

Bolsover District Council

Executive

14th October 2019

Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) 2020 and the New Towns Fund

Report of Portfolio Holder - Economic Development

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- To request Executive approval to prepare a bid for South Normanton Town Centre for the Government's anticipated call for proposals for the FHSF 2020 and the New Town Fund.
- To secure funding to develop a Masterplan for South Normanton to support the future funding bids and shape the future development of South Normanton

1 Report Details

- 1.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published in late December 2018 details of the FHSF. The Fund forms a central part of the government's plans to help high streets evolve and adapt to changes. The Fund will "support places by co-funding transformative, structural changes to overcome challenges in their area". It will "support wider economic growth within local areas, delivering investment and growth across regions in England to deliver our modern Industrial Strategy".
- 1.2 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 Investment needs are expected to fall under the following themes:
 - 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
- 1.4 Government will not accept bids covering town centre areas that are not facing significant challenges. Small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance are not regarded as high streets or town centres for the purposes of

the Fund. Local authorities are expected to put forward only a single, transformative submission covering one high street or town centre in their area.

- 1.5 The first year of the Fund operated as a two-round fund with two stages to the application process. Phase 1 Expressions of Interest (Eoi) had to be submitted by 22 March 2019. Eoi has to set out background to the area (geographic, population and economic information); setting out the challenges facing the town centre; the rationale for selecting the town centre; the strategic ambition to regenerating the town centre including vision and ambition for change; engagement and support for the town centre vision; and estimate of revenue funding needed to develop project plans for capital funding. MHCLG will assess the Eoi's and invite places to move on to Phase 2, development of full business cases. Bolsover Town Centre was unsuccessful in progressing to the second round. The second round applications for the Fund will not be open before 2020 but the Phase 1 is anticipated to reopen in 2020.
- 1.6 During Phase 2, shortlisted places will receive some revenue funding to support the development of their high street strategies which shall include specific project plans and associated business cases setting out how they shall regenerate places. However, the Council also would have to allocate funding to develop a business case for a Phase 2 bid. (At this stage it is estimated at £50k-£70k, although approval for that resource will be subject to a future report to Executive). The business case has to be prepared in line with HM Treasury's Green Book appraisal methodologies. Government expects the full business case development phase to take between 6 to 12 months. Funding decisions will be based on project plans and business cases.
- 1.7 The Bolsover District Regeneration Framework was endorsed by Council in January 2017. The Regeneration Framework was guided by the principles of place making and the ideas and priorities put forward by the local communities. It provides shared vision with flexible mix of transformational and fine grain projects that will enhance the offer of the four town centres of Clowne, Bolsover, Shirebrook and South Normanton to strengthen their role as service centres. A key purpose of the Regeneration Framework is to inform future funding applications for town centre investment and regeneration, and therefore it will assist with preparation of a bid to the Future High Streets Fund.
- 1.8 **Bolsover** - Link the castle to the high street. Link the new food store on the Sherwood lodge site to the high street. Public realm improvements needed to make the area welcoming. Significant infrastructure requirements which can build on the improvements made to facilitate the food store and residential developments (Bolsover North and East). Potential for bringing forward development of infill sites to create additional footfall and enhance the viability of retail and leisure sectors. Potential for green routes to link Bolsover Town Centre with the Bolsover Loop and the wider greenways network. This was previously suggested but was rejected in the first FHSF bidding.
- 1.9 **Clowne** - Public realm works such as the piazza project the Parish council are working up. Potential to reshape the high street to prepare for the Clowne Garden Village proposal.

- 1.10 **Shirebrook** - Opportunity to develop the One Public Estate work that is investigating options for the location of healthcare facilities and build upon that. The market square could be redesigned and the infrastructure around the market square could be reoriented.
- 1.11 **South Normanton** - Opportunity to re-design and re-establish the Market Place as the civic heart, provide space for market and community events and improve the retail offer; a range of interventions including re-design of streets, highway alterations, resurfacing and speed restrictions/ traffic calming measures, introducing shared surface with traffic restrictions, measures to improve pedestrian priority, developments to infill gaps sites and improve pedestrian/ cycle links into the town. To do this a Masterplan for South Normanton should be developed to guide future development and growth.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The Future High Streets Fund is a competitive bidding process giving access to the Government's key fund for improving town centres and high streets across the country. The guidance makes clear that councils should only submit a single transformative bid for one town centre. The Regeneration Framework was prepared with comprehensive consultation and with future funding opportunities in mind. Based on the findings of the Regeneration Framework and having regard to existing funding already in place and future development opportunities, the following priority order for a potential bid is set out below:
- 2.2 **1) South Normanton** - The high street has infrastructure difficulties that make it hard to navigate. There have been some road traffic accidents in the area. A bid has been submitted to DCC's Business Rates Retention Programme for a feasibility study to improve this area. The Economic Development team have met with District and Parish Councillors to discuss the feasibility study and the potential FHSF 2020 as well as developing a Masterplan for South Normanton.
- 2.3 **2) Bolsover** - the high street is dysfunctional and disconnected from Bolsover Castle. The Sherwood lodge site food store will need to be linked to the high street if the benefits of the development are to be maximised. The Bolsover North and East housing developments have potential to increase visits to the high street. However a bid for the FHSF for Bolsover was unsuccessful in spring 2019 and therefore it is not recommended as the first choice town centre.
- 2.4 **3) Shirebrook** - The market square has had investment to revitalise the area. This includes the £167k Market Square Enlivenment Strand of the wider £1.26 million Building Resilience Programme. There has also been significant work completed in Shirebrook. Therefore it would be appropriate to see the impacts of the existing interventions before making further changes.
- 2.5 **4) Clowne** – The high street at Clowne is potentially going to change through the Clowne Garden Village development. Any interventions completed now may be inconsistent with the future development of Clowne's high street.
- 2.6 For the reasons set out above, and subject to approval by Executive, it is recommended that a Phase 1 EoI bid for South Normanton Town Centre be prepared by the Economic Development Team and the Partnership Team.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 As outlined in the report to Council (January 2017) that endorsed the Bolsover District Regeneration Framework, comprehensive consultation was conducted at each stage of the Regeneration Framework processes to ensure added robustness to its proposals. The findings of the consultation and the Regeneration Framework will help inform preparation of the Eol bid.
- 3.2 In preparing the bid, officers will engage with South Normanton Parish Council. Derbyshire County Council and D2N2 have indicated willingness to support a really strong strategic narrative for any Eol bids that are submitted.
- 3.3 Stakeholder and community engagement will be undertaken during preparation of a Phase 2 bid to support the development of the business case. In preparing the bid regard will be given to equality impact to ensure that no groups are disadvantaged.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Option 1: No bid submitted – the Council could decide to not submit any bid to the Future High Streets Fund; however this would mean our town centres would forego the ability to access Government funding that may provide a significant investment opportunity. This is not a recommended option.
- 4.2 Option 2: Bid for another town centre is prepared – the Council could decide to submit another town centre other than South Normanton as a bid to the Future High Streets Fund. However, for the reasons set out in section 2 of this report that is not a recommended option.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

- 5.1.1 The identification and allocation of resources to develop a business case or for project match funding if the Eol bid passes the Government's Phase 1 stage will be subject to Executive approval.
- 5.1.2 Funding for the Masterplan can be met from the Transformation Reserve. However, normally funds are allocated from the Transformation Reserve where a project demonstrates a future benefit to the Council. In this case the Masterplan will add value to future bids but cannot guarantee the additional funds to finance the project or that future benefit will be received by the Council.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

- 5.2.1 This will be taken into account during the preparation of the Eol bid.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

- 5.3.1 The allocation of officer time from both the Economic Development Team and the Partnership Team to prepare a Phase 1 Eol bid for South Normanton Town Centre.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That Executive approve the preparation of a Phase 1 Expression of Interest bid for South Normanton Town Centre for the Government's anticipated New Town Fund and the Future High Streets Fund 2020.
- 6.2 That Executive approve a budget of £50k is allocated to support the development of a Masterplan for South Normanton funded from the Transformation 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 relevant Portfolio Holder been informed</p>	Yes
<p>District Wards Affected</p>	South Normanton East and South Normanton West
<p>Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework</p>	<p>Corporate Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlocking Our Growth Potential <p>Growth Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Enterprise: maintaining and growing the business base <p>Economic Development and Housing Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable town centre development

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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