

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 17 March 2021

REPORT TITLE:	TOWN/HIGH STREET FUND: FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

The report provides for consideration the final recommendations of the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee in respect to Town/High Street Fun: Future High Streets Fund. The report recommends to the Policy and Resource Committee the acceptance to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to consider and approve final signoff of the Future High Street Fund grant funding agreements for Birkenhead and New Ferry, in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance. And to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to commence delivery of the Birkenhead and New Ferry Future High Street Fund programmes in line with the grant funding agreement and change control process.

The full report was presented to the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee on 4 March and is attached.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Economy Regeneration and Development Committee request that Policy and Resources Committee approve the following recommendations:

1. Note the content of the report and the announcement from Government regarding the Future High Street Fund award in relation to Birkenhead and the in-principle award in relation to New Ferry.
2. Note that a re-profiled application was submitted to Government on 3 February 2021 in respect of the New Ferry Future High Street Fund in-principle award.
3. Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to consider and approve final signoff of the Future High Street Fund grant funding agreements for Birkenhead and New Ferry, in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance.
4. Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to commence delivery of the Birkenhead and New Ferry Future High Street Fund programmes in line with the grant funding agreement and change control process.

5. Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to progress with scoping out a design, costed model and fit out of the current preferred option for the temporary market, namely Unit 2 St Werburghs Square and St Werburghs Square itself, that will be used as a temporary holding position while the current Birkenhead Market site be made available for redevelopment.
6. It be noted that a further report will be brought forward to members for approval of the finalised proposal for the temporary market.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1.1 The matter is being referred to the Policy and Resource Committee because The report recommends the acceptance to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to consider and approve final signoff of the Future High Street Fund grant funding agreements for Birkenhead and New Ferry, in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance. And to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to commence delivery of the Birkenhead and the Ferry Future High Street Fund programmes in line with the grant funding agreement and change control process.
- 1.1.2 In accordance with the Council's Constitution decisions regarding land and property including major acquisition and disposals, which includes reserved decision making concerning any purchase, sale or transfer of a value in excess of, or likely to exceed, £100,000 to Policy & Resources Committee.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 An option to delay a report to Committee until the respective Future High Street Fund grant funding agreements are received for Birkenhead and New Ferry was considered but ruled out. Firstly, there are no Committee meetings until after the local elections. In addition to this, it should be noted that the Future High Street Fund process was lengthy and protracted, taking 2 years to date from the launch of the programme. Despite these delays the original spend profile of March 2024 remains, so it is imperative to avoid further delay and commence activity to develop and deliver the projects.
- 2.2 At the time of submission of the Future High Street Fund bid, consideration was being given for the temporary market to be located on Europa Boulevard. Consideration was given to a container type offer, however continued and more developed costings have ruled this location out. There was also some concern from a number of traders that a temporary location at Europa Boulevard was too far away from the retail core.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 26 December 2020, the Council received notification of the outcome of two submissions it had made to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Future High Street Fund.

This announcement set out that Birkenhead had received its full requested allocation of £24.6m. New Ferry was offered an in-principle award of £3.2m from its requested value of £4.6m, subject to the development, submission and subsequent approval of an updated proposal to reflect the lower funding offer. This report sets out the next steps for both areas.

This includes more detailed information regarding the first scheme to be taken forward within Birkenhead, namely a temporary, interim solution for Birkenhead Market, as well as the process to reprofile and resubmit the New Ferry proposal.

Committee is asked to delegate a number of decisions to the Director of Regeneration and Place in terms of accepting the grant funding agreements and commencing activity to develop and deliver the Future High Street Fund programmes.

Town centre regeneration is a long-standing priority for the Council and is reflected in the Wirral Council Plan 2025 through the requirement to deliver inclusive economic growth, working for a prosperous, inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations. This matter affects the wards of Bromborough and Birkenhead and Tranmere. This is a key decision owing to the significance in terms of the effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the Borough, as well as being in excess of £500,000 in monetary value.

- 3.2 Full background information is detailed within the report submitted to Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee on 4 March 2021

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial implications are detailed within the report submitted Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee on 4 March 2021.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The legal implications are detailed within the report submitted Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee on 4 March 2021.

- 5.2 the Policy & Resources Committee is charged by full Council to provide a co-ordinating role across all other service committees and retain a 'whole-council' view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management. In particular, this includes specific responsibility for a decision regarding land and property including major acquisition and disposals, which includes reserved decision making concerning any purchase, sale or transfer of a value in excess of, or likely to exceed, £100,000;

As part of the matter of business that was the subject of the report to Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee falls under that responsibility reserved to the Policy and Resources Committee, the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee's proposed resolution is presented as a recommendation.

- 5.3 As the decision in this matter is the subject of a recommendation from another Committee, the Policy and Resources Committee must take into account the resolution of that Committee and give due regard to the guidance and comments made by its members. The Policy and Resources Committee must not, however, consider itself bound by that Committee's recommendations or otherwise fetter its discretion; its Members must come to their own decision. In doing so, the Committee must satisfy itself that it has been provided with all relevant information or a suitable précis to enable it to comply with its duties and make a lawful decision.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The resource implications are detailed within the report submitted Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee on 4 March 2021.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The relevant risks are detailed within the report submitted Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee on 4 March 2021.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The engagement/consultation are detailed within the report submitted Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee on 4 March 2021.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The equality implications are detailed within the report submitted Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee on 4 March 2021.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The environment and climate are detailed within the report submitted Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee on 4 March 2021.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Minute Extract
Appendix 2 – Future High Streets Fund

BACKGROUND PAPERS

MHCLG Future High Streets Fund Call for Proposals, December 2018
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-high-streets-fund-call-for-proposals>

MHCLG Future High Streets Fund Business Case Guidance, 2019 (Copy available on request) MHCLG Future High Street Fund Announcement, December 2020
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/830-million-funding-boost-for-high-streets>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Delegated Decision Report: Preferred Development	20/12/2019
Option for New Ferry Cabinet Report: New Ferry and Birkenhead Future High Street Fund	23/03/2020
Birkenhead Future High Street Fund Leader Decision (Birkenhead Market Full Business Case)	March 2020
Economy Regeneration and Development Committee	March 2020

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