

Report To:	CABINET	Date:	30th June 2020
Heading:	TOWNS FUNDING		
Portfolio Holder:	CLLR MATTHEW RELF, PLACE, PLANNING AND REGENERATION		
Ward/s:	ALL KIRKBY AND SUTTON WARDS		
Key Decision:	YES		
Subject to Call-In:	YES		

Purpose of Report

To update Cabinet on the Future High Streets Fund bid for Sutton and the Towns Funding for Kirkby and Sutton and seek delegated authority for the submissions.

Recommendation(s)

1. To note progress on the Future High Streets (FHSF) bid for Sutton and the Towns Fund for Kirkby and Sutton.
2. To agree delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Place, Planning and Regeneration and the Director of Place and Communities to:
 - a) Commission consultancy work for the development of projects to be included within the Investment Plan, funded through the Towns Fund capacity funding.
 - b) Submit the full business case for the FHSF bid in July 2020 and the joint Towns Fund Investment Plan for Kirkby and Sutton during autumn 2020.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

To ensure that submissions can be made to the FHSF and Towns Fund within the required timescales.

Alternative Options Considered

Not to agree submissions – this would mean that the business case for FHSF and the Towns Fund Investment Plan would not be submitted and the potential to access significant funding would be lost.

Detailed Information

Towns Fund update

Towns Fund provides an allocation for Sutton and Kirkby and the Council is tasked with working with partners to submit a business case to the Government. In view of the Covid 19 lockdown, it

was not possible to hold the large and open public consultation events which we had planned; these would have involved face to face meetings with community groups, public consultations via market stalls and meetings with businesses. Instead, the consultation strategy was necessarily changed to an entirely digital one. A Member and public web-based consultation closed on 31st May, with 847 responses for Sutton and 524 for Kirkby - c.4% response rate. Member workshops and a Discover Ashfield Board meeting took place in June to provide feedback from the consultation and to agree the capital projects to be included within the Investment Plan.

There have also been c.150 suggestions through Government's #MyTown campaign.

Partner engagement

Prior to the Covid-19 lockdown, a well-attended stakeholder event took place in February, followed by meetings with Nottingham Trent University, Inspire and the County Council's Local Transport Plan team. Other County Council responses/ project ideas were coordinated through the NCC economic development team.

The feedback from all of the consultation was reported to the Town Board – Discover Ashfield on 24th June.

Skills and Enterprise Infrastructure theme

Chimera Consulting were appointed to undertake work for this theme and are making good progress, liaising with partners including Nottingham Trent University (NTU), Mansfield & Ashfield 2020, Inspire, Nottinghamshire County Council and education providers. The work will provide an audit of the current provision for employment and skills development activity, clarification of local needs and issues, understanding employers' needs and testing emerging ideas.

Government guidance and support

The latest guidance was published in June which included a template for the investment plan and revised timeframes. Support is being provided through Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy with an officer designated for Kirkby and Sutton. Low carbon/ clean growth is expected to be a focus for capital projects included within Investment Plans.

The Investment Plan will be prepared over the summer, informed by professional support to produce high-level costings and outputs for each of the projects.

Capacity funding

Commitments and spend for the project to date are detailed below.

Kirkby	Amount
Masterplan	£6,000
Consultation	£352
Specialist advisors for skills and enterprise	£7,150
Total	£13,502
Remaining (£162,019)	£148,517
Sutton	
Sherwood Observatory, 1 st stage HLF bid	£11,000
Consultation	£352
Specialist advisors for skills and enterprise	£7,150
Total	£18,502
Remaining (£162,019)	£143,517

Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) bid for Sutton

FHSF is a competitive bidding regime and ADC has been working with specialist advisors to develop a key list of projects. The specialist advisors for skills and enterprise have been developing the schemes for the sites in Sutton and have been working on the economic cases. A meeting was held with Leadership and Portfolio Holders in early June to discuss the latest proposals from the architects and information from the commercial consultants, with the following proposals agreed for each site:

Fox Street – Creation of public square – providing additional car parking and an area for pop-up food stalls. This will bring a vacant plot back into use, keeping the site available should adjacent sites become available for development in the future. The aspiration was to create a development for food and beverage at this site to provide an attraction at this end of the town. However given the existing challenges with this market in recent years and the effects of Covid-19 a lower risk option is required and this option allows ADC to test the local market for independent dining. The scheme will create a better animated site through a strong pedestrian link from Fox Street to the square, using high quality materials with tree planting and electric vehicle charging points.

Brook Street Council Offices – this proposal will provide ‘maker space’ at ground floor level – a workspace where people can share resources and knowledge, work on projects, develop skills as a hobby or to start their own business. There would be two floors of flats/ apartments above the maker space, providing high quality living accommodation.

Low Street – the Council would buy properties on Low Street, towards the Old Market Place which are currently vacant. The buildings would be restored and refurbished for commercial uses at ground floor and residential accommodation above. This would ensure that historically important buildings within the town are safeguarded as well as revitalising this area of the town.

Market Place new build – commercial use at ground floor and residential development to the rear and above. The building would face on to the Old Market Place at the south-east to enclose the market place and regenerate this area of the town.

Sutton Academy theatre and café/ bar – extension of the entrance area of the academy to provide a café/bar and refurbishment of the existing theatre. The facility would be open to the public at evenings and weekends, providing a varied programme of events including cinema screenings.

The sites were also included in the Towns Fund public consultation and there was generally a good level of support for all of the projects.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The projects support the following key initiatives: Economic Growth and Place - Town Centres, 1. Re-invigorate and re-purpose town centres by bringing empty buildings back into use, enhancing our town teams and diversifying the town centre economy 2. Make the most of external funding to improve our town centres.

Legal:

There are no legal issues identified in the report.

Finance:

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	The costs incurred in preparing bids will be met from the Capacity Funding provided by the Government for this purpose.
General Fund – Capital Programme	Not applicable
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	Not applicable
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	Not applicable

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Failure to submit the bids within the required timeframe	The projects are being managed using Prince2 principles and the Council's performance system. The project programmes are being monitored through reports to the Corporate Leadership Team and Leadership and are on target.

Human Resources:

No issues identified.

Equalities:

No issues identified.

Other Implications:

No issues identified.

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable.

Reason(s) for Exemption

Not applicable.

Background Papers

Not applicable.

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