



CABINET REPORT

Date Written	20 th January 2021
Report Author	Zoe Thomas / Lance Whiteley / Chris Long
Service Area	Community Regeneration
Committee Division	Cabinet
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non-Exempt
Committee Date	3 rd February 2021

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Valleys Taskforce Covid Recovery for Smaller Town Centres

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 In July 2020 the Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government announced the repurposing of up to £5.3m from the Transforming Towns Programme, to support adaptations in town centres which could facilitate trading and public safety in response to Covid-19.
- 1.2 As part of that announcement the Valleys Taskforce committed £3.7 million to support the Transforming Towns agenda.
- 1.3 £3 million of that funding has been made available to Valleys Taskforce local authorities in addition to the repurposed Transforming Towns Programme allocation, specifically to support smaller town centres within the Valleys Taskforce boundary, with the recovery of Covid-19.
- 1.4 In November 2020, Welsh Government issued the application form and guidance to local authorities within the Taskforce area to submit applications to support smaller town centres.
- 1.5 A total of £375k was requested from the Valleys Taskforce Covid Recovery for Smaller Town Centres and this was approved in December 2020.
- 1.6 There are no financial implications for the local authority as there is no intervention rate - the grant is 100% funded.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that

- 2.1 The award of funding for the Valleys Taskforce Covid Recovery for Smaller Town Centres is approved.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In July 2020 the Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government announced the repurposing of up to £5.3m from the Transforming Towns Programme, to support adaptations in town centres which could facilitate trading and public safety in response to Covid-19.
- 3.2 As part of that announcement the Valleys Taskforce committed £3.7 million to support the Transforming Towns agenda.
- 3.3 £3 million of that funding has been made available to Valleys Taskforce local authorities in addition to the repurposed Transforming Towns Programme allocation, specifically to support smaller town centres within the Valleys Taskforce boundary, with the recovery of Covid-19.
- 3.4 As well as adaptations to directly respond to Covid-19 and adhere to social distancing guidelines, Welsh Government announced that funding WiFi within smaller town centres would be considered.
- 3.5 Welsh Government also included funding for internal work to facilitate social distancing and other Covid specific support measures for businesses in larger town centres. The purpose of this is to boost the available funding from the wider Welsh Government Transforming Towns support package which covers outdoor works only.
- 3.6 In September 2020, Cabinet approved the award of £365k from the Transforming Towns Thematic Covid-19 Response for a targeted focus in Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre.
- 3.7 In November 2020, Welsh Government issued the application form and guidance to local authorities within the Taskforce area to submit applications to support smaller town centres.

4.0 VALLEYS TASKFORCE APPLICATION

- 4.1 A total of £375k was requested from the Valleys Taskforce Covid Recovery for Smaller Town Centres and this was approved in December 2020.
- 4.2 Merthyr Tydfil CBC identified two key projects that could be successfully delivered through the Valleys Taskforce Grant:
- A grant scheme for businesses which will support with enhancements both internally and externally to aid business trading in response to Covid-19.

- To deliver digital solutions in the Town Centre linked to wider village areas to gather information on these locations to further enhance Town Centres and the Council's understanding of these areas.
- 4.3 Support for funding through the grant scheme will be available for both Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre businesses and businesses within the smaller Town Centre and village areas. The grant scheme is 'borough wide'.
- 4.4 All projects funded through the grant will need to be completed by March 2021.
- 4.5 Grants of up to £20k are available. The Enterprise Team are leading on the delivery of the grant scheme and the scheme has been marketed widely. Request for applications is now closed and all applications received are currently being assessed.
- 4.6 There has been a large response to the grant and the Enterprise Team are currently engage with 120+ businesses. Any enquiries received after the closing date will be added to the reserve list.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 5.1 There are no financial implications for the local authority as there is no intervention rate - the grant is 100% funded.

6.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Not Applicable
1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives	3 of 4	0 of 4	1 of 4
2. Sustainable Development Principles - How have you considered the five ways of working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term • Prevention • Integration • Collaboration • Involvement 	5 of 5	0 of 5	0 of 5
3. Protected Characteristics <i>(including Welsh Language)</i>	2 of 10	0 of 10	8 of 10
4. Biodiversity	1 of 1	0 of 1	0 of 1

Summary:

The main positive impacts are that this grant scheme delivered in response to the Pandemic will meet the Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives and Sustainable Development Principles through targeting economic growth and ensuring people feel safe within their communities. The project will have a positive effect on the economy, socially and Borough Wide.

No negative impacts have been identified.

ALYN OWEN
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

COUNCILLOR GERAINT THOMAS
CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND
REGENERATION

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.