APPENDIX [..]

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 4 DECEMBER 2012

Title:

TOWN TEAM PARTNERS
[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Adam Taylor Smith]
[Wards Affected: Cranleigh, Farnham and Godalming]

Summary and purpose:

On 23 October it was announced that Godalming, Farnham and Cranleigh had all been confirmed as Portas 'Town Team Partners' and would each receive £10,000 funding and support to revitalise their high streets. As Waverley has supported the bids from the start, and is the accountable body for the funds, this report sets out the governance arrangements for each of the projects for the Executive to approve before the funds are released to the towns.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The bids address three of the Council's corporate priorities – value for money, environment and understanding residents' needs.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

There are no equality and diversity implications.

Environment and Climate Change Implications:

There are no environmental or climate change implications.

Resource/Value for Money Implications:

Waverley is the accountable body for the funds so needs to ensure the bids comply with the DCLG guidance.

Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications.

Introduction

1. Having applied for Portas Pilot funding and been unsuccessful, Godalming, Cranleigh and Farnham were invited to re-submit smaller scale bids, and have all now been confirmed as 'Town Team Partners' for high street regeneration. Waverley Borough Council warmly welcomes the funds and congratulates the three towns.

2.	In becoming a Town Team Partner, local town teams are making the commitment to deliver part of their Portas Plan application and to form a national 'Our Town First' movement and share lessons. In return, they will be supported by the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) which will work with the partners to identify their needs.

3.	The opportunity to become a Town Team Partner received an overwhelming response from towns across the country, with hundreds of MPs submitting applications. Each Town Team Partner will have access to:

- help to get started and become established in their town;

- an advice line and a network of advisers managed by the Association of Town Centre Management;

- special national events to learn from other Town Teams, and secure support from industry experts and trade bodies;

- an online 'Knowledge Bank' with expert advice and support;

- regular meetings with other Town Teams to share tips and ideas; and

- 'Crowdfunding' - a potential way to attract local investors and raise small amounts of finance to support their work.

4.	To support the activity, each Town Team Partner will receive **£10,000** to help put elements of the plan into action.

Waverley's Role as Accountable Body

5.	Waverley Borough Council has played a key role in highlighting the Portas funding opportunities to the borough's towns, and has supported the bids through advice, meetings and assistance with the applications. Waverley also supported the initial Portas bids as 'accountable body' for the funds and was then also required to be accountable body for the smaller Town Team Partner applications because the funding is s31 un-ringfenced revenue grant which can only be paid to certain tiers of local authority. DCLG has now circulated guidance to accountable bodies which outlines decision-making and monitoring arrangements (see Annexe 1).

6.	Waverley has now received the £30,000 funding from DCLG and it needs to be transferred to the Town Teams within the current financial year. In order to comply with the accountable body guidance, we need to ensure the town teams are transparent in their use of this public money and that proper governance is in place in terms of decision making, financial and performance management. However, it must also be noted that the DCLG has asked that the systems in place should be *proportionate, light touch and timely*.

7.	To comply with governance rules, the monies will be transferred directly to the Town or Parish Council and each Town Team has been reminded of the necessity to adhere to the appropriate bodies' procedures and terms of reference to ensure the funds are spent legitimately.

8.   We have therefore asked the Town Teams to submit more detailed plans and governance arrangements in a simple form which will be available in the next few weeks, once the plans have been approved by the individual towns and parishes. The summaries below are based on the proposals they originally submitted and are subject to change:

Godalming

9.   Vision – the vision of the Godalming Together Town Team is to ensure Godalming's future vitality by encouraging and supporting new and existing retailers in the town.

10.   A number of initiatives have been identified to secure this vision:
* Buy Local Scheme - establish a scheme, encourage retailers and other bodies to offer rewards;
* Creating a welcome pack based on feedback from existing retailers and offer the opportunity of a 'Business Buddy' to all new businesses in the town
* Creating a town mobile phone application;
* Street Scene enhancement

Cranleigh

11.   Vision - to revitalise the high street by making it more accessible for people to visit. Organising a series of initiatives and events to increase footfall. Activities being proposed include –
* Bus subsidy – negotiated a subsidy with local bus companies to get more people travelling by bus into Cranleigh offering a fare of 60p per journey or £1 return – on trial
* Shopping Crawl – promote a shopping crawl event where shoppers can claim discounts at several shops taking part in the event.
* Pop up tents – purchase of pop up tents to allow new businesses the chance to sell their items on a regular basis
* Lamp post banners – purchase c40 banners for high street lamp posts to advertise local events.
* Food and Vintage market – run a series of events to attract new customers including a food festival and/or vintage market

Farnham

12.   Vision - The Farnham Town Team will deliver a tailored version of its Portas Bid 'Farnham- a distinctive craft town'. The partners would focus on increasing footfall to sustain its unique blend of independent businesses alongside more national names; maintaining variety and distinctiveness and enhancing the character of Farnham. Farnham's approach will be to focus on its heritage and expertise as a distinctive craft town linking key partners such as the University for the Creative Arts, the New Ashgate Gallery and the regionally significant Farnham Maltings. Activities proposed include:
* getting arts and crafts (including live crafts) into as many shops as possible including vacant units,

- clear promotion and a "Craft Trail" linking and celebrating creative businesses
- this will be supported by improved signage and better links with the transport hubs (rail station, car parks and bus stops).

Proposed next steps

13.   It is proposed that once the towns' detailed plans have been endorsed by the individual town and parish councils, the plans – which will be set out in simple Service Level Agreements – will be submitted to the next Executive. Once the proposals have been approved, funding can be transferred as soon as possible. Waverley officers will continue to assist the Towns, where required, as they begin to put their plans in action. An update report will be sent to a future meeting of the Executive with details of progress.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive:

1.   warmly welcomes the Town Team grants achieved by Cranleigh, Farnham and Godalming, together with the opportunity to work with the local teams to progress their project ideas; and

2.   invites each of the Town Teams to submit their detailed spending plans for approval by the Executive at their next meeting.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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