

Report To:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 5 October 2020
Report Title:	Hastings Town Fund £1m Accelerated Fund Projects
Report By:	Victoria Conheady, Assistant Director Regeneration and Culture
Key Decision:	Y
Classification:	Open

Purpose of Report

This report seeks approval for delivery of all the £1m Town Fund Accelerated Fund projects identified in Appendix 1, **noting that the special urgency provisions have been used to enable Cabinet decision.** The funding is expected to be approved Ministry of Housing and Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) by end of September 2020. Delivery must commence quickly to enable delivery by the 31st March 2021

The Accelerated Fund projects will be used to improve the visitor offer in the town, bring back into use some key buildings and spaces in the town and widen the use of the college facilities to aid employment support, COVID-19 economic recovery and increase footfall into the town centre.

Recommendation(s)

1. That Cabinet note, subject to confirmation by the government to approve all the projects and expenditure identified in the Town Fund Accelerated Fund Approved Project list detailed in Paragraph 9.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Culture or her nominee, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to enter into agreements with the managing authority and the identified Accelerated Fund project leads to deliver the projects and associated outcomes as set out in paragraph 9.

Reasons for Recommendations

The fund has been released as an early phase of the Governments Town Fund Initiative. Cabinet approval is needed to delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Culture, in consultation with the leader of the council, to enter into agreements with the delivery partners. This is still subject to formal MHCLG approval, which is expected by the end of September 2020.

Introduction

1. The Accelerated Fund programme was launched by the government on 1st July 2020 with submissions by 14th August 2020. It is part of the Town Fund programme and the government was keen to have some projects running in the 101 Towns to show progress.
2. Hastings Town Board was responsible for overseeing the development of the programme, call for projects, the assessment process and the final recommendations on the projects submitted for approval. Hastings Borough Council as the accountable body for the Town Fund and the Accelerated Fund was formally obliged to submit the proposals with 'Section 151 Officer' (Chief Finance Officer) approval.

Publicising the call for local projects

3. Hastings Town Deal Board opened a limited call for project ideas with the closing date being 22nd July 2020.
4. Limited call for projects included the following:
 - Town Deal Board was emailed on the 6th July asking them for project ideas and suggestions, and to relay this out through their networks.
 - Email sent to all local councilors asking them to send the message through to their various networks.
5. Other organisations were also asked to promote the opportunity including:
 - Business Improvement District conducted a survey to identify potential projects
 - Heritage Action Zone board meeting was advised and asked for projects
 - Chamber of Commerce publicised a call for projects
 - Coastal Users Group and Grants Advisory Panel (advisory bodies of the Foreshore Trust) were also asked for project ideas.
 - Officers also reviewed all Expressions of Interest which have been submitted via our website for the larger towns fund to identify potential project ideas.
6. Direct approaches were also made by board members and council officers for project proposals to many other local organisations.
7. A total 27 applications were submitted. Two were not submitted in the correct format and one was submitted after the deadline so 24 projects were assessed, with a total ask of £4,211,500. This was over 4 times the amount of funding available.

Assessment of submissions

8. The process for agreeing the Accelerated Fund submissions was agreed by Town Board and was follows:
 - HBC officers and Locate East Sussex assessed submissions for viability and eligibility against the intervention framework criteria

- Following initial assessment, the projects were sent to the Town Board Executive Delivery Group, who assessed and recommend project/s up to the value to £1m for submission. It recommended 4 strongest projects for approval which were felt to be deliverable in the timescales asked for by the government and met all the criteria of the Town Fund guidelines (see Appendix 1 – Hastings Accelerated Towns Funds project recommendations).
- The Town Deal Board also endorsed the projects via email without any objections prior to 14th August submission.

Summary of recommended Accelerator Fund proposals

9. The strongest projects assessed as meeting the criteria's set out by the government as fully as possible were as follows:

- A. **Redevelopment and Regeneration of the White Rock Baths** – The Source – Accelerator Grant Amount provisionally identified @ £485,000

This project will re-develop the remainder of White Rock Baths that have laid derelict on Hastings seafront for decades. The capital will be used to refurbish and re-open rooms adjacent to the current seafront courtyard for occupation by small businesses who share similar customers to the anchor tenant, the Source Park;

- B. **An Employment, Events and Tourist Advice Hub at Hastings College** – East Sussex College Group - Accelerator Grant Amount provisionally identified @ £250,000

The project is a three-pronged approach to redesign part of the ground floor of the college to support the post COVID-19 economic recovery, improve the visitor experience and increase footfall into the town centre;

- C. **Investing in electric vehicle charging infrastructure in town centre public car parks** – HBC - Accelerator Grant Amount provisionally identified @£15,000 with additional match from HBC @ £35,000, to be recommended for agreement by HBC Cabinet.

To expand the provision of low carbon infrastructure in the town centre through the installation of 12 fast electric vehicle charging points in the town centre public car parks;

- D. **Hastings Commons - the Lower Alley – White Rock Neighbourhood Ventures** - Accelerator Grant Amount provisionally identified @£250,000

The project capitalises on the opportunities of a range of peculiar assets that have been brought together as part of the Hastings Commons. These assets cannot be made productive except with significant grant that will make them useable far into the future. The project will make new retail space, new training space, new amenity space, as well as solving the problem of managing waste for the upper and lower Alley that make this area work for residents and businesses.

10. All organisations which submitted applications have been contacted and advised of the reason the EDG are either recommending the project for approval for the £1M accelerated fund or not.

Urgency

11. The fund has been released as an early phase of the Government's Town Fund Initiative. Cabinet approval is needed to delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Culture to enter into agreements with the delivery partners. This is still subject to formal MHCLG approval, which is expected by the end of September 2020. As the projects need to be completed by March 2021 and to avoid delays in the giving decisions to the project leads, the urgency provisions, set out in Part 4 of the constitution are therefore being used, and Cabinet is asked to note these.

Timetable of Next Steps

1. Please include a list of key actions and the scheduled dates for these:

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
Issue Service Level Agreements with project leads	Service Level Agreement Issued	October 2020	Hannah Brookshaw
Projects commence their build programme	Completion of projects by March 2021	March 2021	Hannah Brookshaw

Wards Affected

Castle;

Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score:

Have you used relevant project tools? Yes

Wards Affected

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness Yes

The £1m Accelerated Fund proposals offered many organisations with opportunities to input and suggest projects for delivery as part of the Town Fund development. The board includes representation from the community (business and residents)

Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17) No

Risk Management Yes

Risk log is maintained as part of the HBC project management process for this workstream.

Environmental Issues No

Economic/Financial Implications Yes

Accelerated fund proposals, if approved will bring in £1m of capital investment.

Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	No
Monitoring of the projects will be conducted by HBC but day to day delivery arrangements responsibility of the project lead organisations.	
Local People's Views	No
Anti-Poverty	Yes
There will be economic benefits to residents providing for more employment and support activities.	
Legal	Yes
Service Level Agreements needs to be signed with the lead organisations for the projects.	

Additional Information

Officer to Contact

Pranesh Datta
pdatta@hastings.gov.uk
01424 451784