

## Single Member Cabinet Decision

**Executive  
Forward Plan  
Reference****E3259****Bath Local Centres High Street Improvement Scheme**

<b>Decision maker/s</b>	Cllr Richard Samuel; Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Resources
<b>The Issue</b>	<p>A £295k funding package to support the Bath Local Centres High Street Improvement Scheme has been secured from the West of England Combined Authority's Investment Fund 'Love our High Streets' grant programme. A proposal put forward by B&amp;NES Council through a Full Business Case (FBC) focused on the delivery of creative interventions that improve the street environment and promote increased animation of public spaces.</p> <p>The scheme will support four district/local centres: Twerton High Street (local centre), Moorland Road (district centre), Weston High Street (local centre) and Mount Road (local centre).</p> <p>This report requests agreement to accept the £295k grant funding award from WECA in line with the Bath Local Centres Full Business Case approved at the WECA Committee on 8th April 2022.</p>
<b>Decision Date</b>	23 May 2022
<b>The decision</b>	<p>The Cabinet Member agrees to:</p> <p>Delegate approval to the Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the S151 Officer, to accept the £295k Love our High Streets grant from WECA</p>
<b>Rationale for decision</b>	<p>Acceptance of the £295k Love Our High Streets grant from WECA will allow the Council to intervene to improve struggling local/district centres. The £295k funding allocated by WECA sits alongside £193k funding from other sources to form a project budget of £488k.</p> <p>The core objective of the Bath Local Centres High Street Improvement Scheme is to renew and improve the resilience of Local Centres through implementing projects that improve the street environment and support greater animation of public spaces. In addition, the scheme aims to: sustain footfall and occupancy, support improved sustainability and health outcomes, promote accessibility and empower communities.</p> <p>The '15-minute neighbourhood' principle, where most of people's daily needs can be met within a short walk or cycle (see B&amp;NES Council's 'One Shared Vision' for further information) has been considered when producing the scheme proposal and the scheme will support this</p>

	<p>vision. This approach responds to societal changes prompted by the Covid-19 pandemic and encourages a healthier, more sustainable way of living that is not so heavily reliant on the car.</p> <p>The scheme proposal aligns with strategic policy at national, regional and local levels, e.g. the Build Back Better High Streets Strategy (DfLUHC &amp; MHCLG), the Supporting our High Streets after Covid-19 report (Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee), the aims of the High Street Task Force (set up in 2019), the National Planning Policy framework, the West of England Recovery Plan, the West of England Climate Emergency Action Plan, the B&amp;NES Local Plan and the B&amp;NES Health &amp; Wellbeing Strategy.</p>
<b>Financial and budget implications</b>	<p>The total budget for the scheme is £488k.</p> <p>The £295k WECA 'Love Our High Streets' Bath Local Centres funding package is supplemented by the remaining £13k WECA 'Love Our High Streets' Feasibility &amp; Development funding and £145k Community Infrastructure Levy allocations. An additional £35k of linked funding from the Vacant Unit Action Project is referenced in the Full Business Case.</p> <p>The scheme budget comprises capital funding of £79k and revenue funding of £409k.</p>
<b>Issues considered</b>	Social Inclusion; Sustainability; Equality (age, race, disability, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation); Other Legal Considerations
<b>Consultation undertaken</b>	Ward Councillors; Cabinet colleagues; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Local Residents; Community Interest Groups; Stakeholders/Partners; Other Public Sector Bodies; Section 151 Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer.
<b>How consultation was carried out</b>	<p>The development of the project scope has been informed by engagement with local residents, businesses, community groups and stakeholders which took place in Autumn/Winter 2021.</p> <p>Further engagement with key stakeholders will be undertaken as part of the project inception / detailed design phase of the scheme, due to take place in summer 2022.</p> <p>The submission of the Bath Local Centres Full Business Case was approved by the Senior Leadership Group (SLG), the Director Regeneration &amp; Housing, the Director for Sustainable Communities, the S151 Officer and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development &amp; Resources.</p>
<b>Other options considered</b>	There is an option to decline the grant and not progress the Bath Local Centres High Street Improvement Scheme, or to re-scope parts of the projects. However, our high streets are in urgent need of support and releasing funding now will allow benefits for businesses and the community to be realised as soon as possible.

	<p>Other options included project locations, scope and the value of funding allocated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Policy CP12 of the Placemaking Plan was used to set out the 'long-list' of locations which could be included in the Full Business Case. Policy CP12 indicates that there is 1 District Centre in Bath &amp; North East Somerset and 21 Local Centres in Bath. The project scope focuses on Bath as the largest urban centre in the district.</li> <li>2 Bath Local Centres that could not realistically be classified as 'high streets' due to small scale/limited number of retail outlets and services were removed from the selection.</li> <li>3 A 'Local Centres Vitality Checklist' was prepared to consider which local centres should be prioritised for initial funding. The checklist was used to identify local centres most in need of intervention.</li> <li>4 Officers worked with elected members and undertook community engagement to gather qualitative information about the high streets and opportunities for improvement. Once the four local centres had been determined, officers gathered local intelligence from stakeholders such as community organisations and businesses. Well attended engagement events followed where views were sought from the public about the types of interventions that could make the greatest impact to their local centre.</li> <li>5 The level of funding allocated to each local centre is dependent on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1 'Need' identified as part of the Local Centres Vitality Checklist review</li> <li>5.2 Feedback received from public engagement events</li> <li>5.3 Status as a district/local centre</li> <li>5.4 Size of the centre</li> <li>5.5 Character of the broader locality in which the district/local centre sits</li> </ol> </li> <li>6 If the interventions were allocated across more local centres there would likely be a reduced impact and the objectives less measurable or impactful.</li> </ol>
<b>Declaration of interest by Cabinet Member(s) for decision:</b>	None
<b>Any conflict of interest declared by anyone who is consulted by a Member taking the decision:</b>	None

<b>Name and Signature of Decision Maker/s</b>	Councillor Richard Samuel, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Resources
<b>Date of Signature</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2022
<b>Subject to Call-in until 5 Working days have elapsed following publication of the decision</b>	