

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Herefordshire Revive & Thrive Grant Scheme
Date of decision:	29 September 2021
Decision maker:	Interim Director of Economy and Place
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>Decision taken by Cabinet to approve the COVID 19 Recovery Plan on 24 June 2021: That authority be delegated to the Director of Economy and Place, Director Adults and Communities, Director Children and Families and Director of Public Health be authorised to take all operational decisions to implement recommendation including, but not limited to, the procurement and commissioning of the identified projects (as set out in the detailed action plan)</p> <p>Decision - Covid 19 Recovery Plan - Herefordshire Council</p>
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	<p>The COVID Recovery Plan was approved by Cabinet on 24 June 2021 which provides funding of £6m to support economy, community wellbeing and organisational recovery. The plan provided an overview of the schemes for delivery, which included the “Revive & Thrive” scheme and all appropriate consultation was undertaken at this time.</p> <p>The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and supportive of the project.</p>
Decision made:	<p>No more than a total of £400,000 of funding from the Covid Recovery Fund will be utilised to implement a county-wide business grant scheme, promoted as Revive & Thrive, and administered by Delegated Grants.</p> <p>A grant scheme comprising three strands, offering grants ranging from £500 to £10,000 to support the following:</p> <p>Grants between £500 and £2,500 to support start-up businesses wishing to trial retail type activities and encourage them to ‘have a go’ with either a pop up type arrangement or taking on a retail premises. Grants can fund costs including rent, marketing/branding (including shop decals) and small equipment purchases. Minimum pop up trial period must be six months.</p> <p>Grants between £2,500 and £10,000 for existing businesses wishing to take on either retail or commercial premises for the first time. This will fund minor alterations/making good premises, purchasing equipment or merchandise displays, marketing/branding (including shop decals) and rent.</p>
Reasons for decision:	<p>The COVID crisis has demonstrated how important it is for our businesses to be able to adapt and diversify to survive and grow. It has encouraged many businesses to think about how they might diversify in the future, both to react to difficult times, but also to capitalise on new opportunities.</p> <p>Recognising the role that our high streets and local centres have in ensuring that our county flourishes and prospers, Herefordshire Council has</p>

	<p>introduced the Revive and Thrive Fund.</p> <p>The Revive and Thrive Fund reflects the new pressures facing businesses following COVID and some of the lessons learned around how businesses can adapt and thrive, even in the face of great challenges. It also reflects new opportunities for businesses wanting to take their first steps into occupying commercial and retail premises without taking on large risks.</p> <p>Supporting the county high streets and city centre is another outcome of the scheme. Supporting new, and diverse, businesses to take space within town centres will encourage greater footfall and diversification of the retail offer.</p> <p>The Revive and Thrive Fund has three different strands. Applicants may only make one application and this must be to a single strand of the fund. The scheme will be administered by the Delegated Grants Team, who will assess applications against the scheme criteria. Those that meet the criteria will be considered by a panel of Herefordshire Council Councillors. The panel decision is final.</p> <p>This project will reduce the number of vacant shops and increase the uptake of commercial premises within the county, in some cases bringing commercial premises back into economic use (where currently redundant).</p> <p>The project will further support economic recovery following the pandemic, increase business birth rates and aid economic resilience by supporting businesses to diversify as well as create jobs.</p>
<p>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</p>	<p>The COVID recovery plan budget allocation must be committed within the 2021/22 financial year and all funding agreements to applicants must be issued by 31 March 22. Applicants will be allowed to make claims up to 30 June 2022.</p> <p>Applicants must provide evidence of spend prior to claiming back the grant. This will ensure that only costs and activities approved in the funding agreements can be claimed.</p>
<p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</p>	<p>An option of giving grants up front has been rejected. This will ensure only legitimate costs and activities be funded, as evidence will be required in order to process claims.</p>
<p>Details of any declarations of interest made:</p>	<p>None.</p>

I am an officer delegated to make the decision

Signed:

Print Name: Neil Taylor

Job Title: Interim Director for Economy and Place