

Report To: Charity Committee

Date of Meeting: 14th June 2021

Report Title: Welcome Back Funding

Report By: Kevin Boorman, Marketing and Major Projects Manager

Key Decision: No

Classification: Open

Purpose of Report

To advise Charity Committee on details of the Welcome Back Funding (WBF) and interventions proposed on Foreshore Trust assets.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. To note the details of the interventions proposed.**

Reasons for Recommendations

- Welcome Back Funding will support the Council to safely welcome back visitors and residents to the town. This report notes the interventions proposed that are on Foreshore Trust assets.

Introduction

1. The [Welcome Back Fund \(WBF\)](#) was launched in April 2021, building on the Reopening the High Street Fund launched in 2020. It is utilising European Regional Development Funding (ERDF), and as such comes with a number of conditions and contractual requirements. The funding allows local authorities to put in place additional measures to create and promote safe environment for local trade and tourism, particularly in high streets as their economies open, as well developing plans to respond to the impacts of Covid-19 on local economies, including how other funding streams could address these challenges in the future. Coastal resorts such as Hastings have been given additional funding in recognition of the support required to prepare these areas for welcoming back visitors over the summer and beyond.
2. The funds can be used to implement temporary measures under the following areas of scope:
 - 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
 - Support local authorities to develop plans for responding to the medium-term impact of Covid including trialling new ideas particularly where these relate to the high street.

The programme can be delivered solely by the local authority or with partners through partner delivery arrangements (Service Level Agreement approach).

3. Total funding allocation: £229,052
4. Funding timeline: spend can commence from the date of publication of the guidance (16 April 2021) to 31 March 2022. It is important to note that any expenditure incurred before the grant funding agreement has been signed and the project activity form has been approved by MHCLG is spent 'at risk'.
5. Payments: in arrears after appropriate claim and evidence is submitted
6. Management and Administration (M&A): each relevant service area will manage the proposed interventions in their relevant areas, but the monitoring and compliance of this EU funded scheme will be undertaken by the major projects and regeneration team. There is 4% allocation for M&A costs against the total value of the programme.

Proposed activities/Interventions.

7. The proposed activities have been discussed and brought together under a cross council officer group, focused on:

- a. Supporting safe reopening of the town
 - b. Mitigation actions for the additional work created by an expected, and welcome, increase in visitors to the town
 - c. Exploration into supporting the shoulder tourism season, and winter which may see a natural reduction in footfall and dwell time for our tourism and retail offer.
8. The proposed interventions have been discussed at the council's Covid Taskforce, and with lead members, in addition a meeting with the following external business leaders took place on Wednesday 19 May 2021, along with a walkabout on Monday 24 May 2021:
- a. Love Hastings Ltd – Hastings Business Improvement District
 - b. Old Town Traders Association
 - c. St Leonards Town Team
 - d. Major tourism attractions and leaders (including Hastings Adventure Golf, 18 Hours Ltd and the White Rock hotel, the latter two also representing tourism businesses across the town as the Hastings private sector reps on the 1066 Country Marketing executive board)
9. These proposals have been developed to ensure compliance and alignment with the funding conditions. It is a requirement of the fund that the programme interventions have involved relevant stakeholders in their development. All proposals needed to be submitted by 30 May 2021, before being approved by the WBF grant manager, and subsequent grant agreement being signed.
10. The below table outlines the proposed interventions identified, there are number of interventions that fall on Foreshore Trust assets, these are; Seafront welcome marshals, WiFi network servicing , plus potentially temporary placemaking – tbc.

No.	Area of Scope	Using bullet points briefly set out the specific activities you will undertake	Briefly set out how the activity does not duplicate existing activity (additionality)	Timeline	Total Indicative Budget £ per item Gross
5	Support and promote a safe public environment for a local area's visitor economy	<p>1. Seafront welcome marshals (parking/foreshore/repairs). 7 day working pattern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking- Help control flow of traffic, footfall and people • Foreshore -maintenance seafront, rapid response minor repairs/ unblocking to seafront toilets <p>2. Seafront welcome marshals (Cleansing Operative). 7 day working pattern Litter picking, beach cleaning (sweeping of disability boardwalk) – via DSO</p>	<p>As a coastal town, the focus of the visitor economy is on the seafront as a main asset, with the expectation of increased visitor numbers, it is paramount that marshals are in place to control the flow of traffic and people, and direct people flow into the high streets. To ensure the highest hygiene standards and health and safety for Covid recovery, marshals will also be tasked with ensuring a rapid response to public toilet repairs, ensuring toilets stay open and crowding in key areas is limited.</p> <p>Marshals will also focus on seafront and litter collection, ensuring that highest hygiene standards are maintained with increase in visitors and ensuring the towns visitor asset stays attractive.</p> <p>These roles are additional temporary staff resource and are to cover the extra visitors, due to staycations and support Covid recovery</p>	June - Sept	£60k
5	Support and promote a safe public environment for a local area's visitor economy	<p>Safe temporary placemaking - public realm improvements/amination to support SME's recover and encourage footfall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing the streets alive with music, creativity and movement, to increase dwell time and draw people into the high street in the low season. • Programme of small pop-up events (Oct-March) celebrating the creative, quirky vibe of Hastings, drawing in shoppers to linger and enjoy the space. • Temporary art trails and street art in unloved areas of town centre. • Beautification - Identifying key areas on the high street, neighbouring shopping streets, and seafront that need beautification – removal of graffiti, temporary planting/ green space. 	<p>Additional animation for the town centres, particularly focussing on things that encourage people to stay and linger, as well as address the shoulder season (traditionally October – March when footfall is lower)</p> <p>Beautification intervention would be above what the council/ county council have in terms of planned works and would improve the appearance of unloved area of the high street.</p>	June – March	£70k

		<p>Public Wi-Fi network servicing A public Wi-Fi network services the town centre and seafront, widely used by our businesses, local people and visitors (streaming, downloads, browsing, information searching etc). The network needs to be serviced and an improved service offered to business – helping them to trade digitally.</p> <p>Fund 12 month service and maintenance contract</p>	The network was funded by Coastal Communities Funding originally, but the contract for servicing and maintaining the network is now terminating so the network would end if unable to find funding.		£18k
6	Support local authorities to develop plans for responding to the medium-term impact of CV-19 including trialling new ideas particularly where these relate to the High Street.	<p>Medium Term recovery planning Resource to develop engagement and delivery plans for Covid-19 recovery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement programme within the Town Investment Plan (Hastings Town Deal) • Action planning from High Street Taskforce • Pilots High Street Taskforce interventions • Community engagement platform for – community input and engagement into WB activities / pilots and wider high street regeneration- such as Town Deal fund. • Assessing and evaluating data • Marketing / rebranding engagement for high street revisioning • Footfall data 	Additional resource to support strategic medium terms plans for the recovery of Hastings economy and business from the impact of covid-19	August - March	£72k
	Management & Administration (M&A)	4% fee of total value of the programme eligible			£9k
	Total				£229k

11. The following proposed interventions were also considered and rules out for a number of reasons, as detailed below:

Activity	Details	Why rejected
Temporary road signs	To advise visitors where spaces are	Agreement to replace permanent sign outside of the pier instead
Marketing/comms campaign	Safety advice/useful visitor information	Already in place, non-compliant as no additionality
Billboards	Covid/visitor information on billboards around the town	Not enough impact, Procurement difficult to manage as specific suppliers – risk of non-compliance
East and West Hill lift	Temporary extension to opening hours	Non-compliant (unable to off-set income)
Temporary bins	Extra temporary bins at high traffic areas	Bins already in stock with HBC
Drone light show	One or more events to encourage visitors, evening economy spend	Initial quote too high (£100,000 for one event)
Additional seasonal beach huts	To provide additional tourism offer	Not compliant – capital, permanent asset
Free car parking	To offer reduced or free car parking in town centre car parks	Non-compliant with fund rules (unable to off-set income) Would increase issues re over-crowding of seafront car parks and compound traffic management issues.
Additional Toilets	To provide temporary toilets on heavy use areas	Issue isn't with toilet provision but with vandalism and maintenance, therefore these areas are bolstered National stock low.

Timetable of Next Steps

12. Please include a list of key actions and the scheduled dates for these:

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
Business Leaders meeting	Agree interventions and/or adjust as needed	19 May 2021	Marketing and Major Projects Manager
Intervention Action plan	Submit action plan	By 30 May 2021	Marketing and Major Projects Manager
Grant agreement and action plan approval	Sign grant agreement and receive action plan approval	Tbc by Welcome Back Fund grant manager	Marketing and Major Projects Manager
	Interventions commence	June 2021	
Project ends	All interventions and spend occurred	31 March 2022	Marketing and Major Projects Manager

Policy Implications

13. **Equalities and Community Cohesiveness** – programme considers opportunities for all visitors to move about the high footfall areas safely
14. **Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)** x
15. **Risk Management** – all interventions have been careful considered to be compliant with the requirements of the funding in discussions with the funding grant manager and will require approval before delivery
16. **Environmental Issues** – interventions will address issues of littering and Covid health and safety
17. **Economic/Financial Implications** – interventions have been carefully considered to be compliant with the requirements of the funding. The interventions will bring in £229,000 of additional grant funding to the council and any delivery partners to support the movement out of Covid restrictions
18. **Human Rights Act** x
19. **Organisational Consequences** - M&A is included within the grant allocation for monitoring and compliance. Department Managers will manager relevant interventions
20. **Local People's Views** – Discussions with business leaders are taking place to ensure interventions are relevant to the needs of local people
21. **Anti-Poverty** - x
22. **Legal?** - WBF will require signing of grant agreement and possible Service Level Agreement for any delivery partner arrangements

Wards Affected

Castle, Old Town

Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score: 33.6

Additional Information

None

Officer to Contact

Kevin Boorman
Kboorman@hastings.gov.uk
01424 451123