

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD

25 February 2015

Joint Report of the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 GRANT SUPPORT SCHEME – LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

To set out proposals for extending grant support for local neighbourhood shopping centres building on the district centre grant scheme launched in 2013.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Members of the Board will be aware that a grant scheme to support traders' groups in the Borough's larger district retail centres was launched at the end of 2013 with the aim of encouraging local initiatives to help boost local trade. Grants of up to £7,500 were offered to each centre with funding being drawn from innovation grant monies. The scheme has generated a good deal of positive engagement with local traders and a wide range of proposals were developed by local traders' groups. Where such groups did not exist, a number of parish councils took a lead in consultation with their local traders. Proposals which have been supported included better signage, promotional materials including new websites and visitor information, and improved street furniture. Formal bids from two centres, West Malling and Kings Hill, are outstanding.

1.2 Grant Support for Neighbourhood Centres

1.2.1 It is now proposed to introduce a similar grant scheme aimed at supporting trade in the Borough's larger neighbourhood centres. Suggested criteria for the proposed scheme are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

1.2.2 In most cases, the neighbourhood centres will not have any formal traders groups in place through which grant support could be channelled. Outside of Tonbridge, it is suggested that we engage with relevant parish councils (as has been undertaken with some district centre grants) to promote and take forward the grant scheme. For those neighbourhood centres in Tonbridge, we would envisage making direct contact with the traders in those centres and seek to encourage them to form a local traders group if one does not currently exist.

1.2.3 The following centres are suggested for inclusion within the new grant scheme:

Parished Areas:

Oxley Shaw, Leybourne
Greenacres, Aylesford
Twisden Road, East Malling
Woodland Parade, Ditton
Wateringbury
Hildenborough
Plaxtol

Tonbridge:

Martin Hardie Way
York Parade
Derwent Road, Trench

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 None

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 Funding will be drawn from innovation grant monies which have been awarded to the Borough Council by Government to help boost retail trade.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 None

1.6 Equality Impact Assessment

1.6.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.7 Recommendations

1.7.1 That the proposed grant scheme to support neighbourhood retail centres, as detailed in this report, **BE APPROVED**.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and the Chief Executive confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Mark Raymond

Nil

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive