

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 30 March 2020

Title: North Shields Heritage Action Zone Funding

Portfolio(s): Deputy Mayor

Cabinet Member(s): Councillor Bruce Pickard

Report from Service

Area: Regeneration and Economic Development

Responsible Officer: John Sparkes, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development Tel: (0191) 643 6091

Wards affected: Riverside, Tynemouth

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

On the 26th November 2018, the Cabinet agreed a report which set out 'An Ambition for North Tyneside'. Having listened to the views of our residents and businesses, the report articulated the Elected Mayor and Cabinet's ambition for North Tyneside and provided a series of projects and schemes which reflected the Authority's ambition around the themes of 'our people', 'our place' and 'our economy'.

In December 2019, we submitted a non-competitive bid to Historic England, which if successful, will see significant investment into the buildings and public realm of the Northumberland Square and Howard Street Conservation Area. This will improve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and will build upon our investment at Northumberland Square. The funding will also provide new commercial opportunities for some of the buildings on Howard Street, which could be repurposed toward more suitable uses and which would take advantage of this unique location.

The regeneration of the Northumberland Square and Howard Street Conservation Area will complement the emerging North Shields masterplan. The purpose of the masterplan is to set out our vision for the town centre which reflects the Authority's policy objectives to broaden and diversify the visitor offer and to create a sustainable future for the town centre with improved links to the Fish Quay.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) authorise the Head of Resources to accept grant funding, should the Authority's application be successful, from Historic England for High Street Heritage Action Zone funding for part of the Northumberland Square Conservation Area; and

(2) delegate authority to the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development in consultation with the Deputy Mayor, Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources, the Head of Resources and the Head of Law and Governance to enter into the appropriate grant funding agreement with Historic England.

1.3 Forward Plan:

It has not been practicable to give twenty-eight days' notice of this report. However, it is required to be considered without the twenty-eight days' notice being given due to the recent confirmation that funding will be announced prior to the end of March.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priorities in the 2020-2024 Our North Tyneside Plan, our places will:

Provide a clean, green, healthy, attractive, safe and sustainable environment;

Be a thriving place of choice for visitors; and

Be great places to live

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

In Autumn 2018, the Chancellor announced a new Future High Streets Fund, with £675m being allocated to support the renewal and reshaping of town centres and high streets in a way that improves experience, drives growth and ensures future sustainability. As part of that fund, £40m has been allocated to Historic England for work to support historic high streets.

The High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) will deliver a four-year programme of physical improvements, community engagement and cultural activities. It is a place-based scheme designed to secure lasting improvements to our historic high streets and the communities who use them. The Authority aims to use this funding to work with partners to champion and revive the Northumberland Square and Howard Street Conservation Area, changing perceptions of heritage and high streets. The scheme purpose is to support sustainable economic and cultural growth on and around high streets and restore and enhance local historic character, making the high street an attractive, engaging and vibrant place for people to live, work and play.

The application process required the submission of an Expression of Interest (EOI) application, to outline initial proposals and form part of the assessment of the application against essential criteria.

Officers received confirmation from Historic England in the summer of 2019 advising the Authority's EOI was successful and the Authority was invited to develop a detailed Programme Design with assistance from Historic England. This programme was submitted in December 2019. Although the Authority has not received a formal offer, this is not a competitive process and feedback from Historic England has been very positive.

The essential criteria for this fund is set out below:

1. The HSHAZ must be in a Conservation Area
2. The HSHAZ must be delivered through a partnership, and include the Local Authority as a partner
3. The HSHAZ must be delivered with demonstrable support of the Local Community
4. The HSHAZ must be capable of delivery (scheme completion) in four years (April 2020 to March 2024)

Funding is available for:

- Physical works including building repairs, reinstating architectural features and work to the public realm, work to bring vacant buildings or portions of buildings back into use or conversion of buildings into alternative uses that better suit demand.
- Activities to help people engage with the heritage.
- Activities to help develop and run the scheme, such as preparation of development briefs / appraisals, preparation of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for example.

The Authority's EOI application seeks £900,000 funding and proposes Northumberland Square and Howard Street Conservation Area as the focus of its Heritage Action Zone. Northumberland Square and Howard Street are undoubtedly the flagship developments of North Shields 'new town' which underpinned by its stunning Georgian architecture.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out at Paragraph 1.2 of this report.

Option 2

Cabinet to not approve any of the recommendations.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

Should the Authority be offered grant funding, authorising the Head of Resources to accept the funding from Historic England will allow the Authority to respond quickly to any offer and progress with the High Street Heritage Action Zone project as early as April 2020. This will also help kickstart the regeneration of North Shields in line with Our Ambitions and our emerging Masterplan.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Heritage Action Zone CA Boundary Map.
Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment - HSHAZ

1.9 Contact officers:

Graham Sword, Senior Manager - Regeneration, tel. (0191) 643 6421
Matthew Calvert, Commercial Finance tel. (0191) 643 5722

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The Heritage Action Zone Funding from Historic England totals £0.900m and requires a £1 million match funding contribution from the Authority. It is proposed that the match funding contribution will be taken from the Investment Plan Our Ambition budget provision of £10m over the next five years. As this scheme is over four years, the match funding contribution will be spread between 2020/21 through to 2023/24.

There are clawback provisions within the grant funding agreement, however, the Authority would look to minimise the risk against any grant clawback through full adherence to the grant conditions.

2.2 Legal

The completion of the grant funding agreement will be subject to the agreement of satisfactory and appropriate terms and conditions by the Head of Law and Governance. In relation to the potential for clawback arising from property sales following the carrying out of works, Historic England have stated that clawback will not be exercised where it has been demonstrated that the award of the third party grant has made a scheme viable and that there is not a significant element of developer profit within the scheme.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

Lead Cabinet Members have been briefed and finance, legal and procurement have provided advice on this project and the background to this report.

The North Shields Board have also received reports on the scheme.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

As the scheme progresses and as a requirement of funding, an independently chaired Partnership Board will be required.

The HAZ funding also requires a cultural programme to be developed by a consortium made up of cultural and community organisations. The programme will be a mix of nationally and locally commissioned activities that celebrate the local identity of each high street. The community organisations on the consortium, must be reflective of the place and the people within it. Historic England will facilitate this group, with assistance from North Tyneside Council. We see this programme working together with the North of Tyne's Community Hubs Investment Fund and the Cultural Enterprise Zone initiatives.

Extensive engagement has taken place and continues with businesses, partners and the community regarding the proposed scheme.

2.4 Human rights

There are no Human Rights issues arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

The Equality Impact Assessment has identified that the Heritage Action Zone scheme will not have an adverse impact on people with characteristics protected under the 2010 Equality Act.

2.6 Risk management

A risk register will be established and maintained.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder issues arising directly from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

The scheme will look at the reuse and improvement of historic buildings, thereby contributing to sustainability targets and reducing the need for new build and therefore carbon outputs.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive
- Head(s) of Service
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service