

Subject:	Haslingden Town Centre-external funding bid	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Full Council	Date:	27 th February 2019
Report of:	Director of Economic Development	Portfolio Holder:	Regeneration and Tourism
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached: No
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1.	RECOMMENDATIONS
1.1	Council to allocate £160,000 in match funding from the employment and transport reserve, ring-fenced solely for the purpose of providing match funding for external bids. Authorise the submission of further bids to support the enhancement of Haslingden town centre.
1.2	Council to authorise the Legal Services Manager, in consultation with the Director of Economic Development and the Portfolio Holder, to enter into a grant funding agreement for the initial stage one - development phase bid if approved.
1.3	Council to approve the proposed changes to governance for the Haslingden Task Force and its reconstitution as the Haslingden Strategic Town Centre Board and revised Terms Of Reference (annex 1) to provide the governance framework for any funding award.
1.4	Council delegates all stage one – development phase project spend to the reconstituted Haslingden Strategic Town Centre Board.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To seek Members authorisation for new Haslingden town centre regeneration project bids, allocate match funding, agreement to proceed with successful stage one bid and reconstitution of the Haslingden Task Force.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:

- **A connected and successful Rossendale that welcomes sustainable growth:** our priority is to ensure that we are well connected to our residents, key partners and stakeholders. We want to make the most of every pound we spend and we are always looking for new and innovative ways to make the resources we do have, work harder for us.
- **A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale:** our priority is to ensure that we are creating and maintaining a healthy and vibrant place for people to live and visit.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- There is a do nothing risk that the town centre may continue to decline, unfulfilling its role as the key focal point for retail, leisure and employment. By addressing the identified need in Haslingden town centre through the bid, growth and vibrancy will be achieved.
- There is a risk that poor governance could lead to performance issues and program

delays and the funders being unsatisfied with the project. Reconstituting the Haslingden Task Force into the Haslingden Strategic Town Centre Board allows for good practice and governance of the project should the bid be successful.

- Risk that the new funding bid is unsuccessful. If not approved further similar bids will be made to support the regeneration of Haslingden using the ring fenced match funding.

5. BACKGROUND

5.1 The need to support Haslingden

Haslingden is a historic market town, with unique buildings adding to its character that borders Worsley and Greenfield wards. It is understood the town owns the oldest street market licence and is home to several listed buildings and assets. It still retains some independent shops and quality food and drink establishments. However, the town centre has been affected by the national change in shopping habits in recent years. This has lowered the footfall in the town and it is necessary to update the town centre offer to reflect the change in market demand which requires a higher concentration of residential, leisure, community units. The town centre needs to also develop a stronger events experience and food and drink offer.

Some of the key architectural features that form its heritage are at risk of being consumed in inappropriate additions such as satellite dishes, UPVC shop fronts and roller shutters. The historic assets and ornate detailing on the buildings are also at risk of being overshadowed by empty buildings and derelict sites. Haslingden became a conservation area in 2018, to manage the heritage of the town.

Haslingden has some communities that are ranked in the top 10% of the most disadvantaged areas in the UK as well as areas ranked in the top 30% of the most deprived areas, according to the indices of multiple deprivation. However, there is a strong community spirit and passionate groups such as Love Haslingden, Haslingden Task Force and Haslingden Civic Pride who arrange community events, litter picks and flower planting to improve the local environment. Coupled with an external funding bid and associated works, events and initiatives will restore the core function of the town centre.

An external funding bid is likely to focus on the following areas:

- Shop front improvement works
- Targeted building structural and enhancement works
- Conversion of out of vacant buildings to residential, leisure or community use
- Image improvement initiatives
- Public realm enhancements
- Creation of a dedicated events area
- Community training initiatives and capacity building
- Community grants to promote and enhance the town centre
- Project Manager and consultation

5.2 2018 HLF Funding bid and feedback

Following Council approval in March 2018, the Economic Development Team submitted a comprehensive funding bid to Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for their final call for Townscape Heritage projects. Council allocated £160,088 and £40,000 from the existing Haslingden Task Force budget on 21st March 2018 to support a £2,636,385 RBC, Heritage Lottery Townscape Heritage and private sector funding bid for Haslingden Town Centre. This was a very competitive process that was hugely oversubscribed, as the national budget was lower than in previous years.

Unfortunately, Haslingden was not successful in 2018 but many positive comments were received from the HLF about the funding bid. HLF have indicated that they would welcome a new funding bid for their revised 2019 grants programme.

Other funding bids may be possible to different organisations for a similar town centre regeneration project. It is the intention of the Haslingden Task Force to actively pursue other suitable funding opportunities; as new funding calls are announced and not limit the scope of the match funding just to HLF.

5.3 **Haslingden Task Force – pre application work**

The Haslingden Task Force has received a detailed briefing on the 2018 funding bid. One of the recommendations was that in order to strengthen a 2019 bid further pre application work would be necessary in order to enhance the new application. As a result a budget of £15,000 was allocated from the existing Haslingden Task Force funding. The following additional pre application work has been carried out:

- 3 consultation sessions with the general public
- Online residents survey – 231 completed
- Survey of 800 Haslingden school and sixth form students
- Presentations at the Haslingden Traders Group
- Individual questionnaires with shopkeepers
- Land registry searches
- Letter to all property landlords with survey
- Landlord in-principle willingness to fund match contribution letters
- Structural reports and costs established for priority buildings
- Detailed project plan
- Public realm visual street scene mock ups
- Letters of support from stakeholders

5.4 **Haslingden Task Force – existing budget**

Haslingden Task Force has been meeting since 2014 and has been committed to tackling projects that involve the local community and regeneration of the town centre. The Task Force is chaired by the Leader of the Council and has representatives from members, the community and businesses.

Haslingden Task Force was originally awarded £100,000 from RBC to improve the town centre. Projects have included, additional Christmas lighting, clean up events, an outdoor gym at Victoria Park as well as the introduction of hanging baskets and parking signage.

Haslingden Task Force has also recognised the need for the regeneration of Haslingden Town Centre and engaged with local shopkeepers and building owners on a initial pilot shopfront improvement scheme. This scheme has encouraged owners to replace their shop fronts, sympathetically to its heritage, using a grant made available from the Task Force but this was on a far smaller scale than could be achieved through a significant funding bid.

Financial update 2018/19- remaining funding from the initial £100,000 allocation:

Balance Remaining 31/03/2018	£62,428.67
Actuals to 24/01/19	£4,900.35
Purchase Order Commitments	£5,000.00
Balance Remaining @ 24/01/19	£52,528.32

There is an estimated £12,528 required to cover existing Task Force commitments, which

leaves £40,000 available to be re-used as match funding to support external funding bids.

5.5 **Terms of Reference**

Haslingden Task Force will need reconstituting in order for the governance structure and stakeholder involvement to be compliant to manage a large funding bid and oversee strategic development. The proposed changes to the group were devised based on a similar successful model used in the Bacup THI; including specific heritage groups, community groups and businesses.

The Haslingden Task Force has been consulted on the proposal to reconstitute the group to the Haslingden Strategic Town Centre Board. The group is scheduled to meet before this Council report to adopt these changes. This will link with the Haslingden Partnership, which will continue to deal with non-strategic day-to-day issues.

5.6 **Funding call**

A new HLF funding call has been made with a deadline for stage one submissions of 5th March 2018; we have submitted an expression of interest and are actively pursuing an application. Discussions have taken place with HLF representatives and a similar bid to 2018 with additional pre application work and extra enhancements such as community grants has received a positive response. The total value of the new bid is expected to be on a similar scale to the 2018 application. Other funding opportunities will also be considered.

5.7 **Staged application**

HLF and many other funding organisations adopt a two-stage application process. Typically a stage one - development stage; consists of research, consultation, technical reports and designs and this is of relatively low value compared to the stage two. The work completed under stage one will enable a comprehensive and costed stage two- delivery phase application to be made.

The stage two – delivery phase is when the physical capital works take place. As the exact works required in stage two are not yet known, a further report will be presented to a future Council meeting seeking authorisation for the stage two bid and capital works.

5.8 **Need for a Council decision**

HLF or other funding bids will require external funding to be secured with the sponsoring organisations approval. This is being re-sought as the previous Council report was specific to the 2018 application. It will remain ring fenced in the employment and transport reserve for this purpose and not spent by Haslingden Task Force for non-match funding bid purposes.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

6.1 Financial matters are noted in the report. The allocation of £160,000 leaves a balance of £776,000 in the Employment & Transport Reserve.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

7.1 All due diligence and necessary legal agreements will need to be approved and completed in a timely manner in full compliance with the tender. The terms of reference (annex 1) will ensure good governance in the process.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

8.1 The regeneration of Haslingden Town Centre is identified both as a Corporate Project within the refreshed 2018 Corporate Strategy and within the three year action plan of the adopted

2018 Economic Development Strategy. On success of a funding bid full consultation will be undertaken with the community and relevant and proportionate consideration will be given to equalities

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 This report gives authorisation for new Haslingden town centre regeneration project bids, allocate match funding, agreement to proceed with a successful stage one bid and reconstitution of the Haslingden Task Force.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Terms of Reference - Haslingden Strategic Town Centre Board	<i>Annex 1</i>