

Ref:

Called in

Yes/No

THE THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF CABINET

Cabinet Member

Councillor Reece Pugh

Relevant Portfolio:

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development

Date of Decision:

02 March 2023

Subject:

Future High Street Fund

Key Decision

Yes

In Forward Plan

Yes

Brief summary of matter:

The aim of the Future High Street Fund was to renew and reshape high streets with the inclusion of other uses to drive increases in footfall. Through a lengthy application process Thanet District Council was awarded funding from the Fund to deliver a creative workspace scheme. Unfortunately, due to changing circumstances, the building originally identified to deliver the workspace project in, has been leased to a private business, and with further assets either having been sold, or leased to a third party, or in relation to a previous decision on the 13 October, 2023, the landlord has become unresponsive.

The Council also has the opportunity to include the Levelling Up Programme Funding for the Access to Opportunities in the town centre project as part of this delivery. This allows for greater value to be added to both the Future High Street Fund project and the Levelling Up Fund project.

Decision made:

Cabinet agreed:

1. To Authorise the Director of Regeneration to include the Levelling Up Fund monies for the 'Access to Opportunities' (town centre) project to be included within the Future High Street Fund project for delivery. The funding allocated is approximately £250,000;
2. To give delegated authority to the Director of Regeneration, in consultation with the Interim Director of Property, to complete negotiations for the purchase of a town centre property within the approximately £1.31m externally funded budget. The funding allocated will need to deliver the purchase of the asset, and refurbishment in order to meet the outputs of the Future High Street Fund and the Levelling Up Fund project.

Reasons for decision:

To provide approval to deliver the revised Future High Street Fund creative workspace project, in conjunction with the Levelling Up Fund Access to Opportunities town centre

project.

Alternatives considered and why rejected:

- The Council could do nothing and return the external funding to central government, however the Council would not be delivering on a regeneration project that has been awarded funding in Ramsgate, and the properties would continue to be vacant and blight the High Street.
- Compete with the private sector for smaller units as these become available, however this comes with the risk that no properties would be acquired, also the smaller units will not achieve the outputs committed to in the Future High Street Fund Business Case.
- Properties away from the High Street could be considered and apply to central government for a more significant project adjustment, however it would be unlikely to meet the objectives of the Future High Street Fund.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by any executive Member who has been consulted and of any dispensation granted by the Standards Committee:

None

Author of Officer report:

Louise Askew, Director of Reperation

Background papers

20230302 Future High Street Fund Cabinet paper - Google Docs

Statement if decision is an urgent one and therefore not subject to call-in:

None

Last date for call in:

13 March 2023