

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
Date:	9 March 2018
Title:	Market Town Fund
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

Contact name: Simon Cramp

Tel: 01962 832348

Email: simon.cramp@hants.gov.uk

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. That the Executive Member for Policy and Resources approves the proposed Market Town Fund programme, the indicative allocation to named locations and enhancement schemes, and the Reserve amount.
- 1.2. That approval is given to transfer £1,320,000 to the Environment and Transport capital programme.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The purpose of this paper is to set out the scope of a proposed Market Town Fund initiative, to identify a programme of appropriate schemes and locations, and to indicatively allocate the available funding.
- 2.2. The Market Town Fund was established by the County Council in February 2017 with £2 million funding to support the diverse, complex and crucial role market towns play in driving forward Hampshire's economic growth. The fund aims to support and develop the economic potential and sustainability of towns including Alton, Petersfield, Romsey and Winchester.
- 2.3. In September 2017, the Executive Member for Policy and Resources approved an initial investment from the Market Town Fund to provide £680,000 for implementation of the enhancement scheme for Bell Street and Market Place in Romsey.
- 2.4. This paper seeks to:
 - Set out the background to the Market Town Funding initiative;
 - Identify a programme of schemes and locations considered suitable for support from the fund;
 - Indicatively allocate the residual £1.32million funding to schemes; and
 - Consider the future management of the Market Town Fund programme.

3. Contextual information

3.1 The Market Town Fund was approved by Cabinet on 3 February 2017. Paragraph 4.32 of the Revenue Report stated:

'The Hampshire economic area is large, diverse and complex and market towns have a crucial role to play in the overall strategy for driving economic growth. The establishment of a fund of £2m against which bids can be submitted with the aim of developing the economic potential and sustainability of these towns will support the County Council's overarching priority of supporting the Hampshire economy.'

3.2 The County Council has a proud tradition of supporting market towns through a range of targeted initiatives including the Hampshire Market Towns Project, the Country Towns Initiative, Hampshire Farmers' Markets as well as investment in individual schemes such as High Street, Winchester and Romsey Town Centre.

3.3 Following the success of the public realm improvements to Church Street, Romsey, in September 2017, the Executive Member for Policy and Resources approved an initial investment from the Market Town Fund to provide £680,000 for implementation of the next phase of enhancement works for Romsey Town Centre in Bell Street and Market Place.

3.4 The Decision Report also confirmed the intention to submit a subsequent report to the Executive Member for Policy and Resources establishing the full scope of the Market Town Fund initiative with a list of recommended locations and enhancement schemes.

3.5 The aim of the individual enhancement schemes, and the Market Town Fund Initiative programme overall, is in line with the County Council's 2017 – 2021 Strategic Plan to:

- *'Maintain Hampshire's strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity'* by improving Hampshire's connectivity; planning and delivering appropriate development and infrastructure; attracting increased inward investment; supporting businesses to start and grow; helping to create more jobs;
- *'Enable people in Hampshire to enjoy a rich and diverse environment'* by protecting and improving Hampshire's environment and quality of life; enabling people to live healthy lifestyles; enhancing and protecting Hampshire's heritage and culture; and
- *'Ensure people in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities'* by making it easy for people to find and access support within the community.

4. Proposed Market Town Fund programme

- 4.1. It is intended that the Market Town Fund initiative will support market town environmental enhancement schemes being developed by the County Council, and working closely with the district, town or parish councils.
- 4.2. The term market town is largely synonymous with historic, rural and country towns. They are widely considered to be those places that provide a key focus for their surrounding hinterland of villages and hamlets, have a strong and visible relationship with the rural economy e.g. farmers' market, and the quality of their environment is recognised as a significant draw for tourism. In addition, they provide jobs, major services, and a focus for public transport routes, and cultural and leisure facilities.
- 4.3. In order to target the residual resources of the Market Town Fund most effectively, only those towns meeting the above characteristics with a population in excess of approximately 15,000 and having, by virtue of their size, character and status, potential to provide the widest economic, cultural and social wellbeing benefits, were considered for inclusion in the Market Town Fund programme. Of these, only the following locations (refer table below) provided evidence of environmental enhancement schemes being developed by the County Council with a joined-up approach with local partners, and where the addition of Market Town Fund investment would make a difference to the current funding package and directly support the economic potential and sustainability of the towns.

Market Town	Potential Scheme
Alton	Public realm enhancements and links to the Town Centre.
Andover	Bridge Street and Town Mills environmental improvements.
Romsey	Town centre improvements.
Petersfield	Town Centre Project.
Winchester	Public realm enhancements and links to the Town Centre.

5. Funding

- 5.1. Further to the allocation of £680,000 from the Market Town Fund for implementation of the enhancement works for Romsey Town Centre in Bell Street and Market Place, the investment now available is £1.32million.
- 5.2. At this stage, it is proposed that an indicative funding allocation of £300,000 is made for each of the four remaining locations, Alton, Andover, Petersfield

and Winchester. It is also proposed that the balance of the funding, £120,000, is set aside as a Reserve which can be allocated to top-up the indicative funding allocation as necessary.

Market Town	Indicative allocation
Alton	£300,000
Andover	£300,000
Petersfield	£300,000
Winchester	£300,000
Reserve	£120,000
Total	£1,320,000

- 5.3. It is important to note that these are indicative allocations only at this stage to those areas that have been identified under the criteria as market towns. There remains the opportunity to provide additional funding in the future, either to extend the reach of the programme or to provide additional funds in the towns highlighted above should a suitable business case be put forward, especially where this attracts other local investment from district, town or parish councils.

6. Management of the programme

- 6.1. In order to ensure a fully coordinated approach to the development, delivery and funding of the environmental enhancement schemes, it is proposed that the sum of £1,320,000 be transferred to the Environment and Transport capital programme.
- 6.2. The approval of individual schemes utilising support from the fund, capital transport programme investment and other sources, will be achieved through the submission of Project Appraisals to the Executive Member for Environment and Transport.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	no
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Revenue Budget and Precept 2017/18	16 February 2017
Market Town Funding Initiative (Bell Street and Market Place, Romsey Town Centre Improvements)	22 September 2017
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

This report sets out an indicative programme of environmental enhancement schemes to be undertaken by Hampshire County Council and its partners.

It is considered that the individual schemes will have a neutral impact on groups with protected characteristics, apart from two groups. As the environmental enhancement schemes are likely to improve mobility and accessibility, it is considered that they will have the potential for positive impacts for elderly and disabled users in the public realm.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. The County Council has a legal obligation under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to consider the impact of all the decisions it makes on the prevention of crime.

2.2. The proposals in this report are not considered to adversely affect the prevention of crime.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? The aim of the Market Town Funding Initiative is to develop the economic potential and sustainability of Hampshire's market towns reducing the need to travel.
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? The outcomes of the individual schemes will support market town communities to become more resilient to the effects of future extreme weather events.