF**

- 3.1 The prospect of RCGF support for the Denny regeneration project is welcome as it will assist significantly in its delivery, potentially augmenting the Council's commitment to the scheme. However it can have an impact on the development programme for the project.
- 3.2 Regular updates have been given to elected members and the Community Council conveying the intended delivery timescales for the project. These updates stress that the development timescales are fluid as they are subject to third party agreements in the site assembly, utility disconnection and management process. The proposed timescales are targets which are subject to change. The most recent dates outlined anticipated the construction phase commencing with tender award to the successful contractor in November 2014 with completion in June 2017.

- 3.3 Following acquisition of properties and relocation of occupants a demolition contractor for the remainder of block A and block B at Church Walk was appointed in July 2014. Their most recent programme identifies a site start for demolition at the end of September with the main structure demolished this calendar year and the full contract completed in January 2015. The demolition programme was extended due to one tenant (Boots) requiring to remain in the block until October, their relocation being subject to issues concerning the delivery timescale for their temporary modular building. The appointed contractor for provision of that building has outlined contract completion early in October, with Boots then completing their fit-out before vacating the Church Walk Unit.
- 3.4 The proposed date for the Phase 1 development commencing through a contract award has been previously stated as November 2014. This would have seen a site start towards the end of 2014. This timetable is now affected by two important elements:
- i) Demolition contract: The appointed Phase 1 contractor will be unable to start on site until all demolition works are completed and the demolition contractor has moved off site. This will not be achieved until January 2015, making the earliest site start for construction February 2015.
  - ii) RCGF bid implications: A Stage 2 bid submission has now been made and a condition of acceptance is that works will not commence on site until after 1 April 2015.

#### 4.0 DELIVERY PROGRAMME

- 4.1 The options available to the Council in respect of Phase 1 delivery are:
- i) Continue with the existing programme, which would adjust the start date to February 2015 for the Phase 1 contract award, taking into account the adjusted timescale described above. Site start would be determined by the completion of the demolition contract, however, it would compromise access to the RCGF funding. This would mean a tender process for the phase 1 works starting immediately.
  - ii) Delay tendering of Phase 1 until after the RCGF funding decision in November. This enables the proposed tender award date to be set and avoids conflict with the demolition works.

The proposed amended timetable would be as follows:

Demolition contractor mobilisation on site	end September 2014
RCGF award decision	November 2014
Contract tender Phase 1	October 2014 (if proceeding without pursuing the RCGF bid) November 2014 (if awaiting the outcome of the bid process)
Demolition contract completed	January 2015
Phase 1 site start	February 2015 (if no RCGF bid) April 2015 (if awaiting outcome of the RCGF bid process)

4.2 It is not anticipated that the delay to the site start on phase 1 works until February or April 2015 will affect the final completion date for Phase 1 in 2017. This will however be contingent on successful completion of all elements of the project including those in third party control as has previously been stated.

4.3 In addition to the above matters, work has also been progressing on related aspects of the project:

- War Memorial

The Council has made provision for the temporary re-siting of the existing town centre war memorial, during the regeneration project's demolition and construction phase, to the cemetery at Broompark Community Centre adjacent to the existing town centre. The appointed contractor (T & N Gilmartin Contractors Ltd) initiated the programme of works on 18 August and the works are now complete.

- Icecream Architecture(ICA)

ICA were appointed by Falkirk Community Trust (with funding support from Creative Scotland) as lead artist in October 2013 to work with the community and the Council's design team in the development of the proposed town square as well as promoting an understanding of how public art can contribute to the project through a Public Art Strategy. ICA have carried out extensive consultation with the Denny community which has helped the Council in designing the town square. A report will be presented by ICA to the community and Members as a formal conclusion to the project outlining proposed artist commissions for the development of artworks/interventions within the public realm space based on findings from the community engagement.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

### Policy Implications

5.1 Town centre regeneration is a key priority of the Strategic Community Plan, My Future's in Falkirk and related policies. The submission of the RCGF bid supports these policies.

### Legal Implications

5.2 Delivery of the regeneration project is being progressed with the support of the Council's Legal Services and, where necessary, external legal advisors.

### Financial Implications

5.3 The Council has recognised that delivery of the Denny town centre in the current financial climate is challenging. It is subject to market and financial pressures and therefore the scope to attract external financial support to aid delivery is important. The Council committed to deliver this project through its General Service capital programme, involving disposal of existing assets and redirection of resources from the Portfolio Management Plan as approved by Council in October 2011.

5.4 It is acknowledged that the final cost for delivery of the scheme will depend on the outcome of tendering and, if agreed, the result of the external funding bid to RCGF.

Planning Implications

5.5 Town centre regeneration is a key tool in the delivery of the Council's Local Development Plan commitment to enhance the role of town centres and regenerate district centres.

**6.0 CONCLUSION**

6.1 The Denny town centre regeneration project is reaching an important stage with the prospect of demolition completion and commencement of the construction of the first phase now imminent. The potential of additional grant support for the project via RCGF is welcome. While there is no guarantee that the Council's Stage 2 Bid for Scottish Government funding will be successful, it is suggested the delay in initiating Stage 1 development to 1 April 2015 is worthy of consideration by the Executive as it provides the Council with the possibility of accessing an additional £1.4m funding.

**7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**7.1 It is recommended that the Executive consider the two options for delivery of the phase 1 of Denny town centre project and determine which one it wishes to instruct officers to pursue.**

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Director of Development Services

Date 30 September, 2014

Contact Officers: Colin Frame/Douglas Duff. Ext: 0972/4952.

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Denny Town Centre Regeneration Files.

Anyone wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01324 590972 and ask for Colin Frame.