

ECONOMY PDG

10TH JANUARY 2019

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMY AND REGENERATION

SHOPFRONT ENHANCEMENT SCHEMES

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Richard Chesterton
Responsible Officer: Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration

Reason for Report: To provide members with an update on shopfront enhancement schemes and to seek members' approval to continue / re-instate such schemes in each of the three main market towns in the District.

RECOMMENDATION: That members approve a seed fund totalling £15,000 to maintain / re-instate shopfront enhancement schemes for the three main market towns in the District.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: It supports the corporate objectives for the economy, in particular 'Improving and Regenerating our Town Centres.'

Financial Implications: This report is seeking approval for a total council investment of £15,000 across the district to maintain or re-instate shopfront enhancement schemes in each of the three market towns. This will be used as seed funding to supplement or attract other sources of funding, with the intention that each town has a shopfront enhancement pot of at least £15,000 comprising a blend of council funding (£15,000 in total for all towns combined) and that from other sources. The exact funding package will be different for each town. This is due to the utilisation of planning related S106 funding in certain locations such as £30,000 contribution towards this fund from the Lidl foodstore proposal in Tiverton. The £15,000 Council funding has been identified as a commitment for 19/20 within the Growth and Economy and Delivery budget.

Legal Implications: It is not considered that there are any significant legal implications of continuing the scheme. Contributions sought from development towards the scheme would be subject to s106 legal agreement.

Risk Assessment: It is not envisaged that there are any significant risks with regard to continuing with this scheme. There is a risk that by not continuing with the shopfront enhancement scheme that the appearance of the town centres could be compromised and this in turn could affect the success of the local economy.

Equality Impact Assessment: None anticipated.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 It is recognised that the visual attractiveness of a town centre is an important element in consumers' choices about where to shop and spend leisure time. The state of repair and decorative condition of shopfronts is an important

element of this visual impact and therefore a major contributor to a town's vitality and economic success.

- 1.2 Over a period of several years, the Council has administered three shopfront enhancement schemes across the District, firstly in Crediton as part of a Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme, then in Cullompton to support regeneration in the town centre and more recently in Tiverton as part of the High Street Innovation Fund. Each of these schemes has had a slightly different focus and been funded from different sources. However, they have all been run in a similar way, providing up to 50% match funded grants to property owners and shopkeepers for minor (and sometimes major) repairs, repainting, new signage, and small structural adaptations etc. These grants encourage shop-owners to keep their properties in a good state of order and help to maintain the special status of town centre conservation areas. This is particularly important at a challenging time for retail businesses due to structural changes in the retail market and the combined effect of low consumer confidence and increased cost of imports.
- 1.3 The schemes in each of the three main market towns in the District have now either ended, or have limited funds remaining and are therefore likely to close in the coming months. The Economic Development team would like to continue these schemes, in order to maintain this support for the town centre economy, help preserve conservation areas and as a way of engaging with and encouraging business owners to keep their premises in a state of good repair and attractive for customers.

Crediton Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (2002 - 2005)

- 1.4 The Crediton Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) ran from 2002 – 2005, and was funded by a successful bid to English Heritage which awarded £255,000 over three years, with a further £30,000 coming from Devon County Council. The objective of the HERS was to target specific properties of historic importance within the town centre and provide grants to support repairs and refurbishment, preserving conservation features and making the properties more attractive to shoppers. Over the 3 years of the scheme, HERS grants were offered to a total of 23 properties focusing on the restoration of historic features and the repair of historic fabric. Even though the majority of grants were for minor restoration and refurbishment works, the amount of funding available allowed a small number of larger grants which facilitated substantial repairs to a couple of buildings. The HERS was linked with other regeneration activity in the town at the time including the New Town Square scheme and the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative. The Scheme closed in 2005.

Cullompton Shopfront Facelift Scheme – (2011 – present)

- 1.5 The Cullompton Shopfront Facelift Scheme was launched in 2010 as part of wider initiatives to support regeneration in Cullompton town centre. The scheme was funded with £20,000 s106 contributions from the development of a new Tesco store in Station Road. Although linked to the conservation area,

the scheme did not focus purely on restoring historic features and repair to historic fabric, and has enabled more general redecoration and refurbishment work to properties in the town centre conservation area, as long as the project was in keeping with the conservation area management plan. The scheme provides up to 50% match funding to a maximum of £2,000 per application, although there have been a couple of 'double grants' to facilitate major repairs. To date, the scheme has enabled 14 projects to be funded. There is currently £2,100 left in the budget. (see Appendix A).

Tiverton Shopfront Enhancement Scheme - (2015 – present)

- 1.6 Introduced in 2015 on the model used in Cullompton, the Tiverton Shopfront Enhancement Scheme was funded through a grant of £15,000 from the Government-funded High Street Innovation Fund (HSIF). The scheme provides up to 50% match funding, to a maximum of £2,000 per shop. The scheme was initially targeted at those properties most in need of repairs and refurbishment, but more recently it has been open more generally to any shopkeeper in the Tiverton Conservation Area. To date the scheme has funded 19 shopfront improvements (See Appendix B). The scheme currently has an uncommitted balance of just over £2,250.

2.0 Continuing Shopfront Enhancement Schemes

- 2.1 The Economic Development Team recognises the value of shopfront enhancement schemes in maintaining the visual attractiveness of the town centres, supporting the preservation of conservation areas and as a means of engaging with business owners and encouraging them to update and redecorate their properties at a time when they are potentially experiencing financial difficulties and therefore less likely to invest in their properties.
- 2.2 Experience has shown that a Shopfront Enhancement Scheme with a value of £15,000 could allow a three-year scheme to be set up, providing 50% match funded grants to a maximum of £2,000 per grant. Obviously, a larger scheme pot would allow larger grants for more substantial repairs, or a longer distribution period. The total scheme pot could be drawn from multiple sources, including initial seed funding from the Council, while further funding would be sought through s106 contributions where appropriate, pursuing other grant applications, or seeking contributions from town councils.
- 2.3 In Tiverton, £30,000 has already been negotiated under a s106 agreement to support the shopfront enhancement scheme via the Lidl foodstore planning application. In Cullompton, the Council is actively pursuing a partnership with Historic England which may in time allow larger grants for more substantial repairs and refurbishment, but this funding stream is unlikely to become available until 2020 at the earliest. In Crediton we would need to investigate what other sources of funding may be available.
- 2.4 The Economic Development Team is therefore seeking approval for £15,000 investment from the Council to act as a catalyst to re-establish shopfront enhancement schemes in each of the three market towns of Tiverton,

Cullompton and Crediton. The money will be used to draw down further contributions as detailed above. Once a minimum total scheme pot of £15,000 per town has been reached, then, the scheme would be rolled out in the eligible town.

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Circulation of the Report: Councillor Richard Chesterton
Leadership Team

List of Background Papers:

Appendix A - Cullompton Shopfront Facelift Scheme

	Applicant		Grant
30/03/2011	CHIC	16 High Street	1,382.50
12/08/2011	China Orchid	20 High Street	1,534.00
07/09/2011		56-58 Fore Street	340.50
10/01/2013	Hospicare	52 Fore Street	1,599.00
14/03/2013		24 Fore Street	4,000.00
12/09/2013		50 Fore Street	2,000.00
23/10/2013	House Martins	15 Fore Street	2,000.00
04/12/2013	The White Hart	19 Fore Street	18.18
20/01/2013	Dynamic		200.00
07/01/2015		12-16 Fore Street	4,000.00
01/11/2015			400.00
02/12/2015	Devon Kitchen	8 Higher Street	70.00
	Pickwicks	43 Fore Street	105.50
29/03/2018	CoCo	18 Fore Street	250.00
	Total		17,899.68

Appendix B – Tiverton Shopfront Enhancement Scheme

	Applicant	Grant
2015-16		
	Classic Cuts	£97.50
	The Wool Merchant	£225.00
2016-17		
	Body Language	£399.00
	Richard Grant Memorials	£429.00
	The Jolly Vintner	£473.40
	Easy Life	£543.61
	Chic It	£258.26
2017-18		
TSF1701	Courtenay's Bar	£905.20
TSF1702	Mademoiselle Mojo's	£540.00
TSF1703	Frou Frou	£918.50
TSF1704	Jo Amor	£1,229.50
TSF1705	formerly Jo Jo's	£440.00
TSF1706	GW Pack	£1,275.00
TSF1707	Lantic Gallery	£1,185.50
TSF1708	Grindstone Barbers	£369.50
TSF 1709	A&A Property Services	£410.00
TSF 1710	Tiverton BBQ	£450.00
2018-19		
TSF 1802	Monsieur Mojo	£1,000.00
TSF 1803	Carole King Interiors	£145.00
TSF 1804	Fleur de Lys	£276.42
	Total Committed	£11,570.39