

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 20 January 2022

Report of the Head of Strategic Development

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Fylde East

Corporate Priorities:
Supporting economic growth;

Kirkham Town Centre Projects (Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

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Brief Summary

Fylde Borough Council was successful in attracting Future High Streets Fund and High Street Heritage Action Zone Government funding, however, due to the highly competitive nature of the programme and general oversubscription, the funding awards were less than had been included in their bids to deliver the full extent of the economic growth and regeneration activities across the 'Kirkham Futures' area.

The programme has now been revised and prioritised, with Fylde Borough Council subsequently making a request for the county council to help unlock the scheme and provide gap funding by way of a grant of £3.2m to ensure delivery of key projects.

This report provides information on a range of strategic regeneration activities in Kirkham Town Centre and opportunities that the county council has to add value to the proposed investment and provide significant economic benefit alongside importantly assisting the town's post COVID-19 economic recovery.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order C19 have been complied with.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Authorise the Executive Director of Growth, Environment, Transport and Community Services, Director of Finance and Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Leader of the County Council and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Growth, to receive and approve, where appropriate, the funding business case and approve the grant funding agreement.

- (ii) Approve in-principle investment of up to £3.2m capital to support the Kirkham Future High Streets Fund capital shortfall, subject to receipt of an appropriate funding business case and agreement of Fylde Borough Council to enter into a funding agreement.
- (iii) Note that any county council grant funding will be subject to extensive due diligence, and which will be supported by a grant funding agreement prepared by legal, finance and economic development officers.
- (iv) Note that regular updates will be provided as required to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Growth.

Detail

Fylde Borough Council and partners have developed a comprehensive 4-year programme for the regeneration of Kirkham Town Centre called 'Kirkham Futures', funded mainly by two large government grants: High Street Heritage Action Zone and Future High Streets Fund. This is the biggest regeneration scheme in the town's history and will deliver significant and lasting benefits for years to come.

It is seeking to deliver major improvements to the public realm, shopfront refurbishments, regeneration of empty high street properties and widening the mix of uses, whilst supporting community, health and well-being/social prescribing programmes, plus arts & culture activities.

Kirkham Futures Programme

In early 2020, following a successful bid to Historic England, Kirkham was awarded £1.79m High Streets Heritage Action Zone funding, which can only be spent in Kirkham's Conservation Area covering the eastern half of the high street. Fylde Borough Council also submitted a Full Business Case to the Cities & Local Growth Unit, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities seeking c.£9.5million from the Future High Streets Fund.

The funding as set out above would seek to deliver the following project activities:

- Public realm works to revive and re-energise the town centre streets and open spaces.
- Flood alleviation and drainage works.
- Shop front improvements scheme to transform properties.
- Heritage and Eco Skills Centre to create a regional centre of excellence for heritage and eco skills within a restored Grade II listed building.
- Regeneration of prime town centre properties for leisure, retail, and housing.
- Additional arts, heritage and community facilities, including a community cinema.
- A community-led cultural programme of activities.
- Engagement with the Kirkham community to improve their health and wellbeing.

Funding Overview

Whilst Fylde Borough Council was successful in securing Government funding, it received less than was bid for. This funding shortfall prevents the full delivery of all envisaged projects to fully meet the town's economic ambitions in supporting regeneration and post COVID-19 recovery.

All funding options and contributions have been explored and as a result, a request has been made by Fylde Borough Council to the county council to provide gap funding up to £3.2m to help deliver priority regeneration projects.

Potential identified projects, as noted in Appendix 'A', are strategically aligned to support the delivery of remaining regeneration outputs to provide full economic benefit. Related project activities would start in 2022 with full completion in 2023 to enable the realisation of benefits in the short-medium term.

Any funded projects will be subject to the approval of a business case, with confirmation that all activities are fully funded, sustainable and secured against an appropriate legal agreement. The grant funding will be governed by existing monitoring and reporting mechanisms through the county council's Major Development Sites Group and Board.

Consultations

None required at this stage. It is intended that any projects requiring consultation, for example planning permission, would follow the normal procedure.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Financial and legal risks are set out in Appendix 'A' which is exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. Appendix 'A' contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It is considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Communications

Joint communications and Public Relations will be agreed with Fylde Borough Council in order to align with the county council's key messages in relation to investment in support of its strategic objectives.

Project Management

Any Project Management/Governance risks will be mitigated by Fylde Borough Council's allocation of funding for a Project Manager and recruitment in order that proposed Governance arrangements are fully adhered to.

Legal

The county council's legal services team will provide support in respect of the due diligence exercise and the preparation of the grant funding agreement.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Kirkham Town Centre projects will seek to be fully inclusive and accessible, supporting the regeneration of the town and its wider residents and businesses. Assessments so far indicate that there will be no negative impact and that any potential impact, should they arise, can be mitigated.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. Appendix 'A' contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It is considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.