



Market Towns Investment Group

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Purpose of the Report

To update members about the Market Towns Investment Group and its current project funding programme.

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

Background

The Market Towns Investment Group (MTIG) was established in June 2006 as a key element of the South Somerset Market Towns Vision. MTIG is an important partnership created to encourage better, more constructive community planning arrangements between partners at all levels and to bring forward more effective investment decisions in our market towns and the rural areas they serve.

The Market Towns Investment Group (MTIG), chaired by Councillor Jason Baker, is a partnership of SSDC, Town Councils and local regeneration groups established to promote strategic investment in South Somerset Market Towns and surrounding villages. The eleven Market Town Areas represented are Bruton, Castle Cary, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Langport, Martock, Milborne Port, Somerton, South Petherton and Wincanton.

The agreed purpose of the group is to recommend programmes for investment in Market Town areas where working together would be better than working alone. This might be because undertaking a number of projects would be more economical, or because together we can create a critical mass that would make a scheme viable.

Working together means that it becomes more feasible to deal with common issues that otherwise would not be addressed.

Funding for Investment

All known community plan proposals are held on a shared database. Through this it was established that the estimated cost of all proposals in each Market Town

Community Plan is approximately £2 million and not all areas that need investment are covered in all community plans.

It is well understood that the resources needed to fulfil the ambitions and aspirations we have for the future of our Market Towns are substantial, and will need to be met from a number of sources. MTIG provides an innovative means of capturing the significant levels of funding required to meet well founded community aspirations efficiently and effectively.

In 2006, SSDC made an initial capital budget of £300,000 available to the Market Towns Investment Group, allowing some themes to be explored and programmes for investment to be delivered. An additional £150,000 and £300,000 has since been added to the budget and to date £457,234.35 has been spent.

Deciding Common Themes for Investment

Through a joint exercise, the members of MTIG carefully considered the themes from their published and draft community plans for Market Towns.

In 2008 a clear common interest in projects that promote tourism, the local built environment, community safety and the local economy was identified and funding was allocated to the development of;

- Enhancement of CCTV
- The Creation of Improved Signage through Information Boards Or 'Gateway' Public Art.
- Encouraging joint and priority schemes

Priority Project Programme 2020

Following consultation with representatives of the Market Towns during 2019/20 a new round of Priority Project funding was launched.

Representatives from the market towns identified a diverse range of projects which they are seeking to progress and therefore this round of Priority Project applications to the MTIG has been kept broad to give towns the choice about what they wish to prioritise. The criteria for the funding is:

1. The Town Council can apply for a financial contribution from MTIG funds towards a capital project or the capital element of a larger project based. The minimum request should be no less than £5,000 and the maximum no more than £20,000.



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2. You can package several projects together and ask for financial support towards more than one project but all works must be completed and the grant drawn down within 12 months of the grant offer (unless by prior agreement).
3. The typical grant intervention rate is 50%, higher levels of funding will only be considered for exceptional projects. Grant requests for 100% funding are unlikely to be supported.
4. Your project should be located in the Town Centre and ideally feature in your town plan/neighbourhood plan or as a priority in the Town Council's work programme. When preparing your application please explain the reasons for requesting the funding clearly and include photos/images to support this.
5. Joint projects or collaboration with other MTIG towns is positively encouraged.

The representatives were asked to submit expressions of interest of potential projects by the 28th September 2020 and for the final applications to be received by the 31st January 2020. Some work is still required to determine exact project costs. The expressions of interest are below:

Market Town	Project	Funding
Bruton	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To develop the existing Station Road car park to include car charging points and permeable surfacing	£60,000
Castle Cary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Purchase a lift to externally access the upper floor of the Market House and refurbish the existing kitchen	£10,000
Chard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Declutter the existing town signageInstall signage in the car parks to direct visitors to the town centreInstall two shopper information boards in new locations in Bath Street car parkCreate coaches and campervan bays in the Minnows car park with signage to direct visitors to the town centrePurchase and install four new town gateway signsCreate a permanent display on the roundabout by Tescos (similar to Ablebox in Yeovil)Install a CCTV camera on Boden Street	£20,000
Crewkerne	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Refurbishment of town centre public toilets	£20,000
Ilminster	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Change the gradient of a path into the recreation ground to allow access for wheelchairs and pushchairs	£9,000
Langport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Create a Mini Tourist Information bureau including two defibrillators in the town centreCreate a website for the Langport River ProjectPurchase Health and safety information signage for the river	£20,000



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A new Bus Shelter• Two Donation Boxes located by Langport Toilets and Huish Bridge Car Park• Fencing along the cycleway	
Martock	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The refurbishment and upgrade of the existing public toilets in the Market House• Install solar compacting litter bins• Install CCTV and Wi-Fi infrastructure at Martock Recreation Ground• An E-Notice Board for the Market House and new notice boards for the Parish Hall and Recreation Ground• Electric Gates for the Recreation Ground• Upgrading of lights to LED at the MUGA and Skate Park at the Recreation Ground	£27,500
Milborne Port	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tarmacking of allotments entrance• Renewal of footpaths in churchyard	£5,000
Somerton	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Installation of solar panels for the car park to supply the electric charging points• The replacement of the Christmas Lights displays by changing to LED strings and message panels• The creation of the town centre Park of Peace which gives shoppers a place to rest and relax before and after visiting the old Somerton Town Centre. It is also an attraction for tourists and non-residents of Somerton	£29,000
South Petherton	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Installation of two new lighting columns and re-line the car park at the Recreation Ground• Fit a bike storage and rack with a shelter at St James Street Car Park• A water dispenser• Install an electric charging point• Memorial Garden - Stone walling, coping stones and new flooring• A concrete planter• Three new noticeboards in the car park• A new bus shelter• Architect plans and fees for a new Community Hub	£20,000
Wincanton	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Install recycling bins across the town instead of normal bins and run an education campaign• Change the lights in the outside play area to LED• Purchase a community fridge to support free food share and reduce food waste and run an education campaign	£10,000

Total requested		£230,000
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If completed applications are received for all of the projects listed this will enable the delivery of at least £460,000 of projects in the community.

Council Plan Implications

Council Plan themes and Areas of focus for 2020/21

Focus 2: Economy – To make South Somerset a great place to do business, with clean inclusive growth and thriving urban and rural businesses:

- Regenerate our town centres and high streets, unlocking key sites
- Pilot approaches to improve rural productivity, including flexible affordable transport
- Enhance visitor experience and income from tourism

Focus 3: Environment – To keep South Somerset clean, green and attractive we will work in partnership to:

- Promote recycling and minimise waste
- Promote the use of 'green' technology
- Keep streets and neighbourhoods clean and attractive
- Promote a high quality built environment in line with Local Plan policies
- Support communities to develop and implement local, parish and neighbourhood plans

Focus 4: Places where we live – To Enable housing and communities to meet the existing and future needs of residents and employers, we will work to:

- Ensure development which is sustainable, where people want to live and communities can thrive

Focus 5: Health and Communities – To build healthy, self-reliant, active communities we will:

- Support communities so that they can identify their needs and develop local solutions
- Target support to areas of need
- Help people to live well by enabling quality cultural, leisure, play, sport & healthy lifestyle facilities & activities
- Work with our partners to keep our communities safe

Key priorities for Area West – Area Chapter: Economy



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- To engage Town Councils to develop a programme of investment through the Market Town Investment Group
- Attract tourists and increase spend in and visits to the area and wider district. Engage with attractions and providers to offer a cohesive destination packages to visitors through the TICs and LICs
- Continue to support individual businesses and associations/Chambers of Trade/Town Teams
- Support community led initiatives that contribute towards combatting climate change.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

Environmental based projects are encouraged to be submitted.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The projects aim to provide for people across all age and interest groups in the local community.

Background Papers

None
