

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Return to towns and City – free bus travel scheme extension
Date of decision:	23 March 2022
Decision maker:	Director of Resources and Assurance
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>Decision taken by key cabinet member on 28th February 2022 to give delegated authority to the section 151 officer following consultation with the appropriate director to move funding between approved schemes within the Covid Recovery plan to ensure that any underspend can be maximised.</p> <p>Decision - To give Delegated Authority to the Section 151 officer in consultation with the appropriate director to move funding between the approved schemes within the agreed COVID Recovery plan - Herefordshire Council</p>
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	<p>The COVID Recovery Plan was approved by Cabinet on 24th June which provided funding of £6.1m to support the economy, community wellbeing and organisation with recovery. £1m of this funding was allocated to progress a range of travel-focussed initiatives to support the Covid-19 Recovery Plan 2021/22, aimed at incentivising people to return to leisure and social activities and increase footfall in market Towns, the City centre, and across the wider County.</p> <p>Below is a link to the original cabinet member decision:</p> <p>http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ielIssueDetails.aspx?IId=50037702&PlanId=0&Opt=3#AI58109</p> <p>This decision has been to Cabinet briefing and is supported by a number of cabinet members.</p>
Decision made:	<p>The below link shows the original decision taken in respect of the free bus travel scheme:</p> <p>Issue details - Return to Towns and City – free bus travel scheme - Herefordshire Council</p> <p>This decision is to approve the extension of the scheme allocating the full 800K which was an initially allocated within the Covid recovery plan and an additional £128K from the Covid Recovery plan underspend to extend the existing scheme.</p>
Reasons for decision:	<p>The free bus scheme has been a huge success and a recommendation has now been put forward to initiate the option to extend the scheme as per the original proposal. However, in order to extend the scheme for this period the costs will be higher than originally forecast.</p> <p>Total spend to date for the scheme, plus forecast spend to 31st March is £453k, to extend the scheme until 31st August 2022, the projected costs are £475k, bringing the total projected spend to £928k, meaning an additional £128k is required to fund the scheme.</p> <p>This decision is to allocate £128k Free Bus Travel scheme from underspent schemes in the Covid Recovery Plan and extend the scheme until 31st August 2022.</p>

	This will extend a successful scheme within the Covid Recovery plan and ensure that underspend identified within other schemes can be fully maximised.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	There is a risk that the scheme does not continue to be fully utilised – although given the success to date this is unlikely.
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	Consideration was given not to extend the scheme however due to the success of the scheme to date and the underspend identified within the Covid recovery plan this option was rejected.
Details of any declarations of interest made:	None

Signed

Andrew Lovegrove
Director for Resources and Assurance

Date: 23 March 2022