

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**  
**PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**23 September 2009**

Agenda Item	
Report No	

**TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION FUND**

**Report by Director of Planning and Development**

**SUMMARY**

This report provides information on the second round of Town Centre Regeneration Fund applications submitted and endorsed by the Council.

The application for Town Centre Regeneration Funds is directly supportive of the Council's Single Outcome Agreement commitment to create a competitive, sustainable and adaptable Highland economy and help sustain Highland communities.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 In April 2009 the Scottish Government formally launched the Town Centre Regeneration Fund (TCRF). The Fund is intended to support regeneration and growth in town centres. The Council submitted five applications for the first round in June 2009 for Wick, Thurso, Dingwall, Nairn and Fort William town centres and secured one award of £462,920 for Dingwall town centre.
- 1.2 The Council resubmitted second round applications for Wick, Thurso, Nairn and Fort William by 28<sup>th</sup> August 2009. In total £1,693,591 has been applied for by the Council from the second round of the Fund. The nature of the first round feedback given by the Scottish Government provided an opportunity to address the issues raised and strengthen the applications made. In addition, an enhanced project plan which complements the applications was provided for each of the towns. An announcement on the second round awards is anticipated at the end of October, beginning of November 2009. A verbal update will be given to Committee if any further information becomes available.

**2. Overview of Applications**

2.1 Wick:

The project will focus on enhancements to the network of linking pathways that connect the town's car parks with its shops whilst at the same time improving the visual appearance of those key car parks. Enhancements consist of Caithness slab reinstatement, general surface improvements, signage, lighting and DDA works.

£174k was applied for from the TCRF to complement the £210k allocated in the Planning and Development Capital Programme for 2009/10 and 2010/11.

## 2.2 Thurso:

The works are seeking to complement the major streetscape works undertaken within the past year (£330k). The focus is now on town centre signage; enhancing the Riverside car park (new toilet block £250k proposed 2010/11) and improving access from that car park to the town centre with streetscape improvements proposed for Wilson Street. The proposal also seeks to create a key water sports amenity within the town centre; with work to the slipway being Phase 1 of an ambitious plan to achieve this.

£74k was applied for from the TCRF to complement the £40k allocated in the TECS Programme for 2009/10.

## 2.3 Nairn:

This Project seeks to complete the High Street streetscape improvement works. Phase 1 (£271k) was completed on site in mid July. The first round proposal sought to undertake a second phase utilising the capital programme monies and a third phase using TCRF. As a result of Phase 2 tenders being over budget and the first round application being unsuccessful, a revised application was submitted to the Scottish Government for a comprehensive Phase 2 scheme.

£1.127m was applied for from the TCRF to complement the £215k allocated in the Capital Programme for 2009/10 (plus £271k already committed).

## 2.4 Fort William:

This project seeks to re-vitalise two of Fort William's key entry points with streetscape improvements proposed for the west end section of the High Street and underpass improvements to the east. It is also proposed to relocate the West Highland Way terminus to the west end of the town and therefore capitalise on the significant number of visitors that will pass through the town centre.

£317k was applied for from the TCRF to complement £65k of Council funds, £70k from the LEADER Programme and £20k from HIE.

## 3. **Applications endorsed by the Highland Council**

- 3.1 The Council was asked by the Tain Initiative to support their TCRF application seeking £159,000 TCRF to support a £209,000 project to improve the King Street and Duthac Centre car parks in Tain. Other proposed funding included Highland LEADER Programme £30k, Tain Common Good £10k and TECS £10k. As this assessment satisfied the TCRF criteria a letter of support was duly provided in accordance with the powers delegated at the August 2009 PED Committee.

**4. RECOMMENDATION**

4.1 Committee is recommended to:

- (i) Note the Highland applications submitted for the second round and request that a further report is presented to the November PED Committee on the outcome of the second round applications.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Planning and Development

Date: 15 September 2009

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