
EYEMOUTH – PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR REGENERATION

Report by Executive Director
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

20 August 2019

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the priority regeneration actions identified for Eyemouth and East Berwickshire. The report also seeks approval to commit funding already allocated in the Council’s Capital programme to progress specific priority projects in support of the economic regeneration of Eyemouth.**
- 1.2 The Council’s Executive previously agreed to focus economic regeneration activity on key towns, including Eyemouth, based on the Town Centre Resilience Index. To support the regeneration of Eyemouth, an allocation of £799,000 of capital funding has been approved within the Council’s Financial Plan and a grant of £100,000 towards the installation of an ice plant at the harbour to support the fishing fleet was approved by the Executive Committee in April 2018 leaving an unallocated balance of £699,000.
- 1.3 In 2018, the Council established an Eyemouth and East Berwickshire Economic Regeneration Group as an informal sub group of the Executive. An Eyemouth and East Berwickshire Economic Regeneration Action Plan has been drafted for the area with input from representatives from the sub-group. A range of priority activity areas have been identified to support the regeneration of Eyemouth and these are outlined in this report.
- 1.4 Based on the priority areas identified, a number of indicative allocations are recommended from the Council’s capital programme. These have been reviewed and agreed as recommendations by the Eyemouth and East Berwickshire Economic Regeneration Group.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Executive Committee:-**
- (a) Notes the priority regeneration actions identified for Eyemouth and East Berwickshire by the Eyemouth and East Berwickshire Economic Regeneration Group; and**
 - (b) Approves the recommended project funding breakdown set out in Section 6.1 for the £699k capital funding that is allocated to Eyemouth in the Council’s Financial Plan, in order to progress priority projects to support the regeneration of Eyemouth.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 2017, the Council's Executive agreed to focus economic regeneration activity on key towns based on the Town Centre Resilience Index. The least resilient towns have been identified as Eyemouth, Hawick, Jedburgh, Galashiels and Selkirk based on a range of statistics and indicators. To support the regeneration of Eyemouth, a capital allocation of £799,000 has been made within the Council's Financial Plan.
- 3.2 In 2018, the Council established an Eyemouth and East Berwickshire Economic Regeneration Group as an informal sub group of the Executive. Council Officers have drafted an Eyemouth and East Berwickshire Economic Regeneration Action Plan highlighting key issues and opportunities for the area with input from representatives from the sub-group. A range of priority activity areas have been identified to support the regeneration of Eyemouth.
- 3.3 The draft Action Plan is aligned to the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy with the key objective of inclusive economic growth: "Growth that provides increased prosperity along with greater equality. By creating opportunities for all, it helps to distribute the benefits of increased prosperity fairly." The activities within the Action Plan have been based on the six themes agreed by the Vision for Eyemouth (V4E) Group, who drafted an initial Action Plan for the town in 2012.

Theme 1. Centre for Excellence for Marine Economy

Theme 2. First Port of Call

Theme 3. Carbon Positive

Theme 4. Live in a Healthy Town

Theme 5. Live in a Beautiful Town

Theme 6. Live in a Friendly Town

4 PRIORITY THEMES FOR ACTION

- 4.1 Key actions that will help to drive inclusive economic growth in Eyemouth and East Berwickshire are prioritised across these six themes. The actions are summarised in the following paragraphs and a full list of the actions is set out in Appendix 1.

- 4.2 **Theme 1. Centre for Excellence for Marine Economy**

The draft Action Plan recognises that the harbour is the heart of Eyemouth and that everything that can be done to help ensure its sustainability will also help support the community and local businesses. This theme seeks to support key diversification opportunities related to the marine economy, especially the potential to act as an operations and maintenance base for offshore windfarms currently being planned in the Forth area. There will be a need for feasibility work as well as enabling infrastructure to take advantage of potential opportunities. The theme encourages local schools, Borders College and local businesses to work together to ensure education and training requirements are developed to support the operations and maintenance related sectors. The importance of the Eyemouth Boatyard as a key marine asset and potential facility to support skills development, training and innovation is highlighted too.

- 4.3 The theme picks up on the importance of continuing to support Eyemouth Harbour Trust as a key local economic enabler and deliverer. Supporting the Harbour Trust to initiate the Harbour Road redevelopment, focused on the former Fishmarket site, is a key action. Progressing the education focused 'Hub & Spoke' model for skills and training opportunities as part of the South of Scotland Colleges project is noted, with Eyemouth High School being part

of the pilot approach. A number of transport issues and potential actions are raised, with the priority to progress Reston Station on the East Coast Rail line as a key new transport node.

4.4 **Theme 2. First Port of Call**

This theme focuses on the potential of tourism and the visitor economy for the area. It proposes an action to develop more effective signage to guide visitors to the town. There is a need to progress a range of marketing initiatives to promote and improve the tourism experience and to maximise the opportunities around 'Visitberwickshirecoast', which is already successfully marketing the area. There is an opportunity to promote the high quality seafood that is available locally, helping to develop the local food and drink sector. The theme also focuses on the need to develop additional visitor attractions and facilities such as a skate park for younger visitors, and caravan and vehicle storage for regular visitors. The Community Council are also keen to deliver a shopfront improvement grant scheme to enhance the High Street with a co-ordinated colour scheme.

4.5 **Theme 3. Carbon Positive**

The third theme aims to promote a circular economy and continue to encourage businesses and residents to adopt a zero waste approach, building on existing projects such as Eyemouth Community Fridge. It seeks to support businesses to identify low carbon or clean technology market opportunities by liaising with Zero Waste Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation and other experts. It is proposed that additional charging points for electric cars are installed in Eyemouth town centre and other village centres. The theme also suggests the need for research into the opportunities for community based renewable energy generation projects which can provide a local energy supply and future income streams for communities across Eyemouth & East Berwickshire. Finally, the theme highlights the need to work with private house builders and local housing associations to deliver more affordable housing and support the regeneration of existing housing.

4.6 **Theme 4-6. Live in a Healthy, Beautiful, Friendly Town**

These themes are important to the local community, and can make a useful contribution to the economic regeneration of the area by improving quality of life in the town and making Eyemouth a more attractive destination for day trips and tourist visits. Employment and volunteering opportunities are encouraged via the successful 'Splash' project and other local initiatives. Support for local community enhancement initiatives via Eyemouth Enhancement Group is highlighted. It is proposed that safe walking and cycling routes are created, to benefit both residents and visitors. It is also proposed to promote and encourage healthy living for all age groups through local projects and organisations like Ace, EyeRun, LiveBorders and local businesses.

5 PRIORITY FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

5.1 Based on the priority themes identified as above, the following indicative allocations are recommended from the Council's capital programme. These have been reviewed and agreed as recommendations by the Eyemouth and East Berwickshire Economic Regeneration Group.

5.2 **Theme 1. Centre for Excellence for Marine Economy**

Eyemouth Ice Plant Improvements - The fishing industry and the harbour continue to make a significant contribution to the local Eyemouth economy. The Harbour Trust is proactive in seeking to identify new opportunities to increase income from the harbour. The Trust is developing a new ice-making facility at the harbour in order to service local boats and

importantly to attract visiting boats to land their catch in Eyemouth. £100k has already been approved for this project and the equipment has been purchased and delivered. However, unanticipated additional works associated with the installation of the equipment have arisen. This will require additional reinforcement of the floor of the ice plant room before the equipment can be commissioned adding to the cost of the project. The Trust has requested a further grant of up to £25k to complete the project. Officers are working with the Scottish Government to try to identify additional sources of funding that may reduce this additional requirement from the Council.

- 5.3 **Former Fishmarket/ Museum redevelopment** – The project will progress the redevelopment of the Old Fishmarket, a high profile site on Harbour Road that owned by Eyemouth Harbour Trust (EHT). The vacant redundant building will be demolished and redeveloped into a thriving, vibrant space on the harbour front for use by the local community, businesses and visitors, based on a scheme developed by local architects, Bain Swan. An application has been submitted to the Scottish Government’s Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF). Up to £300k of Council capital funding is recommended for match funding for the RCGF application, with an initial Stage 1 application submitted in June 2019.
- 5.4 **Offshore Windfarm Operations & Maintenance (O&M)** – The potential development of the Neart Na Gaoithe offshore windfarm may offer a major regeneration opportunity for Eyemouth to provide operations and maintenance facilities in support of the energy generation activity. This opportunity has the potential to help diversify the local economy with major capital investment in infrastructure, direct employment and training, as well as indirect benefits such as related supply services, housing and accommodation. It is expected that the contract for the O&M servicing will be tendered in the coming months, with the Council supporting Eyemouth Harbour Trust, if the Trust is given the chance to compete in the process.
- 5.5 The Harbour Trust has already undertaken some pre-development work to enhance and support the potential tender process, such as the submission of a planning application for a heliport and related facilities. The allocation within the Council’s Capital Financial Plan is intended to help progress enabling infrastructure such as new road access, business facilities and other site services to ensure the development opportunity can be proceed if a future tender is successful. Up to £324k is recommended to be allocated to support the tender process as well as allow for facilitation and other enabling infrastructure.
- 5.6 A total of £649,000 is recommended for allocation to these priority projects under this theme.
- 5.7 **Theme 2 & 3: First Port of Call & Carbon Positive**
A number of smaller scale projects, have been identified by the community to provide an opportunity for town centre enhancements and improved visitor services for the town. These include feasibility studies for the former Whale Hotel on Harbour Road, which has remained vacant for many years, as well as a feasibility study for a potential Skate Park at Gunsgreenhill to develop the visitor offer. Funding is also being recommended for the provision of storage facilities for local businesses and visitors (caravans) at Gunsgreenhill Farm as well as additional charging points for electric cars in the town centre to encourage visitors to stay and spend in Eyemouth. A total of £50,000 is recommended for allocation to these priority projects under these themes.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

The recommended funding allocation is set out below. Additional funding and investment will be secured through potential major private sector investment, as well as through other grant funding sources such as the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund.

Eyemouth Ice Plant Additional Costs	Up to £25k
Former Fishmarket/ Museum redevelopment	Up to £300k
Eyemouth Off-shore Operations & Maintenance	Up to £324k
Feasibility Study for Former Whale Hotel	Up to £5k
Eyemouth Gunsgreen Hill farm storage proposal	Up to £20k
Skate Park Feasibility Study	Up to £10k
Additional charging points for electric cars	Up to £15k
TOTAL	£699,000

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

The key risk is that without the proposed support, Eyemouth will continue to face major economic challenges based on its fragile rural economy. The proposed approach, to support a variety of economic development projects, will contribute to supporting regeneration for Eyemouth and the wider economy. To help ensure successful delivery and positive outcomes, risks will be managed at individual project level following the Corporate Risk Management Policy and framework. Significant risks are escalated when necessary in line with the policy.

6.3 Equalities

A key aspect of the Council's Economic Development service work is to reduce barriers to economic inequality. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken at the appropriate stages of project proposals, typically during the development stages of the individual projects.

6.4 Acting Sustainably

The proposed projects will contribute to the sustainability of the local economy and coastal communities by helping to encourage and secure additional economic activity and growth in Eyemouth.

6.5 Carbon Management

Individual projects which are taken forward as part of the project will be assessed appropriately to minimise impacts and maximise low carbon opportunities. The new Sustainable Procurement Duty requires the Council to consider how it can improve the well-being of the area. Where elements of the project require construction works there will be opportunities, through the procurement process, to consider how individual construction projects can improve community well-being through the creation of new employment opportunities and the provision of potential tendering opportunities for local SME's.

6.6 Rural Proofing

Rural Proofing is not specifically required as the proposal does not relate to an amended Council policy or strategy. However, it is likely that the various proposals will have a positive impact on the coastal economy by providing significant diversification opportunities, as well as supporting the local

fishing and tourism industries.

6.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to be made to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation arising from this report.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR, the Clerk to the Council and Communications have been consulted and their comments have been incorporated into the report.

Approved by

Rob Dickson
Executive Director

Signature

Author(s)

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Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: Executive,

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PRIORITY THEMES FOR ACTION

Theme 1. Centre for Excellence for Marine Economy

- Business development opportunities – fishing & related
- Development of Eyemouth Boatyard project as a key facility to support skills development, training & innovation
- Support key diversification opportunities – Offshore Windfarm O&M – feasibility, enabling & infrastructure
- Work with school, colleges & employers to ensure education and training requirements are developed to support O&M and related sectors.
- Support to Eyemouth Harbour Trust as key stakeholder / enabler / deliverer
- Support key diversification opportunities – marine leisure activity
- Progress Harbour Road redevelopment focusing on the former Fishmarket site
- Development of commercial sites & properties in the town in line with current and future business needs
- Support the development of local business and community enterprise activity via Business Gateway, Third Sector, Community Enterprise support and other local partners
- Progress the education hub & spoke model for career development, education & training opportunities as part of the South of Scotland Colleges project. Eyemouth HS is part of the pilot approach
- Ensure High School & Borders College engage more effectively with local industries and provide the right courses and training to encourage better uptake of job opportunities in fishing, agriculture, food processing, land based industries, retail, trades etc
- Progress options appraisal on former secondary school site.
- South of Scotland Alliance to continue to lobby mobile phone operators to expand service coverage.
- Progress Reston Station on the East Coast Rail line as a key transport node.
- Maximise connectivity opportunities / ensure appropriate transport links are in place to other East Berwickshire settlements for commuters, businesses and visitors.
- Improve transport links and provide localised facilities for learning and education sites

Theme 2. First Port of Call

- Develop more effective signage to /into the town
- Progress a range of marketing initiatives to improve the tourism experience
- Support the seafood and developing local F&D sector. Promote and increase the profile of the sector
- Maximise opportunities around Visitberwickshirecoast
- Develop visitor packages - Focus on developing day / overnight experiences targeting key sectors
- Develop additional visitor attractions & facilities eg Skate park/ caravan & vehicle storage
- Deliver a shopfront improvement grant scheme to enhance the High Street with coordinated colour scheme
- Collate details of attractions and experiences, both existing and in development, and other essential tourist facilities
- Work with Chamber of Trade to progress local business initiatives – eg generate directory for all businesses
- Procure & share better photography to promote the different activities and interests

Theme 3. Carbon Positive

- Promote a circular economy and continue to encourage businesses and residents to adopt a zero waste approach eg Eyemouth Community Fridge
- Provide/offer all local businesses with free resource efficiency support working directly with Resource Efficient Scotland
- Support businesses to identify low carbon/clean technology market opportunities by liaising with Zero Waste Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation, etc
- Install additional charging points for electric cars in Eyemouth town centre and other village centres
- Research opportunities for community based renewable energy generation projects which can provide a local energy supply and future income streams for communities across Eyemouth & East Berwickshire
- Local promotion to encourage minimising waste & encouraging recycling: work with SBC Waste Services to develop key actions
- Town centre housing contribution statement for Eyemouth in 2019/20 to explore a range of options to support town centre living: Potentially targeting energy efficiency works and funding for domestic properties in the town centre
- Work with private house builders and local housing associations to deliver more affordable housing and/ or support the regeneration of existing housing

Theme 4-6. Live in a Healthy, Beautiful, Friendly Town

- Encourage employment and volunteering opportunities via Splash & other local initiatives
- Encourage & support local community enhancement initiatives via Eyemouth Enhancement Group
- Create safe walking and cycling routes
- Promote & encourage healthy living for all ages via Ace, EyeRun, LiveBorders, local businesses etc
- Create more sports facilities and opportunities