

Cultural and Economic Services Committee

Date: 11 March 2019

Title: s106 project spend

Purpose of the Report: To seek Committee endorsement for spend

Contact Officer: Vivien Cannon, Head of Cultural and Economic Services

Corporate Objective/s	LLTC Three Year Plan – Aim: To continue to support a vibrant town through partnership working and initiatives including management of the street market, support for local businesses, town and community promotions and town centre enhancements.	
Implications:		
Financial	√	S106 planning development income
Human Resources		
Operational/Service delivery		
Procedural/Legal	√	Financial regulations for quotes
Risk/Health and Safety		

1. RECOMMENDATION/S

Should members be minded, the proposals are:

- 1.1 To endorse the four projects identified for allocation of Section 106, planning gain funds as listed in para 2.3.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 28/01/19, Council endorsed the Five-Year Plan and Objectives for 2019-2024. Key to this Committee is the corporate aim:

- To continue to support a vibrant town through partnership working and initiatives including management of the street market, support for local businesses, town and community promotions and town centre enhancements.

- 2.2 Over recent months officers from Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) have approached the Town Clerk and Head of Service for Cultural and Economic Services on the issue of allocating the spend of section 106 funds received by CBC as a result of the development of the Grovebury Road based retail park. To date, CBC officers have drawn down £50k allocated to be spent in the town centre.

2.3 Four projects are proposed to allocate this initial release of funds to towards continuing with ongoing town centre enhancements:

a) **Bell Alley resurfacing** – recent High Street Improvement Funds and private investment has improved the presentation of the alleyway and shops. The surfacing of the alley however remains uneven and tired. As a link between a town centre car park and High Street, the proposal is to use funds for its resurfacing.

b) **Town Centre Wi-Fi** – at its meeting on 03/09/18, Committee resolved to instruct officers to investigate further the potential for delivery of town centre Wi-Fi provision for future Committee consideration. At the same meeting, CBC officers were in attendance following an expression to support the Town Council in achieving this project. Whilst committee identified a budget, CBC officers proposed the spend of s106 funds to this end.

c) **Relocation of Christmas tree** - over recent years officers have been unable to secure the agreement of the Christmas tree supplier to utilise the ground socket. Refusal is based on there being no structural certificate available to inform the supplier of a stated safe loading capacity. This has resulted in securing a tree that is not the quality desired yet suitable to be placed in a self-standing container. A newly engineered hole is therefore required.

The location of tree does cause disruption to the weekly market and limits the use of the space in that area. The long-term plan is for the market to expand within this area subject to the relocation of certain bollards located thereabouts thus opening the area up. The tree will become more of a problem with this plan.

The Market Cross is already a feature at the top of the High Street. Digging in the area is unfavoured due to the proximity of the Market Cross. It is proposed to relocate the tree socket to the opposite end of the High Street in the centre of the 'entertainment circle'. This would address the need for an engineered socket whilst also serving the purpose of spreading the focus of attention along the whole length of the High Street.

d) **Road barrier/bollards** – explore ideas to help manage access to the High Street on market days, (feasibility study).

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Whilst it is unlikely that all four projects will be achieved with the current amount of available funds, more funds will be made available in due course thereby allowing feasibility work to be achieved in the first instance.

END