

## RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

### **PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted for the Officer or Executive Member  
[NO]

### **SERVICE DIRECTORATE: ENTERPRISE**

#### **• DECISION TAKEN**

- The approval of grants in total £76,702 from the 2022/3 Allocation of the Shared Prosperity Fund from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to fund projects to improve the North Herts Town Centres:

- **£17,774** internally to NHC as outlined in 6.1.1
- **£14,059** to Hitchin Business Improvement District (BID) as outlined in 6.1.2
- **£20,519** to Letchworth Business Improvement District (BID) as outlined in 6.1.3
- **£14,570** to Royston Business Improvement District (BID) as outlined in 6.1.4
- **£9,780** to Royston Town Council 6.1.5

- The approval of grants in total £11,041 from the 2023/4 Allocation of the Shared Prosperity Fund from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to fund projects to improve the North Herts Town Centres:

- **£11,041** to Hitchin Business Improvement District (BID) as outlined in 6.1.2

#### **• 2. DECISION TAKER**

- The Executive Member for Enterprise in consultation with the Service Director – Enterprise.

#### **• DATE DECISION TAKEN:**

- 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023

### **3. REASON FOR DECISION**

4.1 In July 2022, North Herts Council (NHC) compiled the North Herts Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Investment Plan, which provides details of our plans to distribute the 3 annual allocations of the fund provided by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to projects and programmes for the betterment of the District under the scheme.

4.2 In the investment plan, NHC allocated funding towards Improvements to town centres & high street (investment priority E1) as follows:

2022/3	£76,702
2023/4	£65,962
2024/5	£267,581

4.3 The Investment Plan was approved by DLUHC in Dec 22/Jan23 and NHC received the 2022/3 allocation in Feb 2023.

4.4 NHC consulted with the Town Stakeholder Groups and asked them to propose projects they would like to undertake using the funding, including the level of additional funding (in cash or in kind) they could provide to supplement any SPF grant money

and what evidence of the outputs and outcomes of the projects we could expect to see as a result of the activity.

4.5 The Stakeholders have submitted their proposals, NHC have prioritised them for inclusion and have allocated the 2022/3 Town Centre Tranche. These are outlined in section 6 below for approval.

4.6 Delivery - Following approval, NHC will pay the grants to the stakeholders who will be responsible for delivery of and reporting on the approved projects.

4.6.1 These activities are all designed to fall under the E1 intervention, Improvements to the town centres and high streets.

#### 4.6.2 **Required outcomes**

The outputs and outcomes chosen to reflect the success of the measures by March 2025 are :

a) Increased Footfall (at least 5%)

b) Improved public realm space (in m2)

We will require feedback from the grant recipients, coupled with our use of the Community Vision Town Centre metrics system to report back to DLUHC.

4.6.3 We will require the grant recipients to procure items in accordance with the SPF guidance, furnish NHC with invoices representing all spend and to return any underspend that may occur.

#### 4. **CONSULTATION WITH MEMBERS**

5.1 Consultation will take place by means of an information note that published in the Members Information Service on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023

#### 5. **APPLICATION DETAILS**

6.1 NHC is required to monitor to progress of improvements in town centres under the SPF Programme. In order to provide consistent metrics we have extended our contract with HUQ for provision of the Community Vision system which provides data on footfall, dwell time, demographics and other data. The 2023 annual cost is £11,840 and we have accrued £4,934 from the 2022 subscription.

We have also contracted centrally with People and Places Partnership who compiled the recent Town Centre studies to enable further work with stakeholders to crystallise and enable them to start to implement their Town Centre Improvement programmes in Letchworth, Baldock and Royston. The total cost is up to £24,000 over the 18 months to October 2024. The Letchworth Heritage Foundation have pledged a further £2,000 to match the work undertaken in the town. We have allocated £1,000 of this to the 2022/3 Allocation.

Community Vision	£16,774
People and Places	£1,000
	<b>£17774</b>

6.2 Hitchin BID have requested £5,100 towards the £6,100 for a new visitor website. They will provide the balance. They have also requested £20,000 towards the refurbishment and a 'brightening up' of Hitchin Market. They will match this with a further £2000. We propose to pay £8959 from the 22/3 allocation and £11,041 from the 23/4 budget.

Visitor Website	£5100
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Hitchin Market £20,000  
**£25,100**

- 6.3 Letchworth BID have proposed new planters (£10,305.83), event equipment (£6966.63), event training for BID staff (1,663.20) and a website upgrade (1583.34). They are arranging the funding and maintenance of the flowers to fill the planters.

Planters £10305  
Event Kit £6966  
Website £1584  
Training £1664  
**£20519**

- 6.4 Royston BID have requested pigeon deterrent infrastructure in key parts of the Town Centre, the installation of which will involve considerable liaison work with landlords for C4B media who are currently running the admin side of the BID. The cost in total is £2270 of which £2000 is the cost of the supply and fit of the devices and £270 C4B admin cost. The BID will cover the admin cost plus £230 cash leaving a requirement for £1770. They have also requested £1800 towards the £2400 cost of pavement deep cleaning and 11,000 towards stocking the existing and supplying a number of new hanging baskets; capital element £1500 and revenue £9500.

Pigeon Deterrence £1770  
Deep Clean £1800  
Hanging Baskets £11000  
**£14570**

- 6.5 Royston Town Council have received quotes for the repainting of the town centre street furniture of which the most competitive is for £9780.

Street Furniture refurb **£9780**

- 6.6 The Baldock Stakeholders group has been slower to arrive at proposals that are fundable under the scheme. We propose that NHC and they work with People and Places under the new consultancy contract to devise a viable Town Improvement Programme, elements of which we can then fund with Year 2 and 3 SPF. We have also allocated a £5000 grant from the Herts Growth Board toward a feasibility study on the creation a viable business forum to represent the town's traders, conducted by Save the High Street.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Chapter 1, s1-8 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the powers to do anything if it is not specifically prohibited in legislation.
- 7.2 Section 137 Local Government Act 1972 provides specific authority for the Council to incur expenditure on anything which is in the interests of and will bring direct benefit to its area. This includes a charity or other body operating for public service.
- 7.3 The decision taker signing the Decision Notice has delegated authority to take such a decision in accordance with the North Hertfordshire District Council Constitution under section 14.6.8(b)(iii)(A) in relation to Community engagement and development, including financial assistance and grants to external organisations.

## 8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The current balance available in the Shared Prosperity budget and North Herts District Investment Plan to allocate towards Town Centre Improvements is £411,245 over years 2022/3, 2023/4 and 2024/5 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

8.2 The Allocations as outlined in section 6 represent a capital spend of £36,184.80, well in excess of the 10% total allocation minimum (£18k) required by DLUHC and the £10k outlined in the NH Investment plan under this intervention.

**9. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Pentana Risk, the Council's performance and risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues. Whenever a request for grant funding for equipment is received, the recipient of the funding will be advised to obtain insurance for the item to avoid a repeat request for funding in the event of the equipment being stolen or damaged. There are no pertinent risk implications for the Authority associated with any items within this report.

**10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

10.2 Area committee funding is awarded to community groups that clearly demonstrate positive impact on the community and wider environment. The projects outlined in this report seek to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

**11. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" requirements do not apply to this report.

**12. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

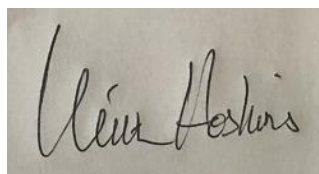
12.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

**13. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 There are no pertinent Human Resource implications associated with any items within this report.

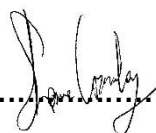
**NOTIFICATION DATE**

28<sup>th</sup> June 2023



Signature of Executive Member Decision taker ...

Date .....29/6/2023.....



Signature of Service Director: Enterprise .....

Date .....29/06/23.....

**Please Note: that *unless urgency provisions apply* EXECUTIVE decisions cannot be implemented until 5 clear working days have elapsed after the decision has been taken to allow for scrutiny call-in.**

**Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**