

## **ECONOMY PDG**

**DATE:** 18 May 2017

### **High Street Innovation Fund**

**Cabinet Member** Cllr Richard Chesterton  
**Responsible Officer** Stephen Walford, Director of Growth

**Reason for Report:** To update Members on the completion of the High Street Innovation Fund phase 2.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):** That Members note the project updates

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** It supports the aims of the Corporate Plan's economy objectives which is a priority for the Council.

Aim 3 - Improve and regenerate our town centres with the aim of increasing footfall, dwell-time and spend in our town centres

**Financial Implications:** None

**Legal Implications:** None

**Risk Assessment:** None

## **1.0 Introduction**

In 2012 the Government offered the Council £100,000 from the High Street Innovation Fund to support Town Centre Regeneration within the District. It was decided to offer this funding as grants to business and community groups for self-generated schemes that would have a lasting impact on the town centre. A first round of grants was approved in 2012. With a combination of underspend and the failure of some projects to come to fruition, the Council was able to offer a second tranche of funding in 2015.

In October 2015, the second phase of the High Street Innovation Fund was allocated to twelve projects across Crediton, Tiverton, Cullompton and Bampton. Each project had to demonstrate how it would enhance the vitality and vibrancy of town centres, by increasing footfall to the town and thereby improving the local economy.

Below is a summary for each project highlighting the impact it had on our high street now that all the funding has been released.

## **2.0 Project Update**

**a. Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life** - £10,000 for a "Tivvy Bumper" sculpture trail. The trail launched on 2 July 2016 and finished on 30 October 2016. There were 21 sculptures in the shape of the Tivvy Bumper steam engine (housed in Tiverton Museum). The sculptures were located in and around Tiverton, at key retail and leisure facilities. The trail appealed to local families and attracted visitors to the

area (at least 17,320 people took part in the trail). There was a map directing people around the town and linked to other attractions. The locations of the sculptures helped to increase awareness of leisure & tourism opportunities in the area, and feedback from Bampton and Coldharbour Mill indicates the trail directed people to visit these sites. It raised awareness of, and funds, for Tiverton Museum. Bampton became particularly involved in their part of the trail, involving a number of local businesses and all of the children in the primary school. The trail unexpectedly won the South West Art in the Landscape Award at Tiverton in Bloom. Tiverton Museum received a huge amount of very positive feedback, summed up by one comment: 'The best thing that's been done for the town in years, it was brilliant.'

**b. Age UK** - £5,000 for a Dementia Accessible Tiverton. The co-ordinator has run Dementia Friends Awareness sessions as part of making Tiverton a Dementia Friendly Community, to businesses, community groups and individuals alike. To date they have run a session for staff at Banbury's, Weatherspoon's, the Best Western Tiverton Hotel, Easy Life Mobility, Home Fayre, Tiverton Museum, Tourist Information Service, Exe Valley Leisure Centre, Community Transport, St Paul and St Georges pastoral care team, the Salvation Army and Gin and Jam W.I. Two hundred and eight Dementia Friends have been trained in the town. Events are also planned during Dementia Awareness week on 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> May.

**c. Bampton Business Group** – received £1,275 to produce 5000 colour copies of the Bampton Business Directory. This new edition featured a map of Bampton town centre showing all the shops and pubs etc. Nearly 100 local businesses were featured in the directory. The directory was produced and launched in January and was featured by the Gazette. This coincided with the delivery of around 4000 copies of the directory to households in Bampton and 16 towns and villages in the surrounding area. The directory is available from a number of shops including 'Welcome to Bampton' packs which are provided to all new residents. It is also stocked by accommodation providers which help visitors to the area to find out what we have here. Residents are impressed with the quality of the production and how well it reflects the quality and range of services available in the high street. Many businesses reported receiving work as a direct result from the directory including sit-down meal bookings and take away food orders, health and beauty appointments and bespoke orders and enquiries. The directory and its associated website continue to be valued by those businesses featured within them but also by the town, with the 'buy local' message to encourage residents to use and support their local shops.

**d. Cullompton Town Team** - £7,000 towards four projects. Festival development - to date Cullompton Town Team have delivered five hugely successful festivals (Spring Fest, Food & Drink Festival & Christmas Festival) and managed to raise money from local businesses to match the funding. Footfall records evidence the impact these events have on the high street bringing thousands of people into the town. The highest record to date was 5,000 visitors in one hour. These have become established annual events for the Town, with the business community coming out on the street to participate.

The sheep noticeboard project, started as a pilot project which was very popular with requests for more from the community, therefore the funding allowed another 8 display boards to be produced which will be installed soon across the town. The Sheep has become the icon for Cullompton and creates a trail around the town to spot them.

The first interactive display board is live at the Hayridge with the second planned for Tesco's. They promote local events and businesses in order to attract people into the town by highlighting what is on offer. Another three smart TV displays are to be put up this summer at the services (Junction 28), the town hall and leisure centre, with scope to widen the project further.

**e. Cullompton Farmers Market** – received £9,500 which helped the Farmers' Market back into a sustainable position. Purchasing gazebo's for their market days and pop up markets which take place at Tesco car park, Uffculme show and Mid Devon show, as well as the Food and Drink festival. This allows the Farmers' market to have a presence around the Culm Valley, showcasing what they have to offer and as a result attracts people to Cullompton for their market days. The gazebo's bright colours, light up the high street, creating a community feel to entice people to shop at the market. A trailer was purchased in order to transport the new equipment so that the market can become independent and move freely around the different events.

The Bullring now has electricity installed, which will allow a market café to be set up selling hot drinks once the urn is purchased, creating another feature for shoppers to spend more dwell time in the town.

Funding supported the Market to commission a marketing strategy, website and active Facebook page, to tempt new customers and keep current customers informed of their offer. The Market has invested in banners and signage alongside the food trail project, which aims to educate shoppers as to where their purchased products have come from e.g. food miles. The marketing strategy action plan will now be taken forward following the appointment a new market manager by the group in April.

**f. Crediton Town Team** were granted £7,212 for four projects. The Flag project, had a second grant, enabled the town team to make eight new flags, bringing the total to 68, representing a group or business. Community groups made three large patchwork banners to decorate shops and public spaces throughout the year. The theme 'What Crediton means to me', currently adorns the walls of East Town Café and the Station Tea Rooms. Admired by locals and visitors, the flags and banners are not simply a celebration of the community's creativity but, by making the town more attractive, have a more serious purpose of increasing footfall and trade in the town.

The Town sign project surveyed high street traders to explore ideas and an artist developed the ideas into a sign. Three designs were developed and made into draft pieces 1 meter tall. These signs were displayed at two consultation events in June and October of 2016. Over 200 people took part and the designs were offered to the Chamber of Commerce to take sign 3 forward.

The Town Square Canopy Design Competition had four long-standing Crediton architects work voluntarily to 'create concepts for a town-square covering which would simultaneously give protection from extreme weather to a wide range of community events and social uses while also enabling people to 'see the sky and feel the wind on their face'. Two of the architect's concepts were chosen, with the remaining two architects doing detailed support work for them. The concepts are ingenious, elegant and (given the subject) controversial. All of the designs are

currently on extended display on the town team's website where further feedback is invited.

The Gazebo project was initially for use during the 2016 Crediton Food & Drink Festival. They have since been made available to other community groups and proved to be a valuable asset for the town. They were, for example, used at the Christmas Lights Switch On event in November and will be in constant use throughout the 3-week Crediton Festival this summer.

- 3.0** The High Street Innovation Fund is now fully allocated and the programme is closed.

**Contact for more Information:** Amy Dugard 01884 234276

**Background Papers:**

**File Reference:**

**Circulation of the Report:** Cllr Richard Chesterton  
Stephen Walford, Director of Growth