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**COUNCIL EXECUTIVE**

**REGENERATION CAPITAL GRANT FUND – BATHGATE RECONNECT REGAL**

**REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION**

**A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to outline the proposal to submit a Stage 1 application to the Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) 2022/23 for the potential redevelopment of the Reconnect Regal Theatre, in Bathgate.

**B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council Executive:

1. Notes the background, application process and eligibility for the proposed stage 1 application;
2. Notes the prescribed short timing and date for submission of the proposed stage 1 application; and
3. Approves preparation and submission of Stage 1 application, and delegates authority to the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration, to finalise the Stage 1 application, on behalf of the council.

**C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I</b>	<b>Council Values</b>	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
<b>II</b>	<b>Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	There are no policy, legal (equality, health, SEA or risk assessment) issues associated with this particular report.
<b>III</b>	<b>Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	The report details a specific one-off delegation to Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration.
<b>IV</b>	<b>Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	None.

<b>V</b>	<b>Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	Outcome 3 - Our economy is diverse and dynamic, and West Lothian is an attractive place for doing business.
<b>VI</b>	<b>Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	There are no staffing, property or financial implications arising for the council.
<b>VII</b>	<b>Consideration at PDSP</b>	Due to short timescale for submission of the application it has not been possible for consideration of this matter by Development and Transport PDSP.
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Other consultations</b>	Economic Development and Regeneration, and Finance and Property.

## **D. TERMS OF REPORT**

### **D1 Background**

The Regeneration Capital Grant Fund is delivered annually in partnership with the Scottish Government, COSLA and local authorities. This is one strand of the Scottish Government's regeneration strategy, which focuses on making the most of Scotland's communities' economic potential through targeted funding.

The Regeneration Capital Grant Fund supports the delivery of locally developed place-based regeneration projects that involve local communities, helping to tackle inequalities and deliver inclusive growth in deprived, disadvantaged and fragile remote communities across Scotland.

In many instances the projects previously receiving funding, are supporting or creating jobs, refurbishing and bringing back into use a number of historic and landmark buildings, creating business space, and supporting numerous community facilities and services across Scotland.

### **D2 Application Process and Eligibility**

The Regeneration Capital Grant Fund operates on a competitive bidding basis, and is open to applications received from all 32 Scottish local authorities and urban regeneration companies.

There is a two-stage assessment. Applicants must submit a summary of their project on the prescribed form provided at Stage 1. Successful projects at this stage will be invited by the panel to then complete a full Stage 2 application. The deadline for Stage 1 submissions (for 2022-23 funding) is Thursday 17 June 2021.

All applications will be subject to scrutiny by the independent Regeneration Capital Grant Fund Investment Panel which will make final recommendations on projects to be funded and offered grant support.

Applications are not restricted in geography, size or type of project, but should demonstrate that the project(s) fit with the aims and objectives of the fund and can demonstrate clear regeneration outcomes in line with the Scottish Government strategy document 'Achieving a Sustainable Future' and local area plans.

There is though, a particular project focus on those:

- that are primarily focused on areas that suffer from high levels of deprivation and disadvantage;
- that demonstrate clear community involvement;
- that will deliver large scale transformational change with strong regeneration outcomes; and
- that can encourage additional investment and address market failure

### **D.3 Reconnect Regal, Bathgate**

The Regal Theatre is located in the heart of Bathgate town centre. It is an art deco building and former cinema, that was first designated as a listed building in the late 1990s, and has served as a venue for the community offering a range of activities from film, music, theatre, to comedy, children's events and workshops.

In March 2018, following a period of community consultation on proposals for the future use of the Regal Theatre, Council Executive approved a five-year lease of the Regal Theatre to Reconnect. The business plan proposed that Reconnect will operate the Regal as a community theatre space and use the venue to promote a range of art, music and drama related activities.

In October 2019, following initial discussion with council officers on future plans for the building, a successful funding application was made through the Town Centre Capital Fund 2019-20 by Reconnect. This along with committed funds previously secured (total £55,000) allowed significant investment in upgrading and improving the exterior of the Regal. This painting, lighting and replacement window work will all be complete by late Summer 2021, following COVID-19 delays.

The Stage 1 final application to the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund will outline the scope of the planned improvement works to upgrade and modernise the Regal facilities, thereby allowing it to operate to its maximum potential and to be attractive to touring entertainment events/audience, community and corporate groups.

Given that this council property is leased to Reconnect, then Property and Finance service would provide any necessary consent to implement any works; and advice and support will be provided by the wider Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration service, in relation to obtaining and carrying out relevant planning, building warrant and/or listed building consent.

The proposed works (theatre redevelopment and upgrade of facilities) can ideally be separated into three individual and directly interlinking capital components. The preference would be for all three components to be completed as a package

- Theatre Modernisation (Stage 1): This would comprise the redevelopment of the ground floor foyer/bar; the first, second and third floor renovations; and auditorium restoration. The estimated indicative costs for the improvement package would be around £1.08 million (plus VAT). This can be split as:

- Redevelopment of ground floor foyer and bar (£280,000)
- First and second floor renovations (£350,000)
- Auditorium restoration (£450,000)

Whilst not part of the planned Stage 1 application to the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, it is noted that Reconnect have generated further detail on their aspirational, ambitious and achievable proposals for a Stage 2 phase of their redevelopment and build programme at the Regal in Bathgate. This is summarised below.

- The Beacon (Stage 2): Redevelopment of Auditorium and Creation of New part of the Building to the Rear. A new fly tower would also be added to make the Regal Theatre viable for national and international touring shows. The indicative costs for this advanced stage of works would be £8 million. This is clearly a vision for the venue's future which encompasses and builds on the planned development work in stage 1.

The Stage 1 application will fully consider the project work components and requirements, and their costings, as well as justification for their compliance with funding objectives, areas of priority focus and outcome. This will include, addressing local need for services and/or employment; areas of relative local deprivation, support from the wider local community and organisations; evidence of support and viable business plan; any financial contribution; bringing listed building into more productive use, and the ability to spend funding and begin ready on site between April 2022 and December 2022.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The report outlines the background to the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, and details the timing for application submission, and the proposal being brought forward in collaboration with and by Reconnect Regal Theatre.

It is recommended that Council Executive approves preparation and submission of a Stage 1 application to the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund 2022/23, and delegates authority to the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration, to agree the finalised Stage 1 application, on behalf of the Council.

## **F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

None

Appendices/Attachments: None

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8 June 2021