

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL****Report by Chief Officer (Regulatory & Regeneration)****Infrastructure, Regeneration & Economic Development Committee  
7 February 2024**

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**Subject: Clydebank: Long - Term Plan for Towns Fund**

**1 Purpose**

- 1.1** This report seeks Members' approval for the establishment of a Clydebank Town Board including appointment of Chair and Deputy, and procurement of services to help the Council develop and deliver a Long-Term Plan and Investment Plan to fulfil the requirements of the Long-Term Plan for Towns Fund.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1** It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) Notes that Clydebank has been selected by UK Government as one of seven towns in Scotland to receive £20m of Long-Term Plan for Towns Fund split into 75% capital funding and 25% revenue funding;
- (ii) Notes that the Council received £50k capacity funding in 23/24 and will receive further £200k in 24/25 to support the development of the Long-Term and Investment Plans;
- (iii) Notes the summary of the guidance for the Fund provided by UK Government Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities;
- (iv) Approves the establishment of a Clydebank Town Board with the range of Members suggested at 4.4;
- (v) Invites the meeting of Council on 27th March 2024 to nominate two elected members to the Clydebank Town Board;
- (vi) Approves the appointment of Liz Connolly, Principal of West College Scotland as Chairperson and delegates authority to the Chief Officer of Regulatory and Regeneration to appoint a Deputy for the Town Board;
- (vii) Delegates authority to the Chief Officer of Regulatory and Regeneration to procure and appoint consultants required to produce the Long-Term Plan and Investment Plan.

**3 Background**

- 3.1** Clydebank is one of seven Scottish towns selected to receive £20m of Long-Term Plan for Towns grant funding from UK Government, selected on the basis of their criteria and methodology. In Step 1 Local authorities were selected according to levelling up need, the population size of Built-Up Areas in the local authority as well as geographic spread. Levelling Up metrics covered skills, pay, productivity and health. In Step 2 a population threshold was applied, for Built-Up Areas of population between 20,000 and 100,000, and all local authorities without eligible Built-Up Areas were excluded. In Step 3 each Built-Up Area with a population between 20,000 and 100,000 within each local authority was ranked by the Index of Multiple Deprivation for each nation (SIMD for Scotland) and the most deprived Built-Up Area within each local authority was then selected.
- 3.2** In December 2023, the UK Government's Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published guidance for local authorities to draw down the £20m investment, 75% of which will be capital funding with the remaining 25% revenue funding. The guidance includes requirements for local authorities to set up suitable governance arrangements including a locally-led Town Board and independent Chair, and provides examples of where the funding can be invested. To unlock the funding, a Long-Term Plan will have to be developed by the Town Board, and approved by DLUHC. Council approval will be required for projects that interact with Council's responsibilities such as Planning, and a need for revenue funding that goes beyond the life of the Plan. In addition to Council responsibilities in respect of the specifics of the projects, it is proposed that a report on the Town Board and progress against the Plan is regularly reported to IRED for information.
- 3.3** Separate capacity funding will be provided to support governance of the fund. The Council has already received £50,000 to cover the upfront costs of setting up a Town Board. Further £200,000 in April 2024 is expected to support the development of the Long-Term Plan, and related administration and management costs

## **4 Main Issues**

- 4.1** The Long-Term Plan for Towns Fund takes a new endowment-style approach. This means that funding is released over a 7-year period and local authorities have the flexibility to spend it over 10 years. The local authority remains the accountable body for funding and executing plans. The Town Board, supported by the local authority and working closely with local people, will be responsible for developing the Long-Term Plan.
- 4.2** Town Boards should be chaired by an independent Chair, invited by the Local Authority. The guidance states that the Chair should be a respected figure in the community with an obvious passion for the place. Examples suggested in the guidance include a philanthropist, the head of a Further Education College, a Director for the NHS Board or Trust or a director of a football club. Elected representatives, such as MPs, MSPs, or local councillors are exempt

from chairing the Town Board. The Town Board should comply with lead Council governance and finance arrangements.

- 4.3** It is recommended that Committee approves the appointment of Liz Connolly as Chair, in her capacity as Principal of West College Scotland. Liz is a respected member of the wider community of interests, and has confirmed her willingness and enthusiasm for the role.
- 4.4** Board Members must include the local MP, a senior Police representative and a maximum of two Elected Members, and can include a local MSP. It is proposed that for Clydebank Town Board, in addition to previously mentioned participants, representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, West Dunbartonshire Council for Voluntary Services, Golden Jubilee Hospital, West of Scotland College, Community Council, Clyde Shopping Centre and other major local businesses, and local community partners. Four senior Council officers will also be asked to participate on the Board, to include the Chief Executive and the Chief Officer: Regulatory and Regeneration, together with the option to nominate substitutes in their absence.
- 4.5** The guidance sets out the timescales for the Fund governance. By 1 April 2024 a Town Board should be established, including appointment of the Chair. By 1 August 2024 the Town Board, supported by the Council should submit their Long -Term Plan which will be assessed and approved by UK Government. It has been acknowledged that Scottish Councils operate with different recess periods to their English counterparts and these timescales may be adjusted to better suit the Scottish context.
- 4.6** The Long-Term Plan will comprise a 10-year vision which clearly identifies the term priorities for the town and 3 year Investment Plan. The Investment Plan will set out how the funding will be allocated and spent over the next 3 years, and local authorities will receive the investment from the Long-Term Plan for Towns over the next 3 years to fund the Town Board's 3-year Investment Plan. External expertise will be required to support the development of the Long-Term Plan and associated community engagement.
- 4.7** The Long-Term Fund for Towns guidance provides a list of interventions across the 3 broad investment themes: safety and security; high streets, heritage and regeneration, and transport and connectivity. Those interventions have already been assessed as having a strong case for investment, value for money and benefit-to-cost ratio and can be included in the Long-Term Plan and Investment Plan. For any "off-menu" interventions an outline business case will need to be provided
- 4.8** The Long-Term Plan should recognise and seek to build on the good work that is underway, or has been undertaken already in the town. In 2021 the Clydebank Town Centre Development Framework was approved. It includes a 15 year vision for transformation of the town centre into a vibrant and attractive place, and was based on the community aspirations from two previous charrettes. Subject to the endorsement of the Town Board, this

Development Framework could form basis of the Long-Term Plan and the 3 year Investment Plan. Through the consultation process it will be developed and updated to ensure that the Long-Term Plan best reflects the current local priorities and long term aspirations.

## **5 People Implications**

- 5.1** The early phases of the programme will be implemented by existing staff within Regeneration and Business Support in consultation with the new Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Town Board. As with the Levelling Up Fund in Dumbarton, consideration will be given in future to using some of the Long Term Fund for Towns to meet the costs of staff required to deliver the programme of work. The new programme and secretariat support to the Town Board will have some demands on staff time across Council Services including Legal, Procurement, Finance, Communities, Planning, Asset Management, Green Space and Roads and the capacity funding and longer term revenue funding will, where appropriate, be applied to fund such support.

## **6 Financial & Procurement Implications**

- 6.1** The Council have already received £50,000 of capacity funding to support establishment of the Town Board. A further £200,000 will be allocated once the Board has been established, to support development of the Long-Term Plan and any associated community engagement.
- 6.2** in Autumn 2024 Local authorities will receive the investment from the Long-Term Plan for Towns over the next 3 years to fund the Town Board's 3-year Investment Plan. It is stated that Funding can be spent in a flexible way which best suits the specific requirements of the town. It is envisaged that further investment to deliver the Long-Term Plan vision beyond the first 3 year period will require a new Investment Plan to be prepared.
- 6.3** The revenue part of the fund can be used to support the capital investment for the duration of the long term plan for towns fund and the Council's support to the Town Board decision making processes and wider administration. Where an intervention would commit the local authority to future expenditure beyond the fund (for example ongoing maintenance of a new leisure facility), Town Boards must engage with local authorities and ensure that this is agreed.
- 6.4** Subject to approval of this report, officers from Regulatory and Regeneration will commence procurement of external consultants to provide expertise required to develop the Long-Term and Investment Plans.

## **7 Risk Analysis**

- 7.1** Timescales to set up the Town Board and develop the Long-Term Plan are challenging however if they are not achieved, funding will be delayed.

## **8 Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 8.1** An EIA has been carried out and is appended.

## **9 Environmental Sustainability**

- 9.1** It will be a priority to take a 'zero carbon' approach to project selection and to reflect the aims of the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

## **10 Consultation**

- 10.1** The Long-Term Plan and 3 year Investment Plan will be developed by the Town Board in consultation with the local community and it will reflect their priorities. Previous engagements with the wider community from the Development Framework and charrette processes will be taken on board.

## **11 Strategic Assessment**

- 11.1** The Council has agreed its five main strategic priorities for 2022 – 2027. The Place Based Investment Programme is consistent with the following objectives:
- Our neighbourhoods are sustainable and attractive.
  - Our area has the infrastructure for sustainable and inclusive growth where businesses can flourish.
  - Our residents are engaged and empowered.

<b>Chief Officer:</b>	<b>Alan Douglas</b>
<b>Service Areas:</b>	<b>Regulatory &amp; Regeneration</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>24 January 2024</b>

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**Person to Contact:** Gillian McNamara

**Appendices:** Appendix One: EIA

**Background Papers:** Clydebank Town Centre Development Framework, September 2021

**Wards Affected:** Clydebank Wards