

CHAMBERS OF TRADE – BIDS FOR TOWN CENTRE INITIATIVES 2002/03

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1. The report outlines the proposals made by Hockley, Rayleigh and Rochford Chambers of Trade and seeks Members' views in respect of which bids should be progressed.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. An annual provision is made each year of £5,000 in respect of initiatives which would improve the economic environment of the town centres. The funds are used to support initiatives put forward by the Chambers of Trade.
- 2.2. In previous years, funds have been provided to install CCTV cameras in town centres, assistance towards provision of Christmas lights and a map of Hockley Town centre.
- 2.3. In the event of funds not being spent, they are carried forward to the next financial year. With regard to the allocations made last year, the works in Rayleigh have been undertaken and the sum of £2,580 has been paid. The Rochford allocation of £5,080 in respect of CCTV has not yet been spent as the works are to take place after the Town Centre Scheme has been completed. The allocation for Hockley of £3,330 for Town Centre maps has not been requested. In accordance with Council instructions, the three Chambers of Trade were asked to make bids for these funds with a deadline being set of 30 June.
- 2.4. All three Chambers have made bids for funds.

3 HOCKLEY CHAMBER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE

- 3.1. The Chamber has requested funding for additions to the Town Centre Enhancement Scheme in the form of trees (3/4 at a cost of approximately £400 each) waste bins in the Town Centre colour scheme ("several" at a cost of approximately £100 each) and a bench for public use with a suitably engraved plaque. The total amount of their bid is approximately £2,500.
- 3.2. In 2001/02, the Chamber bid included a town map to be partially sponsored by advertising by local traders. This map has never been

erected, and it is unlikely that the project will now go ahead. The funds for the map have not been paid to the Chamber and are included in the amount available for 2002/3.

4 RAYLEIGH AND DISTRICT CHAMBER OF TRADE

- 4.1. Rayleigh and District Chamber has made a bid for £5,000 to undertake a comprehensive survey of the Brook Road Industrial Estate for the purpose of formulating a development strategy. This proposal has arisen as a result of an application for change of use of a unit on the Estate, throwing into doubt the role of the Estate as a whole. The Chamber considers that the survey should be carried out urgently in order for it to be included in the District Plan.
- 4.2. Members will be aware that applications for non-industrial use of units on the Estate have been approved in the past.

5 ROCHFORD AND DISTRICT CHAMBER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE

- 5.1. The Rochford Chamber has made a bid for £4-5,000 for a Market Town Health Check.
- 5.2. The Market Town Health Check scheme is part of DEFRA's remit to the Countryside Agency, administered in Essex by the Essex Rural Development Centre who have outlined the potential benefits to the Chamber.
- 5.3. The scheme should be promoted by a community organisation such as the Chamber and, preferably, supported by the local authority. A steering group of people representing the town and its surrounds would oversee the project which would draw assistance from all types of organisation and business for a wide range of consultation. The questionnaire and responses would be analysed by a paid administrator, with the results bringing to light local needs which could form part of an action plan.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There is at present a budget provision of £5,000 for the current year plus £3,330 from last financial year in respect of works not undertaken in Hockley.
- 6.2. As may be seen from the above, the bids are in excess of the budget available.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1. It is proposed that the Committee **RECOMMENDS** to Council the level of grant to be allocated to each Chamber. (CD(F&ES))

Roger Crofts

Corporate Director Finance External Services)

Background Papers:

Letters from:

Hockley Chamber of Trade and Commerce – 21 June 2002 and 2 July 2002

Rayleigh & District Chamber of Trade – 26 March 2002

Rochford & District Chamber of Trade & Commerce – 20 June 2002.

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