

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL FROM THE SPECIAL CABINET MEETING ON 24TH AUGUST 2021

CAB37: TOWN DEAL BOARD

Cabinet considered a report which explained that King's Lynn was one of 101 towns invited by Government to develop proposals for a 'Town Deal' and following submission of the Town investment Plan had been offered the maximum award of £25m.

The objective of the Towns Fund programme was to drive the sustainable economic regeneration of towns to support long term economic and productivity growth. A Town Deal was a three way agreement in principle between Government, the lead local authority and the Town Deal Board. The report set out the next steps required to progress and implement the Town Deal for King's Lynn.

Authority was sought to progress the Town Deal in the Council's capacity as the "Accountable Body" to MHCLG and as part of the Council's role on the Town Deal Board.

It was noted that the Portfolio Holder and Chair and Vice Chair of the Town Deal Board Deal Board would attend meetings of the Local Accountability Framework. The paper was also to be considered by the Town Deal Board the following day.

It was noted that all the projects had been scored with a consistent approach and the Government had encouraged more than the £25m allocation to be prepared in case some projects didn't go ahead. All items had been discussed with Cabinet Members and the Town Deal Board.

Under standing order 34 Councillor Kemp addressed the Cabinet, and asked that improvements be made to the West Lynn Ferry Landing stage; questioned the moving of the library from the existing Carnegie library, and suggested that the market should be rejuvenated.

Councillor Dark drew attention to a press release from the County Council which explained that they were working with the Borough to keep the Carnegie library in use, but that the proposed new community hub would encompass greater space and accessibility and would support the High Street.

Under standing order 34 Councillor de Whalley concurred with the concerns for the current library and the Ferry suggestion. He expressed concern that the improvements to the gyratory system would take the bulk of the funding to the detriment of walking and cycling. He also referred to the need for the White Barn to be incorporated with the Guildhall project and questioned the numbers put forward who would be using the community hub.

Councillor Middleton agreed with the issue of the Carnegie library. He reminded members that the scheme was being put forward by Norfolk County Council so details questions on it should be addressed to them. He took on board the comments re the ferry and would feed them back for consideration. He acknowledged that the Guildhall elements needed to work together to enable a sustainable complex for the future. With regard to the gyratory system, he drew attention to the key driver which was to improve the walking cycling and bus journeys through the town, more information on which would be forthcoming.

Under standing order 34 Councillor Holmes drew attention to and questioned the Equality Impact Assessment which showed a number of negative impacts on groups. It was agreed that the boxes which should have been ticked were neutral, rather than negative. Councillor Holmes also commented that the Governance structures were overly complicated, to which it

was conformed that they were in line with that required by MHCLG, but an attempt would be made to simplify its explanation.

Under standing order 34 Councillor Rust questioned the lack of member involvement on what was being put forward and the lack of engagement with councillors and town wards or the Kings Lynn Area Committee rather than unelected people.

Councillor Dark drew attention to stakeholder and community engagement carried out with the Town Improvement Plan, and confirmed that further consultation would be carried out as work progressed with the draft business cases.

The assistant director drew attention to the raft of consultation carried out with younger people and businesses etc throughout the process. Councillor Middleton drew attention to the advisory groups which the Town Deal Board was setting up, and reminded members that there was a large amount of work to do in the tight timescale whilst being inclusive and more involvement.

Under standing order 34 Councillor Ryves stated that he considered the approach was not joined up but bottom up with a few ideas which individually were nice but he considered did not bring urban regeneration. He sought evidence of the economic value the Guildhall project would bring to the town and questioned whether the obligations of the Town Fund were being met.

Councillor Middleton in disagreeing with the comments responded that all those involved considered that the Guildhall had the opportunity to be of national consequence, with the delivery of the aspirational vision and business plan.

The Assistant Director reminded members that the purpose of the funding was about driving economic growth in order to create the right environment for future investment.

Councillor Kunes in drawing attention to the proposals in the Boal Quay area was pleased to see the proposals for the area being improved, and improvements to the pontoons would bring other boats to the area.

Councillor Long drew attention to the fact that unless the traffic system was improved people would sometimes be more reluctant to come to the town, he commented that there was a fair mix of proposals to help regenerate the area.

Councillor Blunt drew attention to the amount of work to do, and drew attention to the risks, of resources and project creep, thereby needing to concentrate on the specific elements of the project for delivery.

Councillor Sandell welcomed the scheme for the people of the Borough.

Councillor Dickinson concurred with the comments made on consultation, she felt that the underwriting of the Guildhall project should be shown as a Risk as money would have to be found if its HLF funding application was not successful. She also drew attention to the need to have portfolio holder involvement in all stages. It was agreed to include this in the table.

Councillor Middleton drew attention to the process for applying for the HLF grant and learning taken from the previously unsuccessful attempt.

Councillor Long commented that if the HLF bid was unsuccessful in this round then it would have to be looked into whether it was the right scheme.

In summing up Councillor Dark reminded members that it was necessary to start the process and Members and officers would communicate and consult on things as projects progressed.

RECOMMENDED:

1. That the amendment of the capital programme to incorporate £750,000 match funding towards the Guildhall project be approved.

Reason for Decision

To allow the Council to deliver a Town Deal to deliver the investment priorities in the Town Investment Plan for King's Lynn, contribute to the Recovery Plan in response to the Coronavirus pandemic and the long term economic prosperity of the town