

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	PLANNING COMMITTEE	11 MARCH 2020	6
ST ANNES TOWN CENTRE			

PUBLIC ITEM

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

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

At the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 22 January 2020, members considered a report that proposed the establishment of a Town Centres Working Group when it resolved to “agree the principle of a Town Centres Working Group but defer consideration of this matter to the next available meeting of the committee to allow the composition of that group and its Terms of Reference to be further clarified”.

The St Annes Town Centre Workshop referred to in the report took place on 29 January 2020 and a report on potential future actions that will emerge from that workshop will be received shortly.

It is proposed that the terms of reference for the group are:

Purpose

To be an advisory working group to the Planning Committee in respect of town centre development, to enable research and discussion on town centre strategy and management issues and to coordinate, support and develop initiatives to reinvigorate and strengthen the three town centres of Fylde borough.

Objectives

- To improve the prosperity and enhance the well being of Kirkham, Lytham and St Annes Town centres, being the three identified town centres of the borough.
- To engage and work with key stakeholders, including retailers, local businesses, other public sector and transportation bodies and community representatives to create a viable and sustainable town centre economy.
- To develop and deliver the town centre action plans as set out in the Fylde Economic Strategy.
- To identify opportunities for funding from a range of national, regional, and local funding sources and oversee the preparation of funding bids in order to deliver the programme of improvement.
- To take responsibility for identifying potential to develop the role of the town centres.

Reporting

The Town Centres Working Group will report to the Planning Committee and other committees of the council.

During discussion at the meeting of the Planning Committee on 22 January, it was suggested that, rather than establishing a fixed group of 5 elected members, the composition of the Town Centres Working Group could take the form of a smaller core of elected members, with other members co-opted to assist with the consideration of particular issues or matters that are relevant to a particular centre as appropriate. Members may wish to consider this approach further in the establishment of the working group.

The item was previously reported as follows:

SUMMARY

On 25 November 2019, Finance and Democracy Committee, when considering an item on the Kirkham Future High Street Fund, resolved “That consideration be given by the Planning Committee to submit a bid in the second round of the Future High Street Fund for St Annes Town Centre.”

As part of a review of issues facing St Annes Town Centre, a workshop has been arranged to examine what intervention is required to ensure that St Annes Town Centre remains a vibrant and attractive centre that will benefit both residents of and visitors to the borough.

As it is not clear whether there will be a second round of the Future High Street Fund, whether the restrictions of one bid per local authority area applied to round 1 of the bidding process will continue if there is a round 2 and as it is by no means certain that the trading conditions faced by St Annes are such that a bid would be successful, Committee are recommended to consider the outcomes from the St Annes Town Centre workshop 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That a “Town Centres Working Group” consisting of 5 members 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.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Planning Committee - 22 January 2020

“agree the principle of a Town Centres Working Group but defer consideration of this matter to the next available meeting of the committee to allow the composition of that group and its Terms of Reference to be further clarified”.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	√
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	√
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	√
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	√
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	√

REPORT

1. On 25 November 2019, Finance and Democracy Committee, when considering an item on the Kirkham Future High Street Fund, resolved “That consideration be given by the Planning Committee to submit a bid in second round of the Future High Street Fund for St Annes Town Centre.”[sic.]
2. The Future High Streets Fund was launched in December 2018 as part of the government’s plan for the high street. The prospectus set out that there would be two rounds of bidding, one in 2019 with a further round following in 2020. On 13 February 2019, Planning Committee resolved to submit an Expression of Interest in regard to a bid based upon Kirkham Town Centre. Although Kirkham was not amongst the 50 bids that were originally announced by Government in July 2019 to progress to the second phase of the bidding process, on

26 August 2019 Government announced that it had expanded the scheme and that a further 50 towns, including Kirkham, would proceed to the second phase.

3. Successful candidates will progress to the second phase of the Future High Streets Fund and receive up to £150,000 to support the development of detailed project proposals that can be submitted for capital funding. With each of the successful towns eventually, depending on the scale of their plans, being offered funding of up to £25 million. The funding may be used by these areas to improve transport and access into town centres, convert empty retail units into new homes and workplaces, and invest in vital infrastructure.
4. Officers have sought clarification from Government as to whether it remains their intention to continue with a round 2 or whether the funding that had been earmarked for round 2 has been used to expand the list of towns that are to pass through to a second phase of round 1. The original prospectus also limited the number of bids to 1 per local authority area. Again, it is not clear whether it would be possible for Fylde to submit a second bid for an alternative town within its administrative area. Officers will continue to seek clarification as to the restrictions of any future bids.
5. It must also be noted, especially having regard to the issues faced by the 100 towns that have successfully moved to phase 2 of the first bidding round, that St Annes, whilst not without its challenges, is a relatively successful town centre. Any expression of interest put forward for St Annes would need to compete with the needs and challenges faced by other town centres nationally.
6. The continued success of the borough's town centres is a key priority of both the council's Corporate Plan and its Economic Development Strategy. As mentioned above, a bid has been submitted to the Government's Future High Street Fund to seek funding to improve the prospects of Kirkham Town Centre. In addition significant capital funds have been earmarked to improve the public realm of both Lytham and St Annes centres. However, it is recognised that our town centres are currently facing many pressures resulting from marked and swift changes in consumer spending profiles and one of the themes of the Council's Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan relates to the enhancement of the borough's town centres. Work has already commenced on the preparation of a Town Centres Action Strategy that would include an action plan for each of the borough's 3 defined town centres and is at a relatively advanced stage, although recent progress has slowed due to the need to divert resources to the Kirkham Future High Street Fund and Heritage Action Zone bids. In addition, a St Annes Town Centre workshop consisting of several key stakeholders with interests in St Annes town centre has been arranged in order to examine the issues facing the centre.
7. As it is unclear at this time whether there will be a second round of Future High Streets Fund bidding or whether St Annes would meet the eligibility criteria if there is to be a second round, it is important to ensure that all opportunities to promote and enhance St Annes Town Centre are explored. However, the issues facing St Annes are not unique and so it is considered that the remit of the working group should allow an examination of the issues facing all the borough's town centres. The planning committee are, therefore, recommended to establish a working group consisting of 5 elected members. As the issues facing the borough's town centres are wide ranging, there would be merit in extending the membership of the working group to include elected members who are not necessarily members of the Planning Committee. The working group would be able consider the findings of the St Annes Town Centre workshop.
8. Officers will continue to liaise with representatives of MHCLG regarding any future rounds of the Future High Street Fund or other similar initiatives that could benefit St Annes. The ground work carried out through the workshop and the town centres working group could potentially form the basis of a bid to a future round of the FHSF and would inform the council's own interventions in St Annes.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	There are no implications arising directly from this report.
Legal	There are no implications arising directly from this report.
Community Safety	There are no implications arising directly from this report.
Human Rights and Equalities	There are no implications arising directly from this report.

Sustainability and Environmental Impact	There are no implications arising directly from this report.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	There are no implications arising directly from this report.

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
FHSF: overview	October 2018	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-high-streets-fund