



DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE	22 JUNE 2020	6
COVID 19 LOCAL AUTHORITY GRANTS TO TOWN CENTRES			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

In response to the significant challenges facing the local economy, in particular the high streets and town centres as a result of the COVID 19 lockdown and social distancing measures, the council is proposing an unfunded budget increase of £15,000 to award grants to the three largest town centres / high streets. The report outlines proposals to award £5,000 per town centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the committee approve an unfunded revenue budget increase of £15,000 for the award of a £5,000 COVID 19 recovery grant to each of the three primary town centres (Kirkham, Lytham and St Anne's).
2. That the grants are awarded to the local business partnership in each town and expenditure is subject to the guidance set out in the report.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

None

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	✓
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	✓
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	✓
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	✓

REPORT

1. The economic vitality of our high streets and town centres has been a priority for Fylde for several years evidenced by the recent success to secure funding in Kirkham, the regeneration projects in the three largest town centres and smaller high streets, and recent emerging work in St Anne's prior to the COVID 19 lockdown.
2. The COVID 19 lockdown regulations and social distancing measures have had an impact on the world economy with a long-term recovery on the horizon and the prospect of a 'normal' different to that we experienced before COVID 19.
3. There are currently several initiatives in place to support the recovery of the economy in Fylde including: the Safer Travel Restart fund (part of the [Reallocating road space in response to COVID-19](#)) administered by the County Council (upper tier) that Fylde will be able to make bids to in order to re-open public space safely as we move out of COVID 19 lockdown; and the [Reopening High Streets Safely Fund](#) announced on May 29th which has £71,758 available for Fylde to draw down for schemes which meet the four categories set out in the guidance:
 - a. Support to develop an action plan for how the local authority may begin to safely reopen their local economies
 - b. Communications and public information activity to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely
 - c. Business-facing awareness raising activities to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely
 - d. Temporary public realm changes to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely
4. The council is working with stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sector to develop initiatives that will support economic recovery across the Borough to ensure that any funding available through the national schemes is utilised. However, the high street and town centres where there is a concentration of businesses will face additional restrictions with the requirement for social distancing measures in limited space and restrictions on public transport reducing footfall. The council is looking to provide funding support to specific local initiatives in town centres, smaller scale projects that can make a big difference.
5. The committee is asked to consider a proposal to award an initial COVID 19 Town Centre Support Grant to the three primary town centres - St Anne's, Lytham and Kirkham. To award a sum of £5,000 (£15,000 in total) to each town centre business partnership; St Annes Enterprise Partnership (STEP); Lytham Business Partnership (LBP); and Kirkham Business Group.
6. The business partnerships are operated by local businessmen and women who represent the businesses in the town, the partnership will be required to use the grant to fund initiatives that support recovery in the town centre and report back to this committee with details of the schemes they have supported. Representations have already been made by members from some of the business partnerships who have been engaged with discussions on economic recovery sharing some great ideas.
7. To ensure that there is no duplication between the various COVID 19 economic recovery schemes the business partnerships will be provided with guidance to help them formulate suitable proposals and will be asked to liaise with the Chairman of the Town Centre Working Group and the Head of Planning, to discuss and agree the schemes that the partnerships will fund from the Town Centre Support Grant. The more extensive capital schemes will be funded from the national programmes that have made funding available which all partners are working on.
8. The £15,000 required for the three initial £5,000 Town Centre Support Grants will be funded from general reserves, members are being asked to consider a one-off unfunded budget increase to the 2020/21 budget. Further funding may be considered if the recovery period from COVID 19 is more extensive in terms of time frame or cost than currently estimated. The continually changing landscape will require regular review.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The proposal in the report is to distribute grants totalling £15,000 funded from general reserves to be allocated for town centre COVID 19 grants by way of a one-off unfunded revenue budget increase to the 2020/21 budget.
Legal	None arising from this report
Community Safety	None arising from this report
Human Rights and Equalities	None arising from this report
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None arising from this report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None arising from this report

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Reallocating road space in response to COVID-19: statutory guidance for local authorities	May 23 rd	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reallocating-road-space-in-response-to-covid-19-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities
Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer public places - urban centres and green spaces	May 22 nd	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safer-public-places-urban-centres-and-green-spaces-covid-19
Reopening High Streets Safely Fund	May 29 th	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reopening-high-streets-safely-fund-guidance