

Briefing Note: Town Centres Scheme

Executive Summary: This briefing note, and attachments, is intended to provide the Corporate Services and Partnerships POC with oversight of the extensive programme of work on which the Council is engaged to enhance Hillingdon's town centres in the period leading up to 2018.

RECOMMENDATION: That the briefing note on the Town Centres Scheme be noted.

1. There is a clear relationship between the physical quality of high streets and town centres and their success as centres for both commercial and civic activity. By combining major physical improvements with long-term engagement of shop keepers, we can ensure that town centres and local shopping parades throughout the Borough continue to thrive as centres of civic and economic activity. This is the rationale behind the 'Total Approach' to town centre regeneration endorsed by Cabinet in June 2011.
2. The 'Total Approach' delivers a co-ordinated approach to appropriate growth, viability and regeneration of town centres in Hillingdon to maximise the scope and impact of Council and wider external investment. This approach recognises that to ensure a town centre is successful there are a number of the elements which need to be brought together, including:
 - A raised profile and an improved public image;
 - Wider use and increased spending within local centres;
 - Lower crime and anti-social behaviour;
 - A more successful mixed-use economy with a range of goods and services; and,
 - Easy access to parking, especially short-stay such as Stop and Shop.
3. The Council's 'Total Approach' continues to demonstrate intent and commitment to well informed and intelligent regeneration which will make a real difference, rather than going for 'quick wins.'
4. This has been achieved by focussing activity and investment as part of a long-term commitment to regenerating all of Hillingdon's town centres. This approach succeeded in gaining grant awards totalling £2,735k from the Greater London Authority (GLA) for Northwood Hills and Ruislip Manor town centres. These town centres have been transformed through public realm improvements and shop front grants, resulting in increased footfall and business growth.
5. The Major Scheme grant award of £4,964k from Transport for London (TfL) will ensure a bright future for Hayes town centre, with public realm works started in February 2015 and phased to complete in Spring 2017, with the aim of complementing extensive private sector mixed use investment and the economic benefits derived from Crossrail.

6. Further Crossrail Complementary Measures funding as outlined within this report will also build on the Yiewsley and West Drayton (TfL) funded £2,428k major scheme completed in 2014/15.
7. Over the period up to 2018, it is proposed to deliver targeted improvements at key 'Gateway' entrances to our town centres in order to make these locations more welcoming and encourage civic pride. This activity will prioritise Uxbridge Road, Hayes as the 'Eastern Gateway' focusing initially between Craven Close and Warley Road at the heart of the parade. Proposals have also been scoped for improvements at the western end of Uxbridge High Street which would improve links to Fasnidge Park and replace the 'tired' planter beds and paving at the Tesco entrance of the Pavilions Shopping Centre.
8. The popular shop front grant scheme will be extended to support more independent traders at Harefield Village Centre and Eastcote Town Centre with further potential to support smaller neighbourhood parades such as Ryefield Avenue in Hillingdon, as part of the long term 'Inspiring Shopfronts - Increasing Footfall' initiative.
9. With an excellent track record of delivering the Greater London Authority funded projects at Ruislip Manor and Northwood Hills town centres on time and on budget, we will continue to actively pursue all sources of additional external funding to maximise the return on investment and add value to planned activity.
10. Concurrent with the larger scale public realm works planned up to March 2018, it is proposed to continue to actively help smaller independent businesses in high streets and parades throughout Hillingdon by creating 'Stop and Shop' schemes to provide shoppers with 30 minutes free parking.
11. In addition to the programme envisaged under the original commitments made by Cabinet in 2011 and 2015, the Council is also embracing the opportunities provided by activities in and around Uxbridge, spearheaded by the regeneration of the former RAF Uxbridge site as St Andrews Park, and aspirations for Uxbridge to become a Business Improvement District. More projects and programmes are likely to ensue on the back of this other work.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Current Schemes - individual overviews of a selection of work in the recent programme

Appendix B

An example of a presentation given to local Ward Members, businesses and residents in Eastcote which highlights the shop-front and visual marketing work, one aspect of the many workstreams of the Town Centres Team