
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

23 February 2021

Cabinet

Title:	Proposals for Community Investment Fund (CIF) Expenditure
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Purpose:	To provide an update on the Millport Town Hall CIF Project and seek permission to draw down previously agreed Community Investment Fund funding in respect of the project.
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Recommendation:	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Notes the update on the Millport Town Hall project; andb) Approves the early release of a further £70,000 from the £200k CIF funding previously allocated by North Ayrshire Council for the Millport Town Hall project.
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Within its budget for 2017-18, North Ayrshire Council provided a funding allocation for the creation of an innovative fund to enable communities to address the priorities they have identified through Locality Planning Partnerships and within the context of North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership's Fair for All strategy.
- 1.2 Locality Partnerships have subsequently continued to work on their local action plans and brought forward proposals for expenditure in line with their locally identified needs. The North Coast and Cumbrae Locality Partnership developed the Millport Town Hall proposal through a process of collaboration and consensus and £200,000 was approved from CIF Funds, subject to the matched funding being secured in 2019. Cabinet approved the early release of £30,000 to allow the project to progress in 2020.
- 1.3 Millport Town Hall has continued to make progress and secure external funding including £1.5million from the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund in January 2021. This is pivotal to the completion of the project funding and the Millport Town Hall SCIO is requesting to draw down a further £70,000 for the next phase of the restoration works.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Millport Town Hall project is the restoration and regeneration of a historic building, on the At Risk Register and within a Conservation Area. The proposed use is as a multi-

purpose building housing a Heritage and Conservation Centre, Arts and Culture Centre and Community Centre. Sustainable income will be achieved from ticketed events, three holiday let flats, exhibitions, Cumbrae Lottery and local fundraisers. Community lets will be charged at a rate commensurate with those of NAC. The Feasibility Report has shown this to be a viable proposition.

- 2.2 The scale of the project was such that an ambitious funding partnership was required and the amount of CIF requested exceeded the maximum under the guidance. Cabinet outlined some safeguards to ensure that the project was financially viable before releasing funding.

In August 2019 Cabinet agreed to award £200,000 from the North Coast's allocation of the CIF to Millport Town Hall for the restoration of the building subject to:

- (i) the award being set aside for 12 months to allow for the full cost of the project to be funded; and
- (ii) a proportional reduction in the award should the overall cost of the project reduce.

- 2.3 The Millport Town Hall SCIO has worked assiduously with external funders and a cross-service range of council officers to progress the project, however progress has been difficult in the context of the external funding climate, the complexity of the funding partnership and the context of the Covid pandemic.

- 2.4 In February 2020 Cabinet approved the early release of £30,000 to enable the project to progress with architectural and quality surveyor reports. That leveraged in time-limited external funding. The project's progress depended on reports from an architect and a quantity surveyor to inform the next step of the restoration and for further funding applications where the essential detail requires to be provided by specific experts.

- 2.5 The Covid-19 pandemic impacted on the external funding available and made an already challenging task, more difficult. In September 2020, Cabinet reviewed the timescale and extended this until August 2021. Despite the challenges Millport Town Hall has continued to make progress and secure external funding.

- 2.6 In January 2021 the project secured £1.5million from the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grants Fund. This is pivotal to the completion of the project funding.

- 2.7 Work is continuing with external funders and a cross-service range of council officers to support the £2m project, manage increased materials costs due to Covid-19 and to close the revised small funding gap. This currently stands at £88,152, with work currently underway to close this remaining gap.

- 2.8 The Millport Town Hall SCIO is requesting to draw down a further £70,000 for the next phase of the restoration works.

- 2.9 If the current request is approved, the balance of the previously agreed CIF funding would be £100,000. This is an essential part of the project's funding package and further proposals will be brought to Cabinet when the project's funding package is completely agreed with other external funding partners.

2.10 The property has been alienated from Millport Common Good and the Community Asset Transfer to the Millport Town Hall SCIO is in progress.

3. Proposals

3.1 That Cabinet:

- a) Notes the update on the Millport Town Hall project; and
- b) Approves the early release of a further £70,000 from the £200k CIF funding previously allocated by North Ayrshire Council for the Millport Town Hall project.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 CIF funding is allocated within existing resources. The project intention is to continue to leverage into the area the balance of funding required for the project from external funding partners, such as Magnox.

Human Resources

4.2 None.

Legal

4.3 None.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 The purpose of Locality Planning is to reduce inequalities, increase community cohesion and advance community empowerment. Each of the CIF proposals is tested against that purpose before being presented to Cabinet. This proposal addresses inequalities by better meeting the needs of island communities and addressing social isolation and wellbeing needs amongst older people, in particular.

Environmental and Sustainability

4.5 The building will meet building and environmental standards and recently secured £20,000 for solar panels from the Green islands Fund.

Key Priorities

4.6 The proposal contained within the report supports the North Ayrshire Council Plan priorities:

- Active and strong communities;
- Inclusive, growing and enterprising local economy;
- People enjoy good life-long health and wellbeing;
- Vibrant and welcoming places; and

- A sustainable environment.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 The application supports the following pillars of community wealth building:

- Creating volunteering and skills development opportunities;
- Creating local employment through the redevelopment and in the ongoing operation;
- Advancing community enterprises;
- Advancing local ownership of underused land and building; and
- Supporting local business activities and increasing the variety of ownership models.

5. Consultation

5.1 The proposals contained within this report have been developed and approved by the respective Locality Partnerships, through consultation with local people, including young people.

Audrey Sutton
Executive Director
Communities and Education

For further information please contact **Rhona Arthur , Interim Head of Connected Communities**, on **01294 324415**.

Background Papers

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