

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Budget Monitoring Board
DATE	10 September 2009
CORPORATE DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh, Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure
TITLE OF REPORT	Town Centre Regeneration Fund Bid

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present to the Board a summary of the applications that have been made to the Town Centre Regeneration Fund Bid. The report seeks approval for the provision of £55,000 match funding from the under spend in the Corporate Investment Fund Budget for the Safer Places Improves Places (SPIS) bid and the Retail Rocks Aberdeen bid.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- a) To note the application details;
- b) To approve the allocation, if the bid is successful, of £55,000 towards the SIPS bid from the under spend in the Corporate Investment Fund Budget.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no State Aid implication.

The Bid for SPIS is for £1,104,031 of which the Council has indicated it could provide £418,000 match funding, including the Corporate Investment Fund Budget.

The Bid of Retail Rocks is for £881,000 of which the Council has indicated it could provide £307,500 match funding.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Fund is intended to make a key contribution to the National Outcomes of the Scottish Government, in particular helping to ensure that:

- We live in a Scotland that is one of the most attractive places for doing business in Europe
- We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
- We live in well designed, sustainable place where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
- We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for the future generations.

- We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger;
- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others;
- We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.

The Council's Administration Policy (Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward-looking) emphasises continuing to drive regeneration opportunities, striving to buy goods and products locally, the adoption of ambitious recycling targets and measure to ensure safer communities.

The retention of small businesses in the community and the need to make safe, attractive and sustainable places for people to shop locally are key elements of Aberdeen City's Neighbourhood Community Action Plans 2009/2010.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Aberdeen City Council owns the majority of the relevant areas to be enhanced in both bids. With regards to Retail Rocks, the Council negotiate with the relevant owners of the vacant buildings to ensure Best Value and all Legal requirements are completed.

A full Health and Safty Risk Assessment will be carried out before any works are started in accordance with the Council's procedures. The works will be completed in a way to minimise environmental impacts and this has been stated in the bids.

Using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), Torry is the most deprived data zone in Aberdeen. In the employment, health and education and training and is in the category most deprived 5-10% for housing. In the "Health Traffic Lights" data published by NHS Grampian, the Torry neighbourhood records red traffic lights for Mortality, Substance Use, Ill Health and Injury, Mental Health and Function and Child and Maternal Health. This is a community which will benefit from new retail priovision which will target some of these inequalities, particularly in the area of Healthy eating and skills and retail training.

6. REPORT

Background

On the 30th April the Government published the information and guidance for their new Town Centre Regeneration Fund. The Government indicated that the fund was to recognises the important contribution made by Scotland's town centres and wants to see town centres reach their full potential to support local economies through these challenging economic times.

The total funding available in 2009-10 for the whole of Scotland is £60m. The intention is to allocate this funding in two tranches: first application closing date was 5th June (£40m allocated); second closing date is 28 August (£20m intended).

The fund is for capital only and cannot be used either retrospectively or as a substitute for programmed spend. The Fund can be used for the following types of use:

- Improving pedestrian or vehicle access to a town centre
- Improving parking provision within a town centre
- Attracting increased footfall, both day and night
- Diversification of the mix of services and amenities within a town centre, underpinned by an understanding of the requirements of the local community
- Acquisition of gap sites and vacant properties for redevelopment
- Streetscape improvements which enhance and improve how a town centre operates, providing these are of sufficient scale and ambition to represent a capital investment
- Remediation of vacant or derelict sites within the town centre to fit them for retail, residential, business or recreational use.
- Purchase of gap sites to allow for use as residential, retail, business or recreation.
- Remodelling of existing premises to provide a suitable mix and floorplan of retail, business, residential and recreational uses, or to comply within Disability Discrimination Act legislation.

The government in the guidance which identifies the criteria for assessment of bids also identify a number of features they would expect to see e.g.

- Leverage i.e. other funding from the public and for private sector
- Speed of delivery e.g. all grants need to be claimed by end of March 2010.
- Evidence that bids have been developed and agreed with local partnerships including the local authority and businesses; and that, where appropriate, delivery will involve a range of local partners.
- Any bids need to demonstrate that they have been discussed with local partners (in particular non statutory bodies need to show that they have engaged with Local Authorities and Community Planning Partnerships.)

Aberdeen City Council's First Round Bid

There is a strict geographical criteria for the fund. Eligible areas for funding are all areas recognised in the local authority development plans as town and district centres. In Aberdeen's Local Plan Rosemount and Torry are identified as Town Centres. A further 8 areas are identified as District Centres. These are Culter, Cults, Danestone, Dyce, Mastrick, Middleton Park, Upper Berryden, Lang Stracht – Rousay Drive. The latter only effective from such time as a superstore development has been completed and brought into use.

The first round bid was made under one application and was to improve the environmental quality of the areas of Mastrick, Rosemount, Torry, Cults and Peterculter. It included improving access, parking, pavements, planting, recycling facilities, extended CCTV, resurfacing and lighting.

We were informed that the application was not approved and it was indicated that a resubmission must make clear how it would:

- Increase economic activity and employment opportunities
- Ensure a well designed and accessible amenities
- Ensure the project was deliverable

Second Round Bid

Officers have for the second round bid submitted two separate applications.

1. Retail Rocks Aberdeen - Regeneration plan for the retail outlets in Torry. This project is being undertaken in partnership with Essential Edinburgh retail experts, University of Stirling Institute of Retail Studies. The project will enhance and mentor upcoming and interested entrepreneurs to set up retail businesses in the Torry area. Retail Rocks is an innovative new public/private sector partnership model which has been proposed by Retail Rocks Limited and it has been given the support of the Scottish Government at both senior ministerial and civil servant level as well as support from COSLA. It has also gained support from the private sector and the British and Scottish Retail Consortium and leading academics in retail studies. It is designed to revitalise town centres and communities by encouraging, enabling and supporting sustainable retail entrepreneurship; breaking down existing socio-economic and demographic barriers; re-educating traditional, negative mind-sets; providing a catalyst for widespread regeneration; and creating the confidence for further investment. Retail Rocks! will take vacant retail units in Torry and transform them into vibrant retail businesses providing much needed and evidenced amenity shopping and well as specialist retailing to develop a new customer base for Torry.
2. Safer Places Improved Spaces (SPIS) – Environmental Improvements to Mastrick, Rosemount , Torry, Cults and Peterculter. It included improving access, parking, pavements, planting, recycling facilities, extended CCTV, resurfacing and lighting.and Rosemount including CCTV. This will be a resubmission of the main elements of the first bid and will concentrate mainly on the environmental improvements to the shopping area in Mastrick.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/town-centres/tcrf> .