

Portfolio Holders

Title of Report:	Future High Street Fund	
Report No:	CAB/JT/19/008	
Report to / date of decision:	Portfolio Holders' Decision	27 February 2019
Portfolio Holders:	Lance Stanbury FHDC Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth Tel: 07970 947704 Email: lance.stanbury@forest-heath.gov.uk	Susan Glossop SEBC Portfolio Holder Planning and Growth Tel: 07473 041394 Email: susan.glossop@stedsbc.gov.uk
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Purpose of report:	To agree the submission of an Expression Of Interest for Haverhill in round one of the Future High Street Fund. The deadline for the submissions is 22 March 2019.	
Recommendations:	It is RECOMMENDED that the FHDC and SEBC Portfolio Holders for Planning and Growth approve the submission of an expression of interest in round one of the Future High Street Fund, as set out in paragraph 2.1.4 of Report No: CAB/JT/19/008.	
Key Decision: (Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)	Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition? Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed.		
Consultation:	•	

Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options under consideration are set out in Section 2 below. 		
Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any staffing implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any ICT implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any equality implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
The expression of interest is not successful	Med	Adhere to the guidance given with the fund; and encourage a wide range of stakeholders to support our case.	Low
Local Haverhill businesses are not supportive of the Expression of Interest	Low	Ensure the benefits of the fund are adequately explained	Low
Local Haverhill businesses, residents and stakeholders expect the expression of interest to include a wider range of elements than would be practicable/possible	Medium	Explanation of the fund; its purpose; the competitive nature; and the likely level of funds if successful.	Low
Local residents and or stakeholders from other towns raise concern at the election of Haverhill as a subject for the Expression of Interest	High	Explanation that the fund is competitive and fairly prescriptive about the elements one should include. Explanation that a thorough assessment has been undertaken to assess which of our towns would be most likely to secure funding.	Medium
Ward(s) affected:		All Wards	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		N/A	
Documents attached:		None	

1. Background to Future High Street Fund

1.1 Background

1.1.1 MCHLG has allocated £675m into a fund to support the High Street. The objective of the Future High Street Fund (FHSF) is to **renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that improves experience, drives growth and ensures future sustainability.**

1.1.2 The fund sets out the themes under which it is expected any identified need for investment will fall. These are as follows:

- Investment in physical infrastructure
- Acquisition and assembly of land including to support new housing, workspaces and public realm
- Improvements to transport access, traffic flow and circulation in the area
- Supporting change of use including (where appropriate) housing delivery and densification
- Supporting adaptation of the high street in response to changing technology

1.1.3 MCHLG has allocated £55m of the Fund to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to support the regeneration of heritage high streets. The precise details of this element of the fund have not been set out as yet.

1.1.4 The FHSF will work as follows:

- There will be two rounds of the Fund, both with a two-phase application process
- Phase 1 of application process is an Expression of Interest stage where places will be assessed on the need for funding, nature of the challenge and the vision for the future of the town centre
- Phase 2 of application process is for those who pass to Phase 2, there will be an amount of revenue funding available to work up project proposals. Funding decisions will be based on project plans and business cases.
- In the first round of the Fund, projects which are 'shovel ready' may be fast-tracked for funding.
- An announcement on the second round of the Fund is expected soon.
- It is expected that projects will be co-funded by public and private sector stakeholders and this will be taken into consideration as part of the assessment of projects.
- The Fund will contribute up to a maximum of £25 million to each successful place. However, MCHLG has stated that it expects to see a range of project sizes coming forward, many of which are in the region of £5-10 million per town centre.

1.1.5 The fund will run to the following timetable:

- **December 2018:** Phase 1 opens and Expressions of Interest invited
- **22 March 2019:** deadline for Expressions of Interest
- **Summer 2019:** announcement on places moving to Phase 2
- **Late 2019:** first round of final business cases to be submitted
- **Spring 2020:** all remaining final business cases to be submitted
- **Not before 2020:** Second round of applications opens

1.1.6 Other points to note:

- MCHLG has stated that it will not accept bids covering town centre areas that are not facing significant challenges.
- MCHLG originally stated that it expected local authorities to put forward a single, transformative submission covering one high street or town centre in their area; however this has now been changed. It is now possible for Local Authorities to submit multiple bids depending upon their size. West Suffolk can put in two bids, however it doesn't have to be both in the same round.

1.2 **Haverhill**

1.2.1 All five towns, Brandon, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Mildenhall and Newmarket were assessed against the same criteria which included:

- Proportion and/or number of vacant properties
- Openings/closures of commercial units (Nov17 – Nov18)
- Proportion of Independents
- Average rental value (per sq ft per annum)
- Changes to residential (A1 – C3)
- Diversity of uses in the town centre area
- Out Commuting (% 16-74 in employment travelling over 20km to work)
- Resident/customer surveys
- Pedestrian flows and footfall trends
- Volume & Value report, 2015
- Air Quality
- Environmental factors
- Perception of safety and occurrence of crime
- Housing demands
- Ambition and Opportunities
- Innovation
- VENUESCORE (2014-2015) VENUESCORE™ is an annual survey compiled by Javelin Group, which ranks the UK's top 3,500+ retail venues (including town centres, stand-alone malls, retail warehouse parks and factory outlet centres).

1.2.2 Bearing in mind the fact that whichever town we choose to bid for would be in competition with other towns across the whole of England and Wales, it is important to choose the town that has the best fit with the stated criteria.

- 1.2.3 Whilst several other towns showed that they have challenges similar to Haverhill such as a poor range of shops and poor range of town centre uses, it was the opportunities in Haverhill that set it apart.
- 1.2.4 It will be possible for the Expression of Interest to be written to show the extent of the challenge in Haverhill set against the potential to fund initiatives that can change the fortune of the town centre. If successful and if transferable, it will be possible (subject to future funding) for other towns to benefit from the initiatives piloted in Haverhill (if the bid to the FHSF is successful).
- 1.2.5 Regardless of whether the bid to the FHSF is successful or not, it is a stated ambition of West Suffolk that its market towns should be supported and promoted. To this end, there are a number of projects that are currently being worked on in each of the towns. For example, Brandon Leisure Centre improvements; 17/18 Cornhill redevelopment, Bury St Edmunds; Mildenhall Hub; and Newmarket High Street Design work.

2. Options for consideration

- 2.1.1 Three options have been considered to make the most of the Future High Street Fund opportunity.
- 2.1.2 Do nothing: This option was quickly discounted as to not apply for funding would definitely result in no funding coming forward. The only benefit to this option is that some time and effort is saved.
- 2.1.3 Choose a different town: It was important to consider which of the towns would give West Suffolk the greatest chance of success. This was a different consideration to the question, which of our High Streets would we most like to have funding to spend in.
- 2.1.4 Bid for more than one town: Up until very recently, to submit for more than one town per local authority area was against the rules of the fund. However, it is now possible that West Suffolk could submit a second Expression of Interest for another town. It is considered that this option is still available to us as the government has stated that it proposes to open a second round of funding in the future. The consideration was therefore, whether to submit two bids in round one. The amount of work that goes into writing an expression of interest is more extensive than may be thought. Particularly with this fund which is very reliant upon support from stakeholders. It is considered that to ask stakeholders to support two bids at the same time would devalue the support. The preference therefore is for a strong bid to be submitted in this round for Haverhill and then the same effort can be given to a second town in round two.