

Cultural and Economic Services Committee

Date: 07 September 2020

Purpose of the Report: SME Directory

Contact Officers: Vivien Cannon, Head of Cultural and Economic Services.

Corporate Objective/s	VIBRANCY AND VITALITY OF TOWN AND TOWN CENTRE – 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	Y	Annual budget- Business Support (Business Networking Event)
Risk management		
Operational/service delivery		
Legal/compliance		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Should members be minded, the recommendations are:

- 1.1 To allocate up to £375 from the Business Support annual budget (101/4510) to assist with the launch of the electronic directory.
- 1.2 To allocate up to £300 from the Business Support annual budget (101/4510) to contract the services of the same illustrator who completed the Town Centre Logo to create a logo in similar branding style for the SME Directory.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 17/04/20, Committee endorsed a Welcome Back campaign in support of Town Centre based businesses (Covid-19 Delegated Decisions).
- 2.2 This year's Annual Business Networking Event (BNE) did not take place due to Covid-19 distancing rules. This annual event serves to assist the local SME community (Small to Medium Enterprises) to thrive.
- 2.3 In providing the above, the Town Council is demonstrating its support for its local business communities. However support for the SME community this year has not yet equalled that for the Town Centre. Officers have been seeking an alternative practical method of continuing the support to SMEs for Committee to consider.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 It is proposed to support the Town's entrepreneurs (SMEs) by providing a modest financial sum to assist the creation and launch of a web-based directory. The proposal for the online directory can be seen at **Appendix A**. Once set up, the directory will be self-managed with no additional involvement of the Town Council, i.e. no burden on resources, financial or staff. It will operate as a not for profit activity by the host business.
- 3.2 A regular sponsor of the BNE has offered up her business to create the directory on a not-for-profit basis. The sponsor is a businesswoman in her own right and a supporter of SMEs and is keen to facilitate a support mechanism for fellow entrepreneurs. The directory aims to provide a virtual shop window for those SME's who do not benefit from a central High Street location and therefore a physical shop window. The directory therefore aims to making it easier for residents to locate a service they desire.
- 3.3 Committee is asked to offer £375 towards securing administrative assistance to help support establishing the Directory. The BNE budget has not been utilised for this year so the financial assistance could come from the current annual budget: 101/4510.
- 3.4 The online directory will need attractive and locally distinctive artwork as a framework for the information. Officers propose to build upon the Town Centre logo branding style and create a logo that is distinctive to SMEs yet maintains a strong branding link for local businesses operating in the Town.
- 3.5 In order to maintain such a style of branding, it is proposed to use the same illustrator as that used to complete the Town centre logo. It is estimated that a budget of up to £300 would secure the work of the illustrator and that the annual Business Support budget would be utilised.

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