
REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 10
DATE OF MEETING:	1st JUNE 2017	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	FRANK McARDLE CHIEF EXECUTIVE	OPEN
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SUBJECT:	SWADLINCOTE TOWN CENTRE GRANT SCHEME	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	SWADLINCOTE	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS03, EDS10 & EDS11

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That Members approve the operation of a new Swadlincote Town Centre Grant Scheme.
- 1.2 That Members approve the Design Brief for No.s 5-15 West Street, Swadlincote.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To seek Member's support for a new town centre grant scheme focused upon the improvement of non-historic buildings and so complementing the existing Swadlincote Townscape Heritage Scheme which supports repairs and improvements to historic buildings in the Conservation Area.

3.0 Detail

Background

- 3.1 The Swadlincote Town Centre Vision & Strategy 2012 highlighted the need to attract investment to the town centre and maintain the environment. This was reiterated in the South Derbyshire Economic Development Strategy 2016-2020 which included the ambition to support vibrant town centres as commercial, community and service centres.
- 3.2 Research undertaken for the Swadlincote Town Centre Vision included identifying key pedestrian routes, important vistas and areas that would benefit from enhancement of the streetscape. Operating arrangements for a small grant scheme were developed for the now completed Swadlincote Gateways project, which provided incentives to improve the frontages of premises along key arterial routes and in other prominent locations.

- 3.3 Over £400,000 of funding has been secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Swadlincote Townscape Heritage Scheme, with the delivery phase now underway in the town centre's Conservation Area. This includes heritage activities and events, the redesign of the Diana, Princess of Wales, Memorial Garden and a grant scheme for historic buildings.

Aims

- 3.4 The proposed Swadlincote Town Centre Grant Scheme aims to contribute to the further revival of the town centre by enhancing the environment in order to attract greater numbers of shoppers and visitors. The initiative seeks to improve the visual appearance of Swadlincote town centre by incentivising property owners and tenants to invest in their premises.
- 3.5 The focus will be on non-historic properties, in order to complement the work being undertaken through the Swadlincote Townscape Heritage Scheme. Priority will be given to prominent frontages and other aspects that are particularly visible from main public routes. The intention is to begin with The Delph row of shops (No.s 5-15 West Street), six properties which front the town's public square (see Appendix A). If additional funding becomes available in the future, further target properties would be identified.

Implementation

- 3.6 Financial assistance will be made available as grants with the property owner/tenant also contributing to the cost of the works to their premises. If necessary, funding may also be used for expert advice, such as property surveys and design work. Eligible works will include the refurbishment or replacement of the following:
- Doors and windows
 - Masonry, render and other fascia materials
 - Reinstatement of more appropriate features in keeping with the building's design
 - Roofs and rainwater goods
 - Walls, fencing, landscaping and other boundary treatments
 - New shop fronts more appropriate to the building's design and setting
 - Signage
- 3.7 Priority will be given to the most prominent properties in the town centre. Grant levels will be set for each phase of the scheme and will be influenced by whether the works are principally for the benefit of a specific property or for the wider visual appeal of the town centre.

Design Brief

- 3.8 A Design Brief has been prepared for The Delph row of shops - No.s 5-15 West Street, Swadlincote town centre. This row of shops is in a key location fronting the town's public square. Over recent decades the condition of some of the buildings has become a cause for concern. The general appearance of the block is now poor and the aim of the Design Brief is to set out a future vision for the building and to encourage and support improvements through offers of grant funding. The Design Brief can be found at Appendix B.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The initiative will be taken forward using approximately £30,000 of District Council funds set aside from existing budgets, which will be added to in the future as funding allows.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The initiative will contribute directly to the Corporate Plan's vision to 'make South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit' and in particular to the theme of 'Progress - Encouraging inward investment and tourism opportunities: To further build on our significant achievements we will continue to help grow and diversify our strong economy to show that South Derbyshire is well and truly open for business. This includes harnessing the potential of The National Forest. We will maximise opportunities for the future by encouraging the formation of new enterprises as well as the continued growth of existing businesses, visitor spend and inward investment (the injection of money from an external source into the District)'. Key aims include: 'Unlock development potential and ensure the continuing growth of vibrant town centres'.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 The initiative will contribute directly to the South Derbyshire Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy vision of 'a dynamic South Derbyshire, able to seize opportunities to develop successful communities, whilst respecting and enhancing the varied character of our fast growing district'. 'Sustainable Development' is highlighted as a key theme, with the aim of achieving 'successful existing and new communities that meet the population's needs and aspirations'.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 Swadlincote town centre has improved markedly in recent years, experiencing continued inward investment and a sharp fall in vacant premises. This has been supported by the commencement of the Swadlincote Townscape Heritage Scheme and the continuing efforts of the Swadlincote Town Team to promote the centre's vibrancy and prosperity. The Swadlincote Town Centre Grant Scheme will aim to further enhance the visual appearance of the town centre, creating a more attractive environment for shoppers and visitors.

8.0 Background Papers

- 8.1 Swadlincote Town Centre Vision and Strategy 2012
South Derbyshire Economic Development Strategy 2016

Appendices

- A. Location Plan: No.s 5-15 West Street, Swadlincote
B. Design Brief: Delph row of shops – No.s 5-15 West Street, Swadlincote