

**TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
APRIL 6TH 2021**

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Report Title | FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUNDING |
| Purpose of the Report | To accept the Future High Street Funding offer and agree delivery strategy. |
| Recommendation | <p>The Committee RESOLVES to:</p> <p>(1) Confirm acceptance of the funding offered as part of the Future High Streets programme;</p> <p>(2) The Market Hall proposals be approved in principle, further engagement with key stakeholders will continue on detailed design phase for the internal layout;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>The Committee RECOMMENDS to Council that, as detailed in this report:</p> <p>(3) The National Cycle Route 2 proposals and budget are approved with delivery undertaken by Devon County Council;</p> <p>(4) The Queen Street proposals and budget are approved with delivery undertaken by Devon County Council following further public consultation on detailed design;</p> <p>(5) The Market Hall proposals and budget are approved for Council led delivery, involving continued engagement with key stakeholders;</p> <p>(6) The budget for, and Council led delivery of, a new four-screen cinema is approved;</p> <p>And</p> <p>(7) Delegated authority be given to the Head of Place and Commercial Services (in consultation with the Executive Member for Economy and Jobs and Chief Finance Officer) for ensuring appropriate delivery of the Future High Street Fund projects in accordance with this report, Council policy and approved budget.</p> |
| Financial Implications | <p>Financial Implications are outlined section 3 and further in part II</p> <p>Chief Finance Officer</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | martin.flitcroft@teignbridge.gov.uk |
| Legal Implications | <p>The full report has not been submitted in time to enable legal implications to be considered and also to meet the statutory deadline for publication. In event there are any legal implications from a corporate governance perspective, these will be reported to the Executive by the Monitoring Officer under separate cover before the meeting</p> <p>Monitoring Officer karen.trickey@teignbridge.gov.uk</p> |
| Risk Assessment | <p>A project risk assessment has been undertaken and is enclosed in appendix L. Individual risk assessments will be reported through the SPAR system.</p> |
| Environmental / Climate Change Implications | <p>The project proposals for Queen Street and National Cycle Networks will increase the opportunity for sustainable travel throughout the Town.</p> <p>The refurbishment of the market hall will in due course given rise for opportunities to improve the energy usage of the building, being listed alterations to the fabric will be limited.</p> <p>The proposed cinema building will be delivered in accordance with planning policy and will seek to deliver on the carbon reduction targets set out in policy S7.</p> |
| Report Author | <p>Neil Blaney neil.blaney@teignbridge.gov.uk</p> |
| Executive Member | <p>Cllr Nina Jeffries. Executive Member for Economy and Jobs</p> |
| Appendices / Background Papers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Town Centre Reports - Links B. Town Centre Parking Statistics C. Hatch Options Report for final revised bid D. Vision & rationale E. Programme F. NCN2 outline plan G. Engagement Summary H. Queen Street outline plans I. Cinema Background report J. Cinema Supporting Letter K. Cinema scheme plans L. Risk Assessment / delivery route <p>Background documents – background town centre evidence links</p> |

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In July 2020 the Executive endorsed the submission of the Future High Streets (FHS) bid which amounted to a funding ask of £13.3m to fund 5 key regeneration projects across the Town. The aim of the Future High Streets Fund is to renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that drives growth, improves experience and ensures future sustainability.
- 1.2 The FHS bid is based on the town centre policies in the Teignbridge Local Plan, which was based in the 2010 Retail and Leisure Study and 2012 Newton Abbot Regeneration Study, as well as the 2016 Newton Abbot Neighbourhood plan. The plans were all subject to extensive public consultation in their development. The proposals align with the visions set out in the Local Plan, Town Centre Masterplan and aspirations of the Garden Community visions for Newton Abbot.
- 1.3 Town Centre health check data (appendix A) illustrates that intermittent footfall data shows a declining trend of the 12.5% between 2016-2019. There was a marginal increase in 2019 and 2020 data is not representative due to covid19. Similarly vacancy rates (appendix A) which traditionally track below the national average have increased, signifying the need to the high street to adapt and change.
- 1.4 The Grimsey reports (appendix A) originally set out the need for high streets to adapt and change to cater for future generations. A further response to covid19 was published focussing on leadership, localism, fewer cars and more greenery. The principles of these reports have been considered and included in the project proposals.
- 1.5 The proposal will help to realise improved sustainable transport links to the Town Centre, enhanced pedestrian realm in the Town Centre, will establish Newton Abbot as the premier market Town in the South West through the delivery of a cultural and markets quarter via the refurbishment of the Market Hall and construction of a new 4 screen cinema.
- 1.6 The Government announced provisional awards on the 26th December 2020, which included an offer of £9.2m for Newton Abbot.
- 1.7 The proposed offer was conditional on the Council resubmitting a revised bid within the funding limit while still adhering strictly to the bid criteria.
- 1.8 The resubmitted proposal excludes the proposed deck of car parking at Cricketfield Road. This decision was taken based on a thorough review of the scheme submitted and an assessment of which elements would present the best opportunity to secure funding. The car parking works had the lowest cost benefit ratio, which is a key factor in deciding whether a bid is successful. A summary of this work, including pre-covid19 car parking occupancy is enclosed in appendix B & C.

- 1.9 The need for change has been supported through evidence from Newton Abbot Town Centre Health check, annual monitoring of performance against the corporate objective of going to town.
- 1.10 The Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) who administer in the fund are due to confirm awards by 31st March. This will be verbally updated in the meeting.

2 REPORT DETAIL

- 2.1 There are four packages of improvement within the Future High Street Fund (FHSF) bid and these are covered in 2.2 – 2.5, and there is further information in appendix D on the vision and rationale, whilst appendix E shows the outline programme for delivery.
- 2.2 The vision for the Newton Abbot is to deliver positive transformation. The key elements are:
- Enhance resilience of the town centre to meet a range of current and future challenges;
 - Secure the future of key publicly owned buildings in the town centre, which are currently a cost burden;
 - Provide a broader and better quality offer of experience to support footfall including tourism;
 - Deliver improved quality of pedestrian public realm and access for all;
 - Improve the safety, quality and appeal of access to town via active travel means.

2.3 National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 2 project

2.3.1 The Council, alongside Devon County Council, have worked up the package of improvements to enhance the quality and safety of the route where it links to and through the central of Newton Abbot, so that it serves the Town much more effectively. Achieving a high-quality NCN route linking to and through a town is often challenging but in Newton Abbot notable improvements can be achieved at a relatively low overall cost. High-quality routes attract a wider range and density of users that can benefit the town centre as well as offering safe connecting links to wider strategic trails such as the Stover Trail, Wray Valley Trail, and the future Teign Estuary Trail. Numerous studies have found that while cyclists typically spend less per visit they tend to shop more regularly resulting in higher weekly spends (see appendix D).

2.3.2 The scheme proposals for improvements to NCN Route 2 are outlined below:

- Modifying the crossing outside the rail station to accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians, paving the way for a safe cycling link between the rail station & National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 2.
- Improving the quality of the NCN Route 2 via clearer signage and surface markings, to encourage greater levels of uptake of a wider diversity of users.
- Improving safety of key junctions along NCN Route 2, with dedicated provision of space for cyclists, enabling clarity for all road users.
- Marking the current bus-layover area to show it is permitted for use by both local buses and cyclists only, at very low speeds.
- Increasing cycle parking in the town area at key locations; Lemon Road/Queen St. junction; Victoria Place; Highweek Way/ASDA.

2.3.3 This project will be designed into detail between Devon County Council and the Council using the outline proposals provided in appendix F, and will be delivered by Devon County Council, with the Council forming a key part of the project delivery Board.

2.3.4 This project offers notable benefits, particularly in view of the reasonable delivery costs. Please see appendix D for an overview of relevant case studies and wider information. Funding for delivery will be as set out in Section 3.1 below.

2.4 Pedestrian Improvements & Greening along Queen Street, and Cycling Enhancements project

2.4.1 The proposed package of works focuses on the delivery of an improved environment in the heart of town, as a hub for local communities and an appealing offer for visitors via enhanced pedestrian realm and greening. The Outline plans include the measures below and will be subject to the detailed design process alongside further stakeholder and public consultation on the detailing of certain aspects of these plans. Response to early engagement is included in appendix G:

- Widening pavements along Queen Street, with focus on the western reaches, to enhance visual appeal, sense of place, and space for some greening elements. This forms part of the central hub of the town centre.
- Wider pavements may also support some limited outdoor seating, if sufficient width uplift can be achieved. There has been demand for this notably between Fairfield Terrace and King Street.
- Seeking to achieve traffic restrictions at the western reaches of Queen Street, west of Albany Street, in-line with local stakeholder feedback, to allow for loading, taxi's, bicycles and buses only priority through-traffic. This will be subject to further traffic movement review, as well as further stakeholder and public consultation during the detailed design process.
- Narrowing junctions of Courtney Park Road & Quay Road in the eastern reaches of Queen Street, which are notably above unnecessary width, to improve safety and access for pedestrians and to unlock space for greening and public realm, creating an improved gateway into town.
- Predominantly retaining car parking provision at the eastern reaches of Queen Street and alongside this instating bicycle parking to cater for a wider range of

users. Reviewing the potential for improving the capacity for pedestrians crossing Queen Street on the 2-way stretch.

- Retaining loading bay capacity overall and slightly increasing loading capacity close to Albany Street where there has been some demand for enhanced capacity. The need for good loading capacity is recognised as essential for business operation.
- Reducing car dominance via narrowing the very wide carriageway along parts of the 1-way stretch of Queen Street.
- Rationalising street-side parking on Queen Street, and removing some street-side parking to enable notable public realm uplift described above, as part of the transformational opportunity of Future High Street funding.
- Retaining approximately 50% of standard street-side parking spaces, retaining or enhancing disabled parking capacity and exploring the potential to provide some priority parking spaces on Queen Street for less physically able shoppers who do not qualify for a disabled parking badge. This was raised as important by a range of local businesses and will form part of the detailed design discussions with stakeholders.
- Instating a public bench to allow some additional comfort for shoppers who wish to sit and rest whilst accessing the 1-way stretch of Queen Street.
- Instating attractive, feature-place bicycle parking racks in key focal locations such as the Courtenay Park Road/Queen Street junction and western reaches of Queen Street.
- Delivering some tree planting and high-quality herb/flower planters, for which a dedicated budget is incorporated. A few desirable locations have been proposed, including Courtenay Park Road/Queen Street junction, The Avenue/Queen Street junction and Devon Square/Queen Street junction, and Lemon Road/Queen Street junction, but there will be further discussion with stakeholders as part of the detailed design process.
- Exploring the potential for side-street junction priority for pedestrians at key locations along Queen Street.

2.4.2 The Council has been working with Devon County Council (DCC) and Jacobs on outline bid proposals (multi-national consultancy that has excellent local knowledge and has been the partner for a series of major DCC highways schemes).

2.4.3 DCC in conjunction with the Council will work on the detailed design process and further engagement, and DCC will be directly delivering the scheme. The funding spread is set out in section 3.2 below.

2.4.4 Visual imagery of the proposed works at Queen Street is included in appendix H, and outline proposal plans are provided in appendix D.

2.4.5 There will be continued engagement with key local stakeholders during the production of the draft detailed design plans, including sessions to discuss detailed design elements whilst producing the draft detailed design plans. There will also be further public consultation for a period of at least 6-weeks during 2021, on the detailed design plans for Queen Street.

2.5 Newton Abbot Market Hall project

- 2.5.1 The aspiration for the Market Hall is to create a central hub of activity that runs throughout the day, as an active markets quarter and on into the evening alongside the Cinema and offering theatre, events space and a social venue.
- 2.5.2 This wholly aligns with the Newton Abbot Masterplan 2018 and Teignbridge Council Strategy 2020-30, Going to Town project delivering regeneration schemes, improving Newton Abbot's markets and supporting quality evening cultural and leisure opportunities.
- 2.5.3 The Council has been working with Quarterbridge Project Management, specialist in Markets & regeneration on the proposal. Through engagement it has become clear that a Markets Quarter, alongside the evolving Culture Quarter within the town would meet a growing need for a flexible mixed use space and whilst there are some areas of contention, the general feedback has been positive and given us the confidence to progress with the bid submission.
- 2.5.4 Response and summary of the engagement is included in appendix G
- 2.5.5 It is envisioned that the revised Market Hall would act as an economic and social driver for the wider town centre economy, attracting footfall and encompass a new eating provision, a remodelled entertainment and events venue and high quality market space through:
- Re-connecting the Alexandra Cinema and Market Hall buildings to create a flexible market, food & events/theatre space.
 - A designated Food Court and seating area.
 - A range of permanent retail units and flexible market stall designs to allow the space to be used for a variety of uses including performances and events and the ability to respond to rapidly changing retail trends.
 - Redesigned Food Hall wrapping around the building offering an open plan layout, allowing for the new purpose built cinema development and for a partial reveal of the original stone frontage of the market hall and a pedestrian link through to Market Street.
 - Improvements to the entranceways and architecture, including the removal of the modern addition along the frontage of the building onto Market Street to create sight lines and increase permeability.
 - Market Square improvements to include electricity, tree planting and provide a designated outdoor event and market space.
 - Relocation of first floor public toilets.
- 2.5.6 It is intended that the final scheme proposals for the Market Hall and Alexandra Cinema be presented to Council later this year, following further engagement with NADMACS and the Market Hall retailers. A memorandum of understanding has been issued to NADMACS and the Friends of the Alexandra to set out how the community and Council can work together to deliver the widest possible benefit.

2.5.7 This project will require listed building consent given the grade II status of the market hall. An application will follow in due course.

2.6 Cinema project

2.6.1 The proposal for a new 4 screen cinema will form a vital part of the support for evening economy. The principle was approved in principle by the Executive in November 2018. The background, rationale and delivery method are set out in the 2018 report which is included in appendix I. Due to viability this project was paused in 2018 until further funding could be secured.

2.6.2 The proposed financial structure and technical elements relating to delivery are outlined part II of this report. The scheme uses a mixture of grant and Council borrowing to finance the scheme.

2.6.3 The building is proposed to be operated by WTW Scotts Ltd who currently operate the Alexandra Cinema. An agreement for lease and new lease will be entered into for a period of 25 years. A letter of support from Scotts is included in appendix J.

2.6.4 The scheme designs are shown in appendix K and will create a statement landmark building in the centre of the Town, which in conjunction with the Markets project, opening up the flank of the market hall creating a new pedestrian walk through into the town square and facilitating a core evening economy.

2.6.5 The scheme will require full planning consent. An application will follow in due course.

3 FINANCIAL, LEGAL OR OTHER IMPLICATIONS

3.1 National Cycle Network 2 & Queen Street enhancements project costs are provided below. These are subject to some change but the maximum Council contribution will not alter (if this situation changes notably during the detailed design or delivery process then further Council approval will be necessary):

| NCN Route 2 and Queen Street Enhancements | |
|---|--------------------|
| Source of funding | Expenditure |
| FHSF grant from MHCLG | £800,000 |
| Devon County Council contribution | £200,000 |
| Council CIL funding, earmarked for cycling & walking improvements | £105,000 |

3.2 Queen Street enhancement and National Cycle Network Route 2 costs are provided below. These are subject to some change but the maximum Council

contribution will not alter (if this situation changes notably during the detailed design or delivery process then further Council approval will be necessary):

| NCN Route 2 and Queen Street Enhancements | |
|---|--------------------|
| Source of funding | Expenditure |
| FHSF grant from MHCLG | £800,000 |
| Devon County Council contribution | £200,000 |
| Council CIL funding, earmarked for cycling & walking improvements | £105,000 |

3.3 Cinema: Financial and legal implications are outlined in detail part II. The return on cost for the project is 12% which equates to an average income of £121,168.

3.4 The conditions of funding require the grant funding to be drawn down and spent by March 2024. A programme illustrating the delivery route is included in appendix E.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The funding bid required a comprehensive package of works being carried out in the Town which collectively meet the Government's target cost benefit ratio.

4.2 Alternatives are to negotiate with Government to deliver isolated packages of the proposed scheme although this would not be recommended and may result in the funding offer being withdrawn.

4.3 The funding offer could be declined. This is not recommended as it would forgo a unique opportunity to realise significant change in the Town to react to rapid changes effecting the high street and town centres.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 This project is a rare opportunity to secure significant investment into the transformation and regeneration of Newton Abbot, to improve the quality of environment, ensure future resilience and facilitate transformational change.

5.2 The projects seek to enhance the variety of offer and quality of the town centre experience, and enable appealing access via all modes. This will unlock significant social and economic benefits now and into the future.

5.3 The proposal focuses on strengthening the Market and Cultural Quarters and delivering upgrades to Queen Street and the National Cycle Network Route.

5.4 This will deliver post pandemic support to the town through improvements to the building environment and connectivity with the wider Town. Encouraging local spend and supporting local businesses and the community.