



Agenda Item 6

Regeneration Fund Update

Falkirk Council

Title: Regeneration Fund Update
Meeting: Falkirk Council
Date: 06 December 2023
Submitted By: Director of Place Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This purpose of this report is to provide an update to Falkirk Council on progress with the Regeneration Fund agreed at Falkirk Council on 1 March 2023.
- 1.2 The report includes an update on the current position of the former Royal Hotel, Slamannan, as well as a list of other proposed priority projects.
- 1.3 The recommendations in this report contribute to the strategic priorities within the 2022-27 Council Plan to support a thriving economy and green transition as the proposed investment will assist economic development and town centre regeneration.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Council:

- (1) notes the progress with projects proposed under the Regeneration Fund including the former Royal Hotel, Slamannan, and the Battle of Falkirk signage;**
- (2) agrees that the projects, listed at section 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 of this report, will be prioritised for funding under the Regeneration Fund application of reserves, and**
- (3) agrees to delegate responsibility to the Director of Place Services, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, to draw down budget from reserves, up to the value of £1,000,000, and allocate project budgets once project costs are confirmed.**

3. Impact on Climate Change Targets

- 3.1 At this stage of the project proposals, the impact on the climate in terms of carbon emissions associated with the development of individual projects cannot be fully determined. It is likely that there will be an increase in emissions as a consequence of some, or all, of the projects but in the absence of surveys and detailed investigations these cannot currently be quantified at this stage.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Town Centre Regeneration Update to Members, issued via the Information Bulletin (25 November 2022), recognised that there is a role to play for the Council to support the smaller settlements in the Falkirk region, particularly where significant economic and environmental challenges are identified. Following this, Members requested that engagement be undertaken, to identify priority projects in two pilot villages – Slamannan (Rural South), and Bonnybridge (Rural North).
- 4.2 At the meeting of Falkirk Council on 1 March 2023, upon considering the Revenue Budget 2023/24 and Financial Strategy report, Members agreed to apply reserves of £1m for the purpose of establishing a Regeneration Fund. The Regeneration Fund is to support infrastructure improvements in the five town centres and also the two villages of Bonnybridge and Slamannan. The report noted that Officers would bring forward reports to Committee to draw down on these funds.
- 4.3 Members also agreed, in reference to the Regeneration Fund, to ask Officers to prioritise the delivery of the report into the future of the Royal Hotel, Slamannan, with Officers giving options and recommendations on the future of the building and site. Further, it was agreed by Members to ask Officers to provide a report into new signs on Falkirk High Street that direct people to the Battle of Falkirk 1298 Monument, understanding that 2023 was the 725th anniversary of this battle.
- 4.4 This report provides an update to Members on the development of project proposals, to be considered under the Regeneration Fund, under the following three areas.
 - 4.4.1 Pilot Projects within Slamannan (including the former Royal Hotel) and Bonnybridge.
 - 4.4.2 Wider regeneration projects following the establishment of a Falkirk Regeneration Fund.
 - 4.4.3 Battle of Falkirk signage in and around Falkirk High Street.

5. Considerations

- 5.1 The Growth and Investment Unit's regeneration vision for our village centres is to see the most disadvantaged communities supported with investment shaped by the needs and aspirations of local people. We propose to accelerate our ambitions for improvements to the built environment and support 20-minute neighbourhoods, town centre actions, community lead regeneration and community wealth building.
- 5.2 With this in mind, and when developing options under the Regeneration Fund application of reserves, officers have progressed engagement across the pilot project areas of Slamannan and Bonnybridge, as well as a wider call for

expressions of interest from local communities and partners across the Falkirk region.

Pilot Projects within Slamannan and Bonnybridge

- 5.3 Placing the community at the centre of all project ideas, both communities have been engaged to explore and develop project ideas for further consideration. Local Elected Members have also been engaged, and included within invitations to site-visits, on-line discussions and in-person meetings as part of the engagement process.
- 5.4 The priority projects identified in each area are now being further developed and designed (in collaboration with key stakeholders as necessary). Indicative costs for each of the projects in each settlement are provided below in section 5.4.1 and 5.4.2. Members should note that these are indicative costs only and require to be thoroughly tested through a more rigorous feasibility and costing exercise. As such, not all projects listed may be affordable within the available £1m budget. Should this be the case, Officers will engage with local community stakeholders to prioritise projects within budget availability.

5.4.1 Slamannan

The following priority outline projects are proposed in Slamannan:

- Royal Hotel demolition and creation of green space at this site (£140,000);
- Village Clock restoration/historic interpretation (£100,000), and
- Public Realm Improvements to main parade (£250,000).

5.4.2 Bonnybridge

The following priority outline projects are proposed in Bonnybridge:

- Bonnybridge Toll roundabout and public realm improvements (£300,000);
- Historical Annotations (£3,000);
- Memorial Park Improvements (£60,000);
- Astroturf to Anderson Park (£100,000), and
- Pump Track (£100,000).

- 5.5 Local stakeholders will be kept informed and involved in the projects as they progress. Officers will also ensure that, once complete, there is a review of the projects with the local communities and stakeholders, asked to provide feedback on the projects themselves and the process adopted to select and develop the projects. This will help inform any future progress reports to Council Executive and also future implementation of regeneration projects across the Falkirk Council area.

Falkirk Regeneration Fund

- 5.6 A Falkirk Regeneration Fund was established, in early Summer 2023, to provide opportunity for local groups and partners, across Falkirk region, to

submit project proposals to be considered within the £1m application of reserves.

- 5.7 While eight alternative (not Slamannan or Bonnybridge) project submissions were received by the deadline of 30 June 2023, none were considered eligible under the priorities of this funding. Officers continue to engage with applicants to consider alternative funding options and/or provide advice on the further developments of such projects.
- 5.8 This process and governance of the fund itself is being overseen by the Strategic Asset Management Board (SAMB).
- 5.9 Officers are also exploring further opportunities to identify community led regeneration proposals across the Falkirk region, that can be supported through existing or future internal and external funding streams. This approach will be reported as part of a future Town Centre Regeneration update to Falkirk Executive committee.

The Former Royal Hotel, Slamannan.

- 5.10 At the meeting of Falkirk Council on 28 June 2023, Members considered a report which outlined the current position of the former Royal Hotel in Slamannan and proposals for a way forward.
- 5.11 Members agreed to instruct Officers to engage with the King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer (KLTR) with a view to agreeing terms (subject to further approval) to secure ownership of the property. Members also agreed to the use of the Regeneration Fund to resource demolition of the building (upon the Council successfully securing ownership). It was also agreed to progress further engagement/consultation with the community regarding future use/redevelopment of the site.
- 5.12 Council Officers are engaged with KLTR solicitors who are currently completing their title check before they issue a financial offer to the Council.
- 5.13 Section 5.4.1 of this report identifies that the demolition of the Royal Hotel and creation of green space on the site is a priority project for the local community, following engagement. An outline cost of £140,000 has been applied to this project to cover legal and professional fees, and the cost of demolition and site remediation. Landscaping the area to create a green space, is the preference of the Community following engagement.

Battle of Falkirk Signage

- 5.14 As outlined at section 4.3, Members previously agreed to ask Officers to provide a report into new signage that would direct people to the Battle of Falkirk 1298 Monument. A report to the Meeting of the Council Executive on 09 May 2023 provided Members with this update and an outline cost of £20,000 to design, manufacture and install the signage.

- 5.15 The signage was completed and installed in time for the anniversary in 2023, with the exception of the interpretation signage installation which is being taken forward by the Society of John de Graeme.
- 5.16 While Council Executive agreed, on 09 May 2023, that a budget of £20,000 be allocated to this project from the newly approved Regeneration Fund, the cost of the signage will be accommodated within existing resources of the Growth and Investment unit. This will ensure the full £1m Regeneration Fund is retained and allocated for the key identified projects.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Officers have engaged local communities, partners and other stakeholders on the development of the funding proposals contained within this report and will continue to engage as affordability is assessed and priority projects are identified.
- 6.2 Four meetings were undertaken in Slamannan with the community agreeing that improvements to the core of the village with the three projects outlined at 5.4.1 making the most impact. Given there was a clear consensus around a core focus of projects, there was felt to be no need to carry out any further online engagement.
- 6.3 Four meetings were also undertaken in Bonnybridge, with a long list developed. An online engagement exercise was then undertaken to prioritise the projects. This exercise attracted a total of 356 responses, which informed the selection of the priority projects at 5.4.2.

7. Implications

Financial

- 7.1 The proposal refers to the draw down of £1m of reserves, to the General Fund Capital Programme, to deliver the projects outlined within the report.
- 7.2 The estimated £20,000 cost to provide Battle of Falkirk signage on Falkirk High Street will be met within the existing resources of the Growth and Investment unit.

Resources

- 7.3 If approved, existing Officer resource will be applied to project manage the projects proposed for investment within this report.

Legal

- 7.4 There are no direct Legal implications associated with this report. Council Officers will continue to engage with KLTR solicitors on the process to secure ownership of the former Royal Hotel in Slamannan.

Risk

- 7.5 There is a risk that the cost of any project may increase, above budget allocation, because of construction inflation or other factors. Should this occur, further engagement will be undertaken with stakeholders to identify priority projects and/or review project specifications.
- 7.6 Individual project risks will be identified and managed as per approved project management approaches and capital budget monitoring processes.

Equalities

- 7.7 A full Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA) has been completed and is provided at Appendix 1. It is anticipated that the project will not impact adversely the Public Sector Equality Duty nor create circumstances that would lead to discrimination against persons who share a protected characteristic.

8. Conclusions

The report provides Members with proposals for the allocation of £1,000,000 of reserves under the Regeneration Fund Capital project fund. The report also provides Members with key updates on the former Royal Hotel, Slamannan and the Falkirk Town Centre Battle of Falkirk signage.

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Director of Place Services

Date: 24 November 2023

Contact Officer: Keir Stevenson, Economic Development Manager
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Appendices:-

Appendix 1 – Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA)

List of Background Papers:

- Town Centre Regeneration Update to Members via Information Bulletin (25 November 2022)
- Revenue Budget 2023/24 and Financial Strategy report presented to the meeting of Falkirk Council on 1 March 2023.
- The Former Royal Hotel, Slamannan, report presented to the meeting of Falkirk Council on 28 June 2023.

Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00616 (Version 1)

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Service & Division:	Place Services Growth, Planning & Climate	Lead Officer Name:	Keir Stevenson
		Team:	Economic Development
		Tel:	07484011588
		Email:	keir.stevenson@falkirk.gov.uk
Proposal:	Regeneration Fund Update (incl. the former Royal Hotel, Slamannan) to Falkirk Council. To support infrastructure improvements in the five town centres and also the two pilot villages of Bonnybridge and Slamannan.	Reference No:	

What is the Proposal?	Budget & Other Financial Decision	Policy (New or Change)	HR Policy & Practice	Change to Service Delivery / Service Design
	Yes	No	No	No
Who does the Proposal affect?	Service Users	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Other, please specify:				

Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):

01/11/2023	To agree capital projects for which the Council will draw down £1,000,000 of reserves to the General Capital Programme Fund to deliver.

SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For budget changes ONLY please include information below:			Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average
Current spend on this service (£'0000s)	Total:	0	
Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)	Per Annum:	0	
Increase to this service budget (£'000s)	Per Annum:	1,000	
If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.	Current Annual Income Total:		
	Expected Annual Income Total:		
If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?	Start Date:		
	End Date (if any):		

SECTION THREE: EVIDENCE Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EPIA. (This could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements and how this relates to the protected characteristic groups.)

A - Quantitative Evidence This is evidence which is numerical and should include the number people who use the service and the number of people from the protected characteristic groups who might be affected by changes to the service.

The investment proposal relates specifically to the settlements of Slamannan and Bonnybridge to stimulate regeneration where economic and environmental challenges are identified.

Slamannan has an estimated population of 1,378 and there was one area within the most 20% deprived Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation in 2020.

Bonnybridge has an estimated population of 5,183 and there was one area within the most 20% deprived Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation in 2020.

B - Qualitative Evidence This is data which describes the effect or impact of a change on a group of people, e.g. some information provided as part of performance reporting.

Social - case studies; personal / group feedback / other

The project proposals have been arrived at following online engagement, surveys and in-person focus groups with the local communities and key stakeholders. Feedback and satisfaction from these stakeholders will be utilised to assess the impact of the projects.

Best Judgement:

Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?	Yes
Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?	Economic Development Manager and Regeneration Coordinator.
What gaps in data / information were identified?	
Is further research necessary?	Yes
If NO, please state why.	Research on usage numbers and satisfaction will be collated upon project completion.

SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the policy or proposal must take place

Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?	Yes	
If YES, please state who was engagement with.	Elected Members, local community group representatives, general public in Slamannan and Bonnybridge.	
If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.		
How was the engagement carried out?	What were the results from the engagement? Please list...	
Focus Group	Yes	A long list of projects were identified by both communities of Slamannan and Bonnybridge.
Survey	Yes	A long list of projects was voted upon by local community in Bonnybridge.
Display / Exhibitions	No	
User Panels	No	
Public Event	Yes	Public meeting and site visits directed initial priorities for investment in the communities of Slamannan and Bonnybridge.
Other: please specify	Open grant scheme inviting applicants to submit project expressions of interest.	
Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?	Yes	
Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?	Yes	
Is further engagement recommended?	Yes	

SECTION FIVE: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Equality Protected Characteristics: What will the impact of implementing this proposal be on people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 or are likely to be affected by the proposal / policy / project? This section allows you to consider other impacts, e.g. poverty, health inequalities, community justice, carers etc.

Protected Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic.
Age	✓			The project proposals have been assessed and viewed to not have any specific, identified positive or negative impacts on this protected characteristic and will be designed to be open and accessible to all.
Disability	✓			The project proposals have been assessed and viewed to not have any specific, identified positive or negative impacts on this protected characteristic and will be designed to be open and accessible to all.
Sex	✓			The project proposals have been assessed and viewed to not have any specific, identified positive or negative impacts on this protected characteristic and will be designed to be open and accessible to all.
Ethnicity	✓			The project proposals have been assessed and viewed to not have any specific, identified positive or negative impacts on this protected characteristic and will be designed to be open and accessible to all.
Religion / Belief / non-Belief	✓			The project proposals have been assessed and viewed to not have any specific, identified positive or negative impacts on this protected characteristic and will be designed to be open and accessible to all.
Sexual Orientation	✓			The project proposals have been assessed and viewed to not have any specific, identified positive or negative impacts on this protected characteristic and will be designed to be open and accessible to all.
Transgender	✓			The project proposals have been assessed and viewed to not have any specific, identified positive or negative impacts on this protected characteristic and will be designed to be open and accessible to all.
Pregnancy / Maternity	✓			The project proposals have been assessed and viewed to not have any specific, identified positive or negative impacts on this protected characteristic and will be designed to be open and accessible to all.

Public Sector Equality Duty: Scottish Public Authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance quality of opportunity and foster good relations. Scottish specific duties include:

				designed to be open and accessible to all.
Poverty		✓		The proposal sets out to establish capital spending projects, as interventions to support smaller settlements in the Falkirk region, particularly where significant economic and environmental challenges are identified.
Care Experienced	✓			The project proposals have been assessed and viewed to not have any specific, identified positive or negative impacts on this protected characteristic and will be designed to be open and accessible to all.
Other, health, community justice, carers etc.	✓			The project proposals have been assessed and viewed to not have any specific, identified positive or negative impacts on this protected characteristic and will be designed to be open and accessible to all.
Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)				

	Evidence of Due Regard
Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):	Both the consultation process for this proposal and the specific projects recommended to be taken forward have been designed to be welcoming and open to all protected characteristic groups.
Advance Equality of Opportunity:	Both the consultation process for this proposal and the specific projects recommended to be taken forward have been designed to be welcoming and open to all protected characteristic groups. The design stage for approved projects will ensure all assets are accessible to all abilities and all protected characteristic groups.
Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):	Both the consultation process for this proposal and the specific projects recommended to be taken forward have been designed to be welcoming and open to all protected characteristic groups. Beyond this, the proposals do not present a significant further opportunity to improve relations between protected characteristic groups.

SECTION SIX: PARTNERS / OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Which sectors are likely to have an interest in or be affected by the proposal / policy / project?		Describe the interest / affect.
Business	Yes	The proposals aim to support attractive, accessible and healthy local town centres which will support footfall and spend. Projects which support physical activity should assist in supporting health and wellbeing and reduce sickness absence.
Councils	Yes	The proposals improve local areas and increase civic pride and contribute to the strategic priorities within the 2022/27 Council Plan to support a thriving economy and green transition as the proposed investment will assist economic development and town centre regeneration.
Education Sector	Yes	The regeneration of local heritage artefacts and improvement in sport and physical assets support education and physical wellbeing priorities.
Fire	Yes	The increase in assets that support diversionary activities offers opportunity to reduce call outs due to anti-social behaviour e.g. wilful fire-raising.
NHS	Yes	The regeneration of local sport and physical assets supports physical activity and wellbeing priorities.
Integration Joint Board	Yes	The regeneration of local sport and physical assets supports physical activity and wellbeing priorities.
Police	Yes	The increase in assets that support diversionary activities offers opportunity to reduce call outs due to anti-social behaviour.
Third Sector	Yes	The proposed investments support a range of third sector activity such as sporting and historical groups and societies and other targeted charitable activity.
Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.		

SECTION SEVEN: ACTION PLANNING

Mitigating Actions: If you have identified impacts on protected characteristic groups in Section 5 please summarise these in the table below detailing the actions you are taking to mitigate or support this impact. If you are not taking any action to support or mitigate the impact you should complete the No Mitigating Actions section below instead.

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes

No Mitigating Actions

Please explain why you do not need to take any action to mitigate or support the impact of your proposals.

The only impact is identified as intentional positive impact through designed intervention to support regeneration activity in settlements where economic and environmental challenges are identified.

Are actions being reported to Members?

No

If yes when and how ?

SECTION EIGHT: ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

Only one of following statements best matches your assessment of this proposal / policy / project. Please select one and provide your reasons.

No major change required	Yes	The proposal, as it stands, is not felt to be in need of alteration as it is designed to create a positive impact on poverty.
The proposal has to be adjusted to reduce impact on protected characteristic groups	No	
Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups	No	
Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation	No	

SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF

Lead Officer:

Signature:		Date:	01/11/2023
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SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA: Has the EPIA demonstrated the use of data, appropriate engagement, identified mitigating actions as well as ownership and appropriate review of actions to confidently demonstrate compliance with the general and public sector equality duties?		Yes
ASSESSMENT FINDINGS If YES, use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA If NO, use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA	The proposals have been informed by extensive public engagement and have been strategically targeted at smaller settlements in the Falkirk region that are placed within the most 20% deprived Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation in 2020.	
Where adverse impact on diverse communities has been identified and it is intended to continue with the proposal / policy / project, has justification for continuing <u>without making changes been made</u>?	Yes / No	If YES, please describe: N/A

LEVEL OF IMPACT: The EPIA Task Group has agreed the following level of impact on the protected characteristic groups highlighted within the EPIA

LEVEL		COMMENTS
HIGH	Yes / No	
MEDIUM	Yes / No	
LOW	No	No negative impacts identified. Positive impacts have been identified on those experiencing the effects of poverty.

SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

Director / Head of Service:

Signature:		Date:	
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