

# Decision Pathway – Report



**PURPOSE:** Key decision

**MEETING:** Cabinet

**DATE:** 03 October 2023

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>City Centre &amp; High Streets Recovery and Renewal programme and Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for High Streets</b>	
<b>Ward(s)</b>	Citywide and with focus on Central, Ashley, Henbury, Whitchurch	
<b>Author:</b> Jason Thorne	<b>Job title:</b> Service Manager, City Centre & High Streets	
<b>Cabinet lead:</b> Cllr Craig Cheney, Deputy Mayor with responsibility for Finance, Governance & Performance	<b>Executive Director lead:</b> John Smith, Interim Executive Director, Growth & Regeneration	
<b>Proposal origin:</b> BCC Staff		
<b>Decision maker:</b> Cabinet Member <b>Decision forum:</b> Cabinet		
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To note progress and benefits being delivered as part of the City Centre &amp; High Streets Recovery and Renewal programme and to seek approval for the allocation of £1.5m of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for high streets and alignment to the City Centre &amp; High Streets Recovery and Renewal programme. The report sets out funding streams attracted to deliver the programme, including from Bristol City Council, the West of England Combined Authority and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF).</li> </ol>		
<b>Evidence Base:</b>		
<p>This report sets out the background, progress and benefits of the City Centre and High Streets Recovery programme, our approach to the allocation of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy for high streets and the allocation of High Streets Recovery &amp; Adaptions funding.</p>		
<b><u>City Centre &amp; High Streets Recovery and Renewal Programme</u></b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A number of funding sources have been allocated since 2021 as a result of the pandemic and have been brought together to enable the development of a programme of support. The City Centre &amp; High Streets Recovery and Renewal programme is delivering investment across the city in designated high streets, to safeguard and create businesses and employment opportunities, including within the retail, leisure, tourism, creative, events and hospitality sectors, across the day and night.</li> <li>The objectives of the programme are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reimagine and repurpose high streets to meet local need, improve the mix and variety of offer, support economic inclusion, facilitate access to jobs and skills development.</li> <li>Support new enterprises, which will help create new employment opportunities.</li> <li>Reduce vacancy rates by bringing commercial properties back into use.</li> <li>Increase footfall by reanimating our high streets, through locally distinctive and inclusive cultural and creative events and activities, meanwhile and innovative uses, and supporting a vibrant night-time economy.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>		

- Support existing high street businesses to assist recovery and growth by engaging businesses across the city. Providing advice and information on a range of business support services including sustainable and green business practices, Living Wage, Bristol Eating Better and skills
- Enhance the street scene and green infrastructure by improving the appearance of the areas and supporting biodiversity and climate priorities.

3. The programme includes the following citywide packages of support:

- **Business Development and Support** – 1:1 visits to high street businesses to understand their needs and provide support/signposting. Our two Business Development Officers have so far engaged with 977 businesses, 442 of these have been provided with support (52 with 3 hours or more) and 92 referrals have been made to other forms of support via YTKO, Business & Intellectual Property Centre, Growth Hub, Living Wage.
- A business information booklet has been produced to provide businesses with information on support available, see [Business Information Book 2023 \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/business-information-book-2023)
- A fortnightly business newsletter on support and initiatives is produced, businesses can sign-up via [www.bristol.gov.uk/businessnewsletter](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/businessnewsletter). The newsletter is sent to 2,647 recipients.
- The Cost of Living crisis is a significant concern to businesses, especially amongst the hospitality sector (pubs, bars, restaurants, cafes).
- **Vacant Commercial Property Grant Scheme** – businesses/organisations are able to apply for up to £10,000 of capital funding to bring a vacant commercial property back into use. 437 enquiries were received about the grant and 93 applications approved between November 2021 and July 2023. Further information on the scheme, including case studies of some of those businesses/organisations funded to date, can be found at [www.bristol.gov.uk/vcpg](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/vcpg)
- Applications have been approved in a range of locations, including the City Centre, Brislington, Church Rd (St George), Crow Lane, Chandos Rd, Stapleton Rd, East St, Fishponds Rd, Gloucester Rd, Filwood Broadway, Henleaze Rd, North St, St Marks Rd, Two Mile Hill and Whiteladies Rd. Types of businesses supported include gyms, bookshops, DIY, plants sales, hairdressers, art gallery, cooking school, clothes sales, furniture shop, arts and creative.
- Evaluation of the scheme will include businesses supported, jobs created/sustained and business rates income generated.
- The council acted as convenor to bring together M&S and Global Goals/Arts Space Lifespace to enable the meanwhile use of the former M&S building within Broadmead as Sparks Bristol. Sparks Bristol provides a practical and exciting way for people to engage in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (which the One City Economic Recovery & Renewal Strategy is based on) through education and creativity.
- **Marketing and Promotion** – including the Where's It To campaign promoting the independent business offer across the city's high streets, see [www.wheresittobristol.com](http://www.wheresittobristol.com), Bristol Rules Night Safety campaign, see [www.bristolnights.co.uk](http://www.bristolnights.co.uk), social media accounts - @ShopLocalBris Twitter, Shop Local Bristol Facebook and @ShopLocalBris Instagram have 23,258 followers.

4. The programme also includes geographically targeted interventions which focus on a more inclusive culture and events offer to attract people back to high streets, and street scene and green infrastructure enhancements to improve the look and feel. These interventions are focussed on the City Centre and nine local high streets - Brislington (Brislington Hill/Bristol Hill), Church Road (St George), East Street (Bedminster), Filton Avenue, Filwood Broadway, Shirehampton High Street, Stapleton Road, Stockwood (Hollway Road/ Stockwood Road), Two Mile Hill.

5. A summary of the engagement feedback and individual high street plans are available online at

[High street improvements \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/high-street-improvements). Each high street is unique, with a different range of businesses serving their local communities, people fed back that they would like to see a greater mix of shops, services and community facilities. People are concerned about the appearance of their high streets, with improved litter and recycling facilities and more greenery (trees or planters) being a priority. Anti-social behaviour, poor parking provision and illegal parking were raised in a few areas. Most areas were keen to see the introduction of a street market to provide an activity to attract more footfall to support existing businesses.

6. The city centre was the initial priority as the economic and cultural hub of the city and region. In common with other city centres, it is viewed as being most negatively impacted by the pandemic due the lockdowns and changes in working practices (people working from home). The focus has been on the delivery of family friendly and inclusive culture and event activities to boost footfall by encouraging people back into the city centre. The delivery of culture and events activity in the City Centre and 9 priority high streets (within the current programme) will come to an end in October. Street scene and greening interventions are in the planning stage and will be delivered in Spring 2024, subject to engagement, procurement and contractor availability. Stockwood will need a longer timescale due to the need to carry out more extensive highways maintenance works.
7. The culture and events activity has been diverse, within the city centre it has included Night Markets at St Nicholas, Better Sundays in Broadmead Markets, Little Amal in Old City and King Street, Grand Iftar on College Green, Light Festival, Windrush 75 Stories through Film in Broadmead (June 2023), Summer of Film Takeover events in Broadmead and Old City. In the priority high streets activity has included markets, lantern/community parades, public art workshops and installations. Further details can be found in Appendix A.
8. The investment in culture and events is seeing a good level of economic benefit and return. Evaluation is ongoing. Evaluation of 20 events delivered to date shows that they have generated 134,000 visits, an estimated £2.08m of spend and supported 320 paid creative/event professional jobs. Spend on the delivery of these events was £444,000.
9. Footfall information for parts of the city centre show a good level of recovery. St Nicholas Market and Broadmead footfall year to date (up to week 29) compared to the same period in 2022 was up 20.5% and 5.5% respectively. This compared to 3.2% increase for South West high streets and 6% increase for UK high streets. Evidence suggests that Park Street/Queens Road has seen a decline in footfall.
10. The council has successfully applied for £0.489m of funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) co-ordinated by the West of England Combined Authority, which has enabled the City Centre & High Streets Recovery and Renewal programme to be extended. This was the subject of a Cabinet decision in March 2023, see [UKSPF March 7 2023 FINAL LB.pdf \(bristol.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Strategic CIL for High Streets**

11. The allocation of £1.5m Strategic CIL for High Streets was agreed by Full Council on 15 February 2022 (reference GR10 Improvements to Local Centres). The £1.5m of CIL funding will be added to the council's existing City Centre & High Streets Recovery and Renewal programme, allowing it to continue with a focus on Bristol City Centre and support three new priority high streets.
12. Bristol City Centre continues to be priority area, as a driver of the city and region's economy, being a key focus for employment, retail, tourism, leisure, culture, education, transport and healthcare.
13. The three additional high streets prioritised are Ashley Road/Grosvenor Road in St Paul's, Crow Lane in Henbury and Oatlands Avenue in Whitchurch. These have been selected considering the following criteria:

- They are within areas of growth and regeneration and/or have significant housing being developed or proposed with planning permission
- Geographic spread
- The need to focus on new areas outside of the current programme
- Levels of deprivation
- The need to focus on a smaller number of priority areas given the focus of Strategic CIL. In line with CIL Regulations, Strategic CIL funding can only be spent on capital infrastructure projects which support growth in its area e.g. lighting, bus stops, cycle lanes, junctions, highway improvements, greening as part of wider public realm improvements

14. The four focus areas were highlighted to the Growth & Regeneration Scrutiny Commission in January 2023, after consultation had taken place with the Mayor's Office, who agreed this approach.
15. Up to £0.225m (15%) of the £1.5m will be allocated to the development and delivery of plans, including the recruitment of a dedicated part-time High Street Design & Delivery Officer.
16. The funding will be allocated to the development and delivery of tailored high street action plans for the areas identified based on criteria for example number of business units, vacant properties and levels of deprivation.
17. Work will start on the new priority areas in October 2023 and run until September 2025, subject to community and business engagement, detailed designs, costings and contractor availability.

#### **High Streets Recovery & Adaptions Fund**

18. Officers are in the process of preparing a bid for further High Streets Recovery & Adaptions funding of up to £0.850m from the West of England Combined Authority. The funding will be aligned to the Combined Authority's Strategic Framework and delivery of the City Centre & High Streets Recovery and Renewal programme.
19. Our emerging themes for the funding are aligned to our existing high street priorities and to the Combined Authority's Strategic Framework and are being developed in partnership with Regeneration colleagues and the Night Time Economy Advisor, and include:

City Centre and High Streets street scene and greening  
 East Street Community Hub, including Night Time Economy  
 City Centre and High Streets Culture and Events, including Night Economy animation  
 High Streets Going Green with a focus on greening businesses to save costs

#### **Profile of funding for Strategic CIL and UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF)**

20. Appendix A sets out the profiled expenditure of the £7.014m funding supporting delivery of the City Centre & High Streets Recovery and Renewal programme, which includes a forecast profile for 2023/24 to 2025/26 for the Strategic CIL and UK SPF funding detailed in this report.

#### **Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:**

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the approach to the allocation of £1.5m of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for high streets and alignment to the City Centre & High Streets Recovery and Renewal programme.
2. Authorise the Executive Director for Growth & Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member and Deputy Mayor, Finance, Governance & Performance to take all steps required to spend £1.5m of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), including procuring and awarding contracts over the key decision threshold, as outlined in this report.
3. Authorise the Executive Director for Growth & Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member and Deputy Mayor, Finance, Governance & Performance and s.151 Officer, to bid for and if successful, to accept, allocate and spend the High Streets Recovery & Adaptions funding of up to £0.850m from the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), including procuring and awarding contracts over the key decision threshold, as outlined in this report.
4. Note the funding will be aligned to WECA's Strategic Framework and delivery of the City Centre & High Streets Recovery and Renewal programme and overall approval for Recovery & Adaptation Fund for high streets is delegated to each Local Authority's CEO and reported to the Combined Authority's Joint Committee.

#### **Corporate Strategy alignment:**

The City Centre & High Streets Recovery and Renewal programme supports the delivery of the Corporate Strategy 2022-2027. The strategy states 'In line with a recommendation from our 2020 Citizens' Assembly to re-imagine the places we live so that they are people centred, we want people to live in well-designed neighbourhoods where local high streets are thriving and supporting local economic wealth, people can work and play safely, as well as have access to healthy green spaces and sports facilities. We want all people to have social and cultural experiences that reflect their own identity and life. Evolving a shared narrative and understanding of the history that has shaped Bristol will strengthen the fabric of our communities and sense of belonging, unifying the city in recovery.'

The strategy also states 'Our ambition is for Bristol to be a city of sustainable communities that combines housing, employment, retail, education, training and leisure functions, all linked by a strong public transport network. We know that both major infrastructure and changes in behaviour take time, but over the next five years we will make progress towards becoming a better-connected city that enables people to move around efficiently, with increased transport options that are accessible to and inclusive of all. We will deliver an improved sustainable and resilient transport network that supports Bristol's vibrant independent local centres and neighbourhoods and connects to an attractive and thriving city centre.'

#### **City Benefits:**

1. The programme helps to deliver Bristol's challenges are set out in the One City Economic Recovery & Renewal Strategy (October 2020), which identifies key priorities for the City Centre as a key destination for work, leisure, tourism and investment, and to protect and enhance the viability of high streets.
2. Footfall information for parts of the city centre show a good level of recovery. St Nicholas Market and Broadmead footfall year to date (up to week 29) compared to the same period in 2022 was up 20.5% and 5.5% respectively. This compared to 3.2% increase for South West high streets and 6% increase for UK high streets.
3. Evaluation of 17 culture and event activities delivered to date shows that they have generated 120,513 visits, an estimated £1.91m of spend and supported 246 paid creative/event professional jobs.
4. The commercial property vacancy rate for April to June 2023 was 9.02%. While this is a slight increase from the last reported figure (8.85%) it remains consistent with the longer-term trend of around 9%. Similarly, the commercial property vacancy rate for the city centre has increased to 15.01% (from 14.42%) but remains consistent with the longer-term trend of between 14% and 15%.
5. Examples of qualitative feedback captured from culture and events activities demonstrates some of the impacts on equalities and health:
  - "Such a wonderful afternoon, learning about the local people, cultures and sharing food. Stapleton

Road often has such a negative perception, this was a truly magical way to showcase the community, bridge divides and promote greater integration in East city. This should be a permanent fixture in Bristol!”

- “This was an incredible event. So important to bridge the existing divide in BS5 and contribute to integration between different communities. It’s exactly the type of things needed to facilitate dialogue. I will definitely come back. The event has definitely allowed me to enter in spaces I had never thought of entering before. I am planning to get cushions made at the kora centre, eat Afghan food after my yoga class at 238 and go on an evening out for Jamaican food with friends who were not on the tour. I loved all of it.”
- “I lived in Stockwood up until I was 25 my parents still live there I came back especially for the market. Was great seeing old friends and neighbours.”
- “I grew up in Stockwood and this is just what we need for our community, it was very busy and a great atmosphere, my only suggestion is to keep advertising it. Absolutely loved it.
- “Welcome and engaging teams. Stockwood has felt neglected and drab thus has injected life into the area and made me smile!”

**Consultation Details:**

1. Mayor’s Office
2. Growth & Regeneration Scrutiny Commission – January 2023
3. S106 and CIL Project Manager

**Background Documents:**

- [Full Council 15 February 2022](#)
- [Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission, 25 January 2023, agenda item 13](#)
- [One City Economic Recovery and Renewal Strategy](#)

<b>Revenue Cost</b>	£0.089m	<b>Source of Revenue Funding</b>	UK SPF
<b>Capital Cost</b>	£1.5m £0.400m	<b>Source of Capital Funding</b>	Strategic CIL UK SPF
<b>One off cost</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Ongoing cost</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Saving Proposal</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Income generation proposal</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

**Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:**

**1. Finance Advice:**

Funding totalling £5.025m has already been secured towards delivery of the City Centre & High Streets Recovery and Renewal programme (see Appendix A). The additional £1.5m SCIL and £0.489m of UK SPF funding detailed below, would take the total secured funding to £7.014m.

Approval is sought to the approach outlined in the report to determine how the £1.5m of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) for high streets, agreed by Full Council on 15 February 2022, will be spent. The use of SCIL is subject to the activities meeting the criteria for SCIL.

It also seeks permission to align the SCIL, as well as £0.489m UK SPF funding approved by Cabinet in March 2023, to the City Centre & High Streets Recovery and Renewal programme.

It further seeks permission to bid for up to £0.850m High Streets Recovery & Adaptions funding from West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and if successful, for delegated authority to be awarded to the Executive Director for Growth & Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member and Deputy Mayor, Finance, Governance & Performance and s.151 Officer to accept and allocate such funding. Any additional funding secured will be aligned to WECA’s Strategic Framework and delivery of the City Centre & High Streets Recovery and Renewal programme. Details of the spend to date and the forecast spend to 2025/26 for the City Centre & High Streets Recovery and

Renewal programme secured funding totalling £7.014m, is set out in Appendix A.		
<b>Finance Business Partner:</b> Alison Bennett, Interim Finance Business Partner, Growth & Regeneration, 20 September 2023		
<b>2. Legal Advice:</b> S216 of the Planning Act 2008 and Regulation 59 of the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (as amended) permit the use of strategic CIL for the support of development in the Council's area by permitting the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure, such as open spaces, parks and green spaces.		
The proposals contained in this report to allocate Strategic CIL funds to the City Centre and three high streets, being identified as areas of growth and regeneration, is permitted by the Act and the Regulations.		
<b>Legal Team Leader:</b> Joanne Mansfield – Property, Planning and Transport, 5 September 2023		
<b>3. Implications on IT:</b> I can see no implications on IT in regard to this activity.		
<b>IT Team Leader:</b> Alex Simpson, Lead Enterprise Architect, 3 August 2023		
<b>4. HR Advice:</b> There are no HR implications evident.		
<b>HR Partner:</b> Celia Williams, HR Business Partner – Growth & Regeneration, 27 July 2023		
<b>EDM Sign-off</b>	John Smith, Interim Executive Director, Growth & Regeneration	9 August 2023
<b>Cabinet Member sign-off</b>	Cllr Craig Cheney, Deputy Mayor with responsibility for Finance, Governance & Performance	9 August 2023
<b>For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off</b>	Mayor's Office	4 September 2023

<b>Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix D – Risk assessment</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix G – Financial Advice</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix H – Legal Advice</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix I – Exempt Information</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix J – HR advice</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix K – ICT</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix L – Procurement</b>	<b>NO</b>