

Report to	-	Cabinet
Date	-	6 November 2017
Report of the	-	Executive Director of Business Operations
Subject	-	Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group s106 funds

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) the allocation of £7,500 from the Town Centre s106 funds towards the Branding and Vitality Projects be approved; and
 - 2) a further £20,000 from the Town Centre s106 funds be ring-fenced for public realm works within Bexhill Town Centre and the Executive Director of Business Operations be granted delegated authority to approve spend in consultation with the Chairman of the Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group.
-

Service Manager: Brenda Mason

Lead Cabinet Member: Cllr Ian Hollidge

Introduction

1. Members will recall that the adopted Terms of Reference for the Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group stipulate that all future expenditure against the remaining town centre Section 106 (s106) funds and any future funding received requires a report to Cabinet for approval.
2. At its last meeting in September 2017, the Town Centre Steering Group received and supported requests from the Branding and Vitality Project Team for £7,500 to fund a dedicated PR campaign and a summer of events train poster campaign and a request from the Chairman to ring fence £20,000 of the s106 funds for public realm works within the Town Centre.
3. There is currently £52,554 remaining within the town centre s106 funds and the Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group are requesting approval to spend £27,500 in support of the these two projects, further details of which are outlined within this report.

Branding and Vitality Project Team

4. Over the last year the project team have been working on a Bexhill Modern Vintage Campaign, which has included a 2017 Summer of Events train poster and postcard campaign and a retail focused campaign which is due to be launched in the run up to Christmas. These campaigns have been supported through s106 funds as approved by Cabinet in April this year (Minute CB16/94refers).
5. Feedback from event organisers and businesses has been extremely positive with additional visitors coming to events and raising the awareness of Bexhill

and what it has to offer. The project team would like to continue this campaign into 2018 with a further train poster campaign promoting the visitor events from spring and throughout summer, again following the Bexhill Modern Vintage theme. This campaign will cost approximately £3,000 and it is hoped match funding will be generated through working with partners to further extend the campaign.

6. The second part of the teams' request is for £4,500 for a dedicated PR campaign for Bexhill which will continue to raise the profile of the town within the national media. A PR agency will be appointed to get key messages out about the town, capitalising on the recent success that businesses such as Driftwood and rocksalt-on-sea have enjoyed in the national media. The campaign would run from spring through to December 2018.

Public Realm works

7. New schemes recently delivered within the town centre including West Parade, Marina Court Gardens, tree replacements and Sackville roundabout have all significantly contributed to developing a quality sense of place for the Town. Across all schemes high quality materials have been used to achieve a consistent contemporary look and feel to the finished project.
8. It is crucial to ensure this high quality sense of place is retained and enhanced within the town centre, through on-going maintenance works, repairs and throughout future projects.
9. When repairs are required to the public realm it is important that these are carried out to the same level of quality. Key partners within the town, including ESCC, are often unable to commit the required budget to replace street furniture, fittings, surfacing etc. to the same high standard resulting in a mismatch of finishings. Existing street furniture, fixtures and fittings are in places looking tired, many of which are outside of the Council's control.
10. At the last Town Centre Steering Group meeting the Chairman, Councillor Ian Hollidge, proposed that £20,000 of the s106 funds be ring fenced for public realm works within the town centre. The funds would be utilised to:
 - contribute to the costs of using higher quality materials for repair works to ensure the materials, fixtures and fitting used are to the same high standards as the current schemes within the Town Centre; and
 - to enhance features such as post boxes, telephone boxes, street lighting, railings etc. where there are no current plans for up keep
11. The Steering Group approved the Chairman's request with agreement for delegated authority to approve spend being given to the Executive Director of Business Operations in consultation with the Chairman of the Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group. This will ensure that works can be undertaken swiftly without the need to request spends for each item through Cabinet.
12. Where possible officers would look to work with key partners within the town to deliver works.

Conclusion

13. Members are asked to approve the two requests from the Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group for spend against the s106 funds totaling £27,500 as detailed within this report.

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director of Business Operations

Risk Assessment Statement

There are no risks associated with this report.