

Report to: **Council**  
Date: **25<sup>th</sup> March 2021**  
Title: **Investing in South Hams Economic Recovery**  
Portfolio Area: **Leader**

Wards Affected: **Which Wards/all**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken:

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**Recommendations:**

1. It is recommended that, in line with the Council's commitment to work with and support businesses, residents and communities through the Recovery period, Members approve an investment of £498,000 to support economic recovery, the major towns and the visitor economy of the South Hams. The funding will support the national roadmap for the easing of lockdown at a local level, as detailed below:
  - Keeping the streets clean - £130,000
  - Enhanced on street presence - £36,000
  - Supporting business and hospitality - £57,000
  - Improving the business environment in our key towns - £275,000

2. It is recommended that the total cost of £498,000 is funded as set out below:-
- i) £298,000 is allocated to the initiatives set out in this report from either the remaining funds from the Council's Additional Restrictions Grant scheme allocation, or in the event that the further Government guidance due to be published on the ARG scheme indicates that a different approach is required, that instead the £298,000 is funded by the Business Rates Retention Earmarked Reserve.
- ii) The final decision on the financing of the £298,000, is recommended to be delegated to the Director of Place of Enterprise, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Leader and Executive Member for Finance, on receipt of the further guidance from the Government department responsible for Business Grants on the ARG scheme, which is anticipated to be received prior to the end of March 2021.
- iii) Note that £200,000 from the £500,000 of ARG funding previously allocated by Council on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021, (minute CM39/20), earmarked for strategic economic recovery projects and priorities, is allocated to the initiatives set out in this report.

## **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1. The Council continues to play a key role, alongside partners, in both response and recovery to the short, medium and long-term impacts of the pandemic and in the implementation of a range of essential support for individuals, the wider community and business.
- 1.2. In developing and adopting a broad ranging Recovery and Renewal Plan Members recognised the need to adopt a flexible, adaptable approach to the emerging challenges.
- 1.3. Tourism is a vital sector of the South Hams economy and a vibrant tourism sector benefits the whole of the South Hams. Using economic modelling data from EMSI, we know that;
- Accommodation and food services is the largest employment sector within the South Hams and over double the national average.
  - Over 5100 people are employed in this sector
  - This represents 13 % of all employment
  - There are many other sectors supporting the tourism sector.
- 1.4. Total value of Tourism to the South Hams economy is £260,226,000. This is from nights staying, day trips and other tourism related spend.

- 1.5. This report sets out a range of proposals that as part of its recovery plan, will supplement existing activity and make an investment, particularly in its coastal towns and areas of high visitor numbers, and boost the local economy.
- 1.6. The proposals will enable the Council to support and manage the anticipated huge increase in visitor numbers to provide a high quality visitor experience as well as mitigate some of the likely impacts on our communities following the Government's publication of its 'Roadmap' for the gradual easing of the lockdown.
- 1.7. The lockdown easing consists of 4 main phases:
  - 29<sup>th</sup> March - Groups of 6 allowed to meet outdoors, 2 households allowed to meet outdoors, outdoor sports facilities opened.
  - 12<sup>th</sup> April – Non essential shops can reopen, self-catering holiday accommodation and campsites (without communal facilities) 2<sup>nd</sup> homes can be occupied, restaurants cafes and pubs can serve customers outdoors.
  - 17<sup>th</sup> May – Hotels and B&B's open, campsites fully open, restaurants cafes and pubs can serve customers indoors.
  - 21<sup>st</sup> June – All restrictions lifted.
- 1.8. It is anticipated that 'summer 2021' will begin at Easter and whilst the main restrictions on holiday stays are not lifted until the 12<sup>th</sup> April all expectations are that by this point visitor numbers will be present in record numbers.
- 1.9. This report recommends additional resources to be deployed from 1<sup>st</sup> April to ensure that existing service levels can be maintained and enhanced as appropriate in order to support our businesses and communities. The report recommends these resources are maintained until mid-September.
- 1.10. The total cost of the recommended initiatives is £498,000 as detailed below:
  - Keeping the streets clean - £130,000
  - Enhanced on-street presence - £36,000
  - Supporting business and hospitality - £57,000
  - Improving the business environment in our key towns - £275,000

These initiatives are set out in sections 2, 3, 4 and 5.

- 1.11. It is recommended that the £498,000 (one-off revenue cost) is financed as set out in Recommendation 2 of this report.

## **2. Keeping the streets clean**

- 2.1. It is recommended that from 1<sup>st</sup> April we move to a 'summer service', this means:
  - Additional 'twilight' emptying of litter bins.

- Extra litter bin rounds for mid-afternoons at weekends at key locations.
- Extra bins at Hope Cove, Bigbury, Torcross–Memorial–Strete Gate, North Sands & South Sands, Dartmouth Embankment.
- Dedicated cleansing operative located in Salcombe, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday.
- Dedicated cleansing operative located in Dartmouth, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday.
- Dedicated Bigbury cleansing attendant.
- Slapton Line – additional litter picking/clean up.
- Additional recycling bank vehicle – therefore doubling capacity.

2.2. The anticipated costs of 2.1 are estimated at approximately £130,000.

### **3. Enhanced on-street presence.**

3.1. Members will already be aware of the review of the Localities service. The restructured service had a number of strategic aims:

- Keep South Hams safe for those that live in, work in and visit our area.
- Raise the profile of the Council through more on-street visibility when it is needed most and increased public & business engagement.
- Operational delivery of a fair and consistent approach to education & enforcement with the aims of improving environmental quality, encouraging tourism and supporting the positive reputation of the Council.
- Generate a meaningful public and business insight through frequent patrols and constructive conversations that help improve public perception.
- Improved environmental quality through increased street patrols and contract monitoring.

3.2. Members agreed through the budget setting process for 2021/22 to an additional 4 seasonal posts thus enabling weekend, early morning and evening cover.

3.3. In anticipation of increased visitor numbers, it is recommended that the Council increases the number of seasonal posts by a further 2 posts for this year. This will ensure that:

- That the Council has the ability of respond quickly to any issues
- Carry out education and enforcement patrols in more areas over a wider timeframe
- Maintains an on-street presence in key locations
- There is sufficient monitoring of the street services

3.4. The costs of this are £36,000. Members should note that these costs are significantly higher than the previous 4 seasonal posts agreed in the 2021/22 budget process, as a significant portion of the funding was taken from existing salary budget savings. The £36,000 for these 2 posts also includes additional vehicle hire.

#### **4. Supporting businesses and the reopening of outdoor hospitality.**

- 4.1. We want to make sure that we support our businesses to ensure that they can operate safely. Providing confidence to residents and visitors alike is paramount if they are to recover from the last 12 months of lost income and growth.
- 4.2. The Council employed 3 additional temporary Covid Compliance Officers as a result of short term funding from Government to ensure the businesses operated safely. The roles were due to end on 31<sup>st</sup> March.
- 4.3. We received a letter from Robert Jenrick, MHCLG Secretary of State which encourages Councils to support businesses opening up out of lockdown by removing as much bureaucracy and red tape as possible specifically supporting Al fresco dining, takeaways and the freedom to use land for outdoor events and hold markets without obtaining additional planning permission. The Government have confirmed the following:
  - Extending pavement licences for a further 12 months, making it easier and cheaper for pubs, restaurants and cafes to continue to make al fresco dining a reality with outside seating, tables and street stalls to serve food and drinks.
  - Encouraging Councils to support local communities hold popular outdoor events like summer fairs, car-boot sales, and markets, without the need for planning permission.
  - The automatic right to provide takeaways and do deliveries, created at the start of the pandemic is going to continue, as will the right for pubs to have marquees and awnings without planning permission for up to two months.
- 4.4. As a result of the easing lockdown and the encouragement from the Secretary of State, the Council is receiving more contact than ever from businesses regarding compliance advice and requests for support around licence rules. Increased numbers of visitors are likely to result in an increase in demand for regulatory services such as noise and antisocial behaviour complaints.
- 4.5. It is recommended to extend the employment of the Covid Compliance Officers until the end of September and fund 'Town marketing activities' including a programme of vacant shop window dressing (temporary facades that improve the aesthetic, have a local place focus and expedite re-letting). The cost of the extensions and the marketing activities are at a cost of £57,000.

#### **5. Improving the business environment in our key towns**

- 5.1. The Council recognises the important role that the five major towns play in supporting the Tourism sector and the wider economy.

Therefore it is recommended that the Council create a Town Highstreet Investment Fund.

- 5.2. Each Town will be able to bid for 50:50 match funding of up to a maximum £50,000 per town for the five main towns. The total cost of this scheme will be £250,000.
- 5.3. The criteria will be for bids that will contribute directly to the growth in the Tourism or wider economy of the District.
- 5.4. The Council will also instigate a short term series of 'Town marketing' activities including a programme of vacant shop window dressing (temporary facades that improve the aesthetic, have a local place focus and expedite re-letting). The cost of this is estimated at £25,000
- 5.5. The total cost of supporting our towns would be £275,000.

## 6. Proposed Way Forward

- 6.1. That the Council support the recommendations set out in this report, which will ensure that visitors will experience the best that South Hams has to offer, residents will feel confident that towns and businesses are as safe as possible and businesses should see the benefit of returning consumer confidence.

## 7. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	N	None
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	<p>The initiatives set out within this report have a total one-off revenue cost of £498,000.</p> <p>It is recommended that this is funded from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) £298,000 is allocated to the initiatives set out in this report from either the remaining funds from the Council's Additional Restrictions Grant scheme allocation, or in the event that the further Government guidance due to be published on the ARG scheme indicates that a different approach is required, that instead the £298,000 is funded by the Business Rates Retention Earmarked Reserve.</li> <li>ii) The final decision on the financing of the £298,000, is recommended to be delegated to the Director of Place of Enterprise, in</li> </ul>

		<p>consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Leader and Executive Member for Finance, on receipt of the further guidance from the Government department responsible for Business Grants on the ARG scheme, which is anticipated to be received prior to the end of March 2021.</p> <p>iii) Note that £200,000 from the £500,000 of ARG funding previously allocated by Council on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021, (minute CM39/20), earmarked for strategic economic recovery projects and priorities, is allocated to the initiatives set out in this report.</p> <p>The Council's total allocation of the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) is £2.51 million as set out in the report to Council on Business Grants on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021.</p> <p>The Business Rates Retention Earmarked Reserve has sufficient funding to meet the cost of the £298,000 if this is required, on receipt of the further guidance expected for the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme.</p>
Risk		
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	Covid-19 Economic Recovery and Renewal
Equality and Diversity		None
Safeguarding		N/A
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		N/A
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		N/A
Other implications		N/A

### **Supporting Information**

#### **Appendices:**

None

**Background Papers:**

Council – 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021 – Business Grants (includes details of the Additional Restrictions Grant, ARG funding)

<b>Process checklist</b>	<b>Completed</b>
Portfolio Holder briefed	<b>Yes</b>
SLT Rep briefed	<b>Yes</b>
Relevant Exec Director sign off (draft)	<b>Yes</b>
Data protection issues considered	<b>Yes</b>
If exempt information, public (part 1) report also drafted.	<b>N/A</b>