

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**CABINET 8<sup>TH</sup> JULY**

**PRIDE IN OUR HIGH STREETS – SUPPORTING BUSINESS**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR: HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR LEE CARTER**

**PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the successful delivery of the second phase of the Pride in Our High Streets (PIOHS) Programme 2018-2021 which has received national recognition as a model of best practice. The report then sets out a creative and ambitious blueprint for the delivery of a third Programme phase. **This will see £4.8m invested over the next two years with an initial funding package of £2.5m to be invested in 2021/22.**
- 1.2 **PIOHS has had a visible and lasting impact on our high streets with 30 empty retail premises brought back into use creating more than 100 local high street jobs to date (and many more in the supply chain) and leveraging more than £1.32m of private sector investment.** Investment into façade improvements has seen the **transformation of many shop frontages to give our high streets visual appeal and the existing programme has also seen businesses supported to diversify and support for start-ups to help recovery from Covid.** Through the Young High Street Challenge **over 1000 young people have been directly engaged in the future of our high streets.** Since 12<sup>th</sup> April the Council, working with town and parish councils has established a programme of activity to promote and celebrate our High Streets as the latest lockdown is eased encouraging residents to be 'loyal to local'.
- 1.3 Despite this success our high streets face continued challenges. These include: long term empty units/high levels of occupant turnover and a shrinking retail offer driven by the rise in on-line shopping; absentee landlords; mixed quality redevelopment and conversions into living space; and, in some instances, problems of anti-social behaviour.
- 1.4 PIOHS 2021-2023 recognises these continuing problems and sets high street regeneration in a new context reflecting the on-going impact of COVID and the continued growth of on-line shopping which poses both challenges and also new opportunities. The new PIOHS programme will consolidate and build on success maintaining elements of the existing programme alongside

new initiatives including **new digital and environmental grant schemes, a property improvement voucher scheme, improvements to the public realm and initiatives that will enhance our high streets as more than retail destinations.**

- 1.5 **The programme will include establishing Place Plans for each of our 6 borough town high streets working with T&PC and local stakeholders.** These Plans will identify the key challenges and opportunities based on the specific needs of each Borough Town informed by data about the High Street to create a clear vision and set of local investment priorities. **Plans will link in to the other PiOHS programmes and Council led initiatives including Pride in Our Parks and the Council’s events programme.**
- 1.6 Informed by the Place Plans to sustain delivery **PIOHS will identify opportunities for the Council to acquire high street assets for renovation and then either sale or rent, the profits from which will form the basis of a ‘revolving investment fund’ for on-going high street investment.**
- 1.7 PIOHS will also establish a **viability gap fund to encourage private sector re-development of long empty retail premises.** This will incorporate a ‘pay-back’ mechanism to secure developer contributions to the revolving investment fund and support the growth of private sector investment that has already been stimulated via PiOHS to date, particularly, in Wellington.
- 1.8 Through these mechanism **PIOHS will drive high quality property renovation, creating town centre living space, re-purposing retail space that is too large for current need and demand and also creating space that can support community owned enterprises.**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the successful delivery and outcomes of the Phase 2 Pride in Our High Street programme
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves proposals for Phase 3 of the Programme and delegates to the Director Housing, Employment & Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood, Commercial Services & Regeneration responsibility for Place Plan delivery and grant funding approvals

**2. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	The programme will contribute directly to the following priorities: -Protect and create jobs as a business supporting and business winning Council

		<p>-Ensure that neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well-maintained</p> <p>-Regenerate those neighbourhoods in need</p>
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	By contributing to high street regeneration the programme has the potential to have a positive impact on a wide cross section of the community.
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE</b>	Investment will be delivered over the next 2 years	
<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes	<p>The capital programme includes £4.8m across 2021/22 and 2022/23 allocated to Pride in Our High Streets which together with some existing revenue resources will fund the initiatives identified in the report.</p> <p>Opportunities for sustaining investment through a 'revolving investment fund' mechanism should generate future ongoing investment but will need to be carefully managed and monitored.</p> <p>Finance will monitor spend and provide updates to Senior Management and Members as appropriate.</p> <p>PH – 2/6/21</p>
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	Yes	<p>Any decision made by the Authority can be subject to challenge in respect of its reasonableness or lawfulness. Therefore a robust and transparent assessment procedure is required so as to avoid challenge of either the process followed or recommendations made by Officers and the Decision Makers.</p> <p>Whilst State Aid in its previous form is no longer in existence following the UK's departure from the EU a replacement regime entitled "Subsidy Control" has been implemented and will need to be considered when providing any support which may give a financial advantage. Legal advice will be provided as and when requested in this regard.</p> <p>Legal Services have developed a standard form of grant agreement that will be used in each award of funding</p>

		EH 3.6.21
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	No	
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	Yes	The programme will support regeneration across all our High Streets through promotional campaigns. The development of Place Plans will focus on the 6 borough town high streets with the greatest potential to benefit from investment.

## **PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **3. INFORMATION**

#### **Building on Success – Pride in Our High Streets 2018-2020**

- 4.1 Phase 2 of PIOHS has seen £2.2m committed to a range of high street initiatives alongside significant investment being made by a number of Town Councils including Wellington, Oakengates and Dawley.

#### **Business Grant Programme**

- 4.2 The innovative PIOHS grant programme has attracted national interest for its scope and proactive approach to addressing levels of empty high street properties. **Since its launch 30 High Street businesses have been supported to open up taking on empty properties across all 6 of our Borough Towns, leveraging more than £1.32m of private sector investment and creating more than 100 new jobs with more projected as these businesses diversify and grow and in their local supply chain.** All the businesses have been **provided with pre-start up and ongoing business support by the Council’s business support team ensuring that these new businesses continue** to run successfully with several having operated for more than 2 years.
- 4.3 The PIOHS Retail Start up Grant which offers grants of up to £10,000 was extended in late 2020 to reflect the impact of Covid. The Revive and Thrive grant Programme now offers three separate grant funding including a focus on helping existing businesses diversify to meet new challenges.
- 4.4 **Retail Start Up Grants:** This grant has supported the opening of businesses across all 6 borough town high streets with more applications in the pipeline. The scheme has added to high street diversity increasing the food and drink offer and range of independent retailers without displacing existing business.



**The Toy Box Ironbridge**



**Society Market Newport**

- 4.5 **Diversification Grants:** This grant reflects the flexibility of the PIOHS programme which has adapted to changing circumstances and new challenges affecting high street businesses. **With our help businesses have taken on the challenge of on-line competition for example by commissioning websites and establishing on-line payment systems, setting up home delivery services or by taking specialist training courses to extend their customer offer.**



- 4.6 **Start Up Trial Grants:** It has been a feature of Covid that more people are considering self-employment and looking for opportunities in the high street. **The Start – Up Trial Grant provides a small grant to help a potential high street business to test its business idea in a market setting with a minimum of risk.** To date awards have been made to 10 businesses to enable them to take up stands in Wellington and Newport Markets.

- 4.7 Saturday Cycles in Wellington Market reflects the success of the trial grant scheme with the business already looking at an empty retail unit in Wellington to grow on and expand. **In the last couple of weeks the new Food Court at Wellington Market has opened where 8 new food businesses have**

been supported through PiOHS to create a new offer which is transforming Wellington Market and attracting new footfall to Wellington town centre.



Saturday Cycles



Wellington Market Food Court

- 4.8 Together, these grant schemes have delivered more than £390k of support to local businesses and high streets and created more than 100 new high street jobs, with more to be created as these businesses diversify and grow.

#### Property Façade Improvement Programme

- 4.9 Attractive, clean and safe high streets are recognised as underpinning the attraction of the High Street to visitors, residents and investors. **The PIOHS property façade improvement programme is transforming the look and feel of the high streets in Wellington, Oakengates, Ironbridge, Dawley and Madeley.**

- 4.10 Managed directly by the Council the scheme is focussed on properties in poor condition, bringing conservation areas back to life, reintroducing heritage colours and increasing the demand for retail space. **Some 50 properties have been transformed to date and following a temporary stop because of Covid the scheme has re-started with nearly 50 additional properties to be up-graded over 2021/22.**



The Square, Ironbridge



Firefly Oakengates

## The High Street Re-Imagined – Young High Street Challenge

- 4.11 Young people are key to the survival of the high street; as both customers and future entrepreneurs. **The Council's engagement of young people in high street regeneration has been unique with hundreds of young people inspired to think about entrepreneurship as a future career.** It builds on the work the Council is doing through the Life Ready, Work Ready Programme.
- 4.12 The first Young High Street Challenge (YHSC) engaged with **almost 1,000 young people with some 200 students participating in the Challenge programme and finals.** The legacy of YHSC lies not just in inspiring young people but in tangible outputs:-

### Retro Shack

- 4.13 Created by students from Wrekin College, winners of the first YHSC, **Retro Shack in Wellington which has continued to trade during covid demonstrates the power of young people to design and manage a successful high street enterprise.** Young people across Telford will now benefit from Retro Shack which will be offering an enterprise training opportunity during 2021/22 for students from across the borough.



### Wellington Market Pop Up/Youth Market

- 4.14 The combined inspiration of pupils from Burton Borough and Haberdashers Adams School, the new Wellington Market Pop-Up/Youth Market will open this summer. Funded by PIOHS their ideas will see the **re-modelling of outdoor space at Wellington Market to create a vibrant and youthful area that will host a year round programme of markets and live music.** The space will complement the new Wellington Market Food Court, driving new footfall into Wellington High Street.



### High Street MBA

- 4.15 The High Street MBA is a unique and inspiring learning experience for 15-18 year olds designing practical solutions to regenerate high streets which is being piloted in Telford in June 2021 before a national roll-out. Created in partnership with Wrekin College, PIOHS is sponsoring almost 100 young people, many from deprived communities, in a once in a lifetime opportunity. They will work with local and national businesses and learn key business skills from finance to marketing, developing these around a real high street business case.



- 4.16 Following delays due to Covid restrictions YHSC 2 will commence in autumn 2021 delivered in partnership with Wrekin College business school.

### High Street Marketing and High Street Re-Opening

#### Promoting Our High Streets – Loyal to Local

- 4.17 Effective marketing and promotion is essential to attract footfall to our high streets. **The PIOHS Directory features more than 100 high street businesses and this has been complemented by marketing initiatives such as the celebration of High Street Heroes and most recently through the Loyal to Local campaign.** This campaign celebrates the best of our high street retailers and encourages local people to get involved by nominating the shops that they think offer the best service and contribute most to their communities.
- 4.18 **Summer 2021 will see the launch of a new MyTlc app which will be free to all high street businesses and will be a great marketing tool.** Through the app businesses across all our High Streets can design and customise their own page, create and promote offers quickly and easily knowing that they will be reaching their target audience. Businesses will receive all the collateral they need to promote the app which will be supported by an on-going marketing and promotion campaign to drive customer usage.



## A Blueprint for High Street Regeneration – Pride In Our High Street Phase 3

### Programme Objectives

- 4.19 Reflecting both the success of previous phases and new challenges and opportunities, PIOHS Phase 3 will continue to focus on an ambitious programme to create:
- **Diverse high streets** with something for everyone from shopping to work, catching up or celebrating
  - **A vibrant and mixed night time economy** which has been shown to help shape small towns
  - **High street businesses that are digitally aware** and have the skills and resources to compete against new challenges
  - **High streets that contribute to the net zero carbon agenda** and have attractive leisure offers and green spaces that are valued by the community
  - **Loyalty to ‘Local’** that extends beyond Covid
- 4.20 Each of our 6 borough town high streets is a separate destination with roles that vary from local community ‘hubs’ to larger centres attracting visitors from across the Borough and further afield via rail and bus links. Each has unique selling points, active Town Councils, committed businesses and local partnerships and a local vision for what the high street should offer and how it should look.

### Place Plans

- 4.21 **To inform investment through the PIOHS programme, a Place Plan will be established for each Borough Town high street engaging with TC and local partners.** This will establish a tailored investment plan for each Borough Town. The development of the Plans will be informed by data such as the number of empty units, access to high speed broadband or landmark buildings in poor condition, quality of public realm and intelligence around

anti-social behaviour as well as opportunities to develop a stronger destination offer tailored to the local area. The plans will also link to other Council initiatives and investments including the Safer Stronger Communities and the Destination Programmes where these have a high street focus.

### Continuing Successful Initiatives

4.22 Alongside the investment made linked with Place Plans, PIOHS Phase 3 will continue with successful initiatives running across our High Streets including:

- The **Revive and Thrive Grant Programme** with investment priorities kept under review to reflect changing need and demand post covid
- Completion of the existing **Property Façade Improvement programme** delivering a total of 100 premises transformed
- **Young High Street Challenge 2** will re-start in September replicating the success of the first Challenge
- **High street marketing and promotion under the banner Loyal to Local** will continue borough wide

### Introducing New Initiatives

4.23 New initiatives which will be delivered across all Borough Towns tailored to support outcomes from Place Plans – including:-

- further grant/voucher schemes,
- create inspiring environments and leisure opportunities,
- encourage the 'green high street through eco-friendly initiatives,
- create welcoming and safe high streets and
- continue to engage young people in high street regeneration.

### Grants and Voucher Schemes

4.24 If our high streets are to survive, businesses need to have the right digital skills and the ability to market and promote their offer to the right audience. **A new grant/voucher scheme will help high street businesses with the costs of purchasing equipment, designing a website and getting their branding and marketing right.** The scheme will be complemented by a digital business support package for retailers, delivered through the Council's Business Growth Hub.



- 4.25 Recognising the importance of attractive and clean high streets, a **Property Façade Voucher Scheme** will be introduced to continue and protect the legacy of the current Façade Programme. A grant/voucher scheme will be created to allow businesses to replace fascia signboards and re-paint property frontages, **informed by a guide to improvement to ensure that quality is maintained and planning regulations are followed.**
- 4.26 PIOHS will support the green high street and the growing trend for environmentally friendly packaging by **creating a small grant that will help businesses make the move to be eco –friendly.** As well as supporting a move to environmentally friendly packaging the grant will also support local recycling/up-cycling initiatives.
- 4.27 The PIOHS grant programme is designed to support businesses operating in our 6 borough town high streets. The survival of these high streets is essential to thriving local communities and they are important contributors to successful local economies. The Council also recognises the significant contribution and importance of businesses within the retail and services sectors including those who, although not in the High Street, are located in recognised Centres with strong community demand and importance. Exceptional applications to the programme will be considered from businesses operating in these local centres, where these offer a valuable local service, fill a gap in local retail provision or whose loss would be significant to the ward they operate in.

### **Welcoming and Safe High Streets**

- 4.28 Welcoming and safe high streets are essential to their survival and particularly if our high streets are to support a thriving night-time economy. **Linked to the Council’s Stronger Safer Communities initiative we will aim for ‘Purple Flag’ status to promote the night-time economy of our high streets as a safe and clean environment for everyone – including Southwater and Telford Town Centre.**
- 4.29 National high street guidance stresses the importance of a welcoming and informing environment and we know that our high streets can capitalise on this by ensuring that our shops and businesses offer high standards of personal service and are well informed about their local town and high street. **Businesses will be encouraged to participate in locally delivered hospitality workshops and will also have access to an on-line learning and information platform.**

### **Inspiring Environments and Local Leisure**

- 4.30 **Inspiring and green spaces, access to leisure activities and regular markets, events and festivals** all create active high streets that help attract and retain shoppers and visitors. Led by Place Plan research, PIOHS will transform local high streets by supporting a range of initiatives:

- Art installations, art trails, street furniture and green spaces are all important to attract residents and visitors alike. PIOHS will create new spaces but also build on some of the initiatives that have already started as part of Covid recovery
- PIOHS will sponsor a regular schedule of high street events and festivals from culture to food and youth markets so that these become embedded and sustainable
- The growth of loyalty to local high streets will be supported and encouraged through initiatives that will engage local people in high street regeneration such as poster design competitions



### **Sustaining Investment and Growth**

- 4.31 Informed by data collected to create individual High Street Place Plans, **PIOHS will identify opportunities for the Council to acquire high street assets for renovation and then either sale or rent, the profits from which will form the basis of a ‘revolving investment fund’ for on-going high street investment.**
- 4.32 PIOHS will also establish a **viability gap fund to encourage private sector re-development of long empty retail premises.** This will incorporate a ‘pay-back’ mechanism to secure developer contributions to the revolving investment fund.
- 4.33 Through these mechanism PIOHS will drive high quality property renovation, creating town centre living space, re-purposing retail space that is too large for current need and demand and also creating space that can support community owned enterprises.

## **5 IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

NONE

## **6 PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Cabinet 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018 Pride in our High Streets  
Cabinet 18th October 2017 Pride in Our High Streets  
Cabinet 29th June 2017 Young High Street Challenge  
Cabinet 17th November 2016 Pride in Our High Streets  
Cabinet 28th January 2016 Pride in Our High Streets

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**Report prepared by Kathy Mulholland, Service Delivery Manager  
Investment and Business Support, Telephone: 01952 567572**