

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Leader of the Council; Cabinet Member for Transport Services; Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Economic Development; and, Cabinet Member for Community Services	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	Not before 22nd August 2020	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E3223
TITLE:	Midsomer Norton High Street – Renewal Programme	
WARD:	Midsomer Norton North & Midsomer Norton Redfield	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM/		
<p>List of attachments to this report:</p> <p>Appendix 1: HAZ Grant Offer Letter Historic England</p> <p>Appendix 2: Draft Midsomer Norton High Street HAZ Delivery Programme</p> <p>Appendix 3: Proposed schedule of amendments to the Midsomer Norton High Street HAZ Delivery Programme</p> <p>Appendix 4: Midsomer Norton High Street Programme Summary Diagram</p> <p>Appendix 5: Letters of support and match funding offers from Midsomer Norton Town Council and Town Trust</p>		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 A £2 million funding package to support Midsomer Norton High Street and to deliver a renewal programme has been secured. A number of successful grant applications have been made working closely with key stakeholders in the town. This report outlines the sources of funding, the key terms of the spend, funding approval mechanisms and key deliverables and outputs anticipated.
- 1.2 This report requests agreement to formally accept the Historic England grant funding and progress the renewal programme in line with the Delivery Plan, working closely with the local community and business stakeholders. The Council's current Capital Programme does not include this grant from Historic England. However, the Council's financial regulations allow for in-year approval for schemes which are 100% grant funded. The report requests revisions to the capital programme to re-align the provisional capital budgets to reflect these recent developments.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member(s) are asked to;

- 2.1 Delegate approval for John Wilkinson, Director of Economy and Growth to accept the £793k High Street Heritage Action Zone grant from Historic England, to be spent over a four-year period to March 2024, and submit the required Delivery Plan to secure the funding by 1st September 2020 (Appendices 2 & 3), in consultation with the s151 officer, and the Leader of the Council.
- 2.2 Note the scheme funding as set out in section 5 of the report.
- 2.3 Agree to incorporate Midsomer Norton High Street Renewal Programme into the 2020/21 capital programme and allocate provisional capital budget of £913k to be funded from Historic England Grant (£793k), Midsomer Norton Town Council (£45k), Midsomer Norton Town Trust (£25k) and transfer of £50k from the provisional capital budget item CIL – Public Realm.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 B&NES Council secured the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) funding following a competitive national grant fund bidding process. Both Midsomer Norton and Keynsham High Street schemes were successful (the programme is focused on market towns). Midsomer Norton Town Centre is a Conservation Area at Risk, due to the dilapidation of some of the key buildings and the poor quality of the public realm, the HAZ funding seeks to address both of these issues through targeted interventions. The funding offer letter is included as **Appendix 1**. 69 HAZ schemes have been identified across England, with 10 schemes funded in the South West region.
- 3.2 Alongside this heritage funding bid, a funding bid to WECA's Love our High Street Fund also secured £850k (subject to Full Business Case), to support the renewal of the High Street in Midsomer Norton. This supplemented a pre-existing B&NES capital funding pot of £201k – part of this funding has been spent on the delivery of the wayfinding system for the town centre and the re-designed bus stop maps/town map. As part of the funding applications B&NES CIL funding linked to new development in the town (£100k), and community match funding (£70k) was also secured. This funding became the match funding for the HAZ bid which enabled it to score highly in the competitive funding application process.
- 3.3 This report seeks approval to accept the grant funding and agree the Delivery Plan (**Appendix 2**), now incorporating new amendments (**Appendix 3**). A summary diagram is included in this report which outlines the scope of the programme and indicates the priority action areas.
- 3.4 The proposals for Midsomer Norton High Street are focused on three project areas: (1) Improvement scheme at the Island: Market Place scheme and improvements to the Town Hall and adjacent shop fronts; (2) Pedestrian Passageway between car park and high street (3) High Street shopfront and signage improvement scheme. Funding is also allocated to pilot activities such as pop-up shops, outdoor markets and community and business engagement.

3.5 The scope of the projects included within the Delivery Plan and funding bids were worked on collaboratively with key stakeholders and letters of support from ward councillors, the Town Council, the Town Trust and key local groups such as Midsomer Norton Society, the Midsomer Norton Regeneration Partnership, the Midsomer Norton Community Trust, Somerset Farmers Market as well as local landlords interested in the shopfront improvement grant scheme. Offer letters outlining the £70k match funding from the Town Council and the Town Trust also supported the bids (Appendix 5).

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Elements of the renewal package include improvements to listed buildings and shopfronts within the Conservation Area at Risk, these aspects may require listed building consent and potentially planning permission/advertising consent and this is built into the 4 year Delivery Plan.

4.2 Terms and conditions of government funding including consideration of state aid, best value and competitive tendering etc, form part of the funding agreement between the Council and Historic England and will need to be followed throughout the course of the project.

4.3 Improvements to public space will need to consider equalities impacts and support sustainable development including supporting modal shift towards walking and cycling. Enhancement to green space as part of the project will support biodiversity gains.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 £200k capital budget was approved in 2018/19 and we received a contribution of £1.4k from Midsomer Norton Town Council. We incurred spending of £22k with budget remaining of £180k for 2020/21.

5.2 We need to agree a £913k provisional capital budget to reflect the Historic England grant of £793k, £45k local match from Midsomer Norton Town Council and £25k Midsomer Norton Town Trust plus transfer of £50k from the provisional capital programme item CIL – Public Realm of £300k.

5.3 There is also £850k WECA Love our High Streets funding (£750k is allocated subject to Full Business Case); with the split of revenue and capital funding to be determined and CIL funding of £50k which will be requested for approval as part of the 2021/22 budget process.

5.4 The table below shows the proposed £2.014m funding for Midsomer Norton High Street Renewal Programme:

	£000s	£000s
Capital Programme		
Corporate Supported Borrowing	120	
CIL	80	
Midsomer Norton Town Council	1	

Approved Budget		201
Provisional Budget - CIL		50
Requested Provisional Capital Budget		
Historic England Grant	793	
Midsomer Norton Town Council	45	
Midsomer Norton Town trust	25	
Sub Total		863
Further Funding		
WECA Love Our High Streets Grant		
Awarded Revenue Grant	100	
Requested	750	
CIL Requested	50	
Sub Total		<u>900</u>
Total		2,014

5.5 The programme grant funding provides revenue for a 1.0 FTE Senior Officer to oversee and deliver the project for the 4-year project period 2020-24, this is a requirement of Historic England and the costs are predominantly met from their funding. Full details of the funding breakdown are included in the Delivery Plan.

5.6 Elements of the project will incur revenue or maintenance savings and/or additional costs, these will need to be considered as the project is developed, such elements need to be factored into decision making processes.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 The design and delivery of projects will need to consider equalities impacts, as a key part of the design process. In addition, the community engagement and cultural programme elements of the project will also need to consider inclusivity and accessibility as part of their detailed scheme design. Recommendations to this effect are included in the Equalities Assessment accompanying this report.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 The focus of the project is to support the vibrancy and vitality of the High Street which will support 'buy local' agendas, elements of the project support outdoor markets including farmers markets where fresh local produce can be sold. The projects are also underpinned by improving the environment for pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport and prioritise these modes.

8.2 Procurement of street furniture and restoration works to buildings will prioritise natural materials and sustainable sourcing. The project scope also includes greening and planting which can help reduce urban heat island impacts and improve biodiversity.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 There is an option to not accept the Historic England grant funding, or other elements of the funding package and to not progress the renewal programme for Midsomer Norton High Street. However, it is unlikely that the opportunity for this level of external funding would materialise again.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 The Historic England funding has been through two phases of competitive grant applications, both received express support from the Chief Executive of the Council, Councillors, local business and community groups also wrote letters of support for the project. The Town Council and Town Trust included match funding offers as part of the funding bids.

10.2 The detail of the delivery plan will be subject to further consultation and engagement as part of the 4 year programme, funding to support a cultural programme of events and activities to engage the wider community can also be accessed once the grant is accepted through a parallel fund administered by Historic England.

10.3 Undertaking the grant applications and supporting work was agreed by the s151 officer, Chief Executive, Cabinet and Senior Management, however, until the grant awards were made there was no decision to be taken.

10.4 The report has been agreed by the s151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

Contact person	<i>Lynda Deane/Cleo Newcombe-Jones</i>
Background papers	<i>B&NES Core Strategy & Placemaking Plan</i>
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