

CABINET

DATE	06/10/2021
REPORT OF	Councillor Philip Jackson, Leader of the Council
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Sharon Wroot Executive Director for Environment, Economy and Resources
SUBJECT	Activation and Community Engagement Fund
STATUS	Open
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	CB 10/21/05

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The project sits within the Town Investment Plan and will contribute to the Council's 'Stronger Economy' and 'Stronger Communities' as the plan is fully aligned to the Local Plan and the Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan (2020). The project complements and enhances other regeneration activities in Grimsby Town Centre and will promote business and community-led participation and ownership of town centre activities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Activation and Community Engagement (ACE) Fund is one of the six Grimsby town centre projects which form Grimsby's Towns Fund. With an allocation of £850,000 of the £20.9m Towns Fund awarded to Grimsby, the scheme was developed as a result of the Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan consultation and workshops, and subsequent Town Investment Plan (TIP). The objective is to fund grass roots projects within Grimsby town centre which will bring forward alternative activities which add local interest and add value to the larger Council led capital projects taking place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves the submission of a summary business case to MHCLG for the ACE Fund.
2. Authorises the Executive Director for Environment, Economy and Resources, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, and on behalf of the Greater Grimsby Board to take all actions necessary, including
 - 2.1 Acceptance of £850,000 of grant funding from MHCLG to fund the ACE Fund grant scheme, and
 - 2.2 Management of the ACE Fund grant scheme and defrayal of funding through a capital grant programme.

REASONS FOR DECISION

To enable the launch and delivery of the ACE Fund.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 Grimsby's Town Centre Masterplan (2020), having been subject to an extensive public engagement exercise, provided the strategic direction for selecting the TIP projects.
- 1.2 On 3rd March 2021 government announced a funding offer to Grimsby of £20.9m of Towns Fund to deliver the projects set out in the TIP. Heads of Terms were issued which asked Grimsby to choose which of its projects it wished to progress in view of the reduced funding offer.
- 1.3 On 16th June 2021, Cabinet approved the revised project proposals be submitted to MHCLG as part of the Full Business Case, which included the revised TIP projects, one of which is the ACE Fund.
- 1.4 The ACE Fund will allow funding to be directed towards local business and community initiatives offering valuable social inclusion as well as opportunities to introduce a more diverse localised town centre offer.
- 1.5 By targeting investment at smaller, more focused independent schemes, we will be able to introduce some early interventions to the town centre. The remaining, larger capital projects will take longer due to their inherent size and scale. This will help deliver real, visible progress in the short term and enable grass-roots involvement in shaping the future of the town.
- 1.6 The ACE Fund will offer grants of £500-£25,000 to business ventures and community-based organisations that can add local interest and value to the town centre, supporting activity aligned to the core objectives of the TIP and Masterplan.
- 1.7 In meeting the eligibility criteria, applicants will need to consider if their project proposal fits with at least one of the following six town centre priorities identified in the Masterplan.
 - Introduce more diverse uses to the town centre
 - Reconnect the town centre and the community with the waterfront
 - Promote and support community ownership and participation
 - Identify development opportunities within the town centre, including low-carbon initiatives
 - Prioritise health and wellbeing activity in the town centre
 - Enhance employment, skills and entrepreneurial opportunities
- 1.8 The programme will be open to applications until all the grant funding is allocated to eligible applicants, with delivery expected to be spread over the next three to four years, with the final year of funding FY 25/26.

2. NEXT STEPS

- 2.1 Subject to Cabinet approval, officers will submit confirmation of the ACE Fund to MHCLG by the end of October 2021, with funds being released by the end of December 2021.
- 2.2 It is expected that the scheme will be launched in October 2021, with the first grant awards being made in December 2021.

3. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 3.1 The funding will unlock further investment and support SMEs and community-based organisations to bring forward projects within the town centre, adding diversity to the town centre offer.
- 3.2 There is a risk that the fund will be under subscribed, or applications are of insufficient quality to commit funds. The Programme Delivery team are experienced in the delivery of grant funded projects and will work with applicants at every stage of the progress. In addition, the scheme is flexible and can be revised or amended as the scheme evolves.

4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Do nothing – this option would prevent the opportunity for small enterprises and community led organisations to receive funding to participate in the revitalisation of the town centre.
- 4.2 Do Less – this option considered either reducing the value of the fund, or a wider eligibility area. The former had already taken place as a requirement of finalising the reduced Towns Fund grant award, and the latter would dilute the impact on the town centre and the remainder of the programme.

5. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 There are positive reputational implications for the Council resulting from the decision. By including SMEs and community led organisations in the development of the town centre it encourages participation and local pride as well as bringing forward projects at pace. Extensive promotion of the scheme through the press, business communities and business advisors will create an interest in the town centre, and as delivery gets underway there will be further positive news stories and case studies.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The total amount of Towns Fund allocation is £850,000, a proportion of which will be capitalised to pay for the cost of NELC delivery staff. This new fund will

be financed entirely from Towns Fund monies, no Council funding is required.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 New and refurbished building designs will be encouraged to incorporate innovative construction features and low carbon technologies which will reduce carbon emissions and minimise environmental impacts. Activities which promote the health and wellbeing of our residents and visitors will be encouraged to offer a more diverse offer in the town centre.

8. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

- 8.1 Scrutiny were part of the development process for The Masterplan and the TIP during September/October 2020, and the project will be presented at Scrutiny on 26th October 2021.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Towns Fund allocation is incorporated into the Council's approved Capital Investment Programme. The spend will be fully funded through external grant and requires no Council match funding.
- 9.2 The scheme will facilitate town centre development and improvements.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The above sees a continuation of the work in connection with the Grimsby Town Fund. The proposals will receive project management support and Legal Services will support workstreams as appropriate, ensuring that conditionality around any award is complied with.
- 10.2 The delegations sought are appropriate.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no direct HR implications contained within this report.

12. WARD IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Delivery of the ACE Fund is expected to benefit all wards as the economic benefits resulting from the regeneration of Grimsby town centre will benefit all residents living in North East Lincolnshire.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1 16th June 2021 - Cabinet
[Cabinet | Democracy \(nelincs.gov.uk\)](https://nelincs.gov.uk)

13.2 Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan

<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/assets/uploads/2020/12/Grimsby-Masterplan-Report.pdf>

14. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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