

Decision Maker: PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR RENEWAL AND RECREATION WITH PRE-SCRUTINY BY THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday 18 March 2015

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE FUND 2015-16

Contact Officer: Martin Pinnell, Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support
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Chief Officer: Nigel Davies, Executive Director of Environment & Community Services

Ward: (All Wards);

1. Reason for report

This report combines the regular update for Members on the activities of the Town Centre Management and Business Support Team, with an outline of the proposed Town Centre Management events and activities which are planned for the 2015/16 financial year. The report seeks approval to utilise the Town Centre Management Initiative Fund in support of Christmas lights funding and town centre events during the coming financial year.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The Renewal & Recreation Portfolio Holder is asked to:

2.1 Note the range of activities which have taken place during the last quarter of 2014/15 as provided in APPENDIX 1.

2.2 Note the amendments to the current Christmas lights policy, as outlined in paragraphs 3.4 – 3.6, and agree that up to £27k be set aside from the Town Centre Initiatives Fund 2015/16 for use on Town Centre Christmas Lights schemes as set out in paragraph 3.7.

2.3 Agree the schedule of Town Centre Management events and activities for 2015/16 outlined in paragraph 3.10, which will have a total net cost of £33k funded from the Town Centre Initiative Fund.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy
 2. BBB Priority: Vibrant, Thriving Town Centres
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost: £60k
 2. Ongoing costs: Recurring Cost
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Town Centre Management Initiatives Fund
 4. Total current budget for this head: £60k
 5. Source of funding: Existing revenue budget for 2015/16
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 3
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None : Discretionary activities
 2. Call-in: Applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Approximately 2,000 town centre businesses, plus residents using town centres.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

3. COMMENTARY

Introduction

- 3.1 The Town Centre Management (TCM) and Business Support service in Renewal & Recreation exists to maintain and enhance the competitiveness, attractiveness and vibrancy of the borough's town centres – and to support businesses across the borough. This involves working closely with town centre businesses, both directly and through business and traders groups, the Orpington Business Improvement District, and with other key town centre occupiers and service providers. The resources for the service are derived not only from Council budgets but also from income from business donations and sponsorship. Highlights of the TCM and Business Support work programme in Quarter 4 of 2014/15 is provided as **APPENDIX 1**.
- 3.2 The proposed work programme for the Town Centre Managers during 2015/16 will continue to involve a wide range of duties ranging from facilitation of some public events through to day to day assistance to town centre occupiers. Members are asked to take note that resources available are less than in earlier years due to the ending of the Mayor of London's Outer London Fund programme (which provided significant additional funding for events during 2012 and 2013). However, as the Bromley North Village works have now been completed and the Market Square is now available for promotions and occasional chargeable entertainment – income to the Town Centre Management team has recovered to the expected levels, and this is expected to be the case for 2015/16. Although the central part of the High Street is a subject of a proposed public realm project, and the Council's approach to the management and location of the regular market is under review, it is expected that any disruption related to these projects would only impact the ability of the Town Centre Team to generate income after the 2015/16 financial year. Therefore the budget available for Town Centre Initiatives will be £60k for 2015/16.
- 3.3 One of the key priorities for the TCM and Business Support service has been and continues to be the development of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in town centres. As Members are aware the Council has agreed to fund a project to introduce a BID to Bromley Town Centre, the bulk of this in the form of a grant to the Bromley BID Working Group. This has enabled the Working Group with support from a professional BID management company, to start the process of establishing a BID in this town centre, with a ballot planned for early November. Further details of progress on this and other key TCM projects is included in APPENDIX 1.

Christmas Lights

- 3.4 At the request of the Chairman of the R&R PDS Committee Officers undertook a short review of Christmas lights policy in early 2014. During this review larger businesses and business representative groups in the main town centres, particularly Bromley, Beckenham and Penge were consulted and some benchmarking with other areas undertaken. There continues to be reluctance amongst businesses to contribute to Christmas decorations, especially if they feel others are not contributing equally. Increasingly across London and the UK it is town centres with BIDs that continue to maintain Christmas lights. In our own borough, as agreed the Orpington 1st BID did bear the cost of installing the lights in 2014 and we would expect this to be the same for 2015. With the introduction of a BID in Bromley in April 2016 (contingent upon a successful ballot in November) we would likewise expect the responsibility for festive lights in Bromley town centre to be passed to the new BID. It is for Members to decide whether smaller town centres as yet without BIDs, such as Beckenham and Penge, should continue to be funded by the Council in future years.
- 3.5 In the year before the introduction of the BID it is suggested that the Council again funds the bulk of the costs for the displays in Bromley, Beckenham and Penge. After a thorough bench test of the existing lights (purchased in 2011) in early 2014, and their successful use during the

2014/15 season, it is expected that these will be re-usable for the Bromley, Orpington and Penge town centres for a further year – and so the costs will mainly be related to installation and de-installation only. However, there may be the need to purchase some new lighting to refurbish the in-situ tree lights in Bromley Town Centre. For Beckenham town centre, the Council does not own any lights, so if Members agreed to fund we would hire lights for the 2015/16 season as in previous years. Taking account of some additional costs related to tree lights in Bromley, a one year contract for maintenance and installation of the existing lights in Bromley and Penge, plus the hiring of lights in Beckenham would be expected to cost in the region of £25,000.

Table 1 Expenditure on Christmas lights and sources of funding from 2010-2014

Description	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total	%
Total spent on lights and trees	71,600	147,000	31,000	33,100	26,100	308,800	
Business contribution	900	10,300	1,600	2,100	4,000	18,900	6.1%
Other contribution - including OLF	0	116,000	600	0	0	116,600	37.8%
Net cost to LBB	70,700	20,700	28,800	31,000	22,100	173,300	56.1%

- 3.6 As in previous years, each of the smaller town centres which host festive lights displays are expected to cover their costs through local fund raising. However, over a number of years we have offered to include the displays in the smaller towns in the borough-wide contract. The advantages of this is a potential saving due to some economies of scale and also the fact that on a Council contract VAT can be reclaimed by the borough – and the small towns therefore do not need to cover this in their contributions. However, each year a smaller number of the towns take advantage of this facility and there is a disproportionate cost to administrate in terms of officer time. It is therefore proposed to discontinue this practice, but for 2015 only to offer a small one-off donation to each of the four towns / parades who were involved in the contract in 2014 – to offset the additional VAT costs they will now need to find. In total we would envisage setting aside up to £1,300 to cover these donations.
- 3.7 In total the funding requirements for the 2014 Christmas Lights scheme project would therefore be approximately £26,800. Should Members be in support of the overall approach suggested, a budget of £27k will be allocated from the Town Centre Management Initiative Fund towards Christmas lights in the 2015-16 financial year, and officers will undertake a three written quotes process to procure a contractor to undertake this work for the 2015 season. Town Centre Managers will also seek to maximise contributions from local businesses towards the schemes to reduce the net cost to the Council.

Events

- 3.8 Coordinating events for the general public aimed at increasing footfall and raising the profile of our town centres have always been a key part of the work of the Town Centre Management service. During 2014/15 a number of successful town centre events have taken place, mainly focussed around the Christmas season, funded from the Town Centre Management Initiative Fund and other sources including sponsorship from local businesses.
- 3.9 As in previous years the 2014/15 events brought additional vitality into each of the town centres. For example, the lights switch on combined with a Santa Dash event in Bromley on 30 November attracted over 20,000 people to the event, and footfall counts show an increase of over 200% compared with the previous Sunday. The events also encouraged visitors and shoppers to extend their 'dwell time', provided positive publicity for the town concerned, fostered

a greater sense of community and helped to promote local businesses, particularly those sponsoring or supporting the events.

3.10 Although the capacity to delivery major events remains restricted because of limited resources, due to an improved income expectation for 2015/16 Town Centre Managers will look to extend the number of events – to re-introduce at least one summer event in Bromley and Penge – and enhanced support for the seasonal Market days in Beckenham. In addition, officers will continue to support events in smaller town centres through advice and guidance to local groups.

Table 2: Draft Council-funded Town Centre event programme 2015/16

Town	Approx. date	Event title	Description	Estimated total cost	Estimated partner contributions	Net cost to the Council
Beckenham	May, July and September	Three Local Produce Markets	Entertainment and promotion to enhance Market on Beckenham Green	£6,000	£3,000	£3,000
Beckenham	5 Dec	Christmas Switch on	Christmas lights switch on, lantern parade and entertainment in High Street and Beckenham Green	£4,000	£1,000	£3,000
Beckenham	TBC	'Fiver Fest'	Supporting local businesses through marketing a special discount day	£1,500	£500	£1,000
Bromley	Early July	Wimbledon themed event	Tennis / Sports themed event possibly with large screen to coincide with final Wimbledon weekend	£16,000	£7,000	£9,000
Bromley	26 Oct – 12 Nov	Poppies display	Display of large poppies for period running up to	£3,000	£2,000	£1,000

			Remembrance Sunday			
Bromley	29 Nov	Christmas Parade / Santa Dash	Family event including Santa Dash, stage with entertainment and local performers, Christmas parade with reindeers, lights switch on and possibly fireworks	£16,000	£6,000	£10,000
Penge	6 June – 14 June	Penge Festival	Enhancements to Festival event to include VE Day Celebration, Cycle Cinema, Roller Disco, Historical Walks and Concerts.	£7,000	£3,000	£4,000
Penge	November TBC	Christmas event	Christmas themed event with entertainment, market, local theatre and children's rides / activities	£3,500	£1,500	£2,000
TOTALS				£57,000	£24,000	£33,000

3.11 The funded events programme would have a net cost to the Council of £33,000, and therefore this sum is requested to be allocated from the Town Centre Management Initiative Fund.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The events and activities outlined above are aimed specifically at enhancing the vitality of town centres across the borough and as such contribute to the Building a Better Bromley key priority of Vibrant, Thriving Town Centres.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 For 2015/16 the Town Centre Management Initiative Fund budget is £60,000. This is cash limited which means that there has been no inflationary increase from the previous financial year.

5.2 The following table summarises the proposed spending on this fund:-

Town Centre Management Initiative Fund	£
2015/16 Budget	60,000
Proposed events and activities	
Town Centre Events	33,000
Christmas Lights	27,000
Total	<u>60,000</u>

5.3 For 2015/16, the activities of the Town Centre Management and Business Support Team are financed through various funding streams, summarised as follows: -

Funding type	£'000
Town Centre Management Initiative Fund	60
Grant to Orpington BID	13
S106 contributions - Earmarked for Beckenham & Elmers End	48
S106 contribution - earmarked for Bromley Markets Review project	25
Earmarked reserve for Bromley BID project	110
Earmarked Reserve re Local Parade improvements	37
Total	<u><u>293</u></u>

Non-Applicable Sections:	Legal, Personnel
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	R&R PDS Report – Town Centre Management Initiative Fund 2014/15 (DRR14/030– 1 April 2014)