

This report will be made public on 1 March 2021



Report Number **C/20/81**

To: Councillor David Monk, Leader of the Council
Date: 1 March 2021
Status: Non-Key Decision
Corporate Director: Ewan Green, Director of Place

SUBJECT: FOLKESTONE & HYTHE DISTRICT HIGH STREETS FUND

SUMMARY:

This report sets out the detail of applications recommended for approved funding via the Folkestone and Hythe High Street Fund initiative and seeks confirmation for the grant award.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

The Leader is asked to agree to the recommendations of the Decision Panel on grant awards, as set out below, because agreement is needed on these applications to the Folkestone & Hythe District High Streets Fund.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. To receive and note Report C/20/81.**
- 2. To approve the recommended High Street Fund grant applications as summarised this report.**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Cabinet of Folkestone & Hythe District Council approved the mechanism for investing and managing the Folkestone & Hythe District High Streets Fund in September 2019 (Cabinet C/19/21), following agreement to establish this fund in February 2019 (Cabinet C/18/74). This is a £3 million fund earmarked reserves to support high streets across the district “looking to deal with a number of adverse pressures” in the current retail climate.

2. THE FOLKESTONE & HYTHE HIGH STREETS FUND (HSF)

- 2.1. The key uses of the District HSF are to (a) take forward major capital investments opportunities and other initiatives led by F&HDC to help transform Folkestone town centre, the largest town in the district; and to (b) provide contributory funding to external organisations to take forward initiatives to address issues and improve Folkestone and other key High Streets in the district.
- 2.2. Cabinet agreed to £2.2 million of District HSF being allocated to Folkestone town centre and the remaining £800,000 made available to ten other high streets across the district at Cheriton, Sandgate, Hythe, New Romney, Lydd, Hawkinge, Dymchurch, Elham, Lyminge and Sellindge.
- 2.3. The HSF provides grants of between £5,000 and £50,000 towards any individual project, and in normal circumstances this is expected to comprise a maximum of 50% of the total project cost. However, in exceptional circumstances, and at its discretion, the Council may award 100% of the funding for a project.
- 2.4. The types of organisations eligible for grant funding includes:
 - Commercial property freehold owners or leaseholders with at least 5 years left on lease when the work is expected to be completed and permission for the works from the freeholder.
 - Town or Parish councils.
 - Other public organisations such as Folkestone Town Team CIC.
- 2.5. The types of projects eligible for grant funding includes, but is not limited to:
 - External renovations or improvements to front elevations of buildings (areas visible from the high street), including repairs, repainting of shop fronts in suitable colours, signage, external lighting, security grilles and/or security glazing, repair of external stonework and brickwork and repair and reinstatement of guttering and down-pipes.
 - Internal ground floor fit-outs or conversion to commercial properties.
 - Improvements to the townscape, including the introduction of signage, new route ways, new public realm, such as art works or landscaping.
 - Introduction of technology and new innovative products, to support the development of commercial operations.
 - Initiatives and events to increase the vitality of the High Street.
 - Work towards developing a project to improve the vitality or physical environment of the High Street, as a precursor to a further application to the fund or other funding source.

2.6. The grant scheme was launched on 1st October 2019 and grant applications will be accepted at any time until the closure of the scheme. The scheme is expected to run until either 31st March 2021 or until funds have been allocated.

2.7. Applications received are assessed in the first instance by the Economic Development Team, with decisions on individual applications made by decision panels comprising the Leader of the Council, Councillor David Monk, the Lead Cabinet Member for the District Economy, Councillor David Wimble and a Councillor from the relevant high street ward.

3. APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

3.1. The table below lists the applications to the HSF that have been considered by the relevant decision panels and the following recommendations have been made to the Leader on the HSF grant award. Reasons for the recommendations are also summarised in the table below.

4. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED HIGH STREET FUND GRANTS

Name of applicant	Purpose of Grant	Relevant High Street	Recommended High Streets Fund Grant Award (up to)	Recommendations of the Decision Panel	Conditions of grant award including
Root	Exterior painting & signage. Lighting, fixtures & equipment	Hythe	£2,560	Up to 50% of cost capital works	
Millennium Business Technology Limited	Replace doors & windows, electrical work, air conditioning	Hythe	£10,000	12.87% of capital works	
Chaos Cards Ltd	Window protective vinyls, improved disabled access, Digital information board	Folkestone	£7,873.50	50% of capital works	Use of digital display board for FHDC messages to be agreed & written into grant agreement
Smugglers	Replacement wood windows to front shop façade	New Romney	£4,800.50	50% of capital works	

5. LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

5.1 Legal Officer's comments

There are no legal implications associated with the recommendations in this report. However, any grants that are made available to third parties by FHDC will need to be legally documented and the legal team can assist with this.

5.2.1 Finance Officer's comments

The £3 million fund held in earmarked reserves was approved in February 2019, see Minutes 20th February 2019 item 76/5. £468,410 of the £3 million reserve has been transferred to the 20/21 revenue budget (High Street Fund ED14), which will accommodate the proposed High Street Fund Grants of £25,234 listed in this report. Any underspend in 2020/21 will be carried forward to be used in 2021/22.

Further budget is available to be drawn down from the earmarked reserve when schemes are approved.

6. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer:-

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