
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

15 June 2021

Cabinet

Title: Regeneration Capital Grant Fund 2022/23

Purpose: To seek approval for the submission of applications to the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund in support of local regeneration projects for 2022/23.

Recommendation: That Cabinet agrees to the submission of the following projects in order of priority:

- i) Ardrossan Promenade, Ardrossan;
 - ii) Eglinton Country Park, Kilwinning; and
 - iii) Brisbane Observatory, Largs.
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Scottish Government recently launched the ninth round of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, inviting applications for funding by 18 June 2020. This forms part of the £325m investment establishing the new Place Based Investment Programme over the next five years. The Fund is open on a competitive basis to applications from all Scottish Local Authorities and Urban Regeneration Companies for projects delivered directly or on behalf of local groups that they support.
- 1.2 North Ayrshire has had substantial success in securing awards under the Fund with awards totalling in excess of £8m since 2014/15. Officers from Connected Communities and Economic Development and Regeneration support local community groups on an ongoing basis to develop their aspirations and projects for the Fund. This report seeks approval for the three proposals identified for the 2022/23 round of funding.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) is delivered annually in partnership with COSLA and local government. It supports locally developed place-based regeneration projects that involve local communities, help to tackle inequalities and deliver inclusive growth in deprived, disadvantaged and fragile remote communities across Scotland.

- 2.2 The Fund is subject to a two-stage assessment process. Applicants submit a summary of their project on the form provided at Stage 1 in June. Successful projects at this stage will be invited by the panel to then complete a full Stage 2 application in October. An independent investment panel agrees the recommendations to Scottish Ministers and COSLA on projects to be offered grant support.
- 2.3 The Fund is primarily aimed at providing new and/or improved infrastructure to improve the economic, social, and physical environment of communities. Projects are expected to detail how they are considering and contributing towards the target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2045. Projects should also:
- Primarily focus on areas that suffer from high levels of deprivation and disadvantage;
 - Demonstrate clear community involvement;
 - Deliver large scale transformational change with strong regeneration outcomes; and
 - Encourage additional investment and address market failure
- 2.4 Applications are assessed against four weighted criteria and four considerations:

Criteria	- Viability (10%)
	- Community involvement (15%)
	- Physical regeneration outcomes (30%)
	- Economic outcomes (25%)
	- Social outcomes (20%)
Considerations	- Ability to demonstrate the financial sustainability of the project
	- Ability to spend within the grant fund period
	- Demonstration of community involvement/support
	- That the project has emerged from a strategic process

- 2.5 Applications were invited to this round of funding focusing on expenditure in the 2022/23 financial year in April 2021. Whilst there is no restriction on the number of applications that may be submitted, given the limited funds available and highly competitive nature of the fund, applicants are advised to be realistic with the number of applications and the combined value of grant requests being made. Should multiple applications be submitted, these require to be ranked in terms of priority.
- 2.6 Officers from Connected Communities and Economic Development and Regeneration have supported with local groups and organisations to identify potential projects for submission to the Fund. This process has been informed by the funding criteria, key considerations and the level of community involvement based on the experience from previous successful applications. On this basis it is recommended that applications be submitted for the following three projects, listed in order of priority:
- i) Ardrossan Community Development Trust (Project Value £0.77m) - £0.52m grant sought towards the regeneration of Ardrossan Promenade including the repurposing of the former toilet block and new play and recreation provision. This will create a vibrant seafront destination including a community hub, accessible toilet facilities, a destination play area and beach huts to facilitate community and commercial activities;
 - ii) Eglinton Country Park (Project Value £0.7m) - £0.65m grant sought towards the upgrade of the buildings within the historic courtyard at Eglinton Country

Park including the Visitor Centre, Visitor Facilities Block and toilet facilities. This will repurpose the principal courtyard buildings as a flexible resource to support community activity and partners in education, employability and skills and the Health and Social Care Partnership for the delivery of biodiversity, environmental and outdoor learning and training;

- iii) Brisbane Observatory, Largs (Project value £0.132m) - £0.102m grant sought towards the restoration and regeneration of the historic Largs Observatory to secure this for future generations. This will preserve the nationally and internationally significant Observatory to provide public access, support community and educational activities and to encourage and support a diverse range of visitors to the Observatory and more widely, Largs.

- 2.7 Stage One applications require to be submitted by 18 June with a decision by September 2021. Thereafter a more detailed Stage Two application would be required by October 2021 with a formal decision in January 2022. Officers from Connected Communities and Economic Development and Regeneration will continue to support the groups involved in developing the projects during this period and any subsequent implementation.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 That Cabinet agrees to the submission of the following projects in order of priority:

- i) Ardrossan Promenade, Ardrossan;
- ii) Eglinton Country Park, Kilwinning; and
- iii) Brisbane Observatory, Largs.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The cost of the projects will be met using the identified resources. Match funding has been secured by the Ardrossan Community Development Trust and Brisbane Observatory Trust towards their respective projects.

Human Resources

- 4.2 The development and delivery of successful projects will be supported through existing Council resources from within Connected Communities and Economic Development and Regeneration.

Legal

- 4.3 Should any application be successful, the Council would require to enter into a funding agreement with the Scottish Government which would govern the use and expenditure of the funding.

Equality/Socio-economic

- 4.4 The projects identified will assist in meeting the socio-economic duty as set out in the Fairer Scotland Duty by reducing economic, social and physical decline and reducing socio-economic disadvantage in the identified areas. The projects will increase community cohesion and advance community empowerment in the identified areas.

Environmental and Sustainability

- 4.5 The proposals align with the proposed Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy and will deliver environmental and sustainability benefits through the positive improvement of existing sites.

Key Priorities

- 4.6 The project proposals will contribute to achieving the Council Plan priority outcomes and will contribute to the ambitions for: active and strong communities; an inclusive, growing and enterprising economy; a vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment; and a sustainable environment. In particular, the proposals will: build stronger relationships between the council, communities and partners; enable us to support our communities to maximise the use of community assets; and enable us to work with communities to improve the quality of the local environment through a participatory approach.

Community Wealth Building

- 4.7 The proposals will contribute to the delivery of the Land and Assets pillar, objectives and associated actions of the Community Wealth Building Strategy. They will support equitable land development and the development of underutilised assets for community use and ownership. They will also contribute to the Procurement pillar through the inclusion of appropriate community benefit or local supplier clauses within projects in line with the Council's community benefit policy.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Officers have engaged with Council Services, local groups and organisations to identify potential projects for submission to the Fund. The detailed development of the projects will be subject to further consultation for example through the planning process.

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For further information please contact **Louise Kirk, Senior Regeneration Manager**, on **01294 324766**.

Background Papers