

**Committee**

Corporate Policy and
Resources Committee

Date

21 September 2017

Subject: Gainsborough Town Centre Townscape Heritage Application

Report by:

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Purpose / Summary:

To provide an update on the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for Townscape Heritage funding for Gainsborough Town Centre, thereby obtaining formal commitment and financial support.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. To proceed with the submission of a Stage 1 Townscape Heritage bid.
2. To approve the use of the Investment for Growth Reserve as capital match funding within the application.
3. To approve a revised budget within the Capital Programme as detailed within the financial implications.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: Any works carried out under the TH scheme will require the owner's consent and statutory consent (in the form of Listed Building Consent). All works will need to be state aid compliant.

Financial : FIN/67/18

Within the Capital Programme 2017/18 there is a budget of £1.717m for the purpose of delivering this scheme, the financing of which was to be £0.429m from the Investment for Growth Reserve and £1.288m from grant.

In accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, this Committee must approve the submission of grant bids, and accept a commitment to approve relevant match funding in support of the bid, in addition to accepting any future ongoing revenue implications.

The Committee are therefore requested to amend the Capital programme to reflect a budget of £1.615m funded by £0.365m from the Investment for Growth Fund and £1.250m from HLF grant funding.

The delivery of this project is dependent on the success of the bid. Approval to spend will therefore be subject of a future report, once the outcome is known and which will contain details of the schemes to be delivered.

At this stage it is not envisaged that there will be any ongoing revenue financial implications.

Staffing :

This project will be led by the Senior Growth Strategy and Projects Officer supported by the Senior Projects Officer and the Growth Team as part of the agreed work plan.

A steering group has been established to act as a coordinating and monitoring body involving local residents, businesses, council representatives, and representatives from the community and voluntary sector.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

The Stage one application form includes a full equalities impact checklist which takes account of the impact of the project upon groups with protected characteristics under the 2010 Equalities Act.

Risk Assessment :

Risk

We are rejected for the THI funding.

Mitigation

We do not consider a third bid for a substantial period of time and reflect on the organisational lessons offered through HLF rejecting the application.

Risk

We fail to accurately evaluate the conservation deficit in the town centre.

Mitigation

Consult with the Conservation Officer on our assumptions about the historic environment of the town centre.

Commission the building character appraisals contained in the 2016 WLDC THI bid to be updated.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :

Any new development will ensure that current building regulation standards on sustainability can be achieved and include provision for cyclists.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Prosperous Communities Committee – 7 June 2016 - Gainsborough
Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) Bid

<https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/my-council/decision-making-and-council-meetings/meetings-agendas-minutes-and-reports/prosperous-communities-committee/prosperous-communities-committee-reports/>

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1 Background

- 1.1 A Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is a programme administered by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) which seeks to restore historic (both listed and non-listed) buildings in towns. It is a large award of funds to a lead partner (usually a local authority) who operates, in conjunction with partners, a scheme to restore the historic environment of a specified area. This is largely conducted through offering grants to close the 'conservation deficit' (the higher cost incurred through repairs to heritage assets) which are set at a specified percentage of the cost by the relevant officer. The project usually comes with an associated programme of cultural and educational activities, as well as improvements to the local public realm.
- 1.2 This project represents an exciting opportunity for WLDC to act as the catalyst for the heritage-led regeneration of Gainsborough town centre. This is our chance to save some vital heritage assets in our urban core. The project is an important component of the current programmes associated with the Growth Team and with the Mayflower 400 celebrations (the THI area forms part of the Pilgrim Trail).
- 1.3 WLDC previously submitted an application in 2016 but this was rejected by HLF on the grounds that while it was very technically accomplished, it didn't have the 'value added' required to distinguish it in that round of applications.
- 1.4 HLF have indicated they would welcome a resubmission for Gainsborough town centre, subject to the bid including more additional elements as agreed in a debriefing session.
- 1.5 The council's work with the Joint Venture Company for Market Street and its progress towards acquiring a Development Partner for the riverside area has meant that we have entered a fundamental period in the town's renaissance. WLDC have recently expressed their commitment to heritage-led regeneration through the successful launch of a Heritage Masterplan for Gainsborough and organisationally, we have the skills and expertise to support this. The concentration of designated heritage assets in the town centre and their poor condition still causes cause for concern and having them restored or brought into use by local businesses will support the priority projects currently being undertaken by the Growth Team and others.

2 Progress to date

- 2.1 We have established a diverse steering group to administer the project through to the submission of the bid and then, hopefully, through the development phase if the bid is approved (see attached governance chart). The first group met on the 7th August.

- 2.2 We have established an area geography – Gainsborough Market Place and Lord Street.
- 2.3 We are currently seeking letters of support from key figures to boost the bid.
- 2.4 Bassetlaw District Council have been advising us on the preparation of a successful THI bid (their bid was commended as a model by the HLF).
- 2.5 We have notified all business owners in the area of our intentions and have begun a robust process of consultation. We have received five responses, all of which were highly enthusiastic. This represents a very positive level of engagement within a small sample.
- 2.6 We have had two consultation events (one attended by the MP for Gainsborough). The consultation is taking place in partnership with Gainsborough Town Council and harmony with Neighbourhood Plan process.
- 2.7 We are in the process of commissioning a re-assessment of the condition of the buildings in the area and associated costs.
- 2.8 Currently, we are formulating a programme of cultural and educational activities (working in conjunction with the University of Lincoln and Gainsborough College) to support the bid.
- 2.9 We are currently working on the details of our grant request but it seems highly likely that the amount we will be asking for will be £1.25m. The total scheme being £1.615m with £0.365m being a match funding contribution from the Investment for Growth Reserve.
- 2.10 However, we will endeavour to reduce the scheme (and improve our chances of success), by limiting the amount of public realm works required by the project.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 To proceed with the submission of a Stage 1 Townscape Heritage bid.
- 3.2 To approve the use of £0.365m of the Investment for Growth Reserve as capital match funding within the application.
- 3.3 To approve the revised budget within the Capital Programme as detailed within the report.

We proceed with the submission of a Stage 1 Townscape Heritage bid and supported by use the previously agreed funds as match funding within the application.