

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Scrutiny Committee
Date: 21st September 2016
Report of: Executive Member for Economic Growth, Environment and Infrastructure

Report Title

Christmas Lights Update

Summary

This report provides an update on funding for Christmas Lights in 2016 for Altrincham, Ashton on Mersey, Hale, Sale, Sale Moor, Stretford, Partington, Timperley and Urmston centres.

Recommendation(s)

To note the contents of the report.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Martin Ledson, Town Centres Manager

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Background Papers: N/A

Financial Impact:	
Legal Impact:	
Human Resources Impact:	
Asset Management Impact:	
E-Government Impact:	
Risk Management Impact:	
Health and Safety Impact:	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Trafford Council's approach to Christmas lights in 2016 is to provide staff support to community and business groups to organise crowdfunding or fundraising campaigns for Christmas lights in their individual town centres and shopping areas (see Appendix 1).
- 1.2 City Illuminations was appointed by the One Trafford Partnership to be the Christmas lights supplier for Trafford for the next three years. Options and costings have been provided for Christmas lighting displays in each of the identified centres. The information is being used by the groups to plan their fundraising campaigns.
- 1.3 A Community Information Pack has been prepared and has been circulated to the local groups. This includes an explanation of the approach, technical information and FAQs. A series of meetings has taken place with each of the groups.
- 1.4 Potential headline sponsors are also being approached to secure additional funding. Following an initial letter, follow up calls are being made to explain the proposals and benefits.

2. Options and Fundraising Proposals for Each Town Centre

- 2.1 The following section summarises the lighting proposals and fundraising plans in each of the town and local centres.
- 2.2 The Town Centres Team has worked closely with City Illuminations to develop a set of options that can be flexible depending on the amount of funding raised. Research was carried out to determine which would be the most suitable platform for running the campaigns and the advantages and disadvantages were compared. Following the completion of this exercise, groups have been encouraged to use crowdfunder.co.uk because one of the benefits is that "stretch targets" can be set. This means that because there is uncertainty about the final amount of funding that will be raised, groups can structure the fundraising so once the initial target is met (for the least expensive option), the campaigns can continue for higher priced options.
- 2.3 In some centres it has been necessary to develop alternative options for lighting displays compared to that which has been provided in previous years. This is because many of the street lighting columns can no longer have lighting displays fixed to them due to changing legislation on the way electrical connections can be made and the L.E.D. rollout across the borough. In Altrincham, Timperley and Urmston there are a number of higher specification columns that can accommodate the installation of Christmas lights.

2.4 **Altrincham Town Centre Summary**

As in previous years, the Stamford Quarter will be providing festive displays throughout the Shopping Centre. In August, the Altrincham Unlimited Board agreed funding for a comprehensive lighting scheme covering most of the main areas, including:

- Permanent pea lights in trees on Stamford New Road. These can also be lit throughout the year.
- Lighting on higher specification columns on Stamford New Road and Railway Street.
- Tree lighting on Cross Street, Shaws Road, Regent Road and George Street.
- Overhead displays on The Downs and George Street.
- Gateway features on Ashley Road.
- Christmas tree on junction of George Street, Shaws Road and Cross Street.

Indicative costings: £30,000

2.5 **Hale**

Hale Business Forum is to approach local businesses for contributions rather than run a crowdfunding campaign, as this approach was successful last year and they feel that crowdfunding would not be successful in their area.

Options include:

- Small real Christmas trees fixed to properties (funded by individual businesses).
- Overhead displays from appropriate properties on either side of Ashley Road.
- 30 ft real Christmas tree near the Millennium Clock.
- Possible magenta floodlights (already purchased and installed) in three trees.

Note: Hale Business Forum has expressed concerns over the reduced level of provision that can be facilitated compared to previous years and the increased costs of providing new electrical supplies because connections cannot be made to the street lighting columns.

Indicative costings: £7,500

2.6 **Timperley**

Discussions have taken place with Councillor Mrs. Laura Evans regarding the opportunities for this area. £1,250 has been secured in sponsorship so far and an application has been submitted to THT for a £500 Community Micro Grant. Discussions are now taking place with other potential sponsors. Options include:

- Lighting the tree near to Costa on Stockport Road (priority option).
- Stockport Road - features on 7 high specification columns.
- Thorley Lane - features on 2 high specification columns.

Indicative costings: £1,750 - £3,849

2.7 Sale Town Centre

The Sale Town Partnership is running a crowdfunding campaign which launched in early September 2016. A series of “stretch targets” have been set.

- Target 1 – Christmas lights in the 2 trees outside Sale Town Hall.
- Target 2 – Christmas lights in the 2 trees outside Sale Town Hall and 25ft Christmas tree on School Road/Hayfield corner.
- Target 3 - Christmas lights in the 2 trees outside Sale Town Hall, the 25ft Christmas tree on School Road/Hayfield corner and a cone tree on Waterside Plaza.

Indicative costings: Minimum - £1,800 and Maximum - £5,550

2.8 Ashton on Mersey

Options for festive lighting are very limited in Ashton. The group decided not to run a crowdfunding campaign and activities will be arranged locally, as in 2015, including traders purchasing Christmas trees for outside their premises and encouraging shops to have festive window displays.

2.9 Sale Moor

We Are Sale Moor launched their crowdfunding campaign in early September 2016. The options include:

- Criss-cross festoon and cross street displays over Northenden Road.
- Floodlights in trees by car wash.
- Small Christmas trees on shop fronts with lights (funded by individual businesses).

Indicative costings: Minimum - £2,400 and Maximum - £4,565

2.10 Partington

Partington Parish Council felt that a public crowdfunding campaign is unlikely to be successful but will try to engage local sponsors. Two options are being explored:

- It should be possible to install a permanent / living Christmas tree on Council land on Manchester Road using Environmental Works funding. Sponsors will be approached to fund the installation of lights in this tree, the electricity supply pillar and tree pit as well as lighting of trees or columns possible on private land.
- The Parish Council will also approach Peel about potentially lighting trees and street lighting columns on the shopping centre site (including funding these).

Indicative costings: £2049.38

2.11 **Stretford**

Options are limited because of the inability to install on street lighting columns on Chester Road. Stretford Mall will be organising Christmas displays internally, however because the lights are funded by a service charge they cannot be installed on the exterior of the Mall.

The M32 group is to explore Christmas lighting proposals and fundraising opportunities in early September, but this will not include the exterior of the Mall. The group are experienced at fundraising and have stated that they are confident that if a decision is made to proceed, then they will be able to work within the timescales.

Indicative Costings: Minimum - £1,080 and Maximum - £1,800

2.12 **Urmston Town Centre**

There are remaining section 106 funds that will contribute towards the Christmas lights in Urmston in 2016, which will also be supported by a public crowdfunding campaign that launched in early September 2016. The provision includes:

- Electricity supply and lights on Queens Road for the Christmas tree (potential crowdfunded element).
- Electricity supply and lights on the large trees along Crofts Bank Road between the library and Flixton Road junction
- LED lights in mature trees fed from Cheeky Cherubs on Higher Road
- Battery operated lights in 4 small trees along Station Road and up to 15 small trees on Flixton Road.

Indicative costings (crowdfunded element): £798.57

3. **Key Issues**

- 3.1 **Electrical Supplies** - Due to the reduced number of suitable high specification lighting columns for power, electrical supply feeder pillars would need to be installed in some areas in order to make displays / tree lighting possible. This has the effect of increasing fundraising requirements in some areas compared to previous years but the new infrastructure can be used in future years.
- 3.2 **Contingency** - Groups will need to build in contingency funding in case repairs or maintenance are required (e.g. in the event of failure or vandalism).
- 3.3 **Private Supplies** - In a number of cases, electrical connections to private properties and private supplies will need to be negotiated and written permissions obtained by the local groups and this presents added complexity and risk to the delivery of the schemes.

4. Media Campaign

- 4.1 Local groups will be responsible for running the campaigns in their local area using their own social media and/or press activity.
- 4.2 To support all the local groups, Trafford Council is running a borough wide campaign to support them to fundraise for Christmas lights and raise awareness amongst residents and businesses. Its title is “**G.I.F.T - Give it for Trafford**”.
- 4.3 The campaign will be launched in September and run for 4 weeks. Trafford Council’s Communications team has created a suite of marketing materials to support the community groups. This includes a central webpage hosted on the Trafford Partnership website linked to the individual fundraising groups’ campaigns, posters /flyers, window stickers and Facebook banner design. A small budget has been allocated to kick-start the marketing and promotion of the campaign.
- 4.4 The Council has sent out an initial press release to launch the campaign, this will also be distributed to the community groups to personalise and promote via their local channels. Other releases will be launched ad hoc throughout the campaign.
- 4.5 A #TraffordGIFT hashtag has been created to be used to promote and track the campaign on social media. The success of the campaign will be tracked using the following metrics – website hits, social media engagement, donations, press coverage.

5. Next Steps / Timescales

- 5.1 In line with best practice, the funding campaigns will be kept as short as possible. Research has shown that the ideal duration for a crowdfunding project is 28 days. Campaigns that run too long can run out of energy and momentum, whereas shorter deadlines will focus supporters on acting quickly.

- 5.2 The timing of the campaigns have been chosen to miss the school summer holidays and meet the deadlines for placing orders. This gives a period of around 4 weeks to run the campaigns.
- 5.3 There is an opportunity for grants of up to £500 from THT Community Panels. Groups were invited to apply by 9th September 2016.

Action	End Date
All identified headline sponsors to receive follow up conversations.	5 th September 2016
Campaigns to supply links to crowdfunding pages or key contact details.	9 th September 2016
Trafford Campaign Starts - Website to Launch	w/c 12 th September 2016
Initial press release to be issued	w/c 12 th September 2016
Interim press releases / social media	Ad hoc
Campaigns close / orders placed	7 th October
Close of campaign press release	Mid-October
Lights Installed	November 2016

Appendix 1 – Local Community / Business Groups

The identified lead groups to co-ordinate Christmas activity in each of the local areas are:

Town / Local Centre	Preferred Partnership / Group
Altrincham	Altrincham Unlimited
Sale	Sale Town Partnership
Urmston	Urmston Partnership
Stretford	M32
Partington	Partington Parish Council
Timperley	Timperley Vision
Hale	Hale Business Association
Sale Moor	We Are Sale Moor
Ashton on Mersey	Friends of Ashton Village