

Report to: Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board

Report Author: Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director,  
Blackpool Council

Date of Meeting: 16 September 2020

## **FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND (FHSF) UPDATE**

### **1.0 Purpose of the report:**

1.1 To update the Board on the Future High Street Fund bidding process for Blackpool, Fleetwood and Kirkham.

### **2.0 Recommendation(s):**

2.1 To note the report.

### **3.0 Background Information**

Previous Board meetings have highlighted the aims and objectives of the Future High Street Fund and how each Fylde coast authority had indicated their wish to submit a bid for Blackpool, Fleetwood and Kirkham respectively.

Each Authority has now submitted their final bids, the detail of which is set out below, and the outcome of which is anticipated in the early Autumn.

In respect of the previously discussed proposal for each Authority to seek funding towards the Fylde Coast Rail Study, whilst Blackpool and Wyre have include this Fylde have not after their appraisal and feedback. In line with the resolution of the Economic Prosperity Board, Fylde sought the endorsement of Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government through the inclusion of the study within their draft business case submission but the feedback provided set out that revenue grants such as feasibility studies are not within the scope of Future High Street Fund. In addition, they were unable to justify including a request to fund Study given the distance of the station from the town centre which made it difficult to identify any tangible benefits to the town centre of Kirkham from this project. Unlike the Blackpool and Wyre bids, which seek the full £25m funding, the Kirkham bid seeks in the region of £9m and so the inclusion of such a large cost element with no quantifiable benefit would have significantly diluted the Benefit Cost Ratio of their business case to such an extent that the bid as a whole would have been seriously jeopardised.

Nonetheless, Fylde Borough Council have confirmed that they remain committed to exploring ways in which the services provided along the South Fylde Line may be improved and, as referenced at a previous Board it was discussed that even if the bid for the study was unsuccessful through the Future High Street Fund, 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. The importance the Government is placing on transport infrastructure is also seen as an important factor. It remains to be seen how Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government respond to the proposals in the Blackpool and Wyre submissions.

#### **4.0 Future High Street Fund Bid Submission detail**

##### **Blackpool Bid**

###### Date of submission

Blackpool submitted its bid on the 20 July 2020.

###### Funding Sought

There are 11 schemes in the Blackpool programme. The schemes amounted to a Future High Street Fund ask of £25m with public co-funding of £18.3m and private investment of £16.1m.

###### Project List

The Blackpool interventions programme was based around three **Strategic Objectives (SO's)** reflecting the aims and objectives of the Future High Street Fund improving experience, driving growth and future sustainability. The 11 schemes are:-

- **Houndshell Extension:** To provide a physical enhancement to the Houndshell shopping centre via an extension allowing the private sector to invest in a new cinema, 2 restaurants and support the relocation of Wilko, providing an overall boost to the town centre.
- **Abingdon Street Market:** To secure the rejuvenation of the Abingdon Street Market to make it more appealing to a wider resident and visitor base

*NB: these first two schemes have subsequently received an allocation through the Getting Building Fund and both are now going through the Local Enterprise Partnership's accelerated assessment process.*

- **Post Office Acquisition and Redevelopment:** To secure the refurbishment and re-use of this prominent vacant building for a private sector hotel development.

- **King Street Rejuvenation through Property Acquisition:** To acquire 8 vacant properties on King Street to support land acquisition for the location of a major office development.
- **Creative Business Incubation:** To acquire and refurbish 3 vacant units in the town centre to create new retail/maker units for small businesses including pop ups and art and culture businesses.
- **Adelaide Street transport Hub and Access Improvements:** Accessibility and public realm scheme on Adelaide and Bank Hey Street to improve public and other transport access including bus shelters, taxi, cycle, and pedestrian access facilities, directly supporting the Houndshill, Sands Hotel and Showtown developments.
- **Innovation Partnership:** Working with a retail consumer specialist, investment and innovation firm using their expertise and contacts to pilot innovative digital retail technologies in high street businesses, improving businesses' understanding of their customers
- **Digital infrastructure:** To provide the high street businesses and shoppers access to better broadband and the substantial digital infrastructure available to Blackpool
- **Monitoring and Analytics Applications:** To develop and design a monitoring system to understand more clearly visitor footfall, how people move around, the places they visit and the time they spend, to help support businesses adapt to change, and identify new opportunities to enhance the visitor experience.
- **Fylde Coast Rail Study, incorporating proposals for a Tramway Loop:** Technical feasibility study and outline business case to support an extension of the current Blackpool-Fleetwood line to increase frequency and improve connectivity through a train or tram loop across the Fylde Coast and beyond.
- **Application technology marketing and promotion:** Introduce a town centre gift card and loyalty programme to stimulate economic activity through increased footfall and local spend.

## **Wyre (Fleetwood Bid)**

### **Date of submission**

Fleetwood's Future High Street Fund bid was submitted on 4 June 2020

### **Funding Sought**

The bid looked to secure £22.3 million

### **Project List**

A programme of investment to regenerate Fleetwood town centre was grouped under three complementary themes - enabling town centre living, reviving town centre assets and public realm and restoring town centre access. The summary of projects is set out below:

- **Port redevelopment:** – provision of a new sea wall and integrated linear park to unlock the derelict waterfront site to deliver up to 172 homes, including 55 affordable homes within the first phase.
- **Redevelopment of Store 21 and associated parade:** – to explore opportunities to redevelop vacant shopping parades as purpose built affordable housing and ground floor community/business space.
- **Public Realm:** – linking civic and cultural spaces along Victoria Street and Adelaide Street and supporting the 'heritage quarter' at Albert Square/Lord Street through high-quality public realm.
- **Fleetwood Museum:** – extension of the museum to create a fully accessible new visitor centre with an extended offer.
- **Fleetwood Market:** – Development of the food and drink offer in the Victorian Market Hall and redevelopment of derelict land to provide additional trading areas which could be used as a makers market/open space.
- **Fylde Coast Tramway Technical feasibility study and outline business case:** - to explore the reopening of the Fleetwood-Poulton rail line to extend the existing tram/rail network.

## **Fylde (Kirkham) Bid**

### **Date of submission**

The bid was submitted on the 17 August 2020.

### **Funding Sought**

The bid looked to secure £9,509,835 from Future High Street Fund based on :

1. Future High Street Fund Property acquisitions	£2,269,210
2. Public Realm improvements	£4,625,000
3. Development and Building refurbishment costs	£1,705,000
4. Conversion and improvement grants	£501,625
5. Revenue costs	£409,000
TOTAL	£9,509,835

### **Project List**

- **The Kirkgate Centre:** Acquisition of a key town centre building for redevelopment /re-purposing the property, including the conversion of upper floors into 22 affordable dwellings.
- **Hillside Court:** A key Grade II Listed building, which has been vacant for at least 5 years will be redeveloped/refurbished into a heritage/skills/eco/educational centre as part of the Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) for Kirkham.
- **Hillside (Phase 2 and 3):** Acquisition of the neighbouring development plot allowing the 'garden' to be redeveloped. It is proposed to create a new 'earthship', building with space for teaching /hosting and ancillary facilities such as canteen, tools and materials store, drying rooms and office.
- **Former TSB Bank:** Conversion of a vacant Grade II listed building into community hub, suitable for a variety of uses including a community cinema, and Arts Centre. This project will diversify the uses and encourage more people to visit the centre of Kirkham.
- **Public Realm Improvements:** physical improvements to the public realm to reduce traffic and reprioritise the high street in favour of pedestrian movement. Collectively, these works will lead to a positive increase in footfall and general ambience within the town centre area.
- **Development and Building refurbishment costs** to enhance the function and effectiveness of space within existing properties along the Poulton Street, to significantly enhance the architectural quality of the street scene and improve townscape quality.

- **Conversion and improvement costs:** Capital support to convert and/ or improve and repair the all property acquisitions.
- **Revenue costs:** revenue support for Fylde Borough Council to run the Future High Street Fund programme over 4 years.