

## DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	PLANNING COMMITTEE	11 NOVEMBER 2020	4
<b>ALLOCATION OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT TOWN CENTRES AND THE BLACKPOOL AIRPORT ENTERPRISE ZONE</b>			

### PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

### SUMMARY

The Corporate Plan 2020/24 sets out a number of ambitions and actions aimed at promoting the economic prosperity of the borough with the economy being one of the four themes that run through the plan.

One of the key actions in the Corporate Plan seeks to develop the Enterprise Zone through the Fylde Coast partnership attracting employment and new industry. To facilitate the delivery of the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone, it is intended to establish a project management role that will bring forward development, deliver key projects and encourage new investment in the area.

The Town Centres Working Group has been considering a number of initiatives aimed at supporting the borough's three town centres. A summary of this work was presented to the Planning Committee in September when members requested officers to work up a number of proposals including the appointment of additional staff to help deliver these projects and proposals. Following further discussion with the Budget Working Group and the Town Centres Working Group, the report proposes the establishment of a Town Centres Manager post and an Economic Development Officer post.

The report also proposes to top up the existing town centre maintenance budget to improve the quality of the public spaces in the town centre.

Together the proposed investments outlined in this report will be crucial to the successful delivery of large parts of the council's corporate plan.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Finance & Democracy Committee be requested to approve a revenue funded budget increase (to be split between the years 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25) in the total sum of £45,000, to be funded from the Funding Volatility Reserve, in order to provide the required level of resource for the appointment of an Enterprise Zone Project Manager;
2. That the Finance & Democracy Committee be requested to approve a revenue funded budget increase (to be split between the years 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24) in the total sum of £246,000, to be funded from the Funding Volatility Reserve, in order to provide the required resource for the appointment of a Town Centres Manager and an Economic Development Officer;
3. That the Finance & Democracy Committee be requested to approve a revenue funded budget increase of £5,000 for 2020/21 and £25,000 for 2021/22, to be funded from the Funding Volatility Reserve, in order to provide an enhanced financial resource in respect of the existing St Annes town centre maintenance budget;
4. To authorise the proposed expenditure to fund the recruitment of an Enterprise Zone Project Manager for a

temporary period of 3 years;

5. To authorise the proposed expenditure to fund the recruitment of a Town Centres Manager and Economic Development Officer, each for a temporary period of 3 years; and
6. To authorise the proposed expenditure in respect of the enhanced St Annes town centre repairs and maintenance budget in the total additional sum of £30,000.

#### SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

On 4 December 2017, Council resolved:

2. ...to establish the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board (EPB) in the form of a Joint Committee.

Amongst other things, the EPD takes responsibility for programme managing delivery of the Enterprise Zones.

On 11 March 2020, Planning Committee resolved:

1. That a "Town Centres Working Group" (comprising a core group of 7 councillors namely: Councillors Richard Redcliffe, Liz Oades, David O'Rourke, Stan Trudgill, Michael Sayward, Roger Small and Michael Withers with Councillors Cheryl Little and Viv Willder being co-opted as and when appropriate to consider matters relating to St Annes Town Centre) be formally constituted as a working group of the Planning Committee and that they be asked to examine all opportunities to secure funding to assist in the future development of St Annes, including, but not limited to any future rounds of the Future High Street Fund.
2. That the outcomes from the St Annes Town Centre workshop be reported to the Planning Committee via Town Centre Working Group for their consideration and appropriate action.
3. In the event of a working group member not being able to attend a meeting, with the agreement of the Chairman, a substitute member be nominated.

On 16 September 2020, Planning Committee resolved:

1. To note the work of the Town Centres Working Group in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.
2. To note the submission of the bid for Future High Street Funding for Kirkham Town Centre in line with the details presented to Planning Committee on 3 June 2020.
3. To authorise officers to work with the Town Centres Working Group, in consultation with ward members and other key stakeholders, to develop proposals for Lytham Town Centre identified as part of the council's capital programme.
4. To recommend that the Finance & Democracy Committee approve a revenue funded budget increase for 2020/21 in the sum of £150,000, to be funded from the Funding Volatility Reserve, to provide for the commissioning of a vision/strategy for St Annes Town Centre, such vision to include a town centre health check and be informed by the survey results and working group proposals for St Annes.
5. To consider the projects for St Annes that have been identified by the Town Centres Working Group and prioritise those schemes that they wish officers to develop for further consideration and approval by committee.

#### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	✓
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	✓
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	✓
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	✓

## REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

1. The Corporate Plan 2020/24 includes 'Economy' as a key theme within which a number of ambitions and actions are set out to support the wider economy and promote the prosperity of the borough's three town centres. The "Development of the [Blackpool Airport] Enterprise Zone through the Fylde Coast partnership, attracting employment and new industry" is set out as a key act in the Corporate Plan. The delivery of the Enterprise Zone is also a key element of the Fylde Local Plan to 2032, with its success key to the economic strand of the local plan's development strategy.
2. As part of the economic programme, a Town Centres Working Group (TCWG) was established by the Planning Committee in March 2020 with the objective of improving the prosperity and enhancing the wellbeing of Kirkham, Lytham and St Annes town centres. With the onset of the Coronavirus Pandemic work initially focussed on the Council's response to assisting the high street to reopen safely, but during the summer it was possible to move on to concentrate on the longer-term projects originally envisaged. A summary of the work of the group to date was presented to the Planning Committee on 16 September 2020 when Members requested officers to prioritise and develop several the proposals that had been put forward by the working group.

### ADDITIONAL STAFF RESOURCES

3. The improvement of the prosperity and wellbeing of the borough's town centres is an economic development project that falls to the council's Regeneration Team to deliver. Despite being a small multi-disciplinary team, the Regeneration Team have, over the years, delivered numerous projects that have helped to transform the fortunes of each of the borough's three town centres.
4. However, in order to deliver the Council's aspirations and rising expectations set out in the Corporate Plan 2020-24, additional staffing resources will be required to deliver this programme of work. Accordingly, the TCWG has identified a requirement for two additional posts to be added to the existing Team: A Town Centres Manager and an Economic Development Officer.

### ENTERPRISE ZONE PROJECT MANAGER

5. Through the Economic Prosperity Board, Fylde Council has committed to supporting the delivery of the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone (BAEZ). To date this has been achieved primarily through the secondment of an officer to support the establishment of the zone and the drafting of a masterplan aimed at attracting and guiding new investment. The BAEZ is now at a stage where the nature of the support has changed and an experienced project manager is required to assist in the delivery of the project. The revised position has been considered under the council's Job Evaluation Scheme and the salary has been established at SCP 36-40 (£39,880 - £43,857). The position would be established for a period of 3 years and will require additional funding to that which has already been committed as follows

2020/21 - £5,000

2021/22 - £15,000

2022/23 - £15,000

2023/24 - £10,000

6. The purpose of the job would be:
  - To act as a Project Manager supporting delivery of new infrastructure and direct development of commercial property and providing development advice for Blackpool Airport EZ and Blackpool Airport.
  - To work on existing and a planned future property portfolio to seek new development opportunities in accordance with legislation, providing professional advice and delivery of complex property-oriented projects and development schemes, including construction contract management.
  - To provide advice in connection with property development, acquisitions and disposals and management, undertaking option appraisals feasibility studies and delivery of infrastructure and construction projects.

## TOWN CENTRES MANAGER

7. A town centres manager would take a pro-active role in the development and revival of the borough's town centres to ensure they are attractive visitor destinations offering a range of shops and services. This would be achieved through working in partnership with local businesses and other key stakeholders with an interest in the prosperity of the town centres, including the Kirkham and St Annes on the Sea Town Councils and the local business groups that represent each centre.
8. It is envisaged that the post will have a wide range of responsibilities from taking responsibility for developing new ideas and initiatives to ensuring the town centres are maintained as attractive welcoming environments.
9. The key tasks identified for the role include:
  - To work with the council's Town Centres Working Group to take forward a coordinated one-council approach to maintaining a high quality town centre experience.
  - To coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the town centre management plans in order to deliver a range of improvements that meet the council's vision for diverse and thriving town centres.
  - To identify and respond to key local town centre issues that impact upon their success.
  - To develop strong relationships with local business and communities
  - To be the council's town centre champion in collaboration with businesses and residents their promotion, marketing and new project development.
10. It is intended that the post would be established on a temporary basis, initially for a period of 3 years, following which the contribution that the role has made to the prosperity of the town centres could be reviewed and the contract extended if it is considered appropriate and funding is available to do so.
11. The salary attached to the post would be established through the Job Evaluation process, but an examination of similar roles indicates that the salary for the post is likely to fall within Spinal Column Points 18-25 (£24,982 to £29,577).
12. Appendix 1 indicates how the post would be integrated into the Regeneration Team.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

13. There is an existing Principal Economic and Regeneration Development Officer Post (ERDO) within the Regeneration Team that takes responsibility for the economic development projects developed and delivered by the team and leads the council's engagement in regional and sub-regional economic initiatives. This existing role also assists with the supervision of the wider Regeneration Team and so has a higher level of responsibility attached. It is considered that the team would benefit from an additional Economic Development Officer that would be available to support the work of the Principal ERDO allowing them to dedicate a greater proportion of their time to developing and delivering strategic projects.
14. The key tasks identified for the proposed role include:
  - To support the delivery and development of projects and initiatives aimed at improving the economic prosperity of Fylde.
  - To assist with the delivery of the Council's Economic Development Strategy and the Covid-19 recovery strategy.
  - To actively engage with stakeholders to encourage the economic sustainability of the district.
  - To assist the Principal Economic Development Officer and Regeneration Team in the formulation and review of strategy, policy and practice relating to the Council's Economic Development Strategy and wider work programme.
  - To assist in the delivery of projects to secure healthy and vibrant town centres providing a range of services to residents and visitors.

- To provide professional advice to the public and Service Areas on matters which contribute to the delivery of the Council's economic development function.
  - To help develop the capacity of key employment sectors and their contribution to the sustainable regeneration and economic prosperity of the borough.
  - To work constructively and actively with other officers and a range of partner organisations to increase employment and wealth generation within the borough.
  - To promote job creation, sustainable self-employment, business growth and workforce skills.
15. As with the Town Centre Manager role, it is intended that the post would be established on a temporary basis, initially for a period of 3 years, following which the contribution that the role has made to the prosperity of the town centres and the wider borough will be able to be reviewed and the contract extended if it is considered appropriate and funding is available to do so.
16. Again, the salary attached to the post would be established through the Job Evaluation process, but an examination of similar roles indicates that the salary for the post is likely fall within Spinal Column Points 18-25 (£24,982 to 29,577).
17. Appendix 1 indicates how the post would be integrated into the Regeneration Team.

#### FINANCE PROFILE

18. If an appointment is made to these posts during the current financial year, it is expected that the funding for the two posts, including on costs, would be split as follows:
- 2020/21 - £20,000
  - 2021/22 - £81,000
  - 2022/23 - £82,000
  - 2023/24 - £63,000

#### ENHANCED MAINTENANCE BUDGET

19. The budget available for the maintenance of St Annes Town Centre has been reduced over the years as a consequence of savings that have had to be made across all council budgets. Unfortunately, the impact of the reduced maintenance schedule is becoming apparent with adverse comments having been received from residents, visitors and elected members. Restoring the budget to previous levels will allow the quality of public spaces to be maintained, which is particularly important given the exposure to the elements in this coastal location.
20. It is considered that topping up the maintenance budget by £5,000 in the current financial year and £25,000 in 2021/22 will allow a comprehensive rolling programme of maintenance to be carried out. Responsibility for the upkeep of the public spaces in the town centre rests with a number of services within the council as well as external bodies and private companies and individuals. Co-ordination of effective management of public spaces does not currently fall to a single individual and so it is considered that this programme could be overseen as part of the Town Centres Manager if that appointment is approved.

#### CONCLUSIONS

21. The establishment of the new posts set out in the report above will assist in the delivery of a number of key ambitions and actions set out in the Corporate Plan 2020/24, as will investing in the maintenance of the open spaces within the town centres. In particular, the proposals will make a significant contribution to the delivery of the following ambitions:

##### Economy

- Develop & deliver Master Plans for the town centres
- Support and promote appropriate development
- Maximise the use of all council owned assets
- Work with partners to attract new employment and create vibrant economic communities

## Environment

- Provide high quality parks and open spaces
- Reduce anti-social behaviour, disorder and crime

## Efficiency

- Actively seek feedback to improve service delivery
- Continuously review every service to meet changing customer expectation
- Champion and enhance the reputation of the council
- Keep customers informed through open and transparent communication

## Tourism

- Deliver and support a diverse programme of events across the Fylde coast and countryside
- Develop and promote unique destination points across the coast and countryside
- Support and facilitate heritage and arts

22. If the Planning Committee agree with the above proposals, Finance and Democracy Committee will be asked to approve a number of budget increases which total £366,000 (split across 3 years) to be met from the funding volatility reserve in order to fund the proposed posts and top up the town centre maintenance budget.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	This report proposes that the Finance & Democracy Committee be recommended to approve a number of revenue funded budget increases in respect of the staff resource for the Council's economic development function, to support the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone and to provide an enhanced budget for St Annes town centre maintenance, as set out in the report, each to be met from the Funding Volatility Reserve.
Legal	None
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
Mark Evans	Mark.evans@fylde.gov.uk & Tel 01253 658460	October 2020

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
None		

Attached documents

Appendix 1 - Proposed Regeneration Team Structure

## Appendix 1

Proposed Regeneration Team Structure (new/revised posts indicated in green)

