

# **Cherwell District Council**

## **Executive**

**2 December 2013**

<p><b>Cherwell Town Centre Initiatives – Use of the Town Centre Innovation Fund (Portas Monies)</b></p>
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### **Report of Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy**

This report is public

#### **Purpose of report**

To propose a series of projects in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington for the use of the Town Centre Innovation Fund (Portas Monies).

#### **1.0 Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the following projects and release resources from the Town Centre Initiatives Fund:
  - Bicester: Promoting local trade through effective marketing; Enabling traders in Bicester to develop their website so it can be viewed on smart phones.
  - Banbury: Adding Town Team Co-ordination to provide overview and action to create town centre vitality; Improved signage - in car parks (maps highlighting tourist attractions and old town), from the coach park, St Mary's, The Cross and the Tourist Information Centre.
  - Kidlington: Environmental improvement works to Watts Way (near the Kidlington Centre).

#### **2.0 Introduction**

- 2.1 This report considers the Portas Review of High Streets and the award to CDC of funding to support 'Town Centre Innovation'.
- 2.2 The distribution of the Funding between the three urban centres was agreed by Executive in July 2013.
- 2.3 This report proposes the detail of the distribution of the funding to contribute to the strengthening of the economies of the town centres and to meet the objectives of

the Cherwell Economic Development Strategy, Town Masterplans and Cherwell Local Plan (2013).

### **3.0 Report Details**

#### **Using the Town Centre Innovation Fund award**

- 3.1 The town masterplans for Banbury and Bicester are now well advanced and Kidlington's is emerging. Together with the draft Local Plan, a strategic framework exists for the development of the urban centres. It is now appropriate to detail how best to use the funding awarded to CDC, recognising that as this is one off funding how the funding is used should have local economic impact.

#### **Allocation**

- 3.2 It was agreed to initially allocate the £100,000 awarded for 'Town Centre Innovation' by the DCLG in the following proportions:-
- 50% to Banbury - £50,000.
  - 30% to Bicester - £30,000.
  - 20% to Kidlington - £20,000.

#### **Proposed Uses**

- 3.3 The CDC Economic Development Team has engaged in discussion with local Chambers of Commerce, town traders and town partnerships as to possible projects for funding.
- 3.4 Part of the funding has already been used to reduce the cost of parking in Banbury and Bicester in the run up to Christmas last year. This was an initiative that was intended to provide real support for the traders of the two towns in a very challenging economic climate.
- 3.5 The £40k was committed in the following way to the Christmas Parking Initiative:
- Banbury - £25,000.
  - Bicester - £15,000.

Full details of the scheme, which were administered by CDC are available on request.

- 3.6 The remaining amounts for the support of town centre projects are therefore:
- Banbury - £25,000.
  - Bicester - £15,000.
  - Kidlington - £20,000
- 3.7 The CDC Economic Development Team holds the fund and has prepared projects with the local retail/traders groups and parish/town councils, in agreement with the Portfolio holder Councillor Bolster.
- 3.8 It is proposed that each project should:

- Show a broad fit with the Objectives of each urban masterplan and the Cherwell Economic Development Strategy.
- Promote the urban centres for shopping as part of strengthening the visitor economy.

### **Bicester Initial Proposals**

3.8 From local discussions, the Bicester alternatives were considered to be:

- Promoting the Town centre to attract specialist independent retailers so that it can co-exist with Bicester Village in a mutually productive way
- Preparation of a marketing strategy for the town
- Widen the distribution of tourist information about the town
- Considering how to use the historic character of the town
- Events calendar needs widening and more events putting on
- Better promotion of local produce
- Improved promotion of the market and more specialist market days e.g. regular antique fair/flea market

3.9 Bicester project proposals for development are detailed in the Appendices:

- Promoting local trade through effective marketing.
- Enabling traders in Bicester to develop their website so it can be viewed on smart phones.

### **Banbury Initial Proposals**

3.10 From local discussions, the Banbury alternatives were considered to be:

- Preparation of a marketing strategy for the town
- Improving the signage from the car parks to town centre
- Raising the profile of the Tourist information Centre
- Improved promotion of local produce
- Improved promotion of the market and more specialist market days e.g. regular antique fair/flea market
- Better signage from car parks, new maps and guides
- Promote the town to the surrounding villages as a place to shop

3.11 Banbury project proposals for development are detailed in the Appendices:

- Adding Town Team Co-ordination to provide overview and action to create town centre vitality.
- Improved signage - in car parks (maps highlighting tourist attractions and old town), from the coach park, St Mary's, The Cross and the Tourist Information Centre.

3.12 Longer term

- Developing a scheme to improve shop fronts
- Events and promotion – i) The creation of a programme of events throughout the year such as a weekend town food fair, Easter events - find eggs in windows, Victorian Xmas market, Banbury in Bloom, a 'buy local campaign'

and independent retailers month. ii) Promotion at rail stations, including Marylebone Station, with maps from Banbury station, so visitors can see distances to shops and attractions.

- Welcome pack for new comers (Town Guide) / Brochure promoting town.
- Development of a loyalty scheme
- Christmas promotional campaign with vouchers & map

### **Kidlington Initial Proposals**

3.13 From local discussions the Kidlington alternatives were considered to be:

- Improved signage off Oxford road
- Improved promotion of the market and more specialist market days e.g. regular antique fair/flea market
- Raising local awareness of the Tourist information centre and what it can offer
- Establishing an events calendar
- Improved promotion of local produce

3.14 Kidlington project proposal for development is detailed in the Appendices:

- Environmental improvement works to Watts Way (near the Kidlington Centre). This project is well advanced, in agreement with the Portfolio Holder, having gained the agreement and active support of Kidlington Parish Council and being recognised as a key issue through the emerging Kidlington Masterplan.

### **Background: The Portas review**

3.15 On 17 May 2011 the Prime Minister announced that he had asked Mary Portas, leading retail marketing consultant, to undertake a review of the English high street. The report was published on 13 December 2011 'The Portas review: an independent review into the future of our high streets'.

3.16 The Government's formal response to the recommendations made by Mary Portas in her report was published by the Department for Communities and Local Government on 30 March 2012.

3.17 The purpose of the Portas review was to identify what the Government, local authorities, businesses and others can do together to promote the development of new models of prosperous and diverse high streets. It forms part of the Government's work to promote economic growth. The main aims of the review were to:

- Examine the case for developing town centres that contribute to promoting economic growth, creating jobs and improving quality of life in local areas
- Explore new business models for high streets relevant to the modern consumer
- Recommend what action government, businesses and other organisations should take to create diverse, sustainable high streets where small businesses and independent retailers are able to thrive.

- 3.18 High streets are a very visible indicator of how well a local community and economy is thriving. They are recognised as important hubs of social interaction and providers of employment and local commerce.
- 3.19 The recent recession has had a significant negative impact on a number of high streets throughout England. The Government has said it would like to reverse this downward trend by working with retailers, local government and others to improve the prosperity, diversity and social and economic contribution of the high street. The Portas review of how to secure the economic future of high streets forms part of that role.
- 3.20 The Review makes a series of recommendations on what can be done by government, local authorities and business, many of which are reflected in the Bicester and Banbury Masterplans and the Cherwell Local Plan (2013).
- 3.21 The recommendations aim to:
- Get town centres running like businesses: by strengthening the management of high streets through new 'Town Teams', developing the Business Improvement District model and encouraging new markets.
  - Get the basics right to allow businesses to flourish: by looking at how the business rate system could better support small businesses and independent retailers, encouraging affordable town centre car parking and looking at further opportunities to remove red tape on the high street.
  - Level the playing field: by ensuring a strong town centre first approach in planning and encouraging large retailers to show their support for high streets.
  - Define landlords' roles and responsibilities: by looking at disincentives for landlords leaving properties vacant and empowering local authorities to step in when landlords are negligent.
  - Give communities a greater say: by greater inclusion of the high street in neighbourhood planning and encouraging innovative community uses of empty high street spaces.
- 3.22 The report was published alongside new Government commissioned research, 'Understanding High Street Performance', which shows that: although some high streets continue to thrive, a third are degenerating or failing; by 2014 less than 40% of retail spending will be on the high street; and that over the last decade out of town retail floor space has risen by 30% while in town has shrunk by 14%.
- 3.23 Mary Portas also recommends that her suggestions are tried out in a number of high street pilots, 14 of which have been announced.
- 3.24 Cherwell has not been awarded a High Street pilot, but like a number of other Districts has been awarded £100,000 to promote 'town centre innovation'. The DCLG has not prescribed what the funding should be used for and has left this for local determination. There is no time limit on the use of the funding, but there is a need to account for these of the monies.

## **Cherwell District Context**

- 3.25 How this funding for town centre innovation is used should be governed by local strategies for maximum impact:
- The Masterplans which are being completed for Banbury and Bicester with extensive proposals for how the two town centres might be strengthened.
  - The Local Plan for Cherwell (2013) guiding development through to 2031.
  - The Economic Strategy for Cherwell
- 3.26 The evidence base for our strategies is becoming extensive with an analysis of District economic trends informing the Cherwell Economic Strategy and a study of retail trends (CBRE 2012) and a District economic assessment (Roger Tyms 2012) informing the Cherwell Local Plan (2013).
- 3.27 All these studies point to the importance of the town centres as a focus for retail, commercial and cultural activity with a need for actions that promote new development and encourage additional footfall (visitors), through new town marketing, increasing the provision of overnight accommodation and new retail development that strengthens the draw of each town centre.
- 3.28 In particular, the Submission draft Local plan (October 2013) proposing placing an emphasis on the importance of strengthening the town centres as places to shops with commercial and cultural activities. The plan states -

### *'Policy SLE 2: Securing Dynamic Town Centres*

*B.47 We are looking to ensure that Bicester and Banbury have a strengthened role in achieving economic growth, as a destination for visitors, and in serving their rural hinterlands.*

*B.48 We are determined to secure dynamic town centres as the focus for commercial, retail and cultural activity at the heart of our district. The renewal and strengthening of the town centres is critical if the towns are to expand, with the creation of new retail, commercial and other employment generation (such as leisure) that reduces the overall level of out-commuting and maintains their role as the focal points of the district economy and their historic role as the heart of the community.*

*B.49 We envisage town centres that are:*

- *Easy and pleasant to walk around*
- *Attractive for shopping and going out*
- *Easy to do business in*
- *Have housing for all ages*
- *Served by efficient public transport.*

*B.50 The increasing rationalisation of public assets (libraries, civic centres & public access points), is an opportunity to ensure multiple use of public sector buildings and so strengthen their role as a draw to secure additional footfall into the town centres.*

*B.51 In 2010 the Council commissioned an update to its 2006 PPS6 Retail Study. In 2012 a further study was commissioned which examines the capacity for comparison and convenience retail floorspace in the District. The study identified a need for comparison and convenience floorspace in the District to 2031. The town centres of both Banbury and Bicester will therefore need to grow. Sites have been identified in Banbury to accommodate growth. New retail will form part of proposals for Bolton Road, Canalside and Spiceball Development Area and in Bicester towards the improved Bicester Town Railway Station and on through to an expanded Bicester Village, which will be integrated more fully into the town ('Policy Banbury 7: Strengthening Banbury Town Centre' and 'Policy Bicester 5: Strengthening Bicester Town Centre').*

*B.52 We will support businesses affected by the redevelopment of strategic development areas by assisting their relocation and ensuring alternative land is available locally elsewhere.*

*B.53 New retail development will continue to be focused on our town centres and all new development will also be required to be built to high design and building standards.*

*B.54 Town centre uses are considered to be the 'Main Town Centre Uses' defined by the NPPF including; retail, leisure, offices, arts, tourism, cultural and community uses. We will support the role that new restaurants and cafes have in the economy, of both towns in drawing people into the town centre. We will aim to attract new small businesses and to strengthen the draw of the town at the centre of its local hinterland. We will support uses which support the evening economy in appropriate locations.*

*B.55 The urban centres within the district offer an important focus for shopping, commerce and the provision of leisure and other services to meet the needs of local people and visitors. The main centres in the district are the town centres of Banbury and Bicester and the village centre of Kidlington. There is also significant other shopping floorspace in the following locations:*

- Bicester Village Outlet Shopping Centre*
- Banbury Cross Retail Park*
- Various other edge of centre & out-of-centre large stores including a number of major food stores*
- At various local centres within Banbury and Bicester.*

*B.56 As well as serving the population of their immediate communities and more widely within Cherwell District, the retail centres serve a wider population and draw trade from towns such as Southam, Daventry, Towcester, Buckingham, Witney, Chipping Norton and Shipston-on-Stour.*

*B.57 Each of the main urban centres within the district is unique and faces different challenges and opportunities. More information, and specific policies for each of the centres, is included within Section C (Policies Bicester 5, Banbury 7 and Kidlington 2). A number of general comments can, however, be made:*

- *Both Banbury and Bicester town centres lie at the heart of towns which have grown significantly in recent years and, through the period of this Local Plan, will continue to do so.*
- *Banbury has seen significant retail growth since the mid 1990s with the expansion of the Castle Quay Shopping Centre and this has helped to meet its immediate shopping needs. There are opportunities to expand its retail role.*
- *Bicester town centre has seen less growth. However, the re-development of the Bure Place car park has begun to provide a substantial increase in shopping within the town centre (see Policy Bicester 6). Away from the town centre, the Bicester Village Outlet Shopping Centre was opened in 1995 and extended in 2000 and 2008. Bicester Avenue opened in 2007. Further developments in the town centre will need to ensure that the town remains accessible by all forms of transport for residents and visitors. Further growth of the Outlet Village will also ensure its role as a major national and international retail draw continues with all the employment gain this brings to the town. It must, however, be integrated into an improved town centre.*
- *Parts of both Banbury and Bicester town centres lie within conservation areas which protect their historic core. Maintaining the quality of these areas is important and any development in these areas will need to preserve and enhance the character of these areas and historic environment.*
- *Kidlington centre is considerably smaller than the two town centres, however it plays an important role in serving the local population. Additional shopping floorspace was opened in the centre in 2004 and there is capacity for further floorspace in the period up to 2031.*

*B.58 The Council is committed to supporting its town centres and to maintaining and enhancing their vitality and viability and their associated infrastructure to create vibrant retail environments.'*

## **4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1 The Town Centre Innovation funding is proposed for specific activities that contribute to the individual needs of Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington, to promote the vibrancy of businesses and the long-term strength of the centres. The plan for each proposed project is attached as appendices for approval.
- 4.2 In the light of the consultation and engagement with local partnerships within each settlement the proposed approach is believed to be the best way for use of the available funding.

## **5.0 Consultation**

Chambers of Commerce, town traders and town partnerships for Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington.



## **6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To take no action and retain the funding for other purposes.

Option 2: To be more prescriptive about what can be funded

Option 3: To change the proposed allocation of funding

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

7.1 This fund is from the DCLG and involves no direct CDC funding.

Comments checked by:

Comments checked by Tim Madden, Interim Head of Finance and Procurement,  
03000030106

### **Legal Implications**

7.2 There are no direct legal implications

Comments checked by:

Comments checked by Nigel Bell Team Leader – Planning and Litigation  
01295 221687

7.3 Not using the Portas money for the benefit of the economies of the 3 settlements risks reputational damage to the Council.

Comments checked by:

Comments checked by Claire Taylor, Performance Manager 01295 221563

## **8.0 Decision Information**

**Key Decision (Cabinet/Executive reports only) or delete if not Cabinet / Executive report**

**Financial Threshold Met:** **yes**

**Community Impact Threshold Met:** **yes**

### **Wards Affected**

Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington

## Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

A District of Opportunity

### Lead Councillor

Councillor Norman Bolster  
Lead Member for Estates and the Economy

## Document Information

Appendix No	Title
A	Banbury Signage Enhancement
B	Banbury Town Centre Coordination
C	Bicester Radio Advertising Grant
D	Bicester Enabling Business Website and Smart Phones Presence
E	Kidlington Piazza Improvement
Background Papers	
Portas Report	
Report Author	Stephen Newman, Lead officer Economic Development
Contact Information	01295-2211860 stephen.newman@cherwell.gov.uk

## Annex A: Banbury Signage Enhancement

Project Title	Start date	End date
<b>Banbury signage enhancement</b>	January 2014	September 2014
<p><b>Rationale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Why do this?</b> Visitors to Banbury are subject to an array of information that is not always helpful to assisting the purpose of their visit. Information is provided by an array of public and private sector bodies, often appearing incoherent to people arriving in or passing through the town centre. <p>Directional signage (finger posts), maps and other information sources can, when considered together and from the point of view of a visitor, provide the basis of a more enjoyable and productive visit to Banbury town centre.</p> <p>In particular, the Old Town has a wealth of small independent traders and services that are not always able to promote themselves. By collective action and the support of this work, the unique offer of the Old Town should be interpreted more effectively.</p> </li> <li>• <b>Is somebody else doing it already</b> No. A recent review has been made of County Highway signs but a wider review has not been made for many years.</li> <li>• <b>Partnership?</b> The foundation of this project has been created through partnership working with the Old Town Association and the Vitality Group, and officer co-operation at district and county councils.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Aims</b> – <i>link to ED Strategy &amp; Service Plan (what will it achieve?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing business – theme 5 – promote business start-up, support the survival and growth of enterprises. Theme 10 – develop the visitor economy.</li> <li>• Developing place – support our urban centres.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Objectives</b> (<i>what will that involve specifically?</i>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The purpose is to encourage people into the centre of the town, to reduce congestion, to explore the historic streets, and therefore to spend more time and money in the shops.</li> <li>2. To promote the vitality of the historic core of Banbury.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>Options</b> – <i>what are the alternative courses of action? How do we decide? Feasible? Permissions needed?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Do nothing.</li> <li>2) Modify the action described here.</li> <li>3) Commission the works as described.</li> </ol>		

**Resources** (*what / whom do we need to make it happen?*)

Officers at CDC (economic development, street scene and tourism) and OCC Highways to collaborate.

**Budget** (*how much will it cost and how much income?*)

- Other partners contributions, ticket price, maximum number of participants, capital and on-going maintenance costs, etc

£10,000 is allocated for this project (of the remaining £25,000 for Banbury Town Centre Initiatives).

**Risks** (*what could go wrong, what would this mean & what would we do about it?*)

- The cost of project could exceed available budget. Prioritise key locations within the review stage.

**Activity** (*what are you proposing to do and by when? Who's responsible for each part?*)

A de-cluttering signage review in conjunction with OCC Highways department. A brief for the signage review.

This project will involve council officers and consultancy support with the following objectives:

- 1) To review the existing provision of information and signage from the main arteries of the town including the railway, the M40 motorway and other major routes into the town and from the car parks.
- 2) To assess how signage, maps and other media that can be improved to provide a clearer interpretation of the town for people on foot, or arriving by public or private transport.
- 3) Particular focus to encourage pedestrians to Parsons Street (Old Town) area and to the main attractions of the town.

**Evaluation** (*how will we know it's been successful? How will we learn & improve?*)

Assess the results of implementation against objectives: to what extent have people been encouraged into the town centre (footfall) and in particular to Old Town? Ultimately what increase in trade has resulted?

**Review**

*Is it worth repeating?*

*When, how?* Once implemented, keep under review through day-to-day work.

**Project Officer:**

Business Development Officer (Karen Matthews)

**Project Sponsor / Budget Holder:**

Economic Development Officer (Steven Newman)

**Portfolio Holder:**

Cllr Norman Bolster

## Annex B: Banbury Town Centre Coordination

Project Title	Start date	End date
<b>Banbury Town Centre Coordination</b>	January 2014	December 2014
<p><b>Rationale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Why do this?</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) There is a growing concern amongst independent retailers, Castle Quay and the market operator about the vitality of Banbury town centre.</li> <li>2) The town currently has a vacancy rate of 13%, close to the national average but higher than most Oxfordshire towns.</li> <li>3) There is agreement to focus and co-ordinate resources for the re-vitalisation of Banbury Town Centre.</li> <li>4) The future could be more challenging, with the growth of edge-of-town development competing for trade.</li> <li>5) There is also growing evidence that competitor towns are taking action to ensure that their towns remain alive and vibrant.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>Is somebody else doing it already</b> Current resources have not allowed the overall co-ordination of Banbury to happen. Day-to-day activities and occasional events are happening which provides a basis for co-ordination and for value now to be added.</li> <li>• <b>Partnership?</b> Volunteer members of the commercially-led Banbury Vitality Group have contributed to this proposal.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Aims – link to ED Strategy &amp; Service Plan (what will it achieve?)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing business – theme 5 – promote business start-up; support the survival and growth of enterprises. Theme 10 – develop the visitor economy.</li> <li>• Developing place – support our urban centres.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Objectives (what will that involve specifically?)</b></p> <p>Town Team Coordination services will provide strategic and practical leadership to increase the vitality of Banbury. Specific objectives include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bringing cohesion to the town’s stakeholders and interest groups.</li> <li>2. To survey the empty/available shops and establish the barriers to each being let (e.g. not on market, absent landlord, given up hope, asking rent too high, etc). This will include establishing a relationship with landlords and commercial property agents.</li> <li>3. Build relationships with existing retailers to identify :-             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) Which would like to move within the town to an alternative location (e.g. better spot/different shaped/bigger/smaller unit or one they own rather than rent).</li> <li>B) Identify retailers with friends who would like to set up shop or begin with a market stall in Banbury.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Winning PR/social media profile for the town vitality initiative to improve the</li> </ol>		

<p>'leakage' of spending power that Banbury experiences by people in the town and village hinterland shopping elsewhere.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Map the existing retail offer to identify any gaps to target (e.g. retailers in market sectors where your town has gaps, or needs more in sectors to attract shoppers).</li> <li>6. Enable pop-up shop/community shop options.</li> <li>7. Contribute to the Cherwell M40 Investment Partnership's Working Group.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Options</b> – <i>what are the alternative courses of action? How do we decide? Feasible? Permissions needed?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4) Do nothing.</li> <li>5) Attempt to implement actions but resources will not allow full co-ordination to happen and the actions to be achieved.</li> <li>6) Commission external assistance as described here.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Resources</b> (<i>what / whom do we need to make it happen?</i>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Project management at CDC economic development service and administrative support (data collection through this project will be held at CDC in order to inform future support).</li> <li>2) Tourism and Street Scene team involvement.</li> <li>3) Business involvement through the Banbury Vitality Group.</li> <li>4) Partners to contribute time, expertise and possibly money (e.g. marketing)</li> </ol>
<p><b>Budget</b> (<i>how much will it cost and how much income?</i>)</p> <p>£15,000 is allocated for this work (of the remaining £25,000 for Banbury Town Centre Initiatives).</p> <p>It is expected to generate considerable in-kind support from businesses, providing valuable intelligence to inform policy, practical help to businesses and contribute to the work of the Cherwell M40 Investment Partnership.</p>
<p><b>Risks</b> (<i>what could go wrong, what would this mean &amp; what would we do about it?</i>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) An appropriate external co-ordinator cannot be identified.</li> <li>2) The objectives may not be achieved (maintain regular review).</li> <li>3) Insufficient money left to implement actions (need to demonstrate action).</li> <li>4) Banbury suffers additional vacancies and decline in trade but this project will help to reduce these risks.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Activity</b> (<i>what are you proposing to do and by when? Who's responsible for each part?</i>)</p> <p>Project management to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Produce a tender/contract for the role of a Town Team Coordinator. January 2014.</li> <li>2) Commission the work and unite partners in prioritising activity and combining resources. February 2014.</li> <li>3) Produce a framework and activity plan. March 2014.</li> </ol>

4) Implement projects. March 2014.

Support from CDC street scene services.

**Evaluation** (*how will we know it's been successful? How will we learn & improve?*)

- 1) Comparison of vacant units at beginning and end of project.
- 2) Footfall figures for different parts of the town before and after
- 3) Feedback from stakeholders (e.g. chamber, OTA, market operator, other retail groups, shoppers, landlords, Castle Quay).
- 4) Notable PR profile in local and regional media over 12 months
- 5) Increase in the number of new retail investors in Banbury as a result of this project (established or in the pipeline).

**Review**

*Is it worth repeating?*

*When, how?*

September 2014 (Plus mid-term assessments).

**Project Officer:**

Business Development Officer (Karen Matthews)

**Project Sponsor / Budget Holder:**

Economic Development Officer (Steven Newman)

**Portfolio Holder:**

Cllr Norman Bolster

## Annex C: Bicester Radio advertising grant

Project Title	Start date	End date
<b>Bicester: To help towards the cost of advertising on Bicester Radio for a period of 12 months</b>	January 2014	December 2014
<p><b>Rationale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Why do this?</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To enable town centre traders to promote their products and services to local people.</li> <li>2) Independent traders in Bicester have identified this as an opportunity to help them to advertise to the people in and around Bicester. This would be especially helpful to the independent traders who are based in Deans Court and Market Square who are feeling the impact of the new Development which is further up Sheep Street and have experienced a drop in footfall.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>Is somebody else doing it already?</b> Pioneer Square is being plugged on the radio in and around Bicester. This is not bringing people to the rest of the town.</li> <li>• <b>Partnership?</b> This project has been identified through the Bicester Town Traders Forum, involving traders, the Chamber, Bicester Vision and Bicester Village, etc.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Aims</b> – <i>link to ED Strategy &amp; Service Plan (what will it achieve?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Developing business’ (theme 5) - promote business start-up, support the survival and growth of enterprises. Theme 10 – develop the visitor economy.</li> <li>• ‘Developing place’ – support our urban centres.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Objectives</b> (<i>what will that involve specifically?</i>)</p> <p>To support local traders in order to compete effectively, attracting new customers and higher income. Specifically, a subsidy of 75% will be provided to independent businesses within Bicester to allow them to advertise on local radio for 12 months.</p>		
<p><b>Options</b> – <i>what are the alternative courses of action? How do we decide? Feasible? Permissions needed?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Do nothing</li> <li>2) Offer a grant at a different proportion of total cost.</li> <li>3) Take alternative action.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>Resources</b> (<i>what / whom do we need to make it happen?</i>)</p> <p>Project manager to oversee all elements of this work described in ‘activity’ below.</p>		
<p><b>Budget</b> (<i>how much will it cost and how much income?</i>)</p>		



The cost for a typical advertisement campaign on local radio costs around £25 per month e.g. £300 per year. 75% (£225) would be offered towards the cost.

30 grants of £225 would cost £6,750 of the £15,000 remaining in Bicester's Town Centre Innovation Fund.

**Risks** (*what could go wrong, what would this mean & what would we do about it?*)

- 1) We have more applicants for the scheme than we have budget.
- 2) Few applicants come forward.
- 3) We could do something else in the town.

This would be monitored by the partnership with minor adjustment made by through project management and any major adjustments suggested for the approval of the Portfolio Holder.

**Activity** (*what are you proposing to do and by when? Who's responsible for each part?*)

Led by Project Manager and working with the Bicester Traders Group:

- 1) Complete the procedural documents in Jan 2014.
- 2) Appoint radio station.
- 3) Promote the scheme in the media and through partners.
- 4) Implement the scheme throughout 2014 or until budget is invested.
- 5) Review immediately to assess whether further investment is needed.

**Evaluation** (*how will we know it's been successful? How will we learn & improve?*)

- 1) A satisfaction survey to be filled in by traders gaining subsidy through this scheme, to consider the effect upon trade.
- 2) Footfall within the town and unit occupancy to be monitored.

**Review** *Is it worth repeating? When, how?*

If successful, consider extending the service to Banbury, Kidlington and rural areas.

**Project Officer:**

Business Development Officer (Karen Matthews)

**Project Sponsor / Budget Holder:**

Economic Development Officer (Steven Newman)

**Portfolio Holder:**

Cllr Norman Bolster

## Annex D: Bicester Enabling Business Website and Smart Phones Presence

Project Title	Start date	End date
<b>Bicester: enabling business websites to be viewed on smart phones and or to have a web presence where they currently do not have one</b>	January 2014	December 2014
<p><b>Rationale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Why do this?</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To enable town centre traders to promote their products and services via a website to an increasing number of customers using ‘smart phones’ and the internet to buy their services/product.</li> <li>2) Independent traders in Bicester have identified this as an opportunity to allow them to adapt to change and compete with chains and on-line competitors.</li> <li>3) Experience elsewhere suggest this is successful.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>Is somebody else doing it already?</b> Retail chain stores have resources to ensure websites are accessible for users of smart phones. Independent retailers do not have this advantage.</li> <li>• <b>Partnership?</b> This project has been identified through the Bicester Town Traders Forum, involving traders, the Chamber, Bicester Vision and Bicester Village, etc.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Aims</b> – <i>link to ED Strategy &amp; Service Plan (what will it achieve?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Developing business’ (theme 5) - promote business start-up, support the survival and growth of enterprises. Theme 10 – develop the visitor economy.</li> <li>• ‘Developing place’ – support our urban centres.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Objectives</b> (<i>what will that involve specifically?</i>)</p> <p>To support local traders in utilising modern technology in order to compete effectively, attracting new customers and higher income. Specifically, a subsidy of 50% will be provided to independent businesses within Bicester to have website that will be can to be downloaded on a mobile smart-phone.</p>		
<p><b>Options</b> – <i>what are the alternative courses of action? How do we decide? Feasible? Permissions needed?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Do nothing</li> <li>2) Offer a grant at a different proportion of total cost.</li> <li>3) Take alternative action.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>Resources</b> (<i>what / whom do we need to make it happen?</i>)</p> <p>Project manager to oversee all elements of this work described in ‘activity’ below. We will produce a list of website designers. The company will get a quote from one of the designers. We will approve the grant towards the quote. When the work is</p>		

complete we will pay 50% towards the cost of the work, either directly to the company doing the work or on production of an invoice for the work, we will refund the business 50% of the cost.

**Budget** *(how much will it cost and how much income?)*

The total cost for each website to be produced and enabled is approximately £300: 50% (£150) would be offered towards the cost.

30 grants of £150 would cost £4,500 of the £15,000 remaining in Bicester's Town Centre Innovation Fund.

**Risks** *(what could go wrong, what would this mean & what would we do about it?)*

- 1) We have more applicants for the scheme than we have budget.
- 2) Few applicants come forward.
- 3) We could do something else in the town.

This would be monitored by the partnership with minor adjustment made by though project management and any major adjustments suggested for the approval of the Portfolio Holder.

**Activity** *(what are you proposing to do and by when? Who's responsible for each part?)*

Led by Project Manager and working with the Bicester Traders Group:

- 6) Complete the procedural documents in Jan 2014.
- 7) Appoint technical partner in Feb 2014 to work with traders.
- 8) Promote the scheme in the media and through partners.
- 9) Implement the scheme throughout 2014 or until budget is invested.
- 10) Review immediately to assess whether further investment is needed.

**Evaluation** *(how will we know it's been successful? How will we learn & improve?)*

- 3) A satisfaction survey to be filled in by traders gaining subsidy through this scheme, to consider the effect upon trade.
- 4) Footfall within the town and unit occupancy to be monitored.

**Review** *Is it worth repeating? When, how?*

If successful, consider extending the service to Banbury, Kidlington and rural areas.

**Project Officer:**

Business Development Officer (Karen Matthews)

**Project Sponsor / Budget Holder:**

Economic Development Officer (Steven Newman)

**Portfolio Holder:**

Cllr Norman Bolster

## Annex E: Kidlington Piazza Improvement

Project Title	Start date	End date
<b>Kidlington Piazza Improvement</b>	November 2013	March 2014
<p><b>Rationale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Why do this?</b> The Piazza is a major focal point for Kidlington's shopping area, forming the link to High Street from the main car park and an entrance to the Kidlington Centre. The Piazza is owned by CDC and whilst significant resurfacing work was completed around 2008, further enhancement is considered appropriate by CDC officers and the Parish Council to promote the competitiveness of Kidlington as an attractive shopping destination.</li> <li>• <b>Is somebody else doing it already?</b> Nobody else is maintaining the CDC-owned Piazza and funds from elsewhere for this work cannot be identified.</li> <li>• <b>Partnership?</b> Cherwell District Council is the landowner and Kidlington Parish Council is an active supporter.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Aims</b> – link to ED Strategy &amp; Service Plan (what will it achieve?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Piazza leads onto High Street and the aim is to create a more welcoming and informative environment to encourage visitors to spend more time and money in Kidlington, drawing pedestrians to and from the car park and High Street.</li> <li>• The investment will contribute to 'Support Urban Centres' - Undertake regeneration schemes and actions to enhance the attractiveness and success of the centre. It will assist the District to appear to be a modern dynamic and pleasant place to live, work and visit - Developing Place.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Objectives</b> (what will that involve specifically?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The construction of partial screening for the toilet block</b> to enhance the appearance of a prominent yet unsightly public facility located centrally in the Piazza, adding privacy whilst also not compromising community safety.</li> <li>• <b>Add 'Welcome to Kidlington' information</b> to welcome and inform visitors and residents, in harmony with design features already present in Kidlington to create continuity of design.</li> <li>• Consider lighting, weather protection, planting and related signage on High Street in the further development of this project.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Options</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What are the alternative courses of action?</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Do nothing</li> <li>b) Invest elsewhere (but no alternative project(s) identified)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>		

- **How do we decide?** The project idea has been developed in conjunction with Kidlington Parish Council.
- **Feasible?** Yes, initial schemes have been presented and a tendering process undertaken which has resulted in an acceptable scheme being proposed.

#### **Activity**

- **What will happen exactly?** Once final agreement of CDC as landowner and planning authority is confirmed, the detailed design, manufacture and installation can proceed promptly. Further to the feasibility designs already obtained, commencement is expected in January 2014 with completion by March 2014.

#### **Resources** (what / whom do we need to make it happen?)

- CDC Economic Development – funding, project management.
- CDC Street Scene – tendering, street furniture, planters, tree planting, maintenance.
- CDC Tourism – visitor panels.
- Kidlington Parish Council – development of concept and local liaison with residents and businesses.
- Contractor to design, manufacture and install.
- Possible use of art-object funding from Bowood House development to create the High Street feature.

#### **Budget**

- Design, manufacture and installation will cost £20,000 to be funded from the Government's Town Centre Initiatives Fund.
- CDC Officer time.
- Maintenance through CDC Revenue budget.

#### **Risks** (what could go wrong, what would this mean & what would we do about it?)

- Planning permission might be required and not given. Check with planning officer.
- Contractors might not honour agreement. Ensure stepped payments or payment upon completion.
- Manufacture/installation might be substandard. Ensure oversight by the project manager throughout.
- Objections by traders and residents. Ensure project management and community liaison.

#### **Evaluation** (how will we know it's been successful? How will we learn & improve?)

- Difficult to evaluate quantitatively, but benefits of enhancing a key commercial location must be evident in this multi-function area for markets, performances and communal leisure activities.
- Effects on footfall, shop vacancy rates and shopper satisfaction can also be monitored.

**Review**

Is it worth repeating? To be reviewed.  
When, how?

- The experience gained with this investment could inform schemes elsewhere in the district.
- The Parish Council consider this as the basis for significant further development work in the area in the future.

**Project Officer:**

Business Development Officer (Karen Matthews)

**Project Sponsor / Budget Holder:**

Economic Development Officer (Steven Newman)

**Portfolio Holder:**

Cllr Norman Bolster