



AGENDA ITEM: 10

SUMMARY

Report for:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	29 June 2015
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Hemel Hempstead Ambassadors – start-up funding
Contact:	<p>Cllr Andrew Williams, Leader of the Council</p> <p>Author/Responsible Officer</p> <p>Chris Taylor, Strategic Planning and Regeneration Group Manager X3405</p> <p>Rebecca Oblein, Strategic Planning and Regeneration Team Leader X3482</p>
Purpose of report:	To request £140k to support the Hemel Hempstead Ambassadors initiative for a 2 year period. The Ambassadors is a continuation of the reputational work to raise the profile of the area to potential investors. The aim is that after the initial 2 year period the Ambassadors will be self-financing through its membership scheme.
Recommendations	<p>1. That Cabinet recommend Council to approve a supplementary estimate of £140,000, funded from the Dacorum Development Reserve, in order to finance the Ambassadors programme for two years</p>
Corporate objectives:	The Ambassadors programmes supports the corporate objectives of Regeneration and Community Capacity through its purpose; to raise the profile of and to promote Hemel Hempstead, and by association the rest of Dacorum, as a great place to invest, to attract

	businesses, developers and talent (among others) into the area resulting in a thriving local economy.
Implications:	<p><u>Financial</u> Funding of £140,000 to cover the start up costs and the employment of a 'Place Manager' for 2 years, to support the development of the Hemel Hempstead Ambassadors.</p> <p><u>Value for Money</u> Numerous economic and reputational benefits at low additional cost to the council. It is the intention that the Ambassadors will self-fund after the initial 2 year period.</p>
'Value For Money Implications'	
Risk Implications	<p>Reputational – Failure to get the scheme to self-fund after the 2 years seed funding.</p> <p>The Council would become a member of the company (limited by guarantee) being established to run the initiative and would appoint a minority of the Directors of the company but would have no ongoing liability. A report will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting to seek authority for this.</p>
Equalities Implications	Equality impact assessment to be carried out.
Health And Safety Implications	None identified
Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments	<p>Monitoring Officer:</p> <p>It is envisaged in the report that the Hemel Hempstead Ambassadors will form a not for profit company limited by guarantee, with the Council being a member of the company. This is an option which can be considered by Cabinet at a future date when members can be advised of the advantages and disadvantages of setting up a company vehicle.</p> <p>S.151 Officer</p> <p>There are sufficient funds within the Dacorum Development Reserve to fund this programme for two years, and the proposed usage is consistent with the approved purpose of the Reserve.</p> <p>Throughout the initial two-year period, the Place Manager should work closely with colleagues within Financial Services to monitor the longer-term sustainability of the project and the feasibility of it becoming self-funding. A plan should be developed which indicates key milestones for the associated costs transferring away from the</p>

	Council and into the Ambassadors company vehicle.
Consultees:	
Background papers:	N/A

BACKGROUND

1. In April 2014 a presentation was made to the Maylands Partnership about the Burnley Bondholders Scheme, by the Chief Executive of Burnley Borough Council. The aim of the scheme is to get the local business community to be Ambassadors for the area, therefore raising its profile as a place to live and invest. The scheme has been running for 3 years and brings in approx. £75k per annum to be re-invested in activities which continually market Burnley to investors.
2. From this meeting discussions were held with senior business leaders in Dacorum to decide if a similar scheme would be advantageous locally.
3. A consultant was contracted to carry out exploratory work to see what current opinions are from business, of the area and to draw up the place 'story' which could be used to underpin a scheme.
4. A number of business and stakeholder workshops were carried out to ascertain current perspectives of the area, what are its strengths and weaknesses and what it is we should be making more of in promotional terms, see appendix 1 for full results of this work.
5. The outcome was that Hemel Hempstead is the "hero" in the area in economic terms with the rest of the borough benefiting from Hemel Hempstead doing well, gaining investment and having a much improved reputation in the business and investment world.
6. The story of Hemel Hempstead was developed into four themes and a narrative written, the themes are;
 - a. **Access all areas** –connectivity of road/rail/airports and relative location.
 - b. **Centre of Business and Enterprise** - location, Maylands, skills and employment, commercial property stock, industrial history etc.
 - c. **Active and green** – Countryside, canals, sports attractions, market towns and villages
 - d. **Living choice and value** – relating to pace of life, family amenities, affordable to desirable, complementary offers (MK, Watford, St Albans and London).

7. From this work a place board was formed from business leaders and the decision was taken to proceed with an Ambassadors programme for Hemel Hempstead.
8. A draft information pack has been pulled together which details elements of the scheme including the Ambassadors vision, the place story (this will be developed further into a promotional booklet), board members, aims of the scheme and a potential calendar of events (please note this is a live working document) see appendix 2
9. This programme will aim to launch Sept/Oct 2015 (dependant on recruitment) and needs DBC's support in the initial 2 years to fund the Place Manager (to run the scheme, develop the membership, arrange promotional events outside of the borough and to organise the membership benefits) with a small revenue budget;

Proposed budget (for 24 months commencing Set/Oct 2015)

2 years officer salary including on costs - £80k
Year 1 revenue budget (to upfront fund initial scheme collateral £40k
Year 2 revenue budget to support membership income - £20k

Total requirement - £140k

It is proposed that Cabinet agree a supplementary estimate for a total of £140k, to be drawn from the Dacorum Development Reserve over two years.

- 10 It is likely that the Ambassadors will set up a company – not for profit and limited by guarantee - to operate this initiative and council staff will assist in this process. In due course, assuming that the funding is secured, that the Place Manager would become an employee of the company. In the interim it is proposed that the Place Manager be a temporary employee of the Council, transferring across at some point during the two year period.
- 11 The Memorandum and Articles of the company, together with its constitution and rules of operation, will ensure that all monies are spent on proper purposes and that it will not be exposed to unreasonable risk.
- 12 The Ambassadors are keen to ensure Council involvement but without it being seen as part of the Council. They have suggested that the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive be members of the Board, though would not have a controlling interest. As members of the company liability would be restricted to £1.
- 13 The proposal is that the Ambassadors would organise a series of events and presence at opportunities where the strengths and attractions of Hemel Hempstead can be championed and publicised.

- 14 All matters concerning the Council's membership and involvement in the company will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting for consideration.