

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council - 13 December 2011

Improvements to the High Street, Taunton

Report of the Strategic Director, Joy Wislade

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Norman Cavill)

1. Executive Summary

This report requests Full Council approval for receipt of a capital grant from the Homes and Community Agency of in the region of £250,000 for improvements to be made to the High Street, Taunton and for Full Council approval to spend this funding on the use for which it is made available.

2. Background

The High Street is a central retail area of Taunton Town Centre. A paper was brought to the Executive in January 2011 proposing work to design a scheme of works to improve the appearance and functionality of the High Street as a key retail area. A full scheme was felt unlikely to be affordable immediately and the proposal was to design an overall master plan that could be achieved in phases. A further report was approved in August 2011 proposing the de-cluttering works. This report covers an offer of funding from the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) to pay for further works to the High Street, in accordance with the scheme design, as long as these are completed by 31 March 2012.

3. Details

The HCA has made an informal offer of up to £250,000 (although there is the possibility that there may be slightly more than this made available), for further improvement works to the High Street, Taunton as long as these are completed by 31 March 2012.

Officers have looked at what can be done within this time frame and have submitted a final proposal to the HCA. The funding bid for will include the following works:-

- New lighting scheme;
- Sorting out all the electricity supplies so that the unsightly boxes are

- removed and the supply is extended to the top of the High Street so that markets etc can extend further up;
- Further work to the existing planters (removal and rebuilding), some new planting;
 - Street furniture including new seating; and
 - Additional signage.

The scheme has been submitted and we hope to hear back in the next few days whether it has received final approval.

4. Finance Comments

This funding would be in the form of a capital grant. The works are therefore capital works and the Council will need to approve a Supplementary Estimate to increase the Capital Programme Budget for 2011/2012 for the capital expenditure that will be funded by this grant. There is no anticipated use of the Council's own limited capital resources for the works outlined in this report.

5. Legal Comments

The High Street is part of the highway network so all the necessary permissions will be required from Somerset County Council prior to work commencing.

6. Links to Corporate Aims

This scheme links to the Regeneration Corporate Aim.

7. Environmental and Community Safety Implications

The design of the scheme will take into account community safety implications.

8. Equalities Impact

The design of the scheme will incorporate issues around access for all.

9. Risk Management

The design will be subject to a risk management approach.

10. Partnership Implications

This scheme is being delivered in partnership with others. A small project group consisting of officers from Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and the Town Centre Company has been set up. The private sector with interests in the High Street, have also be engaged in the process. A significant amount of public consultation has taken place.

11. Recommendations

- a) That Council authorises receipt of an offer of funding from the Homes and Communities Agency on the understanding that it is to be spent on improvements to the High Street and that it must be spent by 31 March 2012; and
- b) That, should the money be made available, a supplementary budget be approved to increase the Council's 2011/2012 Capital Programme by £250,000 for the additional expenditure funded by this Grant.

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