

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the coat of arms of the Town of Ayr. The coat of arms consists of a shield divided into four quarters. The top-left quarter shows a castle tower. The top-right quarter shows a stag's head with antlers. The bottom-left quarter shows a three-masted sailing ship on the water. The bottom-right quarter shows a bird with spread wings. Above the shield is a crown with four fleurs-de-lis. Below the shield is a ribbon with the motto 'A'NE FOR A'.

Agenda Item 13

Town Centre Update and Capital Fund 2019/20

Falkirk Council

Title: Town Centre Update and Capital Fund 2019/20
Meeting: Executive
Date: 18 June 2019
Submitted By: Director of Development Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report updates the Committee on the work relating to Falkirk's town centres. It includes an update on the work to develop a Falkirk town centre partnership and a suggested approach to the delivery of works relating to the Scottish Government's recently announced Town Centre Capital Fund allocation for the period 2019/20.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Executive agrees:-

- (1) to participate in the "Revitalised Falkirk", the Town Centre Partnership on the basis of the terms of reference contained in Appendix 1 to this report**
- (2) to participate in the Falkirk Town Centre partnership, nominating three elected members to this new body**
- (3) the approach to delivery of the Council's allocation of town centre capital funds for 2019/20, as summarised in this report;**
- (4) that officers proceed to finalise project delivery arrangements and costs for each of the priority projects as summarised in this report;**
- (5) to receive a further report on the progress of these proposals for final decision.**

3. Background

- 3.1. The Council is pursuing a programme of work to regenerate its town centres. This work presently focuses on:
- ***Falkirk***- where the Council has recently completed the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) and work has been underway, via a Town Centre Working Group, to develop a town centre action plan.
 - ***Denny*** – completing the Phase 1 redevelopment scheme and marketing Phases 2 & 3 of the site

- **Grangemouth** – working with community organisations via the Community Planning Partnership to prepare an action plan for the regeneration of the town centre
- 3.2. The Scottish Government launched a £50 million capital fund earlier this year to help regenerate and boost the performance of town centres. The Town Centre Fund, which has been set up in partnership with COSLA, is supporting councils to ensure their high streets are more diverse, sustainable and successful in the face of changing and evolving retail patterns.
- 3.3. Falkirk's allocation of the fund is £1,976,000 and must be utilised by March 2020. The Council requires to allocate this fund and bring forward a range of investments which will make town centres more vibrant, enterprising, and accessible.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 In Falkirk, the town centre working group has progressed its vision and action plan and, as reported at the March 2019 meeting of the Executive, has recommended the formation of a new town centre partnership, 'Revitalising Falkirk', to take forward the regeneration of the town centre.
- 4.2 At a recent meeting of the town centre working group, the proposed terms of reference for the new body were set out (Appendix 1). It is proposed that these are now agreed by the Executive and that it should nominate three elected members to represent the Council on this new body. Progress of the work of the new partnership will be the subject of further reports to the Executive.
- 4.3 The decision to invest in town centres must be taken in the context of recent regeneration activity and town centre vacancy rates which recent town centre 'health check' work has shown to be proportionately higher in Falkirk, Grangemouth and Bo'ness. The project submissions for the Town Centre Capital Fund should also accord with the Strategic Community Plan, the town centre regeneration strategy and action plans, and the Scottish Government's Town Centre Action Plan
- 4.4 A summary of the suggested projects is contained in the table below. It is proposed that funding is allocated to develop the following projects in Falkirk, Grangemouth and Bo'ness to help address the needs of these town centres. Details of these projects will be worked up in further detail in order that a final decision on these projects can be reached:

Town	Project
Falkirk	Signage review and upgrade works.
	Car Parking – off street/car parks review and investment.

	<p>CARS II - opportunity to extend and protect heritage buildings in Falkirk town centre. Appointment of consultants to develop funding proposal and identify and prioritise an early grant intervention for the town centre.</p> <p>Public Realm improvements to Newmarket Street and Lintriggs – appointment of consultants to examine opportunities.</p> <p>Luggage lockers to support local tourism expectations.</p> <p>Exploration of Falkirk High and Grahamston stations opportunities re accessibility and connection to town centre in connection with recently completed Abellio/Scotrail Station Travel Plan.</p> <p>Wifi to town centre – providing town centre user connectivity and digital opportunities.</p> <p>Public Art Project opportunities to 2 locations High Street and Grahams Road.</p>
Grangemouth	<p>Grangemouth 'Making Places' outcomes to be progressed.</p> <p>Demolition options to longstanding vacant and unlettable commercial assets.</p> <p>Wifi to town centre – providing town centre user connectivity and digital opportunities</p> <p>Conservation Audit of Grangemouth town centre</p> <p>Engagement with private owners on development options</p>
Bo'ness	<p>Wifi to town centre – providing town centre user connectivity and digital opportunities</p> <p>Vacant property opportunities to be explored to support the move back into economic use.</p> <p>Access / configuration improvements to library for community and service benefit.</p>

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Town centre stakeholders, community representatives and partners have helped to identify the town centre investment projects outlined in this report as eligible for the fund. This work complements work underway in relation to the implementation of the town centre Action Plan, Further engagement will take place to finalise the list of projects to be taken forward and these will be presented for approval by the Executive.

5.2 Governance

The delivery of the Falkirk town centre action plan will be progressed by the Revitalising Falkirk Partnership. Periodic updates on the work of the Partnership will be presented to the Executive.,

6. Implications

Financial

- 6.1 The Town Centre Capital Fund award has attracted £1,976,000 to support the projects outlined previously. These monies have to be committed within the financial year 2019-20. The revenue implications of these investments will require to be contained within existing budgets and discussions are ongoing with relevant Services to ensure support for ongoing maintenance of this investment.

Resources

- 6.2 It is anticipated that project support will be required to progress the delivery of the regeneration fund projects. Opportunities for training and employment arising from project works will be maximised where achievable in the timescale.

Legal

- 6.3 There are no legal implications arising from the report recommendations.

Risk

- 6.4 There are no risk implications arising from the report's recommendations at this point. A risk matrix will be established for the delivery of the Town Centre Capital Fund programme.

Equalities

- 6.5 No equality and poverty impact assessments are required.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 6.6 Environmental impact of the proposed works will be assessed as appropriate through the planning process.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The new Revitalising Falkirk town centre partnership will play an important role in taking forward the plans to reinvigorate the fortunes of Falkirk town centre. Further updates on the work of the partnership will come forward to the Executive.
- 7.2 The award of £1,976,000 in support of the Council's Town Centre Regeneration Strategy is appreciated. The package of projects recommended for approval will make a tangible impact on local centres at this time and will aid the efforts of the Council and its partners to secure further regeneration. A report on commitment of funds towards these projects will be provided at a future meeting of the Executive.

Director of Development Services

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Date: 04 June 2019

Appendices

None.

List of Background Papers:

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

- Falkirk Town Centre Action Plan
- Falkirk town centre health check: <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/planning-building/planning-policy/monitoring-and-information/town-centre-health-check.aspx>

Terms of Reference

‘Revitalising Falkirk’ – Town Centre Partnership

Background

It has been recognised for some time that Falkirk Town Centre, like many, is being negatively affected by retail decline and under investment. However it was the news in May 2018 that Marks & Spencer were withdrawing from the town centre which highlighted the need for imminent action.

Following meetings with potential town centre investors, a series of workshops with broader stakeholder input was undertaken courting thoughts and opinions on how to revitalise Falkirk. This was facilitated in collaboration with Scottish Future’s Trust, Scotland’s Towns Partnership and Architecture and Design Scotland and had Scottish Governments ‘Town Centres First’ and Place Making principles at its core. A new vision for the town centre was established, promoting it as a place which:

- is a strong and distinctive place to live, work and rest
- is a vibrant place for interaction
- is at the heart of an economic powerhouse (aligned to the Investment Zone)
- has a diverse range of uses with culture at its heart
- attracts people and business back
- exploits the benefits of heritage
- ensures community ‘ownership’

An action plan was developed and this new Partnership will focus on the delivery of the action plan to revitalise the town centre, which includes the investment in Falkirk town centre by Falkirk Council of a new Headquarters and Arts centre facility.

Objectives

The purpose of the ‘Revitalising Falkirk’ town centre partnership is to ensure delivery of the framework and timescales laid out in the town centre action plan which covers physical, social and economic projects and will include the following themes and objectives:

- Governance
- Communication
- Creating Hubs
- Reinvigorating Retail
- Town Centre Living
- Infrastructure

These objectives will feed directly in to the wider town centre action plan and it will be for the Partnership to drive forward these objectives within the timescales provided. It will also provide information back to decision makers for informed judgement and communication of key milestones to other stakeholders involved in the process.

In the decision making process, the Scottish Governments Town Centres First and Place-Making Principles will be integrated, as far as possible.

It is the role of this group to ensure transparency and accountability throughout the revitalisation processes being undertaken.

Governance

Whilst it is imperative for the integrity of the Partnership that those involved are key town centre stakeholders, it is crucial the number of members is manageable and appropriate to the task.

The members of the group will:

- Foster collaboration within and out with the group
- Deliver and report on individual tasks allocated for delivery of the town centre action plan
- Champion the objectives of the action plan and support positive communication
- Understand and respect competing priorities and perspectives
- Notify members in a timely manner of decisions which may impact on the workings of the group
- Attend meetings of the Partnership or its sub-groups or nominate a proxy, as appropriate

The Partnership will meet quarterly. In addition, it will meet bi-annually with a Town Centre Forum involving a wider group of town centre stakeholders and community interests.

Members will include:

Stakeholder	Organisation	Place Allocation
Elected Members	Falkirk Council	3
Business Improvement District and Local Retailers	Falkirk Delivers	3
Town Centre & Community Stakeholder	Forth Environment Link	1
Town Centre & Community Stakeholder	Forth Valley College, Falkirk	1
Public Transport Provider	First Bus	1
Public Transport Provider	Abellio	1
Policy	Scottish Futures Trust	1
Policy	Scotland's Towns Partnership	1
Culture & Wellbeing	Falkirk Community Trust	1

In Attendance	Organisation	Place Allocation
Local Authority Executive	Falkirk Council	3
Co-opted Board Advisor	Falkirk Delivers	1

The partnership will be chaired by the Leader of Falkirk Council, Councillor Cecil Meiklejohn.

At an appropriate point in time a space(s) will be made available for developer interests in the town centre. This is contingent on the outcome of the procurement process around the investment of the new Council HQ and Arts Centre. Opportunities for additional participation (e.g health & social care, third sector) will be considered as work progresses.

Actions relating to the delivery of the action plan will be allocated amongst the partners with updates and outcomes reported on to agreed timescales.

Methodology

Having established short, medium and longer term timescales in the action plan, the partnership will have an initial meeting to allow the group to assign roles and agree on immediate objectives this should then move to quarterly, with regular progress updates on the action plan, as required.

The Partnership will also establish sub groups as appropriate to carry forward agreed actions which may include but not be limited to engagement with potential developers, establishing a key communications strategy and liaison with relevant external agencies on specific issues of concern.

The Partnership will also establish a Town Centre Forum involving a range of stakeholders. This forum should meet twice over the first year of the partnership to support the work of the partnership in communicating key messages and act as a sounding board for the direction of work and actions arising from the Partnership.

Clear and ongoing dialogue and a communication between the Partnership, sub groups and forum will ensure a culture of participation and collaboration is fostered.

Reporting

Actions arising from Partnership meetings will be reported on at the subsequent meeting, unless an interim update is relevant. The Partnership recognises that due to the flexible nature of the action plan interim updates may be required.

The Partnership will report to Falkirk Economic Partnership and the Falkirk Community Planning Partnership.

Output from this Partnership will also be made available to other committees, partnerships and relevant town centre bodies, with approval.

The Terms of Reference for this group may be amended at any time by majority agreement of the Partnership.