

17<sup>th</sup> July 2014

**Agenda Item: 7**

## **REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, HIGHWAYS**

### **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE EXPRESS TRANSIT:**

### **NOTTINGHAM TO TON EXTENSION, UPDATE TO SPECIAL HARDSHIP FUND**

## **CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS**

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider an additional contribution of £25,000 to the established Special Hardship Fund that has been set up to complement the current Financial Assistance Package in place for Local Traders and Business.

### **Background**

2. Members will recall that at the Transport and Highways Committee Meetings of October 2013 and March 2014 it was agreed to contribute £25,000 on each occasion towards the NET special hardship fund.
3. The Special Hardship Fund is in place to complement the Financial Assistance Package and is jointly funded by Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council with the fund being administered by Broxtowe Borough Council. This follows representation from local business supported by the Beeston Improvement District (BID) who put forward the suggestion to address short term cash flow issues creating hardship that could have a terminal effect on more marginal businesses within the identified FAP area. It is intended to keep the Hardship fund available to business within the previously defined FAP area only in keeping with previous agreements as essentially these will be the businesses considered to be at most risk of ceasing to trade as a consequence of the works.
4. Since the inception of the fund in October 2013 sixteen local business have benefitted from it in providing direct support where financial difficulties are being experienced for example in terms of purchasing stock or being in rent arrears.
5. Given that works are continuing to impact upon local business it has been suggested that an additional £25,000 be allocated by the County Council, to be matched by The City Council towards the hardship fund to cover the period through to the end of significant town centre works.

## **Reason for Recommendation**

6. It is recognised that the period during the NET extension construction is a worrying one for some local business proprietors due to the works. Despite many initiatives to alleviate the fears and maintain a healthy shopping environment along the High Road there is evidence that a number of smaller businesses in the area are operating at the margins of profitability. This has led to some short term cash flow problems which the FAP has been able to resolve.
7. As a result of the extended time of significant construction works it is considered appropriate for NCC to contribute a further £25,000 to the established Special Hardship Fund to continue to help those in most need of support during the works.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

8. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Financial Comments**

9. It is intended that the additional £25,000 contribution towards the established special hardship fund be made from existing budgets held within the Highways division.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

10. It is recommended that

Nottinghamshire County Council makes an additional contribution of £25,000 (subject to an equal contribution by the Nottingham City Council). This is in addition to the previous contribution of £25,000 made by NCC for the now established Special Hardship Fund with Broxtowe Borough Council continuing to administer which will assist businesses in most need of support within the identified Financial Assistance Package area.

### **Andrew Warrington**

Service Director (Highways)

### **For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

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**Constitutional Comments (SR 01/07/14)**

Committee have the power to decide the recommendations.

**Financial Implications (GB 24/6/14)**

The financial implications are set out in paragraph 9 of the report

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

Beeston North

Beeston South & Attenborough

Chilwell & Toton

