

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

18th JANUARY 2022

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

TRANSFORMING TOWNS (TT) PROGRAMME BUSINESS FUND IMPLEMENTATION 2021-2022

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Cabinet to enter into a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council as lead authority for the South East Wales Local Authorities to progress the Transforming Towns (TT) programme: Business Fund within the County Boroughs 3 Town Centres of Bridgend, Maesteg and Porthcawl.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-

- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** – taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 Welsh Government's (WG) TT programme is an extension of the 2018-2021 Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) Programme and takes a wider approach to regeneration by allowing Local Authorities to widen their boundary areas and the interventions it can support and undertake. Importantly, it continues the ambitions of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the priorities identified in Local Well-being Plans and other local and regional plans for enhancing economic regeneration and community well-being.

3.2 The 14th September 2021 Cabinet report gave an overview of the success of the TRI / TT programme to date and sought approval to extend the programme to March 2022. Following approval of the recommendations set out in that report, progress has been ongoing to bring a range of projects to fruition.

3.3 Bridgend County Borough Council's (BCBC) Project Board with representatives from Regeneration, Legal, Finance and Planning, with supporting work stream groups, was established at the beginning of the TRI programme and this is proposed to continue throughout the TT programme.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 Transforming Towns: Business Fund

4.1.1 The South East Local Authorities have been successful in securing £1,166,000 to be shared among them in 2021-22, to bring projects under the following headings to fruition within the Town Centres:

- Meanwhile Projects
- Events and Marketing
- Digital Support

4.1.2 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCT) are acting as the lead body for the South East region and will report to WG and the South East Wales Regional Regeneration Board, which will comprise the *Cardiff Capital Region Regeneration Board*. RCT require BCBC and the other local authorities making up the South East region to enter into a Service Level Agreement with RCT to facilitate the drawdown of the grant funding and ensure compliance with the WG grant funding terms and conditions.

4.1.3 There is not an equal financial split across the 10 Local Authorities. Local Authorities are to bid into the funding when projects are ready to go.

4.2 Risks and issues

The risks which Cabinet need to be aware of are as follows:

- There is not a set amount allocated to each South East Local Authority. As such projects will only be awarded when ready to go and if funding is available. Robust monitoring by both BCBC and RCT officers is required.

4.3 Next Steps

4.3.1 Cabinet will need to consider the above proposals and determine whether to approve the implementation of the fund within the County Borough. If the decision is made to proceed, the next step is for BCBC to:

- Enter into the Business Fund SLA agreement with RCT

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There is no direct impact on the Council's policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 A summary of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 assessment are as follows:

- **Long Term:** The regeneration planned for Bridgend's Town Centres as part of the TT programme will drive local prosperity, providing local employment opportunities and offering better environments to promote the health and well-being of those who live, work and visit town centres in the long term.
- **Prevention:** By improving the commercial, office and residential developments in the town centres it will strengthen the existing economic assets while diversifying its economic base. Converting unused or underutilized commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the district.
- **Integration:** The TT programme will focus on delivering a set of physical, commercial and social improvements through re-developing vacant, poor quality, under used or derelict building and premises. This will generate employment opportunities; provide prominent and suitable locations for commercial and retail use and sustain local shopping areas, increase town centre footfall and make available suitable town centre housing.
- **Collaboration:** The project will allow property owners, lessees and Registered Social Landlords to access funding which will allow them to tackle poor quality and unattractive properties; offering these properties a new lease of life and therefore enhancing the physical appearance of the shopping offer, streetscape and public realm.
- **Involvement:** Investing in a community offers a means to connect with local stakeholders. Strong, resilient communities will reinforce the regional and Welsh culture which is a key feature in promoting visits and tourists to the area.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Welsh Government have awarded the following grant for spend in 2021-2022:

Transforming Towns Elements	Projects	WG Funding	Comments
Business Fund	Various Bridgend, Porthcawl & Maesteg Town Centres	£1,166,000	WG funding to be shared between the 10 South East Local Authorities

8.2 No match funding is required for the Business fund projects.

9. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

9.1 Delegate authority to the Director of Communities, in consultation with the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change and Chief Officer - Legal, HR and Regulatory Services, to:

9.1.1 negotiate and enter into a service level agreement with Rhondda Cynon Taff; and

9.1.2 approve any extension or amendment to the service level agreement and to enter into any further deeds and documents which are ancillary to service level agreement.

Janine Nightingale
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10th January 2022

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Background documents:

1. Transforming Towns Programme South ST Wales Business Fund Grant- Award of Funding Letters