

Ballymoney, Coleraine and Limavady Revitalisation	14th March 2017
To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Information	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Accelerating Our Economy & Contributing To Prosperity
Outcome	The Council will work with partners to maximise investment funding opportunities from external sources
Lead Officer	Head of Service, Prosperity and Place
Cost: (If applicable)	Total funding available for Coleraine, Ballymoney and Limavady - £750,000 with matching funding from Council of £60,000

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the projects currently underway in the Financial Year 2016-17.

Background

Following extensive scoping and consultation in each of the 3 town centres in late 2015 to mid-2016, applications were submitted to the North East and North West Development Offices of the Department for Communities for the continuation of Revitalisation grants funding for traders and business owners to upgrade shop frontages to support the improvement in appearance of the town centre streetscapes. The Department for Communities awarded funding in September 2016 as follows:

BALLYMONEY

- Designated area: High Street, Church Street, Victoria Street, Linenhall Street and Charles Street
- Period of Project: 12 September 2016 – 30th April 2017
- Budget: £200K DfC plus £20K CC&G = £220,000 (£200K for frontages and £20K for Promotion & Marketing)
- Estimated number of eligible properties: 78

Progress to date:

- 48 applications received – 43 approved and 5 declined.
- 30 businesses did not apply – mainly due to recently completed works, planned works (e.g. through THI funding), 10 businesses did not engage in project.
- Total committed funding for frontages to date: £187,207.
- Plans for shortfall of £12,792.50 to improve Castlecroft and address the condition of some of the remaining gap sites in the project area.

Applications for Revitalisation grants from property owners on the corner of Victoria Street – Linenhall Street – Victoria Street together with the independent works taking place to the

former McAuley's kitchen building and the gap site in Linenhall Street will yield a considerable improvement to this unsightly area.

COLERAINE

- Designated area: Railway Road (from the Benetton building on one side and Autoline on the other), extending to Kingsgate Street, Brook Street and Long Commons.
- Period of Project: 12 September 2016 – 30 April 2017
- £200K DfC plus £20K CC&G = £220,000
- Estimated number of eligible properties: 96

Progress to date:

- 67 applications received – 66 approved.
- 29 businesses did not apply – the majority of these did not engage in the project.
- Total committed funding for frontages to date: £234,253. Representing overspend of £34,253 on available budget.

Additional funding from DfC has been sought; a re-profiling of the Promotion and Marketing element of the budget to allow more funds for the frontages (£15K) are currently under consideration by the DfC North East Regional Office.

A considerable number of the properties where work has been completed, underway or planned will have a significant impact on the streetscape and greatly improve the appearance of many of the most unsightly buildings in the project area. The majority of businesses that have not applied are in good to excellent condition and it is felt that funding has been directed most appropriately to achieve the greatest impact.

CHALLENGES FOR BOTH BALLYMONEY AND COLERAINE REVITALISE PROJECTS

- Delay in confirmation of funding from DfC
- Many applicants had difficulty securing sufficient number of quotes to accompany their applications
- Above issues led into the Christmas trading period where traders were reluctant to commence works and/or disrupt business
- Weather conditions have not been ideal given that most works were planned to commence after the Christmas period
- Time pressure and weather concerns continue to be a challenge but contractors are confident that works can be completed by the deadline and there are signs of increasing activity in the project area.

LIMAVADY

- Designated area: Market Street
- Period of Project: September 2016 – 30th April 2018
- Budget: £350K DfC plus £21.3K CC&G
- Estimated number of eligible properties: 42

Progress to date:

- 12 applications received with architects drawings / initial proposals
- 2 applications received and 1 more expected for minor works under £5K
- 18 further applications with plans expected.
- 9 will not / have not yet applied or expressed an interest or intention – may see further interest from several of these properties in the future.

A number of properties are looking at extensive works to their premises, with the removal or internalising of shutters. Whilst there has been high interest and engagement, activity seems to have slowed down since the beginning of the year. It is expected that this to increase when it becomes clearer what the procurement process and timeline are likely to be.

Summary

Around 130 properties will be improved by the end of this current round of schemes. Work has already begun to commence some consultation in the next available areas of each of the towns.

In terms of the future of the scheme, Council has received no indication of continuation in a formal sense, however, it is not foreseen that the scheme will come to an end any time soon. Provision has been made in next year's business plan for potential matching funding on the remaining areas of each of the towns. There may be an opportunity to revisit some of those properties which have not yet come forward, and there is at least a further two years of work before the towns under this scheme could be considered "complete".

It is anticipated that some form of celebration event will take place in the next few months to showcase the effect that ReVitalise has had on the whole borough.