

Report To:	CABINET	DATE:	11 MARCH 2019
Heading:	APPROVAL TO SUBMIT AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO THE FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND		
Portfolio Holder:	LEADER, COUNCILLOR JASON ZADROZNY		
Ward/s:	CENTRAL AND NEW CROSS		
Key Decision:	No		
Subject to Call-In:	No		

Purpose of Report

To seek Cabinet approval to submit to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), an initial Expression of Interest (Eol) for the Government's Future High Streets Fund by the deadline of 22 March.

Recommendation(s)

Cabinet agrees:

- 1. That an Expression of Interest for the Government's Future High Streets Fund will be submitted by ADC in respect of Sutton Town Centre by the deadline of 22 March 2019.**
- 2. To delegate responsibility for dispatch of the Expression of Interest (Eol) to the Interim Director of Place and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth.**
- 3. To delegate to the Interim Director of Place and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, responsibility for commissioning appropriate expert support for the subsequent bid.**

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

Approval is required from Cabinet to permit the Council to submit an Expression of Interest bid to the Government's Future High Streets Fund. The deadline for the Eol is 22 March.

Alternative Options Considered

(with reasons why not adopted)

Not to submit an Expression of Interest for the Future High Streets Fund and therefore not take the opportunity to apply for Government funding for Sutton. **This is not recommended.**

Detailed Information

The Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) is a £675m national fund which will support local area plans to make their high streets and town centres fit for the future and more resilient to change. High streets that rely too heavily on retail have found it harder to adapt to change and the fund encourages applicants to provide a greater range of uses to add vibrancy to town centres, eg residential, leisure, commercial, events, culture. The FHSF has been established to help areas diversify. Ashfield is permitted to submit one bid (number of bids permitted is based on the area's population).

A full prospectus was issued on 26 December 2018, followed by Supplementary guidance and an Expression of Interest application form in January.

An initial Expression of Interest (EoI) is invited by the Ministry by 22 March. It is expected that decisions on EoIs will be made by Government after May 2019, with successful applicants then invited to submit a full bid.

Ashfield District Council and its partners on Discover Ashfield Board have a preference to bid for Sutton Town Centre. There are several reasons for this:

- **Kirkby** is developing as a centre for independent retail and has already benefited from public sector investment, e.g. transportation, public realm; as well as private sector investment through Morrisons, Wetherspoons and most recently B&M Bargains. Its offer is to the immediate locality and shop vacancy rates are relatively low. We are also investing up to £14m in the new leisure centre.
- **Hucknall** like Kirkby has benefited from public sector investment through the inner relief ring road improvements, the pedestrianisation of the main high street area and the new market place; and from private sector most recently with the purchase and planned redevelopment of the Byron Cinema. It benefits from its proximity to Nottingham and the new housing developments will create new footfall.
- **Sutton** is not as vibrant as we would like and is struggling to adapt to changes in shopping habits. It is currently too heavily dependent on retail and the town centre is too large, leaking into secondary and even tertiary retail at the town centre edges (eg Outram Street). The Idlewells Centre is doing well. It has recently benefited from ADC and LEP investment and the indoor market occupancy is at 78% (as at end of January 2019), with more traders on the verge of signing up. Outside of this, much of the retail stock is tired, dilapidated and not fit for modern purpose. Sutton Town Centre has few community or cultural facilities and it lacks a food and beverage/night time offer. The town centre vacancy rate is currently 13.9% compared to a regional average of 8.8% and a national average of 10.4% respectively as measured by Springboard.

Separate to this bid has been the production of and consultation on the Sutton Spatial Masterplan, which sets out a vision for a more productive future for Sutton; one which has a wider range of services and facilities and which moves away from a future which is largely dependent on retail. The Masterplan is the subject of a separate Cabinet report.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

Fully in line with ADC's Place Making agenda and bringing Town Centres back to productive use.

Legal:

No legal implications arising from this report.

Finance:

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	No implications arising from this report.
General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation

Human Resources:

None

Equalities:

(to be completed by the author)

None

Other Implications:

(if applicable)

Communications: a Communications' Plan will be required.

Reason(s) for Urgency

(if applicable)

N/A

Reason(s) for Exemption

(if applicable)

N/A

Background Papers

(if applicable)

1 Future High Streets Fund Prospectus

2 Future High Street Fund Expression of Interest Form

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