

Calderdale MBC**Wards Affected**

ALL

Economy and Investment Panel5th September 2017**Calderdale Retail Market Towns Agenda****Report of the Director, Economy and Environment****1. Issue**

- 1.1 Funding assigned in July 2016 by the Economic Investment Panel, for the continued operation of the Council's Retail Market Towns Agenda will end in January 2018. For continued operation of the functions and projects contained within this programme, allocation of further revenue funding will be required.

2. Need for a Decision

- 2.1 Member approval is required to allocate available funding controlled by the Economic Investment Panel and to approve the extension of the current Retail Market Towns Officer post.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider allocation of a sum of £81k revenue funds to facilitate the continued operation of the Retail Market Towns Officer post within the Corporate Projects Service for a period of two years.
- 3.2 Members are asked to allocate a nominal revenue budget of £20K to enable the delivery of the Brighouse Business Improvement District initiative (currently in development).

4. Background

- 4.1 The Retail Market Towns Officer post was originally introduced via the Economic Task Force (ETF) process to project manage the implementation of the Halifax Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID), oversee the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Council and the Marketing Halifax organisation and to provide on-going support to local retail and market businesses borough-wide, delivering a liaison point between them and the Council.
- 4.2 In November 2016, Cabinet approved the establishment (in 2016) of Town Development Boards for Halifax, Sowerby Bridge, Elland, Hebden Bridge and Brighouse as well as continued support for Todmorden.
- 4.3 On 9th Feb 2016, EIP approved the use of funding from the Ambition for our Towns budget to extend the contract of the Retail and Market Towns Officer by 18 months and to broaden its remit to support the work of the new Town Development Boards, as well as the existing support provided to retail businesses and the proposed Halifax BID Company. This decision was subsequently ratified by Cabinet, providing funding for this role until January 2018.
- 4.4 The Halifax Town Centre BID has now been incorporated and began its work within the town in April 2017. The establishment of the BID provides the BID company with c£400k per year to spend on projects within the BID area of Halifax Town Centre to benefit local (mainly retail) businesses. It also provides c£13.5k per annum to the Council in lieu of the Council's role as collecting Authority.
- 4.5 In addition to individual project work the Retail Market Towns Officer provides direct support to SME retail businesses across Calderdale. Retail businesses in Calderdale are under continued pressure due to the rise of internet shopping / click and collect services, in addition to the rise of out of town shopping. Retail and market businesses are required to continuously innovate and change in response to these pressures. Their success is integral to the continued sustainability and vibrancy of towns within Calderdale. Minimal support is on offer to retail based SMEs from organisations outside of the Council and the Retail Market Towns Officer position is the only post within CMBC to provide assistance directly to these businesses.
- 4.6 The Retail Market Town Officer's role is important within the Town Development Boards initiative. The scope of these Boards is focused mainly on Town Centre areas, which contain a significant proportion of retail businesses. The current post holder is already responsible for a number of Town Board initiatives. For example, this post is responsible for co-ordinating the delivery of the Elland 700 celebrations and is also currently developing a proposal to implement a Business Improvement District within Brighouse. This position also leads on developing the strategy to address the growing

numbers of vacant retail properties within Calderdale which is focused on ensuring sustainable business rates growth in the medium to long term.

- 4.7 The Retail Market Towns Officer is also working with the Calderdale Markets Service to drive forward improvements at Halifax Borough Market and contributes to the feasibility work on-going to base-line options for the future of the building. This post also produces external funding bids for retail initiatives within Calderdale and co-ordinates the operation of the recently initiated “Healthy High Streets” project, aimed at increasing footfall, jobs and reducing vacant properties.
- 4.8 The Retail Market Towns Officer is currently responsible for the co-ordination of communication / consultation activities between the West Yorkshire Plus Transport Fund Programme and local retail/leisure businesses, the Halifax BID and larger industry/property stakeholders (including Lloyds, Nestle, Covea Woolshops etc.). The role provides a key co-ordination role, allowing project and programme staff to maintain close links with the business community.
- 4.9 Work to support the retail areas of the market towns is more important now than ever, given the impact of the 2015 floods on townships such as Hebden Bridge and Elland and this role is a key link with business partnerships such as the Hebden Bridge Partnership, Brighouse Business Initiative and Elland District Partnership.
- 4.10 The Brighouse BID initiative is in the early stages of development and has received initial support from the Brighouse Development Board. Initial estimates suggest that an incorporated BID within Brighouse has the potential to generate c£150-200k per annum for the company to spend within the defined BID area.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 At the present time, the full uncommitted balance in relation to the Economic Investment Fund is in the region of £450k.
- 5.2 Funding for both the Retail Market Towns Officer Post and the development of a Brighouse BID will be classed as revenue expenditure.
- 5.3 Costs are illustrated in table 1 (below).

Table 1 – Revenue Requirement, Retail Market Towns Agenda

Description	Revenue Cost (£000's)
Retail Market Towns Officer at SCP 36 - £40.4k per annum (<i>2 year contract extension, inc on-costs</i>))	81
Est. Project Development Cost – Brighouse BID initiative	20
Total Revenue Requirement:	101

- 5.4 The estimated development cost of the Brighouse BID initiative is approximately 60% lower than the cost of establishing the Halifax BID (c£50k). This is due to transfer of skills and learning from consultants employed by Calderdale MBC to develop the Halifax BID, to the Corporate Projects Team.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The expenditure requested above would facilitate continued delivery of both retail and business support to local residents across the Borough, in addition to support for delivery of Town Development Board and business marketing activities. It would also provide resources to develop an incorporated BID within Brighouse and other suitable market towns.

For further information on this report, contact:

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The documents used in the preparation of this report are:

N/A

The documents are available for inspection at:

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Halifax

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