

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

11 April 2019

COUNCILLOR P HODSON - CABINET MEMBER FOR PERFORMANCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

For the period 21 February to 1 April 2019

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

The borough's Expression of Interest (application for the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Government's (HCLG) Futures High Streets Fund (FHSF).

An opportunity for the borough to access funding from the government's recently announced Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) has arisen. The FSHF was set up to help local town centers become more vibrant and arrest declining footfall. The £675m Fund has been created by government to support places by co-funding regeneration projects that will help transform and promote economic growth in town centers and wider local areas. The fund operates on a two-round process with two phases in each round. The first round opened in December 2018 with a Phase 1 call for Expressions of Interest to be submitted by the deadline of March 22nd. The government expects the majority of successful bids will be in the region of £5m to £10m for a town the size of King's Lynn and will need to be co-funded by public and private sector partners.

The full timetable is set out below:

- 22 March 2019: expression of Interest (Eol) submissions
- Summer 2019: announcement of places moving to Phase 2 for business case development
- Late 2019: first round of final business cases for Phase 2 to be submitted by local authorities
- Spring 2020: all remaining business cases for Phase 2 to be submitted

It is important to note that if our Phase 1 Eol application is successful funding will only be secured following a full business plan being submitted and accepted as part of the Phase 2 stage. Phase 1 will be a highly competitive process with most town centres in the UK, some suffering quite high levels of multiple deprivation, applying for funding. A second round of FHSF may be available post 2020.

The Application:

A project team led by the Chief Executive and Executive Director, Leisure and Public Space put together and submitted an EoI application on March 21st prior to the deadline. The two key eligibility criteria areas within the application required setting out the specific challenges the town center faces and how local stakeholder’s vision and ambition can address those challenges. *The Town centre vision and ambition for change* section within the application was informed by a comprehensive range of engagement and consultation activities with a wide group of local residents, businesses and local partner organisations.

In summary Our Town Centre Challenge seeks to arrest ongoing declining footfall and shop closures to create a vibrant community hub by widening the centre’s appeal to residents and visitors beyond just the retail offer.

Our summary strategy for doing this falls under three broad themes:

1. Harness and enhance the existing heritage assets to attract more visitors and business investment
2. Improve and enhance the cultural & arts offer to create an exciting, attractive and safe environment for residents and visitors
3. Through housing provision encourage more people to live and work within the town centre boundary while improving the principal gateways and access points into the town

The application was submitted with support letters from King’s Lynn and West Norfolk residents, businesses, and local, regional and national partner organisations. The application set out the heritage, housing, public realm and economic regeneration achievements that the borough along with, both its public and private sector partners, has achieved with the purpose of highlighting our track record so far and the skills and experience we have to make things happen. This reputation was further reinforced by the inclusion of the very positive comments made about the borough by The Minister for Local Government Parliamentary Under-Secretary Rishi Sunak when he visited on Thursday 7th March.

Overall the community wish to create an ‘**Open Town Centre**’, building on the heritage assets which are King’s Lynn’s USP, and opening up the town center so that it becomes special again. The vision which is emerging is one with a more open community offer that includes young people’s and family interests, more culture, entertainment and eating places, quality shops that are open for longer, better access, and a safe and inclusive town center that gives the traditional Norfolk friendly open welcome to all.

2 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Cabinet Meetings
Cabinet Siftings
Portfolio Meeting

Chris Bamfield
BID Meetings
Local Investor
Informal River Front Working group
Mayors Award Evening
Parish Council Meeting
Mayors Reception
Housing Minister Rushi Sunak
Audit Committee
R & D
Kim Kennedy KL Port
E & C