

This report will be made public on 23 April 2021

Report Number **C/20/92**

**To:** Councillor David Monk, Leader of the Council  
**Date:** 23 April 2021  
**Status:** Non-Key Decision  
**Corporate Director:** Ewan Green, Director of Place

**SUBJECT: WELCOME BACK FUND**

**SUMMARY:**

This report allocates funding from the Welcome Back Fund for a range of interventions to support the District re-open in line with the easing of COVID restrictions.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

The Leader is asked to agree to the recommendations in order to enable timely delivery of proposed interventions ahead of key dates when lockdown restrictions are expected to be lifted, in line with the Government's COVID-19 roadmap to recovery for England.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. To receive and note Report C/20/92.
2. To agree the allocations of funding from the Welcome Back Fund (and the remaining Re-opening High Streets Safely Fund).
3. To agree that any changes to the funding allocations be delegated to the Director Place in consultation with the Leader.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. Following the 3<sup>rd</sup> national lockdown, the £56m Welcome Back Fund (WBF) was introduced, intended to build on the existing Re-opening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF) arrangements but with an expanded scope. The Council's allocation from the WBF is £165,751 and this funding is to be fully utilised by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.
- 1.2. The WBF is an extension of the earlier RHSSF from which the Council was allocated £100,751 and to date there remains £37,249 of this unallocated.
- 1.3. The total funding to be allocated is therefore £203,000.

## **2. OVERVIEW OF THE WELCOME BACK FUND**

2.2 The scope of the initial RHSSF covered four main activity strands;

- 1) Support to develop an action plan for safe reopening of local economies;
- 2) Communications and public information;
- 3) Business-facing awareness raising activities; and
- 4) Temporary public realm changes

A risk assessment of the eleven district High Streets was performed which informed the level of intervention required.

2.3 The WBF expands the scope to include two additional activity strands

- 5) Support and promote a safe public environment for a local area's economy; and
- 6) Allow local areas to develop plans for responding to the medium-term impact of Covid-19 including trialling new ideas particularly in relation to the High Street.

Further details on the fund can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-raft-of-measures-to-prepare-our-high-streets-and-seaside-resorts-for-summer>

- 2.4 Activity relating to the WBF will need to comply with ERDF procurement rules and will be subject to an agreed Grant Action Plan with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
- 2.5 Eligibility of funding is provided in the form of FAQs and engagement via MHCLG which may result in some changes to the table as set out in section 3.
- 2.6 Town and Parish Councils have been engaged for input to the action plan. Where possible these requests will be supported, subject to review against the criteria of the fund.
- 2.7 It is proposed that further decisions regarding the allocation of the Welcome Back Fund be agreed by the Director of Place in consultation with the Leader.

### 3. PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

3.1 The table below outlines the key themes and allocations for the funding:

Subject	Activity	Projected Cost	FHDC Lead
Communications	Signage/Banners Social Media Campaign Welcome back video Publicity campaigns	£20,000	Communications
Public Realm interventions	Transport/highway signage Park & Ride Pilot Social distancing Public Realm improvements	£73,000	Operations and Enforcement
Safe Public Environment	Temporary facilities Seasonal Area Officers	£85,000	Operations and Enforcement
Business Engagement/ Support	Update of Business Toolkit Click and collect offer for existing businesses 12 month support programme Business support programme	£10,000	Economic Development
Visitor Economy	Trialling new ideas e.g. events	£15,000	Economic Development
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£203,000</b>	

### 4. LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

#### Legal Officer's comments (NM)

The Council must ensure that all guidance available to it regarding this funding is adhered to at all times and that the funding is fully utilised by 31 March 2022. The Council must also comply with procurement and state aid rules in relation to the funding

#### Finance Officer's comments (DH)

The figures for the RHSSF are as follows:

Expected grant amount £100,751

Actual expenditure against the grant in 20/21 on ED19, £33,988.02

Balance of the grant £66,762.98 for expenditure in 21/12.

**Please note FHDC has not received the grant funds for £100,751 as yet.**

Added to the expected WBF of £165,751 this gives a total of £232,514 for the key themes and allocations when both amounts of funding are received and reassurances needed that both grants will be forthcoming so the total is not

funded wholly by FHDC.

### **Communications Officer's comments (KA)**

The proposed interventions to be funded by the Welcome Back fund are positive and communications will lead on external promotion as appropriate.

### **CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

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

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