

North East Derbyshire District Council

Cabinet

3 October 2019

Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) 2020

**Report of Councillor Jeremy Kenyon, Portfolio Holder for Business Strategy,
Commerce and Assets**

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- To request Cabinet approval to prepare a bid for Eckington Town Centre for the Government's anticipated call for proposals for the fund FHSF 2020.
- To request Cabinet approval for a budget of £25k is allocated to support the Eckington bid funded from the Invest to Save Reserve.

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. NEDDC put forward Clay Cross Town centre but the bid was unsuccessful
- 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 was originally 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. It is expected the second role of the FHSF 2020 will be broadly similar in terms of finances available.
- 1.3 The application process is two-stage: applicants are required to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI), 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 stated 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. The prospectus stated there will be a second call for bids to the FHSF in 2020, enabling a second town to be put forward for consideration. It is for this bid that we are suggesting that we prepare for.

- 1.6 All of the District's four towns are displaying varying degrees of decline in their centres and on their high streets. The original prospectus required just one location from each local authority area to be submitted for the Eol stage and it is anticipated that this will not change.
- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 The Frameworks and Health checks provide useful evidence and supporting information for a bid to the FHSF. 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 being conducted at Eckington and Killamarsh
- 1.10 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 will also be identified.
- 1.11 The OPE review however will not generate all of the data required and it is proposed that a budget of £25k is allocated to support the bid.
- 1.12 For the reasons set out above, it is recommended that Eckington form the basis of a submission of an Eol to the FHS Fund. At this stage it is estimated at £70k - £100k, 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 Eckington forms the basis of an Eol to the FHSF 2020.

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, Eckington currently presents the best opportunity for a successful bid.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

5.1.1 There will be no financial implications for the Council in preparing the EoI, however to adequately prepare the business case a budget of £25k is required. This budget is required to develop the evidence base needed for the bid. It is proposed that due to the future benefit that may be gained from this bid the funds be committed from the Invest to Save Reserve.

5.1.2 The only risk at this stage is if the EoI is not successful and the Council is not invited to submit a full business case. If the EoI 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

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

6 Recommendations

6.1 That Cabinet agrees that an EoI bid in respect of Eckington be submitted to the FHSF in 2020 and that work is started now on the evidence base required.

6.2 That Cabinet agrees to a budget of £25k is allocated to support the Eckington bid funded from the Invest to Save Reserve.

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: <i>BDC: Revenue - £75,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Capital - £150,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>NEDDC: Revenue - £100,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Capital - £250,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></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>	Eckington North and Eckington South
<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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