

Report to: Leader of the Council

Date: 16 June 2021

Title: Future High Streets Fund – Re-imagining Newhaven Programme

Report of: Ian Fitzpatrick, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning

Cabinet member: Cllr James MacCleary, Leader of the Council

Ward(s): Newhaven North and Newhaven South

Purpose of report: To progress the Reimagining Newhaven Programme in anticipation of the Future High Streets Fund grant.

Decision type: Non-Key

Officer recommendation(s):

- (1) To approve the use of the Reimagining Newhaven Programme Co-Funding allocated within the Council’s Capital Programme to progress the extended feasibility and professional surveys required as detailed and up to the levels outlined within Appendix 1 (Exempt).
- (2) To delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Chief Finance Officer, to progress all matters associated with recommendation 1 above.

Reasons for recommendations: To develop the project feasibility to enable the Reimagining Newhaven Programme in advance of any physical grant funding award.

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) has recently announced the successful award to Lewes District Council (LDC) of

£5.0m for the 'Reimagining Newhaven Programme' as part of the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF). This is less than the original bid (£7.2m), but LDC is one of only 72 authorities across the country to be offered FHSF funding. This highlights the strength of the bid and is a considerable achievement for the Council.

- 1.2 The funding is to renew and reshape town centres to improve experience, drive growth, and ensure future sustainability. Full details of the programme proposal were outlined in the February 2021 Leaders report and further details will be presented to Cabinet in July 2021.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 To enable the bidding process, the Council was awarded capacity funding to undertake a limited amount of design and survey work to help develop the proposals and supporting business case.

- 2.2 In order to take the programme now from the funding award stage into delivery, a period of extended and more detailed feasibility is required. This will ensure the Council is taking the proposals through its usual due diligence process, verifying, de-risking, and strengthening the project including the:

- Scope
- Scheme capital costs
- Business case
- Grant and co-funding cash flow
- Resource needs
- Delivery programme
- Operator requirements

- 2.3 As an extension to the work obtained from the bid development, it is therefore recommended that Cabinet now approves an advance of the LDC Co-Funding allocated within the General Fund (GF) Capital Programme to undertake the necessary feasibility and additional surveys prior to the use of any grant.

Further details in Appendix 1 (Exempt).

3 Outcome expected and performance management

- 3.1 The development of the proposals, obtaining further cost and technical intelligence, is expected to validate the business case with a view to reinforce the principals of the programme in accordance with the Council's Corporate Plan objectives. In expanding the Council's information base, the strategy, opportunity, and deliverables will be solidified.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 Further consultation is not required at this current stage but plans for consultation and stakeholder engagement will continue to be developed as the project progresses past the extended feasibility stage. Those details will be included in a future Cabinet report and will align with the Communication & Stakeholder Engagement Plan submitted as part of the bid to the MHCLG.

5 Corporate plan and council policies

- 5.1 The proposals continue to support the Council's 'Reimagining Lewes District Corporate Plan 2020-2024' as detailed in the February 2021 Leader's report.

6 Business case and alternative option(s) considered

- 6.1 The extended feasibility will help to support and further strengthen the business case that unpins the proposals. After obtaining the additional surveys and professional advice required, a report will be presented to Cabinet with an updated business case and prior to the planning, procurement, and contract award stages.

7 Financial appraisal

- 7.1 Cabinet previously approved an allocation with the GF Capital Programme to Co-Fund the project alongside any FHSF or other grant(s). It is proposed that a limited amount of this Co-Funding is used to develop the extended feasibility required to specify, procure, and deliver the programme.
- 7.2 The extended feasibility will enable the financial appraisal and business case for the project where it is expected, subject to approval, that the FHSF grant will then be accessible to take the project forward and support any co-spending. It will also be important at that time for the Council to consider its Capital Programme and contract terms to the annual grant allocations as stipulated by the MHCLG.

8 Legal implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.
- 8.2 As part of the extended feasibility process, additional legal due diligence will be undertaken in relation to the project and specific assets within the project scope.

All professional appointments and contracts will be made in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) and subject to prior legal advice.

9 Risk management implications

- 9.1 There are no additional risk management implications to report. This will form part of the report to Cabinet in July 2021, with a detailed Risk Register having been prepared for the funding submission.

The extended feasibility and additional due diligence as set out will further analyse and de-risk the project before entering into the committed delivery stage.

10 Equality analysis

- 10.1 It is not considered that an Equality & Fairness Analysis is needed yet at this early feasibility stage, and this will be dealt with in the July 2021 Cabinet report.

11 Environmental sustainability implications

- 11.1 There are no environmental / sustainability implications arising directly from this report.
- 11.2 The project itself continues to focus on supporting regeneration and sustainable economic growth that benefits local communities through the re-use of existing assets and the improved wayfinding, access, and town centre connectivity.

12 Contribution to Community Wealth Building

- 12.1 As above, the proposals seek to re-use existing land and Council property assets for the socially productive benefit of the community. The Community Wealth Building (CWB) principals will continue to be assessed and developed as the project progresses.

13 Appendices

- **Appendix 1 (Exempt)** – Re-imagining Newhaven Programme extended feasibility

Exempt information reasons 3 – Information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

14 Background papers

The background papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

- [Executive Summary of original FHSF bid to Government](#)
- [Infographic of benefits of Re-imagining Newhaven programme](#)