



EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL



TOWN COUNCIL meeting 14th NOVEMBER 2022 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall

Item 6 – Wychavon Evesham Town Council Joint Projects

In recent years, the Town Council has financially supported development projects in conjunction with the District Council.

Wychavon District Council formally requests £15,000 for 2023/24 to carry out planned projects.

Steve Knight, Place Project Officer at Wychavon will present to the meeting and answer questions. His report is attached.

The Council is asked if wishes to agree to the request.

Jo Adams
Town Clerk

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Abbey Lane Court
Evesham, WR11 4BY

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Our Ref: SK/ETC

4 November 2022

Ms Jo Adams
Evesham Town Clerk
Evesham Town Council
Unit 6 - Abbey Lane Court
Abbey Lane
Evesham
WR11 4BY

Dear Ms Adams

Re: Evesham Town Council/ Wychavon District Council Joint Projects Report 2022/23 and proposed projects for 2023/24

I have the pleasure to enclose the Wychavon District Council (WDC) Regeneration team's report to Evesham Town Council (ETC). This report reflects the period since the WDC Marketing and Events officer's previous report submitted in November 2021 and proposals for continued joint working in 2023/24.



Steve Knight
Place Projects Manger
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Executive Summary

Over the past 12 years, Wychavon officers have submitted this annual report to Evesham Town Council and in that time, our joint ambition to improve the viability and vibrancy of Evesham Town Centre has been consistent. The strategy has been to provide immediate support for the town whilst the longer-term activities of securing new structural investment are undertaken.

2022 has seen the country start its recovery following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and whilst other factors have also contributed to hit the economy hard, there have been encouraging signs with business openings, events occurring and footfall rising.

As per previous years, Wychavon District Council (WDC) allocated £35,000 to Evesham and Evesham Town Council (ETC) matched this with a further contribution of £15,000 to be used as an enabling resource to lever additional resources from elsewhere. Evesham Town Council was asked to support three specific project themes:

Attracting Inward Investment (£3,000); Business Support Grants (£3,000); and Local Distinctiveness (£9,000).

The combined ETC and WDC contributions provided a base operating budget of over £100,000.

This fund was provisionally allocated to promote Evesham's investment potential nationally, to developers and investors; bring greater focus on marketing Evesham to its visitor economy and support festivals and events; provide start-up or business development grants to Evesham businesses and engage businesses and schools to promote and help fund new apprenticeships.

Following the launch of the Evesham Inward Investment Prospectus in 2022 and the subsequent creation of the Evesham Place Bord, there are now new mechanisms to assist the town via new projects to complement the traditional activities funded by both councils.

It is in this collective context we respectfully request that Evesham Town Council contributes to funding the continuation of this work in 2023/24 on the following basis:

- Inward Investment – £3,000;
- Business Start-up / Development Grants and Skills Development – £3,000; and
- Local Distinctiveness – £9,000.

On behalf of Wychavon District Council, I would be most grateful if Evesham Town Council would kindly contribute to the above projects for delivery in 2023/24 and respectfully request a total contribution of **£15,000** is made to the overall project.

Looking back

Below are the outcomes of projects jointly funded by Evesham Town Council (ETC) and Wychavon District Council (WDC) in the financial year 2022/23.

Business Start-up / Development Grants and Skills Development

Skills Development

Since October 2021 WDC have helped 5 businesses specifically based in Evesham Town, each business has received a £2,000 grant to help with the cost of employing an apprentice.

This grant is open to all businesses within Wychavon who employ an apprentice for 12 months or more, who fulfil specific criteria- such as size of business, as this is aimed at the SME sector, up to 250 employees.

We work with Worcestershire Apprenticeships who organise the skill show and the apprentice show, both are held at Sixways, we help to promote these to the schools in Evesham, and also help man the shows on the day. These shows are attended by both TDM's and Prince Henry's high school, we do offer funding to help with transportation to the shows, if the schools require it, in past years pre pandemic we fully funded coaches for both schools.

Wychavon has given £160 to each of the 3 schools in Evesham who wanted to take part in the STEM schools challenge, without this funding they would not be able to participate, this enables primary school children within Wychavon to take part in the Worcestershire-wide engineering challenge.

Wychavon also offers a bursary to eligible apprentices who live in the district of Wychavon - we have paid £500 to 5 apprentices who live in Evesham, this is to help towards the costs of travel, tools or clothing.

Business start-up and business growth grants

There continues to be a steady demand for business grant funding from new businesses and established businesses seeking funding to support growth.

Business start-up grant

Our start-up grant offer remains at £1,000 for home-based businesses and £1,500 for businesses in or taking commercial premises.

We work in partnership with the Enterprising Worcestershire programme which provides a package of advice and support for start-ups. New businesses can apply online for Wychavon's grant and are eligible if they have completed some start up training with Enterprising Worcestershire.

The start-up scheme is aimed at the business-to-consumer sectors that are not eligible for European grant funding. The details of our schemes are [here](#)

Business growth grant

Our business growth grant has funded 3 grants of £1,000 to Evesham businesses this financial year:

- Adder Bookkeeping – office equipment
- Arora Design - marketing
- Kaz & Annie's Ceramic – studio equipment



European Regional Development Fund business grants

We have contributed to ERDF programmes (as outlined in last year's report) until they finish in 2023. We continue to work with partners on these programmes and to award funding to local businesses. Most of these funds are now fully spent.

The Pillar

The Pillar business hub comprises of 5 high spec office units. Details of the centre are on our website [here](#). In addition to high spec facilities with flexible terms, the centre will offer business advice and support to early-stage micro businesses and successfully held a Growth Hub clinic recently.



Inward Investment

The Planning Application for the restoration of Evesham Public Hall was approved in the spring and the tendering process to commission specialist contractors to undertake the work is underway.

The Government announced a second round of the Levelling Up Fund in April and it was decided that another attempt to secure funds towards the redevelopment of the entire shopping centre would be made, using Wychavon's commitment to fund the restoration of the Public Hall as match funding. An application for £20m towards a total redevelopment cost of £95m was submitted 1 August. As yet we have not heard if the application has been successful.

At Vale Park South, the 10 small business units completed in 2021 are now fully occupied, work progressed on the development of a 30,000sqft unit for MP Filtri and Wychavon funded an adjacent speculative 22,000sqft unit to benefit from economies of scale. These were completed



September 2022 and are now being fitted out.

Work to develop phase two of the land accessed via Conference Way has commenced. Road infrastructure is being constructed to access this land and work to build two 50,000sqft and one 60,000sqft speculative units has started.

Construction of an Adventure Golf and Rope Walk attraction is underway at The Valley and the Avon Navigation Trust is due to start construction of the long-awaited landing stage on the River Avon. Eagle One reported that they were close to submitting an application for 60 holiday chalets which formed part of their original outline permission granted in 2012.

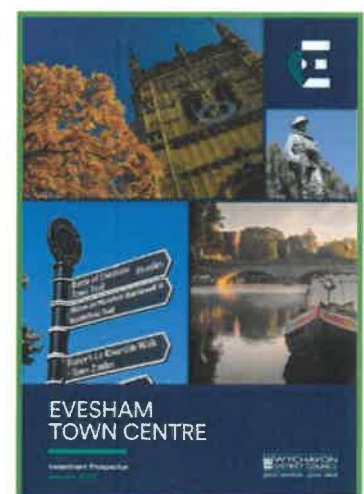


Prospectus and Place Board

In May 2022, WDC were proud to launch the Inward Investment Prospectus for Evesham after working closely with CBRE and Thinkingplace. The comprehensive document's aim is to help generate future investment into the town and ensure the right type, scale and diversity of development comes forward over the next 20 years. The prospectus identifies primary opportunity or change zone sites as well as 'softer', non-development-specific opportunities for intervention.

In addition to the development sites, place branding experts Thinkingplace led on the creation of a 'vision' for Evesham and a set of strategic objectives to help achieve this vision. The objectives revolve around developing Evesham as a leisure destination; enhancing the evening economy; showcasing a coherent Evesham offer; positioning Evesham as a centre for the sub-region; recognising the town as somewhere that welcomes walkers and cyclists; and climate resilience.

To help meet these objectives, Thinkingplace recommended the creation of Place Boards consisting of local stakeholders who would identify projects that would help implement the vision. Developed from the original steering groups, the Evesham Place Board has since been set up and works towards the creation of an action plan.



The UK Shared Prosperity Fund

In June 2022, the Wychavon district was told it had been allocated £3,999,058 of UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF). However, despite the allocation, WDC were required to submit an investment plan by 1 August 2022 explaining how the money would be spent, why and what would be achieved during the timescale of the funding – between April 2022 and March 2025. At the time of writing, we have yet to hear if the plan has been accepted and when the monies will be released.

All objectives within the plan will need to meet various outcomes and outputs but also features a split between capital and revenue spend. The Evesham Place Board will play a leading role in identifying projects and recommended them to WDC to receive funding from the UKSPF.

Local Distinctiveness

ETC's contribution of £9,000 allows Evesham to typically have the pride of offering an unrivalled array of events within the county – with widespread appeal to a number of audiences. 2022 saw the return of many of the town's favourite events with Covid-19 restrictions being removed enabling organisers to have more understanding over what's viable. Despite this good news, an increase in costs for services have most definitely impacted events' finances meaning support is as important as ever.



The events that took place included:

Battle of Evesham Medieval Market | Battle of Evesham Festival | Battle of Evesham Banquet | Evesham Angling Festival | Evesham Walking Festival | Festival of Words | Evesham Christmas Lights Switch on (upcoming, 25 November) | Evesham Christmas Artisan Fayre (NEW and upcoming, 26 & 27 November) | Free Outdoor Cinema | Vale of Evesham Food & Drink Festival (NEW) | Queen's Jubilee street parties | Wartime in the Vale | Asparagus Coach Tours (as part of the Vale of Evesham Asparagus season | Tuesday and Sunday Bike Nights

The value of initiatives and events is aided with access to footfall counter software across areas within the district. This has been a useful tool to monitor the recovery of the town and will be extremely helpful for future marketing with the information available. The table below shows that according to the software, all bar one months have shown an increase in visits compared to the previous year. Unfortunately, data for pre-pandemic isn't available but the 2020 information will be used as the base rate to improve from.

Month	Year	Site Visits (000s)	Year	Site Visits (000s)	% change Yr-Yr	Year	Site Visits (000s)	% change Yr-Yr
January	2020	-	2021	159	-	2022	304	91%
February	2020	-	2021	141	-	2022	293	108%
March	2020	-	2021	173	-	2022	357	106%
April	2020	-	2021	218	-	2022	322	48%
May	2020	152	2021	224	47%	2022	345	54%
June	2020	185	2021	217	17%	2022	382	76%
July	2020	166	2021	236	42%	2022	383	62%
August	2020	230	2021	209	-9%	2022	353	69%
September	2020	230	2021	296	29%	2022	384	30%
October	2020	244	2021	280	15%	2022	-	-
November	2020	207	2021	304	47%	2022	-	-
December	2020	233	2021	302	30%	2022	-	-

Evesham has been heavily included in marketing material and publicity with campaigns run regional printed publications including magazines and bedroom browsers, together with a host of local publications and online blogs. In addition, the town has received national promotion through features within the country's largest newspapers via events, namely the Battle of Evesham.



The collaboration with Thinkingplace as part of the prospectus project accelerated the desire to expand the photography library for the town, meaning there is now a new suite of images that can be used for the tourism season in 2023 to entice visitors.

Social media continues to demonstrate its value and effectiveness with many events and initiatives promoted through paid adverts on the

Worcestershire's Vale & Spa Facebook account, enabling great interaction and engagement. This was best demonstrated through the inaugural Vale of Evesham Food & Drink Festival which predominately focussed its marketing on Facebook spend. The result was a hugely successful event with thousands of visitors over the weekend.

During the upcoming festive period, Evesham's businesses and events will again be promoted via the 'be curious this Christmas' campaign. Originally ran in 2021, the campaign aimed to encourage people to rediscover their High Street. With a lot of branding work already established, WDC will look to expand upon this again in the build up to Christmas 2022.

Without the negative impact of nation-wide lockdowns, Evesham will get a chance to experience the Christmas High Street Safari QR-code trail to get people around all parts of the town centre running from November and into the New Year.

The Worcestershire's Vale & Spa website now accommodates a shopping directory, showing the latest town centre businesses. This will be a key competent o the Christmas campaign too and can be searched for via the type of business they are.

Request for Evesham Town Council's Support

2022/23 has seen continued progress on many fronts with significant items including the Evesham Inward Investment Prospectus and the announcement of the UKSPF. It's important to continue to momentum of the success and build on the foundations created to ensure 2023/24 accelerates success measures. Thus, the following projects are proposed for ETC and WDC to fund jointly:

Inward Investment

The Council continues to press for an agreement with landowners to enable an off-road walking and cycling route connection between Evesham Town Centre and The Valley. This continues to be a priority and resources have been allocated to fund active travel in the Council's UKSPF Investment Plan.

The priorities for Wychavon's plan are to invest in Communities and Place, Local Businesses and People & Skills. This will include business grants of up to £10,000 for small businesses as well as funding allocations to each of the recently established town centre Place Boards.

Wychavon is committed to restoring Evesham Public Hall regardless of outcome of the Levelling Up Application and but hopefully this will lead to an early commencement of work on the wider site with the support of Levelling Up Funds. Until we hear the outcome of the applications (due autumn 2022) we are continuing with preparatory work in the background.

Business Start-up / Development Grants and Skills Development

WDC will continue to offer a business start-up scheme and support new businesses. Grant support and advice will also be provided to established businesses. It is anticipated that similar schemes will be offered as part of the package of funding via the Shared Prosperity Fund.

The meeting rooms at The Pillar in the Civic Centre will continue to be used as a business centre for business advice sessions and workshops.

Skills Development

This funding will remain in place, to enable us to continue with this level of funding support for the businesses and apprentices based in Wychavon, and specifically in Evesham.

It is anticipated with the level of apprentice vacancies now being registered - between 30 and 40 a week within Wychavon - the number of businesses and apprentices we support will increase over the next 12 months.

Local Distinctiveness

To assist with the traditional events calendar for Evesham, featuring the return of events yet to run following the pandemic, and explore new events to complement the diverse offering that has successfully been established.

Build upon the existing destination marketing to showcase Evesham as a safe, enjoyable and multi-accessible destination for all the family by utilising the footfall counter software to determine opportunities for likely audiences.

Ensure the town of Evesham benefits from the milestone anniversary of the Blossom Trail, which will be running it's 40th edition in 2023. A large promotional campaign will run for this to encourage visits to the area, and WDC will subsequently look to guide these visitors to the town. A press familiarisation visit is also being explored for the spring to target individuals and influencers with large followers and exposure, to understand what the area has to offer.


The projects recommended by the Evesham Place Board will no doubt have local distinctiveness at its heart and presents an exciting time for the town with a new vision and direction.

Summary

The WDC Regeneration Team would be most grateful if ETC would kindly contribute to the above projects for delivery in 2023/24 and respectfully requests a total contribution of **£15,000**. The ETC contribution will heavily assist with the projects that WDC are committed to funding, to the value of over £100,000.

Finally, I sincerely thank Evesham Town Council for its support in my capacity as the Marketing and Events officer. I look forward to continuing and developing the close working relationship between ETC and WDC in 2023/24.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Knight
Place Projects Manager