



Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism

Cabinet – 23 March 2023

**FPR7 Report - The Welsh Government Transforming
Towns - Placemaking Grant**

Purpose:	To comply with Financial Procedure Rule No.7 (Capital Programming and Appraisals) - to commit and authorise the addition of new schemes to the Capital Programme.
Policy Framework:	Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy, City Centre Strategic Framework.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that Cabinet: 1) notes the grant application as set out in this report has been approved by WG as part of the 2022/23-2024/25 capital bidding round for the WG Transforming Towns Programme. 2) approves the addition of the WG Transforming Towns Placemaking grant Programme funding to the capital programme to support the delivery of the schemes outlined in paragraph 2.2. 3) notes that an inter authority agreement is being prepared to protect the Council's position as lead Authority in distributing the funding received from Welsh Government to deliver the schemes on a regional basis and delegates authority to the Head of Planning and City Regeneration in consultation with the Chief Legal Officer to enter into the agreement on behalf of the Council.
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the Welsh Governments Transforming Towns Placemaking grant programme, covering the three financial years from 2022/23 to 2024/25 which affords Local Authorities in Wales the broadest and most flexible package of support aimed at revitalising town centres throughout Wales.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Transforming Towns Placemaking (PMG) programme for 2022/23 to 2024/25 builds on the success of the previous PMG programme delivered in the 2021/22 financial year. The authority received the current grant award letter following approval from Welsh Ministers dated 24th June 2022 which outlines the PMG budget for the South West Region over the 3 financial years as £7.48m broken down as £1m for 2022/23 and £3.240m for both 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- 2.2 The PMG grant from April 2022 continues to offer a range of support interventions and these are outlined in the updated appended framework document (Appendix B) and this includes 13 distinct types of intervention available to support the strategic aims of the Welsh Government and region and are listed below:

Placemaking programme– to include grant support considerations for:

- Residential Units in Town Centres
- Commercial Property Improvement Grants
- Green Infrastructure
- Public Realm
- Strategic Acquisition
- Town Centre Markets
- Town Centre Meanwhile Uses
- Town Centre External Trading Support.
- Shop Frontage Enveloping Schemes
- Digital Towns
- Active Travel
- Toilet Provision
- Recreational Facilities

- 2.3 The maximum individual award of grant for PMG projects is up to £250,000. If works are phased and grant is awarded on a phased basis, the total allocation to a single property cannot exceed this £250,000 limit. Should a Local Authority Partner wish to use £250,000 or more of the Funding to support a project then the Local Authority Partner must obtain prior written approval from Welsh Government before agreeing to provide such level of funding.

- 2.4 Of particular note within the Framework document is reference to the Placemaking Plans and that investment through this grant should be informed by wider place or town plans. The intention is to ensure the Placemaking Grant supports interventions which are strategically connected to other activity taking place in a town.
- 2.5 Any items to be supported from this framework need to be part of a holistic place making plan or master plan for a town centre and not supported as standalone projects. These interventions need to be strategic in nature and the activity needs to be planned. Further, the projects need to 'knit together' in the context of both Transforming Towns and wider interventions taking place or planned in selected towns including Housing, Green and Digital Infrastructure, transport as well as circular economy interventions such as repair and re-use cafés in town centres.
- 2.6 A key and important consideration for Welsh Government is that there is a strategic plan in place for a designated town centre. This plan should be bottom up, community driven and needs to involve key partners such as BIDs, Town and Community Councils and local third sector organisations amongst other local groups.
- 2.7 Swansea is the regional lead for the South West Wales region 'Placemaking award' There is no set indicative apportionment of funding for the regional authorities. Funding is committed on an approvals basis where local and regional endorsement is required for each scheme within the placemaking programme.

3.0 Financial Implications

- 3.1 Swansea Council's role as regional lead for the South West Placemaking Grant will generate a 5% local management fee together with a 3% regional management fee.
- 3.2 In the majority of cases covering the commercial and residential focused grants within the Placemaking programme, any match funding required to deliver the schemes will be met by external private sector investment and there is no requirement for the authority to make capital match funding contributions to these 3rd party schemes. Match funding will be required for any Placemaking scheme proposals that relate to Council assets.
- 3.3 Appendix A outlines the total anticipated South West regional project costs out turn for the Placemaking programme for 2022/23 along with an estimate of associated fees for supporting delivery and management. Following below this summary, the expected Placemaking out turn for Swansea is shown where it is anticipated that £664k of grant expenditure will be incurred together with £63k in associated fees.
- 3.4 The South West regional out turn for Placemaking is anticipated to be £848k with £72k in associated fees. The balance of the annual Placemaking budget will be allocated by the Welsh Government to finance approved

strategic projects. The £1m Placemaking grant award must be claimed against eligible expenditure by the 31st March otherwise it will be lost and not carry over to the 2023/24 Placemaking budget.

3.5 There will be no future revenue implications arising from the schemes. Any ongoing maintenance costs would be absorbed within existing budgets.

3.6 Summary of Placemaking Budget for 2022/23:

					£'000
					Budget
					1,000
Local Authority	Profiled Cost	Regional Lead fee (3%)	Local Fees (5%)	Total Fees (£)	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Swansea	664	30	33	63	727
Carmarthenshire	0	-	0	0	0
Neath Port Talbot	95	-	5	5	100
Pembrokeshire	89	-	4	4	93
Total	848	30	42	72	921
Balance to Strategic Projects					80
Total					1,000

4.0 Legal Implications

4.1 The Council will need to comply with the terms and conditions attached to any grant funding utilised in conjunction with the regeneration match funding budget identified in this report.

4.2 Any projects or grant proposals developed and subsequently delivered or administered in partnership with internal or external organisations will be managed in-line with appropriate agreements, to ensure adherence to the terms and conditions set-out in Grant Offer Letters and to relevant City and County of Swansea policies. In the case of grant investment in private sector developments a legal charge will be placed on property or assets linked to the grant recipient as required by the grant offer terms and conditions for the necessary period and to ensure that the financial risk to the authority is mitigated.

4.3 Generally the terms attached to WG Grant Funded schemes are legally binding and will be formally recorded in an appropriate document/contract. Any joint bid by Regional Partners should similarly be so recorded and governance issues clarified in terms of legal responsibility and decision making.

4.4 An inter-authority agreement and suggested project specific agreement is to be drafted by Swansea Council as lead authority for the region and agreed by regional local authority partners to ensure that appropriate indemnities

and governance arrangements for the terms and conditions applicable to the Transforming Towns Placemaking Grant are in place.

- 4.5 All contracts for works, goods and services necessary to deliver the strategic projects and Council led Placemaking schemes must be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the relevant domestic regulations as appropriate. The contractual liabilities/obligations of the Council and any appointed contractors will be covered by the individual contracts entered into.
- 4.6 All statutory consents required in proposals to utilise the regeneration match funding budget will be the responsibility of the Planning and City Regeneration Service and will be formally recorded in an appropriate document/contract.

5.0 Integrated Assessment Implications

- 5.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts;
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
 - deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage;
 - consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language;
 - treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English;
 - ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 5.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.
- 5.3 There are no specific equality implications in relation to this report. Reference is made to strategic projects where these together with Council Placemaking projects will be addressed by separate reports where IIA screening has been completed and full IIA will be undertaken where needed as specified from the screening.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Financial Implications – Placemaking Programme

Appendix B – Placemaking Framework