

Report of:	Head of Economic Prosperity
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Portfolio Leader:	Town Centre Regeneration
Key Decision:	No
Report Track:	Cabinet: 13/11/19

CABINET
13 NOVEMBER 2019
PERMISSION TO SPEND – CANNOCK TOWN CENTRE

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the progress of the establishment of the Cannock Town Centre Partnership (CTCP)
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet permission to spend in order to extend the role of the Town Centre Partnership Officer in Cannock for a further 12 months i.e. from 3 June 2020 to 31 May 2021 utilising monies already deposited with the Council as part of the Section 106 agreement with Mill Green.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the progress made by the Cannock Town Centre Partnership since its formation in November 2018.
- 2.2 Cabinet is asked to provide permission to spend a maximum of £34,500 in order to extend the role of the Cannock Town Centre Partnership Officer (TCPO) for a further 12 months from Section 106 monies deposited from the Mill Green project held by the Council.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The CTCP was formed in November 2018 and whilst it is too early to fully evaluate how successful the partnership has been to date, there is evidence that it is moving in the right direction. The CTCP Board have taken the decision to establish the partnership as a Community Interest Company (CIC) led by a board of 12 members and a new Chair and Vice-chair are in place. The CTCP is working to establish itself and is focusing on organising events in the town centre to increase footfall and the visitor experience.
- 3.2 The CTCP is supported by the TCPO role which is hosted by the Council and funded from Section 106 monies received from the Mill Green development. The

current funding of the TCPO role is due to expire 31 May 2020 and there are no resources to continue funding this role from Council core budgets beyond this date. Currently the partnership has not developed a financial strategy to sustain the role at this present time, given the period it has taken to properly establish itself.

- 3.3 There is sufficient remaining budget within the existing Mill Green Section 106 account under the town centre improvements category to fund the post for this extended period.

The available balance from the Mill Green section 106 is currently £50,604 and after deduction of the proposed extension would leave a remaining balance of £16,104.

- 3.4 It is proposed that by extending the role for a further 12 months this will be sufficiently long enough to give the partnership the opportunity to further establish itself and identify opportunities to become self-sustaining.
- 3.5 The TCPO has built relations in the town since the formation of the Cannock Town Centre Partnership (CTCP) Board in November 2018 and the desire to make improvement, via events etc. has grown and more businesses are becoming involved with ideas and suggestions.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities as follows:
- (i) Creating strong and diverse town centres to attract additional customers and visitors.
 - (ii) Creating a positive environment in which businesses in the District can thrive.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 Cabinet will recall January 2018 its recommendations to approve permission to spend Mill Green S106 monies in relation to Cannock town centre improvements.
- 5.2 Since the original permission to spend report was approved, officers have progressed the various town centre improvements set out in the report and the current position is as follows:
- The production of a Cannock Town Centre investment prospectus to help raise the profile and identify opportunities available in Cannock town centre – This has since been delivered by securing external funding from GBSLEP via its SEP enabling fund.
 - The provision of free Wi-Fi in Cannock town centre – not currently being progressed but will be reviewed by officers in conjunction with the Town Centre Partnership.

- The implementation of a Cannock town centre rewards scheme to encourage customer loyalty – A trial scheme was run for 12 months called the “Good Life” but take up was extremely low and a decision made by officers not to continue.
 - Improvements to Cannock town centre markets including improvements to the entrance to Cannock town centre indoor market to provide an improved environment for shoppers – This work was carried out using funds from existing budgets.
 - Promotional events and festivals including those planned by the Cannock Traders Association – ongoing projects via the Town Centre Partnership. There will be sufficient funds available to host events and festivals in the town centre from the existing funds, with additional funds due early 2020.
 - Funding the position of a CTCP for 2 years to assist in delivering the improvements to Cannock town centre – TCPO has been in post since June 2018 and looking to extend this post for a further 12 months (subject to Cabinet agreeing to the recommendations in this report).
- 5.3 As members will see from the above, some of the projects have been funded from other sources or not being actively progressed, therefore there are sufficient monies available from the S106 to fund the role of the TCPO for a further 12 months.
- 5.4 Cabinet will also recall in November 2018 its recommendation for the formation of the CTCP. This has now been established and continues to gain the trust and help of the community.
- 5.5 The Council employs a TCPO and this officer has been in post since 3 June 2018 and is funded through to 31 May 2020 from the Mill Green Section 106 monies. The current balance on the Section 106 account is £50,604 with a further £50,000 due early 2020.
- 5.6 The TCPO plays an important role in the partnership with planning of the events, including production of event management plans and risk assessments, by extending the role of the TCPO for a further 12 months will only enhance, expand and strengthen this further. The CTCP is not yet at a stage when it is financially self-sustaining so it is not able to fund the post within its own resources.
- 5.7 The presence of the TCPO in the town has prompted more businesses and stakeholders to become involved with the partnership, with ideas and suggestions on how to make improvements being made via social media.
- 5.8 The partnership has a Board in place with 12 members, led by a Chair and Vice-chair and meet on a regular basis. The work of the partnership is supported by two sub groups. The Council is represented on the Board by the Portfolio Leader for Town Centre Regeneration. The main focus of the partnership is to improve the town centre and increase the footfall and the visitor experience. Moving forward in to 2020 several community events are being looked at which include a VE Celebration, bringing back the Charter Fair into the town, Easter celebration

and also working with Arts Connect for sponsorship to support art in the community.

- 5.9 CTCP have created a social media page “Our Cannock” which is updated on a regular basis to keep followers up to date with events, activities and actions that the partnership are involved in. This also gives members of the public the option to give their feed back and also leave comments.
- 5.10 There is a lot of potential and passion in Cannock town centre from businesses, stakeholders and the local community to work together with the partnership to continue to make the town centre a place for events and festivals which will increase the footfall and vibrancy of the area.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

The TCPO Post has been funded from a specific S106 Account for Cannock Town Centre Improvements since 3rd June 2018 up to 31st May 2020, there is no further identified source of Council funding after this date.

This funding was approved by Members in the report to Cabinet on 25th January 2018; Members also approved the residual identified S106 funding be spent on the areas referred to in para 5.2.

- 6.2 The estimated costs of extending the post for an additional 12 months are detailed in the Table below:

Estimated Additional Costs	04/06/2020 To 31/03/2021	01/04/21 To 03/06/2021	Est Total Additional Funding
Sal, ERC & Superannuation	25,000	5,500	30,500
Est Maximum Redundancy	0	4,000	4,000
Total Cost	25,000	9,500	34,500

- 6.3 Members will need to consider whether this post should be continued beyond the current 3 June 2020 end date. Subject to Members approval of the estimated additional £34,500 cost of extending the post until 3 June 2021, the residual balance of S106 funds available for the other improvements to the Town Centre will be diminished.
- 6.4 The Head of Economic Prosperity has updated Members on the work carried out on the original proposed activities for the town centre improvements in para 5.2 and has advised that any outstanding works can be funded from the remaining balance of S106 funding after the cost of extending the post has been met.

6.5 Should members not support the extension of the post the CTCP will need to consider other funding options if they wish the post to continue.

6.6 **Legal**

No issues or concerns.

6.7 **Human Resources**

The current TCPO contract is in place until 31 May 2020 and the existing TCPO is interested in staying in the role for a further 12 months i.e. for the extended period.

6.8 **Section 17 (Crime Prevention)**

None

6.9 **Human Rights Act**

None

6.10 **Data Protection**

None

6.11 **Risk Management**

If the post of the TCPO is not extended there is a risk that the partnership will fail to develop further given its embryonic stage and lack of development. This would mean the work to date will have been abortive.

6.12 **Equality & Diversity**

None

6.13 **Best Value**

The post was advertised and filled initially via a competitive process and therefore represents best value.

7 Appendices to the Report

None.

Previous Consideration
Cannock Town Centre Management Partnership Cabinet 8 November 2018
Application for Permission to Spend – Mill Green Cabinet 25 January 2018
Background Papers
None.