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West Lothian Council

COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

PLACE BASED INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2023/24

REPORT BY DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE, EDUCATION, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to set out proposals for the allocation and delivery of the Scottish Government's Place Based Capital Investment Programme in West Lothian for 2023/24.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Executive:

1. notes the amount of Place Based Funding allocated to date;
2. notes that £789,000 of funding will be received in 2023/24; and
3. approves the allocation of funding in 2023/24 as outlines in section D4: £600,000 via Community Wealth Building projects capital projects and £189,00 via Community Choices.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	**Council Values**	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II	**Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)**	The Place Based Investment Programme is a Scottish Government Initiative.
III	**Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers**	The report details one-off specific delegation to the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration and Head of Finance and Property Services.
IV	**Impact on performance and performance Indicators**	None.
V	**Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement**	Projects are relevant to all outcomes within the Single Outcome agreement.
VI	**Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)**	West Lothian's allocation of the Scottish Governments Place Based Investment Programme funding was £1.302million in

		2021/22 and £1.132 million in 2022/23.
VII	**Consideration at PDSP**	Previous allocations of funding considered at Council Executive and at all nine Local Area Committees.
VIII	**Other consultations**	None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Background

The Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Programme, which was launched in 2021, is intended to link and align place-based funding initiatives.

The main objectives of the programme are:

- to support place policy ambitions such as town centre revitalisation, community led regeneration, 20-minute neighbourhoods and community wealth building;

- to ensure that all place-based investments are shaped by the needs and aspirations of local communities; and

- to accelerate ambitions for net zero, wellbeing and inclusive economic development, tackling inequality and disadvantage, and community involvement and ownership.

To date West Lothian Council has been allocated £1.302 million in 2021/22 and £1.132 million in 2022/23, for distribution in line with the objectives of the Place Based Investment Programme. A further allocation of £789,000 has been provided for 2023/24. It is expected that a further two years of funding will be provided by the Scottish Government from 2024 to 2026 at around £789,000 per annum.

D2 Place Based Investment Funding - 2021/22

The 2021/22 funding was allocated via a thematic allocation to capital projects over £100,000, that met the aims and principles of community wealth building.

In October 2021 the following five projects were awarded funding:

1. The ***Craigsfarm Community Development Project*** was awarded £129,602 for its 'Craigsfarm Campus access and improvement' project. The project aimed to improve the standard of facilities and accessibility of the existing Craigsfarm Community Hub campus to increase participation.

2. The ***West Calder Hub*** was awarded £140,265 for its 'Customer improvements at West Calder Hub' project. The project aimed to renovate and improve the existing hub facility at West Calder Community Centre.

3. ***West Lothian College*** was awarded £493,346 to build an eco-house education and training centre. The project will build a state-of-the-art eco-house at the West Lothian College campus.

4. The ***West Lothian Foodbank*** was awarded £188,697 for its 'market garden' project to build a growing garden at their warehouse at Whitehill Industrial Estate.

5. ***Crofthead Community Education Centre*** was awarded £350,000 for its 'Crofthead Community Regeneration Development' project. The project has three elements which include external landscaping around the facility, extending and redesigning the existing cycle track and the design and project development, including technical works, of a new multi-purpose hall and other options for future developments at the existing site.

D3 Place Based Investment Funding - 2022/23

The 2022/23 funding was allocated evenly by two approaches to capital projects over £100,000 that met the aims and principles of community wealth building and through a Town Centre Capital Grants programme.

The Town Centre Capital Grants element was allocated in line with previous Town Centre Capital funding where villages with over 1,000 residents were allocated a proportion based on the population of the village and total amount of funding available. Throughout 2022/23 69 projects were allocated £566,000 via Local Area Committees for local community-based projects.

In June 2022 four larger capital projects were awarded funding:

1. ***Almond Valley Heritage Trust*** was awarded £153,000 for its 'Big Welcome, Phase 1' project. The project will upgrade the car park area and create a new site entrance to the Almond Valley Heritage Centre

2. ***Craigsfarm Community Development Project*** was awarded £146,940 for its 'Upgrade and Refresh' project. The project will upgrade internal elements of the building and carry out a feasibility study on the use of a former sports pavilion.

3. ***The Larder, West Lothian*** was awarded £182,879 for its 'place based community development programme'. The project has three elements based within the organisation's facilities at Brewster Square, Kirkton House and Blackburn Health First hub in the Mill Centre, Blackburn.

4. ***The Bridge Community Project*** was awarded a part award of £83,627 for its 'wellbeing hub refurbishment project'. The funding was provided to support the renewable elements of the project, including the installation of a renewable heating system, solar PV system and electric car charging stations.

D4 Place Based Investment Funding – 2023/24

The Scottish Government has issued a grant offer letter confirming that West Lothian Council will receive £789,000 for distribution in 2023/24. Based on previous years' experience of allocating funding and current priorities it is recommended that the Council Executive approve the following option for allocating funding in 2023/24:

1. As in previous years, £600,000 of the funding is awarded via a thematic allocation to capital projects over £100,000 that meet the aims and principles of community wealth building. Community, voluntary and third sector organisations will be invited to apply for funding via an application process. The funding bid will open on Wednesday 21st June until Wednesday 2nd August. A scoring panel, comprising of representatives from the Third Sector and senior council officials, will assess the applications and make recommendations for approval by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration. As with previous years allocations it its recommended that the award of funding is delegated to the Head of

Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration.

2. The remaining funding of £189,000 is allocated via a Community Choices (Participatory Budgeting) exercise for small capital projects, with a minimum project value of £5,000. Community, voluntary and third sector organisations will be invited to apply for funding via an application process, with the allocation of the funding being decided through a public vote. The process will include an in-person market-place event where applicants can promote their proposed project to potential voters. A variety of methods will then be used to collect votes, including voting at the event, online voting and ballot boxes located in key community facilities. This approach follows best practice in terms of Community Choices processes and contributes to the requirement that at least 1% of annual council budgets will be subject to Participatory Budgeting. The officer Community Choices Working Group will support the delivery of this element of the Place Based Investment Funding. It is recommended that the final project award, through the Community Choices process, is delegated to the Head of Finance and Property Services.

It is recommended that Council Executive approves the proposed allocation of funding through the Place Based Investment Programme via a thematic large-scale capital project and a community choices exercise, as detailed above. The grant application process for large scale capital projects will open on the 21st June, with the Community Choices element opening for project in September.

Should insufficient projects, to meet the allocated budget, be identified through the Community Choices bidding process in September the unallocated funding should be allocated, via the panel, to unsuccessful Community Wealth Building capital projects.

E. CONCLUSION

The report provides an update on the impact the Scottish Government's Place Based Capital funding has had to date in West Lothian and identifies a distribution model for allocating funding in 2023/24.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Council Executive – 22 June 2021 Place Based Investment Programme and Community Wealth Building report - West Lothian Council Committee Information - View Committee Document
Council Executive, - 26 October 2021 'Place Based Investment and Community Wealth Building Report' - West Lothian Council Committee Information - View Committee Document
Council Executive - 8 February 2022 – Place Based Investment Programme Process Proposals and Update report viewSelectedDocument.asp (westlothian.gov.uk)
Council Executive – 21 June 2022 - Place Based Investment Programme 2022/23 West Lothian Council Committee Information - View Committee Document

Appendices/Attachments: none

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