

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2015

PRIDE IN YOUR HIGH STREETS & LOCAL CENTRES

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR SHAUN DAVIES

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

1.1. The Pride in Our High Streets & Local Centres Fund (hereafter referred to as the Fund) is comprised of two parts totalling £1m;

- a bidding pot (hereafter referred to as the Bidding Fund) of around £800k which will be made available for bids meeting the criteria set out in 5 below,
- a separate budget (hereafter referred to as the Innovation Fund) of around £200k which will be used by Telford & Wrekin Council to invest in promotions and activities to attract people to visit and use the local high streets and local centres, adding to the attraction of the Borough as a destination of choice for visitors.

1.2. It is proposed that the criteria for evaluating proposals submitted for the Bidding Fund will include:

- The creation or protection of jobs.
- Bringing redundant or empty properties back into economic use.
- Increasing footfall on the High Street, e.g. by introducing a new service.
- Making centres safer and more attractive places

Consideration will also be given to

- Innovation
- Sustainability
- Value for money
- The level of community engagement in, and support for, the project

1.3. The Bidding Fund will seek to make an equitable distribution of grants across the different High Streets and Local Centres in the Borough. No one High Street or Local Centre will be able to benefit from more than £100,000 of grants in total.

1.4. Applications for funding will be considered against the grant criteria by a team of business representatives and local authority officers with recommendations for funding, then being presented to Cabinet for consideration.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- 2.1. Agree the process set out for allocating the Fund including the criteria for the Fund outlined in 5.1.7.
- 2.2. Agree the process for assessing applications including the establishment of an Assessment Panel who will evaluate applications and make recommendations on grant allocation to Cabinet for a decision.
- 2.3. Delegate responsibility to the Assistant Director, Development, Business & Employment to oversee the administration and implementation of the Fund
- 2.4. Delegate responsibility to the Assistant Director, Leisure, Culture & Facilities Management in conjunction with the Assistant Director, Development, Business & Employment and the Lead Cabinet Member to oversee the investment of the £200k in line with proposals in the Report.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	The proposals within this report will contribute directly towards the following priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and create jobs as a 'Business Supporting, Business Winning Council' • Ensure that neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained • Regenerate those neighbourhoods in need and work to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	
TARGET COMPLETION / DELIVERY DATE	The scheme will open for applications during May 2015 with a deadline for submission of the end July 2015. Dependent upon the number of successful applications, there may be opportunity for subsequent applications in October 2015.	
FINANCIAL / VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>£1m revenue funding is included in the budget strategy for 2015/16 to fund the Pride in Our High Streets & Local Centres Fund. A bidding pot of £800k will be created and a separate budget of £200k for TWC to invest in promotions and activities.</p> <p>The successful bidders into the bidding pot will be required to enter into a grant agreement which will cover</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the terms of the grant and the purpose for which it is approved, • the arrangements for the drawdown of funding, • the monitoring arrangements for the grant, • the arrangements for the repayment of grant funding

		<p>if it is unspent or used for purposes other than those agreed under the grant agreement.</p> <p>Finance support will be provided in the finalisation of the Grant Conditions, the evaluation of bids and the monitoring of successful grant bids.</p> <p>JAC 060215</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p>Any decision made by the Authority can be subject to challenge in respect of its reasonableness or lawfulness. Therefore a robust and transparent assessment procedure has been developed so as to avoid challenge of either the process or recommendations made by the Initial Assessment Panel and the decisions taken by the Cabinet. This should be supported by developing a Terms of Reference for the Initial Assessment Panel which should detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who the key members of the Initial Assessment Panel will be • The roles and responsibilities of the Initial Assessment Panel • How the Initial Assessment Panel will operate (Governance) • The key processes for ensuring accountability, probity, transparency, compliance with legal obligations and value for money • How stakeholders can contribute to the work of the Initial Assessment Panel <p>Although the State Aid De Minimis principle is likely to apply in the vast majority of cases the assessment and award process will need to ensure that State Aid does not arise either directly or indirectly by the award of grant funding to individual organisations or joint ventures which could distort competition and affect trade by favouring certain undertakings.</p> <p>Legal Services have developed a standard form of grant agreement that should be used in each award of funding</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	<p>This investment will have a wide economic impact on the Borough in terms of regeneration and the development of new services. It will further trigger increased spend by local residents and visitors attracted by the new services and facilities available and the promotional activity.</p>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	<p>The initiative will impact on wards which include High Streets and / or Local Centres.</p>

PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. AIMS OF THE PRIDE IN YOUR HIGH STREETS & LOCAL CENTRES PROGRAMME

4.1. The Pride in Our High Streets & Local Centres initiative aims to deliver a programme of physical and social regeneration across the Borough to support the Council's business supporting, business winning agenda and its intention to promote the concept of a "Living High Street". The programme also shows a commitment by the Council that it is addressing the issues that are important to local people.

The Pride in Our High Streets & Local Centres initiative will complement the recent Pride in Your Community Programme. It will provide a grant scheme to fund a wide variety of projects across the Borough's High Streets and Local Centres. It will also compliment and extend the focus on improving vitality of our key centres, which is being piloted in Wellington and Dawley. The scheme provides an opportunity for voluntary, public and private sector organisations to access funding that will help to improve buildings and facilities, organise events and purchase items for projects within the Borough. This funding aims to support projects that are of community or strategic importance in terms of high street and local centre regeneration and that have potential to support or create local employment opportunities.

4.2. The Pride in Our High Streets & Local Centres initiative also aims to support the delivery of the Council's priority objectives. Applications will need to demonstrate how the project will deliver outcomes that support the delivery of one or more of the following priorities as well as meeting the detailed criteria set out in 5.1.7 below;

- Put our children and young people first
- Protect and create jobs as a 'Business Supporting, Business Winning Council'
- Improve local people's prospects through education and skills training
- Protect and support our vulnerable children and adults
- Ensure that neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained
- Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities
- Regenerate those neighbourhoods in need and work to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing

4.3. Telford & Wrekin Council will be looking for projects that are innovative and sustainable.

4.4. As well as providing an opportunity for larger, well established organisations to access funding, the initiative also aims to support small community and voluntary sector organisations by providing an opportunity to apply for smaller grants. It is envisaged that this will enable small or new organisations to develop their ideas and grow in confidence and expertise in accessing funding and delivering projects which should assist with their longer term sustainability.

4.5. The initiative will seek to unlock the creativity and energy of young people in the community by promoting the involvement of young people and youth groups, both in the development of proposals and bidding for funds, and in the delivery of projects

themselves. This will align with the objectives of the Youth Pledge currently being developed by Telford & Wrekin Council.

4.6. The Fund consists of two elements totalling £1m.

- A Bidding Fund of around £800k will be made available for applications meeting the criteria set out in 5.1.7 below.
- A separate Innovation Fund of around £200k which will be used to support interesting and exciting projects and activities that will help promote our borough towns as destinations in their own right.

Part 5 of this report outlines proposals for the operation of the Bidding Fund. Part 6 outlines proposals for operation of the Innovation Fund.

5. PRIDE IN YOUR HIGH STREETS & LOCAL CENTRES – BIDDING FUND

5.1. Application for grants from the Bidding Fund

5.1.1 Who can apply

The Bidding Fund will be made available for applications from the groups below.

- Parish Councils
- Town Councils
- Regeneration Partnerships
- Businesses and Social Enterprises
- Charities and the Voluntary Sector

Note the following:

- Organisations are able to make joint bids. Telford & Wrekin Council believes that collaboration will yield benefits both in terms of the scale of what is achievable and in the level of community involvement, so joint bids will be considered favourably.
- Organisations (or groups of organisations) are able to make more than one application.
- Applications from individuals or groups of individuals will not be accepted.

Council Officers will be available to offer advice on appropriate organisational constitutions if required.

5.1.2 Application milestones

The Bidding Fund will open for applications during May 2015 with a deadline for submission of the end July 2015. Initial evaluation will take place during August 2015, allowing the Funding Advisory Panel to sit during September 2015.

Announcements regarding successful applicants are anticipated by the end of September 2015.

5.1.3 Minimum and maximum grants

Applicants can apply for grants up to a maximum of £100,000. No one High Street or Local Centre will be able to benefit from more than £100,000 of grants in total. In line with our desire to support smaller organisations, the minimum grant allocated will be set at £5,000.

5.1.4 Match funding

Applicants will be expected to fund at least the first 10% of any project cost. Applicants will not be expected at time of application to be able to prove the match funding is available, but applicants will be expected to explain how they will acquire the funding should they be successful and receive a funding allocation.

5.1.5 Type of project allowed

The Bidding Fund will be classified as revenue, providing great flexibility regarding the types of projects that will be considered.

5.1.6 Scope of allowable projects

Projects must deliver outcomes that link directly to a specific High Street or Local Centre in Telford & Wrekin Borough.

5.1.7 Project evaluation guidelines

Bidders will be encouraged to put forward bids that meet as many of the following criteria as possible.

1. Create or protect jobs
2. Increase footfall into the local High Street or Local Centre.
3. Bring redundant or empty units back into economic use.
4. Bring a new service or function to a High Street or Local Centre
5. Promote 5 Ways to Well-being
6. Help make the High Street or Local Centre safer
7. Help extend the “established” operating hours of the High Street or Local Centre (for instance, during the evenings or at weekends)
8. Help make the High Street / Local Centre cleaner and more pleasant
9. Encourage innovation and entrepreneurship
10. Involved local young people in the bidding process or will encourage them to become involved in subsequent delivery

Projects are also expected to be innovative in their objectives for the High Street or Local Centre, and offer a model for long-term sustainability. They must offer value for money.

Finally, projects will be evaluated on the degree of community / public support the project has received or is likely to attract.

5.1.8 Support for Applicants

Support for applicants will be provided in terms of guidance on how to complete the application form and the types of information required, and about the evaluation process in general. Telford & Wrekin Council will arrange workshops where organisations can meet with Council Officers and get help.

Support from Council Officers for actually completing application forms or pre-evaluation quality checks on potential submission material will not be provided on the grounds of impartiality.

5.1.9 Materials for Applicants

A pack containing guidelines for applicants will be issued to all applicants describing the evaluation criteria, the documentary and financial evidence required and the evaluation process itself. An application form template will be provided.

5.2. Evaluation of submitted applications for funding

5.2.1 Initial Assessment Panel

An initial review of applications against the criteria listed in 5.1.7 above will be made by an Initial Assessment Panel made up of T&WC Officers and representatives of the business sector (including the Chair of the Telford Business Board). This review stage will indicate to Cabinet how well applications are structured and how well they meet the key criteria. The Initial Assessment Panel will make recommendations to Cabinet for the grant of funding for consideration. A Terms of Reference document will be provided to Initial Assessment Panel members.

5.2.2 Cabinet Review

It will be the task of Telford & Wrekin Council's Cabinet to review the recommendations made by the Initial Assessment Panel and make decisions about which projects should be taken forward and allocated funding. A Terms of Reference document will be provided to Cabinet members.

5.2.3 Conflict of Interest

Members of the Initial Assessment Panel and Cabinet will be asked to declare any potential conflict of interest relating to applications that are to be considered at the start of each evaluation meeting.

5.2.4 Evaluation Programme

The evaluation process will take place during September 2015.

5.2.5 Funding Distribution

Grants are to be distributed between High Streets and Local Centres on an equitable basis. The focus will be on the following recognised High Street / Local Centres¹:

Dawley
Donnington
Hadley
Ironbridge
Madeley
Newport
Oakengates

¹ With regard to centres the adopted Telford & Wrekin Core Strategy states that the focus will be Telford Town Centre and the district centres of Dawley, Donnington, Hadley, Madeley, Oakengates and Wellington. These borough towns will meet the local needs for shopping, services and facilities. Policy CS5 identifies that the six district centres will be the focus of new development which serves the needs of their respective communities with a mix of retail, recreation, leisure and culture, housing and employment uses. Smaller centres will provide more accessible local services and small scale community services to meet people's day to day needs. For the purposes of this Fund, we have recognised Ironbridge, Newport and St Georges as High Streets / Local Centres to be included.

St Georges
Wellington

On this basis no one High Street or Local Centre will be allowed to benefit from more than £100k in total.

Telford & Wrekin's Cabinet Council's Cabinet will ensure this fair allocation of funding. If they are not able to do this, for instance, if there are insufficient projects submitted relating to one or more High Streets or Local Centres, the unallocated funds can be retained by Telford & Wrekin Council and added to the budget for distribution by Telford & Wrekin Council as described in 6 below, or used for a later round of applications.

6. PRIDE IN YOUR HIGH STREETS & LOCAL CENTRES – INNOVATION FUND

- 6.1. The £200k Innovation Fund is designed to support our High Streets and Local Centres as destinations in their own right by celebrating their distinctiveness and highlighting their individuality. This will be achieved through the promotion and backing of interesting and exciting projects that will help to integrate them more closely into the Borough and link them together.
- 6.2. The Innovation Fund will be used to provide additional activity and animation in the high streets which celebrate the unique character and appeal of distinctive public spaces. These will compliment the existing facilities and provide an additional draw to the town which benefits the local economy. Activities will be drawn up in partnership with the community, inviting their input to the content, themes and occasion.
- 6.3. Projects and activities supported by the Innovation Fund will integrate into and link with existing, recognised events in order to offer an enhanced promotion of the Borough and all its various assets. This will help encourage a wider range of visitors, both local and regional.
- 6.4. The Innovation Fund links to and complements the Arts & Culture Events Programme managed by Telford & Wrekin Council's Arts & Culture team. Projects supported will be integrated into the framework of key activities which are delivered on an annual basis. They will also be expected to complement the existing 'fringe events' in the borough towns that already add depth and richness to the borough offer (e.g. Wellington Literary Festival, Oakengates Carnival, etc.)
- 6.5. Groups and organisations intending to run an event will be required to submit an expression of interest (EoI) outlining their concept. EoI's involving multiple partners will be considered favourably. EoI's will be used by the Arts & Culture team to determine the level of alignment with the framework mentioned above which will help them link up the applicants with other event teams and sources of support.
- 6.6. Events supported by the Innovation fund will be encouraged to link up with the delivery of projects that win funding through the Bidding Fund. Events that link up with projects in this way will be considered favourably.

6.7. The Innovation Fund can also be used by the Arts & Culture Service to support local communities to strengthen their existing offers and enhance local events. This could be done in a number of ways:

- through advice and/or joint procurement of event content and artists
- for training and up skilling volunteers and event organisers
- support for the promotion and marketing of activities and events on council social media, websites and in facilities and buildings
- for community and schools workshops to create content with the community members and get them engaged
- for the acquisition of equipment or resources to enhance an event e.g. sound and lighting, materials for costumes and effects, etc.

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION – NONE

8. PREVIOUS MINUTES – NONE

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS – NONE

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