

Notice of KEY Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	MHCLG Reopening High Street Safely Fund allocation to Havering of £231,057
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Damian White
SLT Lead:	Neil Stubbings
Report Author and contact details:	Howard Swift Tel: 01708 432654 E: howard.swift@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	Havering Corporate Plan 2020/2021. Places: Strengthening the attractiveness of our town centres
Financial summary:	Havering's allocation of £0.231m for the MHCLG Reopening High Streets Safely Fund.
Reason decision is Key	Significant effect on two or more Wards.
Relevant OSC:	OSC
Is it an urgent decision?	Yes
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	Yes, due to Special Urgency – MHCLG as Managing Authority for EU Funds requires proposal for spending funding allocation by Friday 17 July 2020.

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering	[X]
Places making Havering	[X]
Opportunities making Havering	[X]
Connections making Havering	[X]

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

Cabinet is requested to approve and endorse the following measures outlined below:

1. To accept the MHCLG Reopening High Street Safely Fund (RHSSF) allocation to Havering of £231,057 financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and agree to enter into a grant funding agreement with the Cities and Local Growth Unit for the execution and administration of the funds.
2. To approve the proposed projects / initiatives identified to be delivered as part of the MHCLG RHSSF funds:
 - An additional post in public protection for a nine month period.
 - To deliver a Shop Local campaign to communicate 'shop safely' messaging and to promote the #LoveHaveringShops campaign which encourages residents to use their local businesses/shops.
 - Commission a company, Project Centre, to deliver a Public & Business Engagement and Concept Design programme via the Havering and Newham framework agreement for highways and related services to ascertain public and businesses perceptions, views and opinions for future social, economic, cultural and environmental improvements opportunities to enhance the vitality and viability in town centres across the Borough. This programme will deliver concept designs through to public consultation which will produce a comprehensive report to enable the progression towards preliminary design, detailed design for long term town centre recovery delivery plans for future Capital investment programmes. The programme will also identify Quick Wins for early intervention promoting COVID-security.
3. To authorise for the Director of Regeneration to enter into a grant funding agreement for the Havering's allocation of £231,057 RHSSF with the Cities & Local Growth Unit (CLGU) and in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer all matters related to the expenditure and administration of Havering's fund allocation.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Authority is The Leader has exercised his Executive authority, as set out in Part 3, Section 2 of the Council's Constitution:

- (c) To determine all substantial policy matters and strategic decisions and those minor matters which are referred by the Leader at the request of an individual Cabinet Member as being particularly contentious.

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

MHCLG – Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF) European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

1. Councils across England are to share £50m of additional funding to support the safe reopening of high streets and other commercial areas. The money will allow local authorities in England to put in place additional measures to establish a safe trading environment for businesses and customers, particularly in high streets, to develop plans through measures that extend to the end of March 2021. **Havering’s allocation will be £231,057.**
2. The ERDF have produced a set of guidance notes in advance of the funding agreement (Appendix A) being in place detailing the fund will support 4 main strands set out below:
 - 2.1 To develop an action plan** for how the local authority may begin to safely reopen their local economies. All local authorities are encouraged to engage businesses, business organisations, lower tier authorities such as parish councils and other relevant stakeholders when considering how to use this award and encourage councils to utilise the Covid-19 framework as a guide to developing recovery and transformation plans.
 - 2.2 Communications and public information activity** to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely: The local authority will want to effectively communicate to its citizens their role in ensuring that the local economy can reopen safely.
 - 2.3 Business-facing awareness raising activities** to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely. The principle of this activity is the same as for communications to citizens, but it is recognised that the messaging needs to be different and as such part of a separate campaign.
 - 2.4 Temporary public realm changes** to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely. These changes can help improve consumer confidence and increase, safely, the number of active consumers.
3. Grant Funding Agreements will need to be put in place between the Cities and Local Growth Unit (CLGU) and the Council. All proposed projects will need to be agreed by the CLGU.
4. Publicity for funded initiatives will need to carry ERDF publicity logos.
5. The ERDF Reopening High Streets Funds will not fund any of the following
 - 5.1 Activity that provides no additionality** - The Government recognises that local authorities will already be delivering activity to ensure the safe reopening of their economies. This funding is intended to be additional funding on top of that existing activity; it should not be replacing the source for already committed expenditure.
 - 5.2 Capital expenditure** – This funding is intended to help local authorities address the short-term issue of re-opening their local economies. It can support some

Key Executive Decision

temporary changes to the physical environment, but those changes should not be anticipated to last beyond 12 months, or until no longer required for social distancing.

5.3 Grants to businesses – Funding cannot provide direct financial support to businesses to make adaptations to premises, purchase PPE, purchase goods or equipment or offset wages or other operating costs.

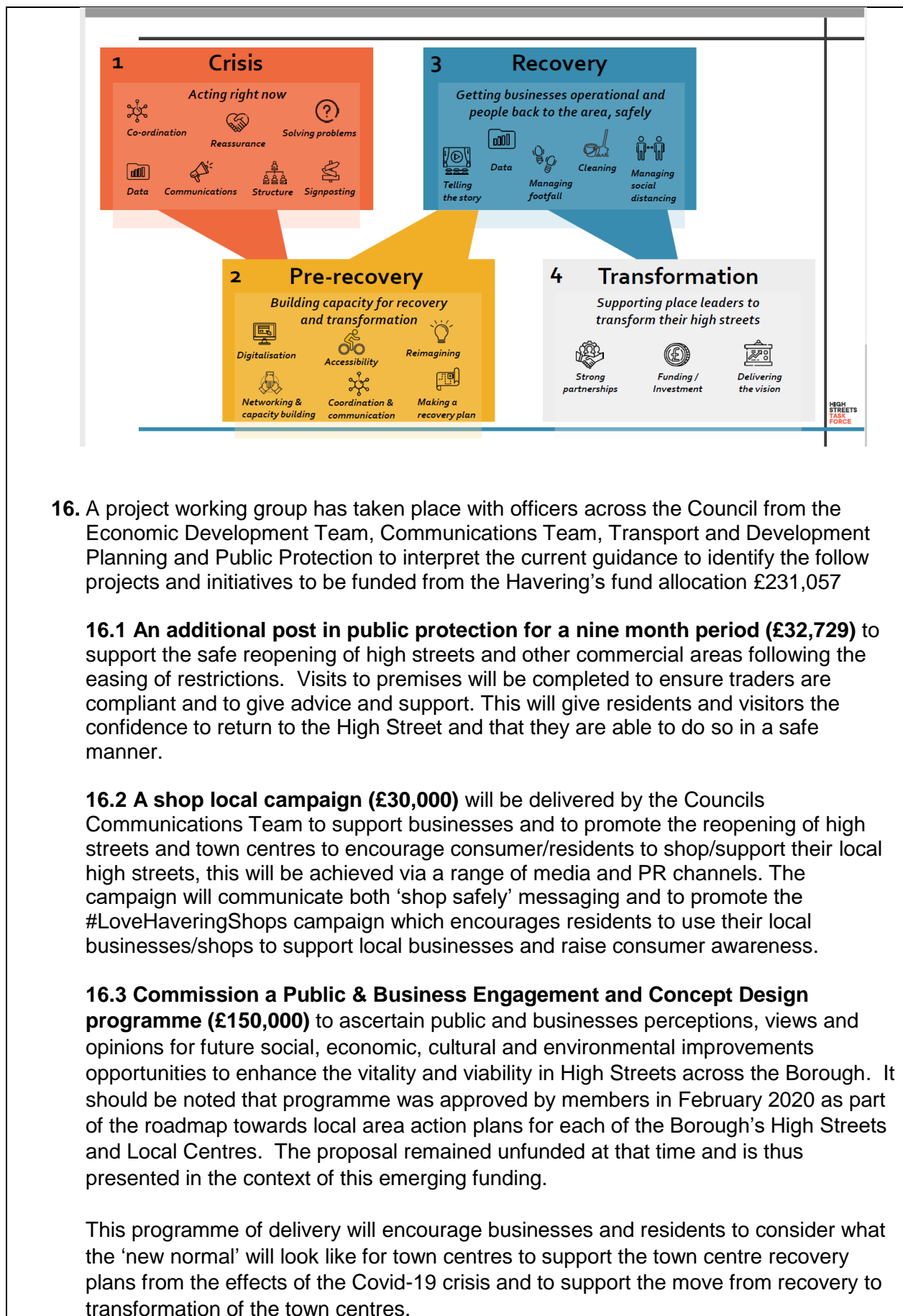
Current Activity

6. Public Protection Officers have reached out to all the businesses in Havering to make sure they are aware of all the Government guidance. We have also been going out and visiting all the premises such as barber-/ hairdressers/hospitality establishments, beauty service providers and Public houses and advising them of how to operate safely and be COVID-secure. In addition, we have been investigating intelligence from the public in relation to COVID secure concerns at some premises.
7. Where suitable locations are identified, the footway will be widened to enable social distancing to take place alongside shopfront-trading.
8. To support social distancing in town centres, directional signage has been implemented on the ground indicating where on a footway or pedestrianised area people should be walking. This helps maintain social distancing measures, as far as is practicable, on narrow footways.
9. Stencilling has been implemented on the ground with 2m distancing indicating where people need to queue when waiting to enter shops or other community facilities.
10. Transport for London (TfL) on behalf of the London Mayor is developing initiatives to facilitate social distancing. It wants to work with boroughs to deliver its London Streetspace Plan which is a programme designed to radically reallocate road space to walking and cycling and improve bus efficiency in London.
11. In order to maintain social distancing on London's public transport, services will have to operate at around 20% capacity of previous peak demand. TfL want to make sure that those living or working in London have an alternative choice to making their journeys other than by the private vehicle.
12. The London Streetspace Plan aims to make it easy and safe for Londoners to choose to walk or cycle as an alternative to public transport use.
13. The London Streetspace Plan will help address TfL's concern that travelling by car is likely to become more attractive as the lockdown is eased when congestion levels are lower than before Covid 19 but also because of fears about using public transport.
14. During the Covid-19 crisis and pre recovery period the Council has supported businesses in accessing government business support packages, discretionary grants, delivery of a business helpline, a designated Covid-19 website that incorporates advice and support, business impact survey and Q and A Leaders business sessions.

Projects proposed to be funded via the EDRF – Reopening of High Street Funds

15. The diagramme below illustrates and provide context the journey from crisis to transformation that the project projects make a contextualised contribution.

Key Executive Decision



16. A project working group has taken place with officers across the Council from the Economic Development Team, Communications Team, Transport and Development Planning and Public Protection to interpret the current guidance to identify the follow projects and initiatives to be funded from the Havering's fund allocation £231,057

16.1 An additional post in public protection for a nine month period (£32,729) to support the safe reopening of high streets and other commercial areas following the easing of restrictions. Visits to premises will be completed to ensure traders are compliant and to give advice and support. This will give residents and visitors the confidence to return to the High Street and that they are able to do so in a safe manner.

16.2 A shop local campaign (£30,000) will be delivered by the Councils Communications Team to support businesses and to promote the reopening of high streets and town centres to encourage consumer/residents to shop/support their local high streets, this will be achieved via a range of media and PR channels. The campaign will communicate both 'shop safely' messaging and to promote the #LoveHaveringShops campaign which encourages residents to use their local businesses/shops to support local businesses and raise consumer awareness.

16.3 Commission a Public & Business Engagement and Concept Design programme (£150,000) to ascertain public and businesses perceptions, views and opinions for future social, economic, cultural and environmental improvements opportunities to enhance the vitality and viability in High Streets across the Borough. It should be noted that programme was approved by members in February 2020 as part of the roadmap towards local area action plans for each of the Borough's High Streets and Local Centres. The proposal remained unfunded at that time and is thus presented in the context of this emerging funding.

This programme of delivery will encourage businesses and residents to consider what the 'new normal' will look like for town centres to support the town centre recovery plans from the effects of the Covid-19 crisis and to support the move from recovery to transformation of the town centres.

Key Executive Decision

As we move into the town centre recovery period this programme of delivery will support the existing Covid-19 social distancing measures for town centres and will help to complement and foster businesses engagement on future projects/initiatives delivery within the town centres. The programme of delivery will work with the Council's Communication Team to ensure that that this programme fits with existing promotions, campaigns and keeps a consistent approach. The consultation /engagement delivery will be flexible to the continuing need for social distancing during these unprecedented times.

Delivery will also focus on bringing Council services together which have a vested interest / a service delivery within the relevant town centres as well as businesses and residents' views to influence the future scope to achieve concept designs through to public consultation resulting in a comprehensive report to support the future capital investment programme for each town centre.

While the deliverable of this work will be an essential component of the local areas plans moving forward, we anticipate the early identification of small scale practical interventions that can be progressed as Quick Wins, for example:

- Shop front improvements
- PPE supply
- Additional banners and posters promoting COVID-security
- Removal of redundant signage and street furniture
- Small scale structural improvements impacting the public realm
- Accessibility improvements

Note that the Reopening High Street Fund cannot meet the cost of every illustrative intervention. Such ineligible cost would require to be separately budgeted.

It is recommended to commission a company, Project Centre to deliver a Public & Business Engagement and Concept Design programme via the Havering and Newham framework agreement for highways and related services. It is anticipated that an outline timeframe for a phased delivery considering Covid-19 restrictions is nine months and will be agreed with Project centre upon commissioning of their services. See Appendix B.

17. An administration fee of 1.5% (**£3,465**) for claims and evaluating grant monitoring submission claim forms will be obtained by the Council.

18. Contingency – a further sum of 6% (**£13,863**) will be reserved to cover contingencies

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Refuse the ERDF £231,057 allocation to Havering for the reopening of high street funds – rejected as it is important to the economic vitality of Havering's town centres to improve and support businesses in our town centres and Romford Market to become more resilient and to

Key Executive Decision

support local businesses to continue to trade and be resilient during these unprecedented times.

Haverling Blue – the introduction of a Borough loyalty card was considered and remains an area worthy of further exploration but it is recognised that the alignment of this activity and that proposed to be funded by RHSS is poor and could therefore not be funded in this manner.

ShopAppy - The introduction of an online digital marketplace platform (ShopAppy) (£30,000) was considered to encourage and support businesses within the Covid-19 recovery period and long term to have a digital trading existence as well as maintaining a presence on the high street and stay connected with their consumers. It is known that the Romford BID is committed to a similar initiative which it intends to share with the broader Borough. We expect to support this partner initiative and now recommend not to risk any perception of there being competing products vying for the same market.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

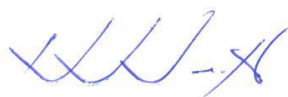
The proposals have been widely and iteratively consulted upon internally across Council departments with the Economic Development Team, Communications Team, Transport and Development Planning and Public Protection to devise the project proposals.

NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Howard Swift

Designation: Interim Economic Development Manager

Signature:



Date: 15/07/20

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

S1 Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a general power of competence, the Council has the power to receive grant funding and enter into agreements including agreements with others for the delivery of some of the projects.

The grant agreement and agreements for the projects/ initiatives which are to be entered into must be reviewed and approved by the Council's legal team, who will advise on each agreement including in respect of State Aid relating to that agreement if appropriate.

The proposed contracts are not above the EU threshold for services agreements. They are not therefore caught by the full Public Contracts Regulations 2015 regime. Contracts must be procured in compliance with the Treaty principles of proportionality, equality of treatment, transparency and non-discrimination; and in accordance with the provisions of the Council's contract standing orders (CSO). Where due to urgency, departure is made from the CSO, a waiver should be obtained.

Cleared by Legal on 19 June 2020.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

All proposed projects will be funded/met by the MHCLG Reopening High Streets Safely Fund allocation for Havering (£0.231m).

Cleared by Finance on 19 June 2020.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

The resource proposed will be appointed by adhering to the Council HR policies and procedures.

Any required additional staffing resource is expected to be procured through the established contract with Adecco or separately by direct appointment of an appropriate contractor in accordance with the Council's procurement requirements.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- i. The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- ii. The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- iii. Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not

Key Executive Decision

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are: age, gender, race and disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio – economics and health determinants.

This provision will benefit local businesses and local residents to highlight the commodities/products that are available locally within their town centres as well as providing the convenience and accessibility to purchase product/commodities via e-commerce as well as supporting local businesses to become more resilient therefore safeguarding local jobs within these challenging economic times.

Support and advice will be given to traders/businesses to ensure compliant on social distancing which will give residents and visitors the confidence to return to the high street and that they are able to do so in a safe manner. Residents will receive enhanced communication on shop safely messages and the consultation programme will give businesses and residents the opportunity to influence future change for their town centre and their environment.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The COVID 19 pandemic is a global and national emergency with serious impact on lives and socio economic activities. National guidance recommends social distancing measures, working from home and only essential travels to reduce further risk to lives.

Given the threat to lives posed by the ongoing pandemic, the overriding consideration is to follow national guidance to stay alert and to protect lives. This decision is consistent with that guidance and the proposed projects support this message.

The additional cycle provision will encourage residents to cycle to their town centre that will encourage health and wellbeing.

The Public and Business Engagement and Concept Design programme will take into consideration the Healthy streets principles on the development of design concepts for the town centres.

Appendix A MHCLG – Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF) European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) guidance notes.

Appendix B The Public and Business Engagement and Concept Design programme.

Key Executive Decision

Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Delete as applicable

Proposal NOT agreed because

Details of decision maker

Signed

Name:

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title:

Head of Service title

Other manager title:

Date:

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to the proper officer, Debra Marlow, Principal Democratic Services Officer in Democratic Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____