

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure Committee
DATE	23 rd February 2010
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
TITLE OF REPORT	Town Centre Regeneration Fund – Safer Places, Improved Spaces
REPORT NUMBER:	EP& I/10/038

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide information and seek approval to proceed with works being carried out through the Town Centre Regeneration Fund (TCRF) grant awarded by the Scottish Government to Aberdeen City Council in November 2009 to support improvements to the District Centres in Rosemount, Cults, Peterculter and Mastrick.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

Committee is requested:

1. To approve works to be carried out as detailed in the Notes (section 6)
2. To approve costs being aligned to existing budgets where similar works have been authorised, on the condition that costs will be reimbursed by the Scottish Government's TCRF
3. To approve the formalisation of a project team who will monitor and coordinate the works associated with the grant
4. To ask the Committee to instruct the Director of Corporate Governance to issue a letter to the Scottish Ministers, confirming that the funds will be utilised for the works detailed in the Notes (Section 6)

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In November 2009, the Council was awarded £686,031 (revised to £678,700, see note 6.4) from the Scottish Government's Town Centre Regeneration Fund for capital expenditure on projects in the town districts of Rosemount, Cults, Peterculter and Mastrick. This funding must be spent in the current financial year (2009-10) which requires the grant holder to provide evidence of expenditure, or submit a legal commitment to pursuing these works by 17th March 2010 (the date of submission of the final claim form). A full breakdown of the projects and expenditure is given in section 6 below.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

Single Outcome Agreement

- We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger
- We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need
- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others
- We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations
- We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production
- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking

“Continue to drive regeneration and take advantage of regeneration opportunities city wide as they present themselves and identify, in consultation with the local communities, immediate priorities for regeneration projects”

“Carry out a Retail Impact Assessment to assess the impact of out of town developments on the city centre”

“Strive to buy goods and products locally (where this is possible) and encourage other public sector bodies and businesses in the city to adopt a similar approach”

“Adopt ambitious targets for recycling”

“Pursue legal remedies for littering”

“Ensure the council continues to make appropriate and robust use of anti social behaviour measures.”

No Equality Impact Assessment was carried out at this stage. This project will have purely positive impacts for the communities involved. The works in Mastrick are compliant with the needs of an “at risk” area; improving community safety, access to green space, creating employability opportunities and providing access to services for all ages and abilities. These works include improving ramp access, hand rail provision, resurfacing pedestrian areas and providing more parking spaces.

Throughout the project and its geographical scope, the core objective is improving access to local services and addressing the barriers to access. This will have clear benefits to those with disabilities or access issues. Equality considerations will be taken into account at every stage of designing and conducting works.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The grant money from the Scottish Government can only be claimed upon presentation of legally binding documentation to evidence claims. If this report is approved by this committee and then authorised by the Council's Director of Corporate Governance, the Scottish Ministers will accept this as evidence of our commitment to the project and will release the grant money, on condition the works are conducted as soon as possible.

This project has a very tight time threshold; all funding has to be claimed and committed within the current financial year. In order to ensure that works are delivered according to the expectations of the Scottish Ministers and costs outlined in section 6, works contracts will be raised where necessary to deliver work packages.

In doing so, we encounter unavoidable risks associated with claiming the grant prior to conducting the works. In order to mitigate these risks, our Project Team will continue to monitor each work package and liaise with the Scottish Ministers and our Council colleagues to ensure works are completed according to quality and financial thresholds.

Whilst it is not anticipated that the works to improve road surfaces and layout and pedestrianised areas in Mastrick will cause a major impact or disrupt traffic (both vehicular and pedestrian), these works will be managed to mitigate any upheaval for the local community and business users.

6. REPORT

An application was submitted in August 2009 to the Scottish Government's Town Centre Regeneration Fund grant scheme to support extension and improvement of facilities for the purpose of encouraging a wider use of local amenities. The District Centres that will benefit from this grant money have been identified, either on the basis of being 'at risk' (Mastrick) and/or being in need of rejuvenation in order to realise their full potential (Rosemount, Cults and Peterculter). The eligibility criteria for the grant scheme insisted that the only areas where capital investment could be spent were those defined as town or district centres in the Local Plans devised by Local Authorities. The city wide proposals were discussed and approved by the Aberdeen City Alliance, Aberdeen's community planning partnership. The project has been titled 'Safer Places, Improved Spaces' and seeks to provide better access, environmental surroundings and safety within these town centres

This Town Centre Regeneration Fund grant has been awarded to improve safety in areas where the threat of crime and violence persist as a barrier to social interaction and movement throughout district centres. While Mastrick is identified as an "at-risk" neighbourhood and the corresponding improvements have been tailored to take account of this, the other eligible town centres of Rosemount, Cults and Peterculter could also benefit from an increased footfall to the areas. By encouraging more people to consider using their local amenities and business and improving the safety and accessibility of their surroundings, it is anticipated that this increased footfall will improve the long-term future and economic security of local businesses.

This grant is matched (at a ratio of 61:39) with £432,050 of contributions in kind, from the Council's 2009/10 budget allocations and other external sources. No additional funds are sought.

Total Contributions from ACC and other External Sources

Abbreviation	Source of funds	Allocation
CRIF	Corporate Revenue Investment Fund 2009/10	£55,000
NP	Neighbourhood Planning Budget 2009/10	£32,000
AG	Aberdeen Greenspace Grant 2010/11	£9,050
ERM	Equipment Repairs and Maintenance Budget 2010/11	£10,000
LO	Lining Operations Budget 2010/11	£3,000
KP	CCTV Kittybrewster Project 2010/11	£300,000 (approved by Resources Management Committee 10/3/09)
SA	Safer Aberdeen Initiative 2010/11	£7,000
ESR	Environment Services Revenue Budget 2010/11	£16,000
	Total	£432,050

The TCRF and other sources of funding are allocated to the project's respective work packages as follows:

Project Funding Allocations

Notes (see below)	Activity/Task	TCRF	Matched Funding	
			Funding from ACC	Funding from other sources
6.1	Mastrick – Greenfern Place pedestrianised shopping area thoroughfare	£185,000	£30,500 <i>£26,500, CRIF £4,000, NP</i>	£3,000 <i>AG</i>
6.2	Mastrick – Side road access link between Mastrick Drive and Arnage Drive	£47,000	£16,000 <i>£10,000, CRIF £6,000, NP</i>	
6.3	Mastrick – Greenspace Area between Mastrick Drive and Mastrick Community Centre	£58,500	£40,500 <i>£18,500, CRIF £22,000, NP</i>	£6,050 <i>AG</i>
6.4	Rosemount – Purchase and Installation of parking meters and signage and repainting parking bay lines	£34,700	£13,000 <i>£10,000, ERM £3,000, LO</i>	

6.5	Extension of CCTV provision in all areas	£310,000	£300,000 <i>KP</i>	
6.6	Provision of ShopSafe radios through Safer Aberdeen initiative	£27,500		£7,000 <i>SA</i>
6.7	Provision of litter bins and related services	£16,000	£16,000 <i>ESR</i>	
6.8	Appointment of a Project Team	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	£678,700	£416,000	£16,050

NOTES

6.1 The works involved in the Greenfern Place pedestrianised shopping area thoroughfare are described as follows:

Removal of disrepaired features:-

- raised kerbed areas along Mastrick Drive
- two squared, beds within Greenfern Place.

Installation of new features –

- Handrails for existing steps on Greenfern Place and rear exit onto Arnage Drive
- Enhanced Lighting in Greenfern Place
- Central, rectangular planted area (trees and low level shrubs) within Greenfern Place pedestrianised area
- Community notice board
- Relocation of 2 existing benches and installation of 2 further benches around the perimeter of the circular planted area
- Additional 6 robust “Derby” bins located at key spots throughout Greenfern Place and Mastrick Drive
- Key bollard access and designated lock block access for agreed service vehicles
- Repaving throughout Greenfern Place and the pedestrianised strip adjacent to Mastrick Drive
- Replacement of trees and tree guards and installation of additional trees and tree guards along the pedestrianised strip adjacent to Mastrick Drive
- Rejuvenated landscaping (trees and low level shrubs) in the existing L shaped raised beds together with power washing of raised bed walls and repaint of decorative railings
- Installation of community art work plaque (in conjunction with Muirfield Primary School) on one or both of the L shaped raised beds.
- Resurface two rear ramp access areas to Arnage Drive.

Likely Start Date – 1st April 2010

Likely End Date – 15th June 2010

6.2 The works involved in the Side road access link between Mastrick Drive and Arnage Drive are described as follows:

Removal of disrepaired features:-

- Demolition of disused public toilet and ground reinstatement to accommodate relocated recycling area, which will incorporate an enhanced fixed bin system.

Installation of new features:-

- Widened access from Greenfern Road/Mastrick Drive to improve access to District Centre Parking
- Additional parking spaces created as a result of relocating recycling centre
- Enhanced Lighting

Likely Start Date – 1st April 2010

Likely End Date – 15th June 2010

6.3 The works involved in the green space area between Mastrick Drive and Mastrick Community Centre are described as follows:

Installation of new features:-

- Replacement and repair of existing (salvageable) play equipment
- Installation of additional play equipment
- Installation of fencing surrounding play grassed area, following existing path boundary with three gated access points
- Installation of 3 seats near each gated access
- Installation of 3 Cardiff/park bins at key points within fenced area
- Improved landscaping in and around the two green space areas either side of the early years play park area

Likely Start Date – 1st March 2010

Likely End Date – 31st May 2010

Access to local amenities in Mastrick, currently hampered by a number of issues will be improved through the support of this grant. Current insufficient lighting in the pedestrianised centre, which act as a barrier to those wishing to use the shops out of day light hours; new energy efficient lighting will be installed. The condition of some of the access points to the pedestrianised centre need to be addressed; new hand rails and resurfacing of stairs and ramps will allow residents of all abilities to access their local amenities. Landscaping will include replacement tree planting, while a number of former grassed areas, currently in disrepair, are likely to be removed from the pedestrianised area to allow for more effective management on a smaller number of planted areas.

Matrick's litter problem will be improved by providing more bins to the area, as well as enhancing recycling facilities. Previous measures to ease litter problems have encountered a further problem; litter bins have been vandalised in the area. As such, anti-vandalism bins have been purchased through this capital grant and

their maintenance will be absorbed through the council's revenue budget as part of the Council's match funding for the grant.

There are certain environmental improvements to be gained through this project. Not only will the provision of improved recycling and litter facilities help reduce the amount of landfill waste generated at local level, encouraging and enabling people to shop in their local area will reduce the number of short car journeys incurred through frequent shopping trips.

A local neighbourhood partnership involving businesses, community representatives and local services worked together to develop proposals for the Mastrick District Centre. Community groups will be consulted and will be given the opportunity to get involved in the design of new planting and paving, increasing their feeling of civic pride and community involvement. Muirfield Primary School have expressed a strong interest in participating in a community arts and eco-schools project as part of the works.

Infrastructure improvements to the Mastrick District Centre will not increase current maintenance levels.

6.4 At the time of application, Jack's Brae, which sits out with the Rosemount boundary had been cited as an eligible site for the development of a much needed car park. The TCRF was approached for £42,031. Upon submission of this application, the Scottish Ministers asked for this element to be removed due to Jack's Brae's ineligible location out with the Rosemount boundary. Due to an administrative error, this element of the project was not removed from the application paperwork. Furthermore, the £42,031 was included in the award letter received in November '09 when the Scottish Government invited us to pursue this project. We have since approached the Scottish Government with a project change; in lieu of developing a new car park, we have agreed to deliver the following at a revised cost of £34,700:

Installation of new features: -

- Install 8 new parking meters; three to be located on Rosemount Place and the remaining five to be located in adjacent side streets within boundary
- Provide a total of 10 new signs (2 large and 8 small) to be installed within the Rosemount boundary to direct business users to nearby pay and display parking facilities
- Repaint parking bay lines throughout the boundary area in order to maximise parking space usage

Likely Start Date – 1st March 2010

Likely End Date – 1st May 2010

New parking meter units will be purchased at a cost of £3350 each and will be installed by Council employees. The revenue costs incurred through this extension; providing electricity to the units, pay and display tickets and staff (Wardens) costs are represented by Aberdeen City Council's match fund. Improved signage would also help to distinguish the parking areas that are located in the vicinity of local shops and amenities for those who are unfamiliar with the area's layout and facilities. Two large signs, to be located on Esslemont

Avenue and Argyle Place, and a further eight smaller signs will be designed and installed throughout the area at a cost of £500 per large sign and £200 per small sign. A review of the boundary area concluded that parking bay lines would require repainting in most streets in order to maximise the use of spaces. The £5000 from the TCRF grant to reinstate lines will be matched by Aberdeen City Council's contribution for the maintenance of the bays.

6.5 The works involved in the extension of the CCTV networks in the Cults, Peterculter, Rosemount and Mastrick areas are as follows:

Installation of new features: -

- Installation of a 5.8GHz wireless mesh network, capable of supporting a public space CCTV system in Rosemount, Mastrick, Cults and Peterculter, for both fixed and dome cameras to a CIF resolution of 360 x 240 sufficient to meet current evidential standards.
- The cameras are to be located in the designated town centres known as Rosemount (4 cameras – 3 dome & 1 fixed), Mastrick (4 cameras – 3 dome & 1 fixed), Cults (1 dome & 1 fixed) and Peterculter (1 dome & 1 fixed).
- Monitoring of the system is to be located and coordinated from Council Headquarters, St Nicholas House, Broad Street, Aberdeen.
- Access will be available to 5 high rise multi storey blocks/buildings to permit the installation of radio repeaters.
- The cameras should either be capable of delivering a suitable digital bit stream or an analogue based camera with a suitable digital converter. All cameras will record to an inbuilt hard drive with 30 days recording capability.
- The Monitoring Equipment required for this work will be one computer with dedicated cat 5 cable, and two 19 inch PC monitors.
- Maintenance Stock required; one Repeater, two Dome Cameras and two Fixed Cameras. A five year maintenance programme with next day response will be put in place to safeguard the system

Likely Start Date – 1st March 2010

Likely End Date – 31st May 2010

These works are an extension of those approved by Resources Management Committee report, 'Communal Cleaning and Security Services in Mainstream Multi Storey Blocks' of 10th March 2009 and a works contract will be raised in order to complete the new installations. The costs include maintenance cover for 5 years; the usual lifespan of cameras purchased by the Council. The exact location of the cameras will not be known until installation; they will be positioned according to the coverage afforded from the wireless network. A works contract will be raised in order to deliver the extension in a reasonable timescale and according to the quality and scope required.

6.6 The works involved in the provision of ShopSafe radios and providing related services to shopkeepers in Rosemount and Mastrick areas are as follows:

Installation of new features: -

- Providing shopkeepers with radios as part of the ShopSafe scheme; number of participating businesses to be confirmed.
- Provide access to a citywide communications network, linked to local police officers, other business members and CCTV.

Likely Start Date – 31st March 2010

Likely End Date – 30th April 2010 (for installation of radio units in participating businesses)

Staff from the Safer Aberdeen initiative approached local shopkeepers to inform them of their eligibility for the subsidised rates and to encourage them to make the most of this opportunity. Shopkeepers would ordinarily pay an annual subscription of £250 and £398.33 per annum to rent a radio. As a result of this grant, shopkeepers in eligible areas can join the scheme for 3 years at a fixed annual rate of £150, including radio hire and scheme subscription.

Although an original feature of our application, the provision of this service to shopkeepers in the Cults and Peterculter communities has been discussed and it has been concluded that this extension would be too costly for the outcomes expected.

Through Safer Aberdeen's Retail Scheme, the ShopSafe Radio link has been in operation for a number of years and its membership now exceeds 100 shopkeepers. The radios provide a link to the City Centre Police Unit and CCTV operators, so that potential criminal activities can be tracked and prevented through quick response interventions. This comprehensive monitoring and communication network has proved to be a cost-effective method of managing real-time crime.

For those who chose to, the main benefit of this investment will be participating in the widening of communications networks between the victims of crime and those who seek to prevent it.

6.7 The works involved in the provision of litter bins and related services in Cults, Peterculter, Rosemount and Mastrick areas are as follows:

Installation of new features:-

- Procure and install new litter bins within each boundary, 10 in Mastrick, 8 in Cults, 6 in Peterculter and 6 in Rosemount.

Likely Start Date – 1st March 2010

Likely End Date – 31st March 2010

The provision and installation of 30 new litter bins within the four boundaries will improve the environmental quality and appearance of these areas. Increasing the number of litter bins is essential; if we are to be successful in increasing footfall in the areas, a likely side effect will be increased amounts of litter being generated by passers-by. The bins will be located close to shops and services where the majority of pedestrian activity takes place and will mitigate existing and potential littering problems. This element of the

TCRF grant is being matched by support from the Environmental Services Revenue budget which will cover costs of maintaining and emptying the bins.

- 6.8 We have assembled a formal Project Team in order to coordinate and monitor the work packages detailed above. The group consists of colleagues from Education, Culture & Sport, Housing and Environment and Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure. It will be chaired and led by an officer from Economic and Business Development. Each member of the Project Team has accepted their work package and related responsibilities in order to satisfy the project scope. The team meets once every 4 weeks and the team leader maintains consistent communications with members between meetings. The group will continue to meet until June 2010, or whenever the work packages have all been concluded.

Planning and consultation has been underway since the award letter was received in November 2009, however the associated groundworks are to take place between February and April 2010. The project is being monitored and coordinated by a Project Team, consisting of those who will oversee and instruct the completion of works and monitor the budget. Interim reports detailing the progress of works, and a final report will be produced for the Scottish Government and a Council Committee by External Funding.

In order to complete all works and make full use of this grant, the Committee is requested to approve the report and its four recommendations.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Town Centre Maps
- CCTV Scheduled works Gantt chart