

CABINET

Morecambe Future High Street Bid Informal Task Group

11th April 2023

Report of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To request Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the Morecambe Future High Street bid.				
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Referral from Overview and Scrutiny
				Y
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision.	N/A.			
This report is public.				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATION 1

That Officers ensure in future bids that consultants have a local knowledge base, and that use is made of expertise available in the area, including nearby universities.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That comparisons with other locales should be like-for-like: there is no benefit in comparing a seaside-based, seasonal tourist town with major city yields and operations.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That a Capital Strategy policy be developed to include the purchase of land in Morecambe.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

That any future bids (whether for Morecambe or other parts of the district or the district as a whole) involve consultation with a wider base of stakeholders, with a broader scope of interests, and further that all councillors in the affected area are invited to participate, from Town, City and County councils.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That full consultation takes place with County highways, rail and Eden North to ensure a whole structured, environmentally-friendly transport plan is conceived for the area.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That more sustainable regeneration proposals are developed following wider consultation.

RECOMMENDATION 7

That conversion of empty business premises and new build of housing should be undertaken throughout the town centre, to bring back the community feel of the whole central area.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

That the Winter Gardens is an essential part of Morecambe's future and should be a part of any future bid of a similar nature.

RECOMMENDATION 9:

That the Council tries to source other funding for hyperfast broadband in Morecambe.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

- (i) That this bid is not reused/recycled in the future, as it is outdated and no longer fit for purpose post-COVID.
- (ii) That a new Morecambe Area Action Plan is drafted with full participation of all Morecambe councillors and with business representatives.
- (iii) That for clarity, an Executive Summary be attached to officers' reports on, which also defines the original Council brief, tasks undertaken, personnel involved and third party outsourcing responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION 11

That, as a rule, final bids (which ultimately involve spending commitments by the Council) should be signed off by the Departmental

Head, the Chief Executive, the portfolio-holder and the Leader of the Council.

1.0 Introduction

To consider the recommendations contained in the Morecambe Future High Street bid Informal Task Group report.

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 After the unsuccessful Morecambe Future High Street bid, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to carry out a short piece of work to consider the bid that had been submitted and make recommendations to increase the City Council's chances in the future.

2.2 The purpose of the Morecambe Future High Street Bid Informal Task Group was to assist in ensuring that any future bids that were submitted by the City Council were given the best chance of success in accessing the necessary funding for the sustainable economic priorities of the local community.

2.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report of the Informal Task Group and made a number of recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.

2.5 The Morecambe High Street Bid Informal Task Group report is attached.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 No formal consultation has taken place.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

Option 1:	To accept the recommendations as set out in the report.
Option 2:	Not to accept the recommendations as set out in the report.
Option 3:	To make alternative proposals to those recommended by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5.0 Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Preferred Option (and comments)

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Preferred Option is Option 1. To accept the recommendations set out in the report.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Cabinet is requested to consider the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee set out in report.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

This report contributes to the Council's priorities, most notably those associated with an Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

There are no direct impacts as a result of this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

With regard to recommendation 10, Members are reminded that the current Morecambe AAP is a formal Development Plan Document (DPD) that constitutes part of the Council's adopted Development Plan. The current Morecambe Area Action Plan awaits the conclusions of a monitoring report. As the preparation of any new or reviewed Development Plan Document requires the deployment of significant resources, decisions on which Development Plan Documents to prepare must be taken in light of consideration of the necessity, purposes and benefits of such a document, and, in consideration of other tasks and priorities. The Council's formal commitment to prepare or review Development Plan Documents is contained in the published Local Development Scheme (LDS). There are processes for establishing and updating the work programme provided within the LDS; the process is one which requires direction from the relevant Portfolio Holder, accordingly, it is not appropriate for Cabinet to recommend the creation of a new AAP outside of the appropriate formal mechanism.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. Any recommendations resulting in the requirement of officer time will be managed from within existing budgets and any future expenditure needed will be reported back to members as part of future projects.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Risk of unsuccessful bids.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Although there are no direct financial implications as a result of this report many of the recommendations if fully implemented could have significant financial consequences in future years. These would need to be considered in line with the Council's current Budget & Policy Framework and existing governance requirements.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the work of the Cabinet and the Council as a whole and may be supported by Task Groups. These lead to reports and recommendations that advise the Cabinet and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.

It is important that Overview & Scrutiny should act as a 'critical friend' for Cabinet.

Officers are responsible for advising on and implementing policies, and for the delivery of services in the manner that they consider is most appropriate given their managerial and professional expertise. Councillors would not be expected to be involved in the detail of implementation, but can expect reports on progress.

External funding arrangements, and bids for funding, are governed by the Financial Procedure Rules and they provide that Chief Officers (formally Directors) have authority, with the agreement of the Chief Finance Officer, to express an interest in, bid for, and accept external funds where the total value of the bid does not exceed the Council's Key Decision thresholds and the proposal is (at least) budget neutral, subject to due diligence being demonstrated.

Chief Officers have authority to submit expressions of interest for external funding above Key Decision thresholds:

- (a) subject to consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the relevant Portfolio holder, and additionally
- (a) the Leader and the Chief Executive, where the expression of interest falls outside of the Budget and/or Policy Framework.

For clarity, an expression of interest in itself does not constitute a Key Decision.

The advice on procedure from the Monitoring Officer is to take each recommendation in turn and either accept, reject or partially accept, giving reasons for the decision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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