

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member and Advisers for Regeneration and Development
2.	Date:	Monday 2nd December 2013
3.	Title:	RERF - High Street public realm
4.	Programme Area:	Environment and Development Services

5. **Summary**

This report seeks approval of an allocation of £22,000 RERF revenue towards funding of public realm works on High Street as part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme.

6. **Recommendations**

That £22,000 of RERF revenue is approved towards public realm works on High Street

7. Proposals and Details

The Rotherham Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme was established to help improve the historic buildings on High Street in the town centre. The scheme included complimentary proposals to carry out public realm improvements to both Minster Yard and High Street.

The aim of the initiative is to contribute to the wider regeneration of the town centre by returning this once bustling shopping street back to its former glory. This is being achieved by restoring the architectural features of the buildings, carrying out essential building repairs and reinstating traditional shop frontages to the properties.

The THI programme was funded by Heritage Lottery Fund (£1.145m), Yorkshire Forward (£1.5m) and Rotherham Borough Council (£1m) with a further £800k being invested by those property owners assisted by the programme.

Public Realm works in Minster Yard funded through Yorkshire Forward and THI have been completed, dramatically improving the setting of the Minster

The works to the High Street properties helping to bring vacant floor space back into use and so transforming this part of the town centre into a vibrant area attracting increased footfall.

The original THI programme had an allocation of £580,000 to develop and improve the public realm on High Street thus reinforcing the regeneration of the location and improving the setting of the retail units. Shop owners were encouraged to invest in their properties as part of a complete package of regeneration works, which included works to the public realm. However, these works were to be wholly funded through the Yorkshire Forward (YF) money and when YF were disbanded these funds were withdrawn leaving a gap in the budget for the public realm works

Officers continued to work up a scheme for the public realm which dramatically improves the quality of High Street but recognises the funding pressures which the Council has to deal with.

The Public Realm scheme has now been costed at £417,500 including professional fees

Funding has been identified from the following sources

1) SEEDS	£40,000
2) RMBC capital programme	£305,500
3) Local Transport Fund	£25,000
4) Highways Maintenance	£25,000

This leaves a £22,000 funding shortfall, which is being sought from RERF to specifically contribute towards ongoing professional fees.

If the RERF funding is secured officers will immediately order materials to secure a discount from the supplier with a view to commencing works in April 2014. The works will take 20 weeks to complete.

8. Finance

Funding	Status of funding. Approved/ Awaiting Approval	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	Total
RERF					
Capital					-
Revenue	Awaiting	22,000			22,000
TOTAL RERF		22,000	-	-	22,000
Other Funding Sources					
	RMBC	50,000	255,500		305,500
	SEEDS	20,000	20,000		40,000
	LTF		25,000		25,000
	Highways Maintenance		25,000		25,000
					-
TOTAL OTHER FUNDING		70,000	70,000	-	395,500
Grand Total		92,000	325,500	-	417,500

There is currently £50,000 of revenue money available under the RERF programme. This is sufficient to fund this project and leave £28,000 for the remainder of 2013/14

9. Risks and Uncertainties

HLF still have to agree that the works can be carried out by RMBC, although as their quote is considerably lower than the only private sector company that tendered then this is not expected to be a problem

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The THI project will contribute to the following strategic priorities from the Community Strategy:- Revitalise the town centre

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Widespread consultation has taken place as part of the wider THI project.

Discussions have taken place with the Town Centre Review meeting, Highways Maintenance Team, Highways Design, the Strategic Director, EDS and Director of Planning, Regeneration and Culture.

A copy of the full RERF application form for this project is available on request. RMBC Finance have been consulted on the report.

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