

**REPORT TO:** Policy and Performance Review Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 9 September 2021

**BY:** Executive Director of Place

**SUBJECT:** Progress with Business Recovery Investment Fund

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the administration of the Business Recovery Investment Fund, established at the Council meeting of 2 March 2021 and subsequently allocated across sectors and proposed interventions at the Council meeting of 27 April 2021.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the progress that is being made with the allocation of the Business Recovery Investment Fund.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the meeting of 2 March 2021, a sum of £600,000 was established to support business recovery during and after the Covid-19 pandemic and allocated across proposed interventions on 27 April 2021. This included support for town centre recovery and renewal; for the tourism and hospitality sector; for the rural economy: for employability; for 'Love East Lothian' messaging; and for businesses, to safeguard employment and encourage growth. A tracking system has been developed by the Economic Development team, alongside necessary supporting governance, to deliver the objectives of the Business Recovery Investment Fund.
- 3.2 Good progress has been made in terms of the allocation of additional funding provided for COVID business recovery support, in tandem with the administration of additional grant streams for taxi drivers, taxi operators, soft play providers, and hospitality settings that were put in place at short

notice during the standing down of COVID level restrictions over June – August. An update on progress with this policy initiative follows.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 This report is by way of an update on progress towards delivery of the policy aim to support business recovery as the pandemic recedes. The following section demonstrates how progress is being made as follows:
- 4.2 Tourism – the allocation of grant funding has been successfully agreed following an open application process for groups operating within the sector in East Lothian. Funding has been awarded to the East Lothian Tourism Attractions Group and the East Lothian Golf Alliance that will allow a number of activities to take place during 2021/22 and 2022/23. These will be focused on COVID recovery and developing new markets / audiences. Activities to improve destination marketing, the VEL website, and visitor management are all underway.
- 4.3 Direct Business Support – new 1 to 1 business support packages have been agreed following engagement with local businesses and will be rolled out from September as part of our post-COVID relaunch of Business Gateway. Growth and sustainability grants are being made available to local employers with plans to expand and to businesses looking to relocate operations to East Lothian.
- 4.4 Support for towns and villages – funding is being made available through direct grants to local business and traders associations, through support for the East Lothian Gift Card scheme, via an open grant scheme to support economic recovery activity in towns and villages (closing date for applications 24/09/21), and via the ongoing Dunbar pilot of the [www.sole.scot](http://www.sole.scot) digital community platform.
- 4.5 Marketing – the production of a bespoke ‘Local Economy’ edition of the Council’s Living magazine is being planned for late 2021/early 2022. Its focus will be on the range of support and services available from the Council as well promoting the activity of local businesses. This will be distributed to all East Lothian addresses.
- 4.6 Food and Drink – an East Lothian ‘FEAST’ event is being developed with East Lothian Food and Drink and a delivery partner to take place in late 2021/ early 2022. This will promote the best of EL producers and manufacturers.
- 4.7 Rural Economy – support for rural digital connectivity, access, and skills if being scoped and designed for roll out during Q3 and Q4. This will focus on addressing core access to service needs in rural areas.
- 4.8 Employability – activities have been agreed with and are being progressed by East Lothian Works to hold a careers event and expand the availability of hospitality training in the County.

## **5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial – None, funds already allocated
- 6.2 Personnel - None
- 6.3 Other - None

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 Appendix 1, a spreadsheet that tracks the tasks required to ensure effective allocation of the resources by the end of the financial year 2021/22.
- 7.2 Council Report 27 April 2021: COVID-19 and Concurrent Risks – Update on the Management of Council Response and Recovery – Appendix 4 (link attached)

[https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/16623/east\\_lothian\\_council](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/16623/east_lothian_council)




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<b>DATE</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> August 2021

**Business Recovery Investment Funding 2021/22**

**Recovery Action Tracker**

Updated 02/09/2021 By JB

	£Budget	£Committed	Funding notes	Action	Target Date	% Complete	Date Completed	Red Amber Green	Notes
<b>Tourism</b>									
Grant Scheme for Sector Groups	100,000	100,000	£60,000 between 2 applicants, balance ring-fenced for same for activities TBA for 22/23	Set guidance & agree application process, including application deadline	09/06/21	100%	21/06/21		Groups with 'primary purpose' of attracting / promoting tourism eligible + partnerships (min 3 members) of tourism sector orgs with same aims invited.
				Invite sectors to apply - golf, attractions, events and outdoor	14/06/21	100%	22/06/21		Scheme also communicated to the wider VEL database and industry via mailshot and social.
				Closing date for submissions	13/07/21	100%	20/07/21		Some applicants did not supply supporting documentation / complete applications full - agreed to extended closing date by 1 week to give all applicants notice to complete all outstanding elements of their submission or respond to panel queries.
				Evaluate and score submissions	20/07/21	100%	06/08/21		Awards confirmed at CEG Chairs 6/8/21 - ELTAG and Golf Alliance successful and awarded £30,000 each for activities in 21/22. £40,000 unallocated from the fund to be offered to the successful applicants pending completion of 21/22 activities to fund activities in 22/23 based on learning from 21/22. Golf alliance did not initially supply supporting financial information requested, and award was provisional. Information now supplied and agreement expected to be complete w/c 6th Sept.
				Award offer issued	23/07/21	100%	13/08/21		ELTAG acceptance received, Golf Alliance have received in-principle award notification pending receipt of supporting financial statements etc.
				Award accepted	25/07/21	50%			ELTAG acceptance received.
				First payment made	26/07/21	50%			ELTAG payment actioned, Golf Alliance to provide supporting financial statements etc. per the application process. Now supplied and under review.
				22/23 proposals received by	01/02/22				
				22/23 proposals agreed by	14/02/22				Proposals for 22/23 received and evaluated by mid-Feb 22 or sooner if possible.
				21/22 project reports received	07/03/22				

			21/22 project evaluation	14/03/22				
			Final 21/22 payments made by	31/03/22				Or sooner if possible based on info supplied by applicants.
			22/23 payments made by	31/03/22				Or sooner if possible based on info supplied by applicants.
Destination Visitor Marketing	30,000	30,000	Identify campaigns	30/07/21	100%			
			Agree outcomes and sign off activity	20/08/21	50%			Activity identified with VisitScotland
			Activity delivery	01/09/21				
			Activity report	31/12/21				
Website	25,000	25,000	Prepare website review brief and PID	07/06/21	100%	07/06/21		
			Invite tenders	18/06/21	100%	26/06/21		
			Award contract	30/07/21	100%	28/07/21		Internet Creations appointed
			Website approved	31/01/22				
Visitor Management	29,000	29,000	Agree project parameters with Edinburgh University	31/08/21	90%			Pending completion of asset transfers and data sharing agreement etc.
			Install sensors	31/10/21				
			App Development	28/02/22				App will be built & functionality developed over the course of the period ready for next season.
<b>Towns and Villages</b>								
ELI Gift Card potential expansion	15,000	15,000	Discuss scope / possibilities with	18/06/21	100%	06/08/21		
			Receive proposal for project(s)	02/07/21	50%			Awaiting proposals from ELI, initial discussion suggests support for expanding established campaigns to improve take-up etc. and looking at new technology offers by the supplier to include electronic / online redemption.
			Evaluate project proposals and agree	w/c 12/7/21				
			Agree monitoring and transfer funds	w/c 19/7/21				
SOLE Digital Communities roll out	42,500	0	STA Application for CRF	16/06/21	100%	18/06/21		
			Outcome of CRF application	Late July				Outcome due during July, now overdue and intelligence is that decisions haven't yet been made.

			Application to LEADER				Fund guidance not a good fit for project / other project progressed with EL Works and VCEL (VCEL project awarded £50k to test Rural Parliament outcome locally in Mid and East Lothian).
			Outcome of LEADER application				
			Dunbar rollout evaluation +	w/c 5/7/21	50%		Initial meeting has taken place, follow up required due w/c 30/08/21. Progress slowed to await CRF result and allow for full public launch.
			Decision to roll out / method of rollout agreed	02/08/21			Subject to interest, evaluation, and funding availability, e.g. from CRF.
			STA start rollout / engagement with EL Traders	TBC			
			Additional SOLE / SOLE East	TBC			
			Ongoing support for rollout	TBC			
			Rollout complete	TBC			
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Trader Group core funds	9,000	9,000	Notify established groups of	28/06/21	100%	02/08/21	
			Discuss Tranent & PSG Traders	28/06/2021			Discussion still to be arranged, summer leave and other priorities for all has delayed.
			Arrange transfer of funds	05/07/21			Awaiting confirmation of account info. from groups.
			Support for PSG / Tranent groups TBC	TBC			
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Towns and Villages Fund	36,000	36,000	Complete review of guidance and agree assessment procedure	23/06/21	90%		Final assessment procedure TBA
			Publish application form and guidance incl. closing date	28/06/2021	100%	19/08/21	£6,000 nominally available per Ward, aim is 1 or 2 small awards circa £500 and 1 large circa £5k per town cluster / ward.
			Closing date for submission	24/09/2021			
			Assess and agree awards	w/c 27/09/21			
			Issue award letters with any conditions	TBC			
			Payment of awards	TBC			
			Project report / evaluations reminder / request made	01/02/22			
			Project report / evaluations	31/03/22			
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Road Licensing Fees	5,000	1,500	Commits in response Agree route to publicity if any	18/06/21	100%		Approach agreed with Roads - available to new

to applications

applications or renewing applicants from 21/22 only.

Track requests for and transfer

Ongoing



Town Centre Investment Support

22,500

0

Develop proposal taking cognisance of available capital programmes / funds incl. CRF / Delivery TBC

31/08/21

10%



STP town audits or similar proposed, but needs to be coordinated with all 'place' active services.

TBC



**Business Support and Growth**

Expert support to businesses

60,000

60,000

Programme launches Sept.

Survey design for first contact with businesses (scoping)

11/06/21

100%

11/06/21



Issue survey to business base

11/06/21

100%

11/06/21



Survey return complete

27/06/21

100%

28/06/21



Agree possible routes to procuring

27/06/21

100%

28/06/21



Confirm design of services / work

02/07/21

100%

26/07/21



Procure

w/c 5/7/21

100%



Services live

September



Business Sustainability/Job Creation grant

100,000

20,000

Funding commits in response to applications.

Complete application and

30/06/21

100%

19/07/21



Process based on establish ED good practice, incl. analysis of financial sustainability etc.

Identify long list of candidate businesses

30/06/21

95%



Notification of candidates and provide support

01/07/21

20%



2x growth businesses in process, 1x application received.

50% fund allocated

30/11/21



Applications close

31/01/22



Capital expenditure invoiced by

31/03/22



100% Funds drawn down by

31/03/22



**Rural Economy**

Rural Toilet Provision

23,500

23,500

Confirm scope and cost / Transfer funds to FM

30/06/21

100%



facilities to be open from 30/07/21 - closure date TBC

Rural facilities open

Ongoing



As at 19/08/21 all facilities open save Fisher Row due to damage by fire (vandalism).

