

URGENT BUSINESS

Request for the City Council to act as Accountable Body for Mary Portas Pilot – Town Team Initiative bid by Morecambe Town Council

Report of Head of Regeneration & Policy Service

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To obtain the agreement of cabinet for the City Council to act as accountable body for the Morecambe Town Council in their bid for funding to implement a Mary Portas Pilot Town Team Initiative in the event of the funding bid being successful.			
Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Referral from Cabinet Member
Date Included in Forward Plan	N/a.		
This report is public.			

RECOMMENDATIONS OF HEAD OF REGENERATION AND POLICY

- (1) That the Chief Executive under urgent business agrees to Lancaster City Council acting as accountable body for the Mary Portas Pilot, subject to there being no cost implications for the City Council.
- (2) That the revenue budget is updated accordingly in the event that the Stage 2 application is successful.
- (3) That consultation be undertaken with a view to waiving call in, in accordance with Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rule 17, to enable the decision to be implemented immediately.

1.0 Introduction

1.0 What are Mary Portas Pilots?

- 1.1 Mary Portas Pilots are projects which are able to attract specific funding targeted at revitalising high streets. The Morecambe Town Council intends to make a bid for a Town team Initiative which could attract up to £100,000 of funding. Before it makes a bid however it has to be able to confirm that the City Council would act as the accountable body for the funding, to manage it in accordance with Financial Regulations and apply the appropriate level of governance for the management of public funds.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 As host authority for the funds the Council would act as the accountable body were a grant to be awarded. The Town Council state that no match funding would be required from the City Council for this project. The requirement to have agreement in principle that a local authority will act as accountable body is similar to the obligation placed on the Arnside/Silverdale AONB when they applied for funding to create a Nature Improvement area for Morecambe Bay earlier this year.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 The Town Council have sought advice from officers of the Regeneration and Policy Service before engaging expertise to formulate their bid. No formal consultation has been carried out as yet.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

- 4.1 Option 1 is to agree to support the Town Council application for funding and agree to act as Accountable Body subject to there being no financial implications for the City Council. This option would demonstrate to the Town Council that the City Council supports complementary initiatives to help regenerate the town. A project which would assist in the regeneration of the towns shopping streets would be consistent with the City Councils regeneration objectives and the developing Morecambe Area Action Plan.
- 4.2 Option 2 is not to agree to act as Accountable Body. This would prevent the Town Council from applying for funding.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 5.1 Option 1 is the preferred option as this presents a unique opportunity in the current financial climate to obtain external funding for projects to improve the very special areas which the City Council has a responsibility to manage, without any match funding burden on the council itself.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The regeneration of Morecambe Town Centre is a part of the economic Growth key priority in the latest version of the corporate Plan 2012-2015.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

The provision of good quality shopping and services in Morecambe Town centre enables greater access to goods and services for local residents on this side of the river, reducing the need for travel and encouraging more sustainable communities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no match funding requirement for the council. The funds will contain an element to contribute to the administration costs of managing the funds which the City Council may be able to access.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Should the bid be successful, then appropriate financial arrangements would need to be put in place to ensure that the Council's obligations as accountable body could be met fully, and that any initiatives facilitated by the bid had no financial implications for the City Council.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications beyond those which will be contained in the grant conditions.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has no comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Letter from Morecambe Town Council dated 21st March 2012.

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