

North East Derbyshire District Council

Cabinet

13 February 2019

Future High Streets Fund

Report of Councillor G Baxter MBE, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Strategy and Transformation

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- To inform Members of a recent calls for bids to the Future High Streets Fund and to recommend the submission of a bid for one of North East Derbyshire District's four towns to the Expression of Interest stage.

1 Background

- 1.1 In December 2018, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government issued a prospectus announcing a call for proposals for the Future High Streets Fund.
- 1.2 This fund aims to support local authorities by co-funding transformative and structural changes to overcome challenges affecting town centres and declining high streets. The Fund is worth £625 million. The total amount that can be bid for is £25 million, however Government expects project sizes to be in the region of £5-£10 million. Government expects projects submitted for the Fund to be co-funded by public and private sector additions. This will be taken into consideration as part of the assessment processes for the bids
- 1.3 The application process is two-stage: applicants are required to submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) by 22 March 2019, and successful applicants will be invited to present a full business case later in the year.
- 1.4 This presents a good opportunity for the Council to bid for funding to further develop town centre initiatives that have been identified in the Regeneration Frameworks adopted for each of the District's four towns.
- 1.5 The prospectus states that only one location per local authority may be put forward, so a decision is required on which town centre will form the basis of an EoI. There will be a second call for bids to the High Street Fund in 2020, enabling a second town to be put forward for consideration.

Proposal for a bid to the Future High Street Fund

- 1.6 All of the District's four towns are displaying varying degrees of decline in their centres and on their high streets. The prospectus requires just one location from each local authority area to be submitted for the Eol stage.
- 1.7 To gauge interest from Town and Parish Councils, each Parish clerk was contacted alerting them to the call for bids, and inviting each town to submit proposals to the Council that satisfied the requirement of the prospectus for the identification of 'transformational' projects. No proposals were received by the deadline set.
- 1.8 There will be strong nation-wide competition for the fund, so to maximise the prospect of an Eol bid advancing to the full business case stage, it will be necessary to provide evidence of a town centre that is displaying symptoms of decline, and to identify transformational interventions that will address these symptoms.
- 1.9 All four towns in the district have adopted Regeneration Frameworks that identify initiatives to enhance and improve their town centres. In addition to the Frameworks, the District's towns have been the subject of Town Centre Health checks, which measures the perceptions of local residents towards the quality and attractiveness of each town centre.
- 1.10 The Frameworks and Health checks provide useful evidence and supporting information for a bid to the High Street Fund. There is sufficient evidence of long term decline in all four of our town centres, and potentially each one could form the basis of an Eol bid. However, in addition to the work already carried out around the four town centres, a One Public Estate (OPE) locality review is well advanced in Clay Cross.
- 1.11 This OPE review will provide valuable and recent intelligence on the town centre, including useful public consultation feedback on the perceived quality of the town centre, its facilities and services, and the built environment. A number of development opportunities have also been identified.
- 1.12 For the reasons set out above, it is recommended that Clay Cross form the basis of a submission of an Eol to the Future High Streets Fund. At this stage it is estimated at £50k-£70k, although approval for that resource will be subject to a future report to Cabinet.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 To maximise the Council's opportunity for securing an invitation to proceed to the full application stage, it is recommended that Clay Cross forms the basis of an Eol to the Future High Streets Fund. If the recommendation for Clay Cross is not accepted, then an Eol case will be made for one of the remaining three towns based on the best supporting evidence available.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 If the Eol is successful, comprehensive consultation will be carried out with local residents, community groups, and other key stakeholders as part of the development of the full business case.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 All four towns were considered as potential bids, but as set out above, Clay Cross currently presents the best opportunity for a successful bid. Over the next 12 months, more work will be done in evaluating which of the other three towns (Dronfield, Killamarsh, Eckington) could be put forward for consideration when the next call for bids is issued in 2020.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

- 5.1.1 There will be no financial implications for the Council in preparing the Eol. The only risk at this stage is if the Eol is not successful and the Council is not invited to submit a full business case. If the Eol is successful, shortlisted applicants will receive revenue funding to support the development of the full business case.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

- 5.2.1 No implications arising from this report.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

- 6.3.1 NEDDC officers will lead and manage the process, and there is sufficient experience and capacity in the Growth Directorate to do this.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That an Expression of Interest bid in respect of Clay Cross be submitted to the Future High Streets Fund.

7 Decision Information

<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: BDC: Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> NEDDC: Revenue - £100,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £250,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please indicate which threshold applies</p>	No
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</p>	No
<p>Has the portfolio holder been informed</p>	Yes
<p>District Wards Affected</p>	Clay Cross North
<p>Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework</p>	Unlocking our Growth Potential

8 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
None	
<p>Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)</p>	
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