

Report to:	Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board
Report Author:	Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prospeity Programme Director, Blackpool Council
Date of Meeting:	7th April 2020 (CANCELLED)

Future High Street Fund (FHSF) and the Fylde Coast Tram Loop

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To update the Board on the FHSF bidding process for Blackpool, Fleetwood and Kirkham and the proposed Fylde Coast Tram Loop business case study

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 Members are asked to note the report on which further updates will be given and a draft brief circulated for comment in due course.

3.0 Background Information

At last Board meeting on 7th January, following a proposal for the three local authorities to include a funding request in their respective Future High Street Fund (FHSF) bids to support a business case study into a Fylde Coast tramway loop it was agreed:

- a) That the proposition was accepted.
- b) MHCLG are approached to secure endorsement for the approach being undertaken with a view to Future High Street Funding.
- c) Lancashire County Council, as transport authority for the vast majority of the study area, are formally approached for their support.
- d) Blackpool Transport, Network Rail and Northern Railway are briefed on the proposal and are given an opportunity to input.
- e) Community Rail Lancashire, Transport for the North, the DfT and the Poulton and Wyre Railway Society are consulted.
- f) Kirkham Business Group and Kirkham Town Council are consulted.

Previous Board meetings have highlighted the aims and objectives of the FHSF fund and how each Fylde coast authority had been invited to submit a bid for Blackpool, Fleetwood and Kirkham respectively.

Wyre Council were in the first phase and so were required to submit a draft bid by the end of January deadline and a full bid by the end of April although in view of the Covi-19 pandemic this has been extended to 5th June. Fylde and Blackpool Councils

were required to submit their draft bids by the 16th March and full bids by 30th June but they now have the option of submitting their bids from 30th June to 31st July.

This has now been done and each bid currently contains an £800k bid for resources to support a comprehensive feasibility study and outline business case to provide a sufficiently developed preferred option, which will be capable of being implemented if a future funding opportunity becomes available.

Appraisal feedback takes 6-8 weeks and Wyre have recently received their feedback which made no comment on the Tram Loop proposal. The depth of detail required for bids is clearly set out, which with the COVID-19 outbreak and its ramifications, there is some concern over the ability to develop bids to the standard required to meet the short deadline, especially for Wyre whose deadline is shortest. Not surprisingly no guidance from Government has yet been issued to change the situation or relax the deadlines so in the meantime all 3 bids continue to be developed to aim to meet the existing deadlines.

Also, as referenced at the last Board it was discussed that even if the bid for the study was unsuccessful through the FHSF, any work undertaken would stand all three authorities in good stead for future bids, and the issue of improving connectivity across the Fylde Coast was critical

In terms of the Board's other resolutions progress is highlighted in italics below:

b) MHCLG are approached to secure endorsement for the approach being undertaken with a view to Future High Street Funding.

The Delivery Manager for Blackpool and Fylde's bids gave no definitive response but said that the matter would need the input of the Department of Transport if included in the final submission

c) Lancashire County Council, as transport authority for the vast majority of the study area, are formally approached for their support.

Discussions have commenced on the draft brief which, once it is sufficiently ready will be the subject of a wider consultation

d) Blackpool Transport, Network Rail and Northern Railway are briefed on the proposal and are given an opportunity to input.

e) Community Rail Lancashire, Transport for the North, the DfT and the Poulton and Wyre Railway Society are consulted.

Some discussions have commenced and once more progress has been made on c) a draft brief will be the subject of a wider consultation

f) Kirkham Business Group and Kirkham Town Council are consulted.

A meeting took place on 10th March with Fylde and Blackpool officers to explain the proposals more fully, understand the opportunity this potentially presented and the

issues of concern to Kirkah's businesses and communities so that these could be addressed in the brief.