

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

7 MARCH 2019

**REPORT OF SENIOR
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Lead Cabinet Member - Regeneration and Housing – Councillor Nigel Cooke

PROGRESS ON RESHAPING TOWN CENTRES – FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND BIDS

Summary

Further to the report to Cabinet in December 2018 detailing the challenges facing town centres, this report updates on activity and interventions across the Boroughs town centres since December 2018.

Recommendations

1. Cabinet note the positive update on activity and engagement across the Borough's town centres.
2. Cabinet note the work undertaken to the Government's future high street fund and endorse the submission of two bids for the town centres of Stockton and Yarm.

Reason for the Recommendations/Decisions

To allow the continued regeneration of the Borough's Town Centres in line with the Council's Economic Growth objectives.

Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item, as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, **in accordance with paragraph 18** of the code, consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest and the business:-

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give

evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code)

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code)

CABINET DECISION

PROGRESS ON RESHAPING TOWN CENTRES – FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND BIDS

SUMMARY

Further to the report to Cabinet in December 2018 detailing the challenges facing town centres, this report updates on activity and interventions across the Boroughs town centres since December 2018.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cabinet note the positive update on activity and engagement across the Borough's town centres.
2. Cabinet note the work undertaken to the Government's future high street fund and endorse the submission of two bids for the town centres of Stockton and Yarm.

DETAIL

Background

1. As detailed in reports to Cabinet and Council in December 2018, the scale of the challenge facing town centres and the retail sector on a national level is unprecedented. The threat posed by the changes in the retail sector and function of town centres was acknowledged by members and the importance of tackling this change was reflected in the approval of up to £30million prudential borrowing for commercial developments and acquisitions which will seek to address some of the key challenges across the Boroughs town centres.
2. Since then, the ten year investment plan for Tees Valley has been approved at a meeting of the Combined Authority Cabinet in January 2019. This approval provides the opportunity to access additional funds to support the development of the Boroughs town centres and can be used to supplement already approved funds as well as any potential funds secured through the Future High Streets Fund.
3. The report to Cabinet and Council in December 2018 articulated how the future of our town centres relies on a fundamental repurposing and reshaping of their function and make up, recognising that whilst retail is still very important, particularly the on-going growth of independent retailers, the centres cannot survive predominantly on that use as they have in the past
4. Whilst it was demonstrated that the many initiatives and investment from the Council and its partners across the Borough's Town Centres have meant that the impact of these drastic changes have been offset in part, it is clear that further intervention is required.

Recent Progress Across the Borough's Town Centres

Billingham

5. Funding has been secured through the Transforming Cities Fund to support wide ranging enhancements to Billingham Station which will enable those with mobility issues to have full access to the station through new ramp access and the installation of lifts.
6. The Council continues to have active and positive engagement with the owners of Billingham town centre, St.Modwen, with a view to master-planning options for the town centre and in particular, West Precinct.
7. The masterplan will build on the momentum of investment over recent years from both the public and private sector to ensure the offer within Billingham remains fit for purpose in the ever changing face of town centres.

Thornaby

8. Thornaby Town Centre continues to perform very well in both the retail uses and the close proximity to a number of town centre located businesses which provide regular footfall. With Councils leisure, library and customer services at the heart of the town centre it remains a great example of town centres acting as community hubs.
9. Residential development will continue to play a large part in the future of Thornaby Town Centre as the Council works with its partner, Thirteen, in the redevelopment of the Anson and Hudson House area to provide an enhanced residential development that meets the needs of the community.
10. The Council continues dialogue with a number of key stakeholders within the town centre where there is a clear need to explore future uses of unused buildings to ensure appropriate uses for these sites can be brought forward.

Yarm

11. Work continues alongside the recently established Yarm Business Forum who are working with businesses from across the town centre to develop proposals that will ensure Yarm has the right facilities for its future growth needs, building on an already successful Christmas event programme.
12. Appropriate car parking provision and capacity remains a key focus for the Council to ensure that a long stay solution to car parking can be achieved. This will support recent changes to the short stay arrangements on the High Street which have been very well received by businesses and visitors alike. The Secretary of State for Transport, on a recent visit to the town made a firm offer of help to remove some of the barriers placed by National agencies to help bring forward critical infrastructure that will facilitate additional car parking and the Council are ready to support and act upon his next steps.
13. The Council now has a long lease agreed on Yarm Wharf which will enable the ongoing use by River based business, supporting future event provision and ongoing access to the River Tees by river users and the general public.

Norton

14. Norton High Street is another example of a town centre which is doing very well and the buoyancy of the daytime and evening economy are clearly evident. The Council recognises that with the success comes challenges particularly around car parking and traffic management and work is already underway to look at how this can be improved.

Ingleby Barwick

15. Work has begun in earnest on the Ingleby Barwick Leisure Centre, which not only includes wet and dry sports, soft play and café facilities but importantly the integration of the library into the facility. With first phase works on the car park complete in January this year, the contractor has now moved on to excavating the main swimming pool and work to erect the super structure commences in late March with completion expected in the summer of 2020.
16. Ingleby Barwick has a strong localised retail offer and this has recently grown with the completion of new shopping facilities at Sandgate. The success of this offer has led to some parking pressures and the Council has committed within the Medium Term Financial Plan to explore and fund additional provision to alleviate this problem with works expected to be complete by March 2020.

Stockton

17. The changing face of Stockton town centre continues at a rapid pace most notably with the Council's direct funding and intervention of the Globe, Georgian Theatre, Hampton by Hilton Hotel and Victoria Estate redevelopment which has lately seen the demolition of Elm House again changing the skyline across the town for the better.
18. The private sector are actively responding to the Council's leadership and intervention with examples such as the old Riverside Inn pub and former Bojangles bar both scheduled for major refurbishment. It is not just the night time economy as the Council is in dialogue with several art gallery providers who are keen to understand how they can occupy space within the town centre recognising the value of the offer within Stockton.
19. The events programme across the town and indeed across the Borough continues to play a major role in bringing town centre spaces to life and with a full 2019 programme already underway the City Games in September of this year will bring a welcome presence on the World's stage.
20. It is of course widely recognised that the decline of retail on the High Street, not least in Stockton, is a major burden despite all of the positive interventions and repurposing activity. This was notably recognised when the town hosted two Parliamentary Select Committee visits and subsequent praiseworthy reports which have been used to advise the Government on Shaping the future of High Streets.

Future High Street Fund Bids

21. In late December 2018, details of the £675 million Future High Streets Fund were made available to Local Authorities. The aim of the fund is help local high streets evolve and adapt to the challenges presented by structural changes affecting retail and the function of town centres.
22. The Minister for Northern Powerhouse and Local Growth, recently visited the high street to personally understand the challenges but also the opportunities the Council is seizing. The Minister saw first hand the work undertaken by the Council but he also recognised that having six town centres in one Borough places a very different challenge on the Council which is not

common among many other areas and raising this point with the Minister allowed us to successfully lobby to make more than one bid into the future high street fund.

23. Following lobbying of government, the opportunity now exists for the Council to submit two applications to the Future High Streets Fund. As such, bids are being developed for both Stockton and Yarm. Cabinet are asked to note this activity and endorse the two bids that are being prepared for submission.
24. As previously reported, the aim of the new fund exactly matches what we are trying to achieve in the borough. "...to encourage vibrant town centres where people live, shop, use services, and spend their leisure time. The Future High Streets Fund will support and fund local areas' plans to make their high streets and town centres fit for the future." (MHCLG Policy Paper 29 October 2018).
25. Full details of assessment criteria have now been published with applications to the fund only considered for areas facing significant challenges. Applications will be considered for investment in physical infrastructure, public and other transport access, new housing and workspace development, and investment in land assembly, including to support the densification of residential and workspace around high streets in place of under-used retail units.
26. The Council is currently working on the details of an Expression of Interest with a view to meeting the stage 1 submission deadline of 22nd March 2019. Successful applicants from stage 1 will be announced in summer 2019 and will be required to produce detailed business cases for assessment thereafter.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

27. The Community Impact implications will continue to be assessed and monitored throughout the development of the proposals in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

28. Should the Council be successful in bidding for Future High Street Funds then this money could be made available in addition to the already allocated resources to facilitate the interventions envisaged in this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

29. The Council has a range of powers to invest and borrow, and to acquire property by agreement for the purposes of any of its functions and to support the intervention envisaged in this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

30. The proposals in this report are categorised as medium risk and are covered by existing management arrangements.

COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

31. The report addresses the Policy Principle of creating economic prosperity.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

32. Not applicable.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

33. Commitment remains to undertaking broad engagement to seek residents views on how these plans will shape these future community hubs and Cabinet will be updated at a later date on this approach.

All political group leaders have been confidentially briefed on this report and its proposals.

Name of Contact Officers:

Richard McGuckin, Director of Economic Growth and Development, Telephone No. 01642 527028,
Email: richard.mcguccin@stockton.gov.uk

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet December 12th 2018