

Report To:	Cabinet	Date:	26th January 2021
Heading:	FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUNDING		
Portfolio Holder:	CLLR MATTHEW RELF, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLACE, PLANNING AND REGENERATION		
Ward/s:	ALL SUTTON WARDS		
Key Decision:	Yes		
Subject to Call-In:	Yes		

Purpose of Report

To update Cabinet on the successful outcome of the Future High Streets bid for Sutton.

Recommendation(s)

Cabinet:

1. To note the contents of the report;
2. To recommend that the Council accepts the funding of £6.27m; and
3. To approve the delivery of the projects, in principle, subject to the reworking of the business case to reflect the level of funding awarded.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

Agreement is required to accept the funding.

Alternative Options Considered

Not to accept the funding – **not recommended**, as the funding provides an opportunity to deliver projects which will help to revitalise Sutton town centre.

Detailed Information

The Council has been successful in securing £6.27m from the Government's £831m Future High Streets Fund (FHSF). The Fund was a highly competitive bidding scheme, open to all Local Authorities in England and was first announced in a prospectus issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG ISBN: 978-1-4098-5400-5) in **December 2018**. Its aim was to address the challenges being faced by High Streets and to invite bidders to set out ambitious

plans for change. The guidance permitted multiple bids by Councils with populations larger than the England average, up to a maximum of 7 bids. Ashfield Council was permitted to submit one bid.

Ashfield Council officers and Councillors immediately mobilised to work on Ashfield's proposals for Sutton town centre, bringing in partners, MHCLG support and experts as required.

Successful bids were announced by MHCLG Secretary of State Robert Jenrick on 26 December 2020. In total 72 bids were successful and were awarded a share of £831m. Of these, only 15 achieved the full funding requested. Ashfield's bid of £9.2m was allocated £6.27m, which, according to MHCLG, is a significant achievement.

Some key dates on our long FHSF journey:

December 2018:	Prospectus launched by MHCLG
22 March 2019:	Expression of interest submitted by ADC by the MHCLG deadline. Submission included many letters of support from partners.
2 May 2019:	Local Election and new Administration/Members.
8 July 2019:	Ashfield notified that it was not selected for round 1 of the process, but MHCLG recognised the strength of the bid and invited the Council to submit under a later round 2.
August 2019:	Ashfield Council invited by MHCLG to progress to the second round of FHSF.
October 2019:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notification from MHCLG that ADC had successfully progressed to the business planning stage. MHCLG relationship officer allocated to ADC to support the full bid/business plan.• £95k capacity funding allocated to assist with specialist support. Gleeds appointed as specialists to assist with project development and cost planning.• Requirement to establish a Towns Fund Board, ostensibly to oversee the Towns Fund bid, but also to provide a governance approach to FHSF. Discover Ashfield undertook this responsibility.
8 November 2019:	First business plan - "Rough Order of Magnitude" submitted with draft costings for the 5 major projects as detailed below.
12 December 2019:	General Election and new MP.
May 2020:	Community consultation undertaken for the 5 projects as part of the Towns Fund consultation. Seminar for all Sutton Cabinet members held to discuss the 5 projects. Towns Fund seminar held with all Kirkby and Sutton members to discuss potential projects.
31 July 2020:	Final bid presented to MHCLG by the Council.
9 October 2020	Clarifications for the bid for £9.2m submitted to MHCLG
26 December 2020:	Decision by MHCLG Secretary of State to award ADC £6.27m for Sutton.
February 2021:	Submission of updated business case for £6.27m to MHCLG.

The announcement that the bid for Sutton-in-Ashfield was successful will provide a much needed boost to the town centre during these challenging times.

Projects included in the Future High Streets bid were as follows:

Sutton Academy Community Theatre/Cinema – Renovation of the existing Sutton Community Academy theatre and extension to create a foyer area, with a café-bar. The facility will be used by the academy in the day-time and in the evenings and weekends open to the public for theatre, cinema and live music events.

Sutton Maker Space and Business Hub - creating a Maker Space and business hub. The Maker Space is for anyone who lacks the funds and/or space for tools at home to be able to pay a small membership fee for access to woodworking, metalworking, sewing machines, 3D printers, laser cutters, etc. This can be for hobbies, sense of community, learning a new skill or starting and building a business.

Low Street vacant units - for the purchase and refurbishment of vacant retail units on Low Street to give them a new purpose on the ground floor and convert upper floors into high quality apartments.

Fox Street pop-up food court and car park – transformation of the derelict site behind Lloyds Bank into a new car park and public space that provides connectivity between ASDA and Portland Square to attract more people into the town centre. The space can also be set up as a venue for pop-up food stalls.

Market Place new build - a new building on the Market Square that will provide space for community uses and high quality residential apartments.

FHSF was a challenge fund and therefore a highly competitive process open to all Councils in England, with just 72 towns selected to receive the funding. The Government feedback was that Sutton's was a strong bid and it is one of 57 high streets which have received a provisional funding offer which is less than the amount bid for; only 15 bids were awarded the full amount requested. The Council's submission was for £9.2m and we will therefore need to consider how to deliver the projects within the reduced funding offer of £6.27m (which is still a substantial amount of investment). We will then submit the updated business case to the Government in February.

More than ever, the town centres need investment and there are some exciting plans for Sutton. As well as this, the FHSF funded projects complement the 17 projects being developed for inclusion in the Kirkby and Sutton Towns Fund bid which will be submitted at the end of January. As part of this fund, Kirkby and Sutton could receive up to £25m each to fund plans to create thriving and revitalised town centres, as well as projects to support and create new business opportunities and improve and develop the area's sports facilities and visitor economy.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

Economic Growth and Place: Town centre: Re-invigorate and re-purpose town centres by bringing empty buildings back into use and diversifying the town centre economy; Make the most of external funding to improve our town centres and Use our town centre events, including specialist markets to attract visitors to our town centres.

Legal:

There are no legal implications in this report; however any grant conditions will need to be considered following submission of the final revised proposals.

Finance:

Budget Area	Implication
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General Fund – Revenue Budget	N/A
General Fund – Capital Programme	Four of the schemes require Council borrowing as match funding which would be recouped through income generation from property leases and car park income. A revised business case based on the final scheme and confirmed provisional funding allocation will need to be produced to ensure that the schemes provide value for money.
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	N/A

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Each project has a detailed risk register which will be updated at the start of each project stage and regularly reviewed	The risk registers provide mitigation where appropriate for identified risks.

Human Resources:

No HR implications identified in the report.

Environmental/Sustainability:

All of the build schemes will incorporate sustainable materials and energy which will also reduce running costs. The car park at Fox Street will incorporate electric vehicle charge points.

Equalities:

No implications identified in the report.

Other Implications: not applicable

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Exemption

Not applicable

Background Papers

Not applicable

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