

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Executive Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	8 July 2020
<b>Subject:</b>	Re-opening the High Streets Safely Fund – Action Plan
<b>Report of:</b>	Interim Head of Development Services.
<b>Corporate Lead:</b>	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Economic Development/Promotion
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	One

## **Executive Summary:**

This report explains the purpose of the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF) launched by government. It sets out how funding may be spent and that it can only be used to support business and for temporary public realm measures on high streets. A high-level initial action plan is appended to the report which identifies necessary actions in order to support the safe reopening of the local economy and the need to achieve social distancing.

## **Recommendation:**

- 1. To NOTE the government criteria for the use of the Re-opening the High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF)**
- 2. To AGREE the initial Action Plan and note that it is a dynamic document which may change.**
- 3. To delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the decisions needed to implement the action plan or vary it in response to circumstances which may arise as a consequence of the need to re-open the local economy safely, support social distancing or respond to business intelligence, including authority to enter into agreements, notices and other legal documents as necessary.**

## **Reasons for Recommendation:**

To establish a swift and clear decision pathway so that decisions necessary to support this work can be made immediately should the need arise.

To keep Members up to date with the recovery work taking place and the need to support business and the safe reopening of high streets.

**Resource Implications:**

A recovery cell working group of Borough Council Officers (including a representative from Gloucestershire County Council Highways and Gloucestershire Police Constabulary) has been set up. Individual Officers are funded through existing budgets. The action plan costs will be paid for by the RHSSF where they meet the criteria. This is expected to be the case for most actions. Where costs arise as a consequence of immediate or unknown circumstances funding will be sought initially through the recovery framework or other government grant schemes prior to any actions taking place.

**Legal Implications:**

The Council is required to enter into a funding agreement for the funding referred to in this report as well as other agreements to implement the action plan e.g. delegations from the County Council. Legal advice will be sought on specific aspects of the action plan to ensure compliance with the procurement legislation and state aid.

**Risk Management Implications:**

The risks associated with this work relate to a failure to make provision for social distancing and, consequently, failure to support the local economy and re-opening of high streets safely.

Government has directly targeted this work and made funding available to ensure that it does happen. There are specific criteria associated with the use of the fund as set out explicitly in guidance. Implementation requires that work moves forward collaboratively and at pace. The fund is available to draw down for a period up to, and including, March 2021 although it is expected that monies will be committed and spent by December 2020.

**Performance Management Follow-up:**

Progress on this piece of work will be reported as part of the corporate performance tracker with specific progress reported back to Executive Committee in January (three months before the end of the fund and immediately following the soft deadline of December 2020 set by government).

A high-level action plan is attached to this report as Appendix 1. Implementation relies on continuing to work collaboratively with Gloucestershire County Council (Highways Authority), Gloucestershire Constabulary and with the support of the business community.

**Environmental Implications:**

There are indirect environmental impacts associated with this piece of work. Re-opening high streets safely will support the recovery of the local economy by offering the means for business and the community to access and achieve safe social distancing

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

**1.1** Councils across England are sharing £50million of additional funding to support the safe reopening of high streets and other commercial areas. A sum of £84,931K is allocated for Tewkesbury Borough Council. The money has been allocated to allow local authorities in England to put in place additional measures to establish a safe trading environment for businesses and customers, particularly in high streets, through measures that extend to the end of March 2021. Government has indicated that the monies will be available up to, and including, March 2021 but is encouraging use of the money by end of this calendar year. Full details of the requirements of this European Regional Development Fund will be covered in a funding agreement which is yet to be issued.

## **2.0 PURPOSE OF THE FUND**

**2.1** The fund is focussed and narrowly targeted as set out below:

- 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 the local economy can be managed successfully and safely.
- Temporary public realm changes to ensure reopening of the local economy can be managed successfully and safely.

To date guidance and FAQ's have been issued together with an initial bulletin clarifying what items are in scope and out of scope.

The action plan identifies themed areas. The allocations are currently evenly distributed but may change as this piece of work progresses if business and community engagements identify additional relevant actions which need to take place.

## **3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

**3.1** The criteria are prescriptive. No other options considered.

## **4.0 CONSULTATION**

**4.1** Internally and with working group as set out in the report. Wider consultation and engagements will take place as part of this work.

## **5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

**5.1** This work has direct links with the Tewkesbury Borough Council Recovery Plan Framework agreed by Executive Committee on 10 June 2020.

## **6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

**6.1** This fund has been launched with a specific purpose in direct response to the need to support the local economy to reopen safely and social distancing. It has links to the High Streets Task Force initiative announced by government in July 2019.

## **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)**

**7.1** None.

**8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**

**8.1** This piece of work supports sustainability objectives.

**9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)**

**9.1** The work supports Health and Safety obligations.

**10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**

**10.1** A recovery cell group for RHSSF has been set up. It is a task and finish group. Membership includes the six authorities across Gloucestershire and the Gloucestershire Police Constabulary. The group is sharing key actions and ensuring that the focus of work remains on the safe opening to support the economy.

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**Background Papers:** Reopening the High Streets safely Fund, Guidance Version 2  
Reopening High Streets Safely Fund: Frequently Asked Questions

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**Appendices:** 1 - High Level Action Plan