

Notice of Non-key Executive Decision

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| Subject Heading: | MHCLG Reopening High Street Safely Fund Round 2 Welcome Back allocation to Havering of £231,057 |
| Cabinet Member: | Cllr Damian White |
| SLT Lead: | Neil Stubbings |
| Report Author and contact details: | <p>Howard Swift / Perry Brooker Tel: 01708 432654 E: howard.swift@havering.gov.uk</p> <p>Tel: 01708 432654 E: perry.brooker@havering.gov.uk</p> |
| Policy context: | <p>Havering Corporate Plan 2020/2021.</p> <p>Places: Strengthening the attractiveness of our town centres</p> |
| Financial summary: | Havering's allocation of £231,057 for the MHCLG Reopening High Streets Safely Fund Round 2 Welcome Back Fund. |
| Relevant OSC: | OSC |
| 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 30 th May 2021 |

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

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|-------------------------------|-----|
| 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

Requested to approve and endorse the following measures outlined below:

1. To accept the MHCLG Reopening High Street Safely Fund (RHSSF) Round 2 Welcome Back Fund allocation to Havering of £231,057 financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and agree to enter into variation agreement to the existing signed Grant Funding Agreement (13th Jan 2021) 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 Round 2 Welcome Back funds:
 - An appointment of 4 x Night Time Economy Ambassadors (part-time).
 - An appointment of a Business Support Officer (full time fixed term until 31st Mar 2022).
 - To fund early interventions delivery/outcomes from the Town Centre Recovery Plans.
 - A programme of town centre events to animate and explore the heritage of our high streets.
 - To deliver a communications and public information campaign.
3. To authorise for the Director of Regeneration to enter into a variation agreement to the existing RHSSF Grant Funding Agreement to obtain Havering's allocation of £231,057 RHSSF Round 2 Welcome Back funds 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) Round 2 Welcome Back Fund
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

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1. Councils across England are to share £56m of ERDF funding to support the return to high streets safely and help *build back better* from the pandemic. This funding is to be known as the “Welcome Back Fund” (the fund) and it builds on the £50m Reopening High Street Safely Fund (RHSSF) allocated to Councils in 2020 and forms part of wider support government is providing to communities and businesses, to protect jobs, support the most vulnerable and ensure no one is left behind as we continue to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic and begin to *build back better*. The fund will allow local authorities in England to put in place additional measures to create and promote a safe environment for local trade and tourism, particularly in high streets as their economies reopen.

The Welcome Back Fund (WBF) builds on the existing Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF) Round 1 and is an extension of the Round 1 funding allocation with the addition of two new eligibility criteria strands that further broaden the scope of the fund, supporting a wide range of intervention measures. **Harvering’s allocation will be £231,057 for Round 2 for projects and initiatives to be delivered 31st March 2022.**

2. The ERDF have produced a set of guidance notes on the RHSSF (Round 2) Welcome Back Fund (Appendix A) detailing the fund will support the existing 4 criteria strands plus an addition of two new criteria strands that further broaden the scope of the fund, supporting a wide range of intervention measures set out below:

2.1 To develop an action plan for how the local authority may begin to safely reopen their local economies.

2.2 Communications and public information activity to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely.

2.3 Business-facing awareness raising activities to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely.

2.4 Temporary public realm changes to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely.

2.5 Support to promote a safe public environment for a local area’s visitor economy.

2.6 Support local authorities to develop plans for responding to the medium-term impact of Covid-19 including trialling new ideas particularly where these relate to the high street.

3. The Council will need to agree with MHCLG the projects proposed to be funded by the RHSSF Round 2 Welcome Back Fund allocation by completing and submitting an activity form/action plan by the closing date of 30th May 2021 and will need to enter into a variation agreement to the existing Grant Funding Agreement that was signed on the 13th January 2021.
4. Publicity for funded initiatives will need to carry ERDF publicity logos and adherence to the ERDF procurement regulations.
5. The ERDF Reopening High Streets Funds will not fund any of the following which is out of scope for this funding allocation.
 - **Activity that provides no additionality** - 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

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activity; it should not be replacing the source for already committed expenditure. For example, if there is already a communications officer on staff then this funding cannot be used to subsidise their salary, but it can support overtime of existing staff or a new temporary role to support the implementation. Similarly, if the authority's own in-house public works department undertakes works (e.g. additional road markings) the staff costs associated with this activity would not be eligible, although additional materials purchased for this purpose would be eligible.

- **Capital expenditure** – This is a revenue only funding project intended to help local authorities address the longer-term impact of Covid-19 on local economies. This can include activities that last as long as restrictive measures are in place as well as activities that help future proof high streets. Permanent changes are therefore not permit.
- **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.

6. Projects proposed to be funded via the EDRF – Reopening of High Street Funds 'Welcome back Fund'.

A project working group has taken place with officers across the Council from the Economic Development Team, Communications Team, Transport and Development Planning, Public Protection Team, Licensing, Streetcare, Highways, Community Safety, Cultural services and the Outbreak Control Team, to interpret the current guidance to identify the follow projects and initiatives to be funded from the Havering's fund allocation **Round 2 (WBF)** £231,057.

6.1 An appointment of 4 x Night Time Economy Ambassadors (Part Time) to patrol high streets and town centres (£34,854). As we continue to take cautious steps back to recovery there are several key milestones where Night Time Ambassadors will be paramount to ensure Covid-19 compliance still remains within the high streets. The Night Time Ambassadors will engage and encourage public compliance with Covid-19 regulations, provide advice and support to the public. The Night Time Ambassadors will provide reassurance around feeling safe in the town centres and high streets in the evening and at night on a Friday and a Saturday.

6.2 Appointment of a Business Support Officer (full time fixed term until 31st Mar 2022) within the Outbreak Control Team (£55,354) to carry out visits and provide advice and education to business on the changing requirements within their retail setting following the easing of restrictions, this would include risk assessments which may need to be revised. The Business Support Officer will give businesses the confidence to re-open with the reduced measures. Where businesses are confident and displaying the correct Covid-19 measures, this in turn will boost consumers' confidence to return to the boroughs high streets.

6.3 To fund early interventions delivery/outcomes (£41,598) from findings of the engagement /consultation programme with residents, businesses and key stakeholders from the Town Centre Covid-19 Recovery Action Plans.

6.4 A programme of town centre events (£60,000) to enhance, curate and animate the high streets and exploration of heritage, community led with consideration to disproportionality represented groups into participatory arts and craft

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performances, therefore, making the high street experience a memorable one to encourage more people back into town centres and high streets.

6.5 To deliver a communications and public information campaign (£30,000) to build on the success of the Round 1 campaign to continue to communicate and remind residents of the current Covid-19 measures / compliance requirements and continue to make residents feel assured that the Council is working hard to keep our high streets safe and Covid-19 secure. The campaign will build on the success of the phase 1 campaign deliverables by delivering a multi-channel campaign, using both digital and traditional marketing, with a wide range of advertisement opportunities including digital social media adverts.

6.6 An administration fee (£9,251) for claims and evaluating grant monitoring submission claim forms to be obtained by the Council.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Refuse the RHSSF Welcome Back funds £231,057 allocation to Havering for the reopening of high street funds Round 2 – rejected as it is important to the economic vitality of Havering's town centres to improve and support businesses in our town centres to become more resilient and to support local businesses to continue to trade and be resilient during these unprecedented times.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

A project working group has taken place with officers across the Council departments from the Economic Development Team, Communications Team, Transport and Development Planning, Public Protection Team, Licensing, Streetcare, Highways, Community Safety, Cultural services and the Outbreak Control Team, to interpret the current guidance to identify the proposed projects and initiatives to be funded from the Havering's fund allocation RHSSF Round 2 (WBF) £231,057.

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

Name: Howard Swift / Perry Brooker

Designation: Interim Economic Development Manager, Town Centres Manager

Signature:

Date:

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a general power of competence to do anything an individual can do, subject to any statutory constraints on the Council's powers. The recommendations in this report are in keeping with this power and, the Council has the power to receive grant funding.

Acceptance of the grant entails a variation of the existing grant funding agreement to incorporate the second round of funding into the agreement. The grant conditions have already been reviewed by the Council's legal team prior to the Council entering into the agreement. The legal team will assist with the variation agreement once received from MHCLG.

Award of the contracts which will be funded by the received grant money will be subject to separate decisions at the requisite level of delegation once providers have been identified.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

All proposed projects will be funded/met by the MHCLG Reopening High Streets Safely Fund allocation for Havering (£231,057).

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

The resources 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 for temporary staff provision or separately by direct appointment of an appropriate contractor in accordance with the Councils 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

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

It is both Council policy and SLT direction/expectation that EqHIAs (Equality and Health Impact Assessments) are carried out when appropriate and in sufficient time to enable informed decision-making. As a basic rule, one should be undertaken whenever staff, service users, or the wider public are impacted by decisions or the intended or planned activity.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – RHSSF Welcome Back guidance notes.

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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

Proposal NOT agreed because

Details of decision maker

Signed 

Name: Neil Stubbings, Regeneration Director

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title:

Head of Service title

Other manager title:

Date: 28.05.21

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 _____