

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Monday, 20 January 2020

Investment in town centres – Strategic statement

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Executive All 1, 2, 10, 50
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee:
 - 1.1.1 agrees the strategic statement concerning investment in town centres and local centres;
 - 1.1.2 agrees that the Council prepare a schedule of key projects in town and local centres as a resource to inform future investment following the consultation process set out in this report; and
 - 1.1.3 discharges the motion of 6 June 2019 regarding the strategic statement.

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Investment in town centres – Strategic statement

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report sets out a proposed strategic statement for investment in town centres and local centres in Edinburgh. The report proposes the preparation of a schedule of key projects setting out the priority for investment in each town and local centre. Finally, the report provides an update on funds for investment in town centres.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) identifies eight town centres in Edinburgh (listed in Appendix 1 and mapped in Appendix 2). The role of the town centres as set out in the LDP is to *“serve as a focal point for their local communities providing a diverse mix of shopping facilities and other commercial and community services.”*
- 3.2 The LDP also identifies 61 existing (and four proposed) local centres in Edinburgh (listed in Appendix 1 and mapped in Appendix 2). The role of the local centres as set out in the LPD is to *“contribute to the quality of life and sense of identity of neighbourhoods by providing local shops and other services within walking distance”*. The local centres vary considerably in size, ranging from large shopping centres to parades comprising a handful of units.
- 3.3 On 7 March 2019 the Scottish Government wrote to the Council offering £2.613m of capital funding, ring-fenced for *“place based economic investments which encourage town centres to diversify and flourish, creating footfall through local improvements and partnerships”*. On [6 June 2019](#), the Housing and Economy Committee considered a paper on allocations of the Town Centre Fund. The Committee requested that *“locality managers consider other suitable projects which fit with the Council’s strategic objectives and would benefit town centres, particularly those in areas of most need. These projects would be considered should funds become available in the future.”* The Committee also agreed a [motion](#) calling for *“a town centre investment strategic statement to enable future decision making”*.

4. Main report

- 4.1 This report has been prepared in response to the motion of [6 June 2019](#). The report sets out a strategic statement for investment in Edinburgh's town and local centres.
- 4.2 Local centres have been included as they are thought to play a similar role in Edinburgh to the town centres. This report does not consider the city centre (which has its own strategy) or the commercial centres (which are regarded as playing a different role in the city than that of the town and local centres).
- 4.3 The pressures currently facing UK high streets have been widely reported and with the continued growth of online retailing are likely to persist. The Federation of Small Businesses has stated that between January 2016 and August 2019, 414 shops, banks and other premises closed across Scotland. Multiple retailers and other high street businesses with a presence in Edinburgh have gone into administration or commenced company voluntary arrangements. While to date Edinburgh has proven relatively robust, with some high profile units swiftly being adapted to alternative uses, the city is not immune to these pressures. Town and local centres in less affluent areas of Edinburgh are particularly vulnerable.

Strategic statement

- 4.4 The proposed text of the strategic statement for investment in town centres and local centres in Edinburgh is as follows:
 - 4.4.1 *"The Council will direct investment in Edinburgh's town centres and local centres to projects that strengthen and reinforce their roles as set out in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan; contribute to inclusive growth; and enhance their resilience and sustainability in the face of change."*

Schedule of key projects

- 4.5 To underpin the statement and inform future investment decision making, it is proposed to prepare a schedule of key projects requiring investment in each of Edinburgh's town centres and local centres. The schedule would identify the highest priority project in each of the centres, helping inform the allocation of any future ring-fenced town centre funding. It is recognised that some centres, particularly the town centres and the larger local centres, may have multiple projects that are considered priorities; the schedule would set out the highest priority project. Conversely, some centres may be considered not to need significant investment. Where there are multiple competing projects, it is proposed that the below criteria would be used to determine the highest priority:
 - 4.5.1 Fit with Council Commitments;
 - 4.5.2 Fit with the Edinburgh Local Development Plan;
 - 4.5.3 Fit with the relevant Locality Improvement Plan;
 - 4.5.4 Health and safety implications;
 - 4.5.5 Availability of match funding;

4.5.6 Economic impact; and

4.5.7 Community support and engagement.

- 4.6 The key projects in question could take multiple different forms including the restoration of key buildings; community facilities; public realm improvements; greenspace improvements; artwork; transport upgrades and local energy projects.
- 4.7 As the boundaries of the town and local centres as drawn in the LDP are relatively tight, it is proposed that eligible key projects would extend to projects within one block of the boundary line.
- 4.8 Information that it is anticipated would be captured in the schedule includes a brief description of the project; its status; the projected budget (if known); and its priority.
- 4.9 It is noted that in some town and local centres key projects may concern assets owned by the private sector, the third sector or other public sector bodies rather than by the Council. In these cases, the role of the Council may be to facilitate investment rather than provide funding directly.
- 4.10 It is proposed that the schedule would be drafted by officers from Economic Development with input from the Council's Locality teams along with Planning; Transport; Housing and Regeneration; Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries and other relevant service areas under the oversight of the Executive Director of Place. The suggestions would then be consulted upon with community representatives in line with the process set out in section seven.

Funding update

- 4.11 In the past decade, the Scottish Government has created multiple grant funds to support town centre regeneration, including the Town Centre Regeneration Fund, the Town Centre Empty Homes Fund, the Town Centre Communities Capital Fund, and, most recently, the Town Centre Fund.
- 4.12 The Council is currently in the process of delivering the four projects which received Town Centre Fund allocations in June 2019. The Scottish Government has stated that there are no plans for a second round of the Town Centre Fund. While officers are maintaining a watching brief, it would be prudent to assume that there will not be a second round at this time.
- 4.13 On 4 March 2019, the UK Government announced a new £1.6 billion Stronger Towns Fund to help "*create new jobs, help train local people and boost growth*" in towns in England. The UK Government has stated that it "will seek to ensure towns across Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will benefit from the new funding". It is understood that dialogue is underway with the Scottish Government. It is unclear whether additional funding would be allocated to the Scottish Government in line with Barnett Formula or whether the UK Government would seek to make awards directly to Scottish local authorities. Officers are maintaining a watching brief.
- 4.14 The UK Government has announced the creation of a UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) as a replacement for European Union structural funding following the

planned departure of the UK from the European Union on 31 January 2020. The UK Government has stated that the objective of the UKSPF will be to “tackle inequalities between communities by raising productivity”. Limited information on the UKSPF has been shared to date, but it could potentially be a source of funds for investment in town and local centres. Officers are maintaining a watching brief.

- 4.15 The Scottish Government’s Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) is a key source of capital funding for regeneration projects and has previously funded projects in Edinburgh such as the restoration of 165A Leith Walk. The Scottish Government has stated that, subject to the spending review, it anticipates a further call for projects for 2021/22; it is expected that the deadline for bids for 2021/22 would be in mid-2020. Officers are currently scoping out potential bids.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Officers would begin the preparation of a schedule – engaging stakeholders in line with the process set out in section 7 – and bring a report back to the Committee setting out the proposed schedule for approval.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The schedule would not recommend funding allocations nor is it anticipated that it would directly inform Council budgeting processes. Rather, the schedule would provide a resource that could be utilised by officers and members in the event of future windfall receipts such as the Town Centre Fund, as well as informing grant applications, community fundraisers and other initiatives.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 It is proposed that the draft schedule would in the first instance be consulted upon with the relevant ward councillors. The Councillors would be asked for their views on whether the projects identified represented the top priorities for the town and local centres in question.
- 7.2 Once the schedule was agreed with ward councillors, it is proposed that it would be shared with the relevant community councils for their views.
- 7.3 Should disputes arise over which project is the top priority for an area, it is proposed that the final decision would rest with the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Convener and Vice Convener.
- 7.4 Throughout the consultation process, it would be emphasised that the schedule was being prepared as a resource only and that the inclusion of a project on the schedule did not mean that it would be funded.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 “Town Centre Fund – Allocations Report” – report to the Housing and Economy Committee, [6 June 2019](#)
- 8.2 Motions and Amendments – Housing and Economy Committee, [6 June 2019](#)

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – List of town and local centres in Edinburgh
- 9.2 Appendix 2 – Plan of town and local centres in Edinburgh

9.1 Appendix 1 – List of town and local centres in Edinburgh

9.1.1 Town centres

Centre	Ward(s)	Community council(s)
Corstorphine	Corstorphine / Murrayfield	Corstorphine
Gorgie / Dalry	Sighthill / Gorgie	Gorgie / Dalry
Leith / Leith Walk	Leith Leith Walk	Leith Central Leith Harbour and Newhaven Leith Links New Town/Broughton
Morningside / Bruntsfield	Morningside	Merchiston Morningside
Nicolson Street / Clerk Street	City Centre Southside / Newington	Old Town Southside
Portobello	Portobello / Craigmillar	Portobello
Stockbridge	Inverleith	Stockbridge / Inverleith
Tollcross	City Centre	Tollcross

9.1.2 Local centres

Centre	Ward(s)	Community council(s)
Ashley Terrace	Fountainbridge / Craiglockhart	Merchiston
Balgreen Road	Sighthill / Gorgie	Gorgie / Dalry
Blackhall	Inverleith	Craigleith / Blackhall
Boswall Parkway	Forth	Granton and District
Broughton Street	City Centre	New Town / Broughton
Bryce Road, Currie	Pentland Hills	Currie
Buckstone Terrace	Colinton / Fairmilehead	Fairmilehead
Chesser	Fountainbridge / Craiglockhart	Hutchison / Chesser Stenhouse, Saughton Mains and Whitson
Chesser Avenue	Fountainbridge / Craiglockhart	Hutchison / Chesser
Colinton	Colinton / Fairmilehead	Colinton
Comiston Road	Morningside	Morningside
Corslet Place, Currie	Pentland Hills	Currie
Craiglockhart	Fountainbridge / Craiglockhart	Craiglockhart
Craigmillar	Portobello / Craigmillar	Craigmillar
Dalkeith Road	Southside / Newington	Grange / Prestonfield
Davidsons Mains	Almond	Silverknowes
Drumrae	Drum Brae / Gyle	Drum Brae
Drylaw	Inverleith	Drylaw / Telford
Dundas Street	Inverleith	New Town / Broughton
Dundee Street	Fountainbridge / Craiglockhart	Merchiston
East Craigs	Drum Brae / Gyle	Drum Brae
Easter Road	Craigentiny / Duddingston Leith Walk	Leith Central Old Town
Ferry Road (East)	Leith	Leith Harbour and Newhaven
Ferry Road (West)	Forth Leith Walk	Leith Central Trinity
Forrest Road	City Centre	Old Town
Gilmerton	Liberton / Gilmerton	Gilmerton / Inch
Goldenacre	Inverleith	Stockbridge / Inverleith
Gracemount	Liberton / Gilmerton	Liberton and District
Hillhouse Road / Telford Road	Inverleith	Craigleith / Blackhall

		Silverknowes
Jock's Lodge	Craigentiny / Duddingston	Northfield/Willowbrae
Juniper Green	Pentland Hills	Juniper Green
Liberton Brae	Liberton / Gilmerton	Liberton and District
Main Street, Balerno	Pentland Hills	Balerno
Main Street, Kirkliston	Almond	Kirkliston
Marchmont North	Morningside	Marchmont and Sciennes
Marchmont South	Morningside	Marchmont and Sciennes
Mayfield Road	Southside / Newington	Grange / Prestonfield
Milton Road West	Portobello / Craigmillar	Portobello
Moredun Park Road	Liberton / Gilmerton	Gilmerton / Inch
Muirhouse / Pennywell	Almond	Muirhouse / Salvesen
Oxgangs Broadway	Colinton / Fairmilehead	Firrhill
Parkhead	Sighthill / Gorgie	Sighthill, Broomhouse and Parkhead
Pentland View Court, Currie	Pentland Hills	Currie
Piershill	Craigentiny / Duddingston	Northfield/Willowbrae
Polwarth Gardens	Morningside	Merchiston
Queensferry (Centre)	Almond	Queensferry and District
Ratcliffe Terrace	Southside / Newington	Grange / Prestonfield
Restalrig Road	Craigentiny / Duddingston	Leith Links
Rodney Street	Inverleith Leith Walk	New Town / Broughton
Roseburn Terrace	Corstorphine / Murrayfield	Murrayfield
Saughton Road North	Corstorphine / Murrayfield	Corstorphine
Scotstoun Grove, Queensferry	Almond	Queensferry and District
Sighthill	Sighthill / Gorgie	Sighthill, Broomhouse and Parkhead
Stenhouse Cross	Sighthill / Gorgie	Stenhouse, Saughton Mains and Whitson
Viewforth	Morningside	Merchiston
Walter Scott Avenue	Liberton / Gilmerton	Gilmerton / Inch
Waterfront Broadway	Forth	West Pilton / West Granton
West Maitland Street	City Centre	West End
Western Corner	Corstorphine / Murrayfield	Murrayfield
Whitehouse Road	Almond	Cramond and Barnton
Wester Hailes	Pentland Hills	Wester Hailes

9.1.3 Proposed new local centres

Centre	Ward(s)	Community council(s)
Brunstane	Portobello / Craigmillar	Portobello
Fountainbridge	Fountainbridge / Craiglockhart	Merchiston
Granton Waterfront	Forth	Granton and District
Western Harbour	Leith	Leith Harbour and Newhaven

Appendix 2 – Plan of town and local centres in Edinburgh

