



Report to: Place and Economic Development Committee, 7th June 2021

Report of: Corporate Director, Place

Subject: WELCOME BACK FUND

1. Recommendation

1.1 That the Committee notes the plan for spend of the Welcome Back Fund, set out in the Appendix (to follow), which has been submitted to Government under the Managing Director's urgency powers.

2. Background

2.1 Councils across England are to share £56m of ERDF funding, known as the Welcome Back Fund, to support the return to high streets safely and help support the recovery from the pandemic. This funding builds on the Reopening High Street Safely Fund allocated to councils in 2020. Funds need to be spent by the end of the 2021/22 financial year.

2.2 The Council has been awarded a total of £180,242 from the two sources to support local authorities in England to put in place additional measures to create and promote a safe environment for local trade and tourism, particularly in high streets as their economies reopen.

2.3 There are six criteria for eligible projects under the funding:

- Support to develop an action plan for how the local authority may begin to safely reopen their local economies;
- Communications and public information activity to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely;
- Business-facing awareness raising activities to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely;
- Temporary public realm changes to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely;
- Support and promote a safe public environment for a local area's visitor economy; and
- Support local authorities to develop plans for responding to the medium-term impact of Covid-19 including trialling new ideas particularly where these relate to the High Street.

3. Information

3.1 The spending plan is being finalised and will be attached as an appendix to this report (**to follow**).

The Government deadline for submitting the spending plan was prior to the meeting of this Committee; therefore, officers have consulted the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee on the spending plan and are submitting it under the Managing Director's urgency powers.

- 3.2 The plan has been developed in partnership with Worcester BID who will deliver some of the projects. Other stakeholders, including Parish Councils in Warndon and St Peters were consulted throughout the development of the plan.
- 3.3 The funding must be spent by 31st March 2022.

Ward(s): All
Contact Officer: Helen Mole, Tel: 01905 722309 Email: helen.mole@worcester.gov.uk
Background Papers: None