

CABINET



TUESDAY, 24 AUGUST 2021 - 3.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor C Boden (Chairman), Councillor Mrs J French (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor S Clark, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor P Murphy and Councillor C Seaton

APOLOGIES: Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor A Lynn and Councillor S Tierney

Councillor Mrs Laws' absence was due to the current government limits on social contact because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CAB16/21 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 15 July 2021 were approved and signed.

CAB17/21 FUTURE PROJECT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Members considered the Future Project Funding Opportunities report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Hoy said she would like if agreed to alter one of the recommendations. Where it states: *'That Cabinet authorises the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director and Chief Financial Officer, in discussion with the Leader to develop the Round 2 LUF bid'*, she would like added *'and Wisbech Cabinet members'* because *'in discussion'* does not seem strong enough to bring people along in the process as suggested. She also suggested removing the word *'discussion'* because this could just be interpreted as consulting someone.

Councillor Boden said because of the split between the role of councillors and officers, we cannot remove the words *'in discussion'* since we as Cabinet members cannot be the ones that implement this. However, he agreed to replace the phrasing with *'after agreement with'*.

Councillor Hoy said so many public consultations have taken place over the years and although she is aware there is a legal process that must be followed, she is keen for us to keep to a minimum as far as possible the further asking of questions. We just need to get on with it, not ask people what they already have told us. Councillor Boden agreed that we have had a wide range of discussions, but we are building on these to get to the next stage; we are not trying to change what we have already agreed but we are trying to refine it and make it appropriate for the monies we will be bidding for over the next few years.

Councillor Mrs French said it is good to see the MP is funding £31,400 and asked if it is coming from his personal or government office. Councillor Boden said he believes it is coming out of his personal office fund. Councillor French said in that case we should be writing a letter of thanks because she has never known this to happen before. Councillor Boden agreed it was appropriate to write and thank him for his support if the recommendation is approved by Cabinet.

Councillor Hoy drew attention to the end of the report where it mentions the Wisbech High Street Project and the Wisbech Access Strategy. She hopes these have been mentioned regarding all grants being received and not been mentioned for use of levelling up funding. Councillor Boden confirmed these had been included as part of a comprehensive list of all the different schemes, however we will accept funding from wherever we can get it. We are not ruling out the possibility

that LUF funding will be sought for other projects listed but none of that will threaten the proposal for Wisbech which is a regeneration project and not a transport project.

Councillor Hoy said that she is concerned about the Wisbech Access Strategy; it is not a Fenland project, it was led by the County Council and Combined Authority (CA) and County officers are trying to use levelling up money for this. Paul Medd thanked Councillor Hoy for raising this and said he has communicated clearly to both County and CA officers that the up to £20m levelling up regeneration bid for Wisbech will not include any aspect of the Wisbech access strategy work. The CA have the potential to submit one levelling up fund transport bid which can be up to £50m so there could be two rival bids, one for Peterborough and one for Fenland. It might be, with the CA in discussion with ourselves, that the Wisbech Access Strategy could form part of that bid but not the up to £20m regeneration bid. Councillor Hoy thanked Paul Medd.

Councillor Mrs French asked that with the £50m, is FDC looking to put a bid in with CC for the March Area Transport Strategy? Councillor Boden said that the March Area Transport Strategy will not cost £50m. When we realised the size of any potential transport bid under the LUF, we knew that merely putting in the March Area Transport Strategy work in would be deemed to be insufficient, which is why we are looking for a package, including potentially the Wisbech Access Strategy work, which will come to a more substantial figure and take us closer to the £50m to put forward as a possibility for the CA to consider when it comes to putting in a transport bid around January or February. He will continue to make the point at the CA that a potential transport bid for Fenland needs to remain under consideration.

Paul Medd added that there is a third project forming part of the package, that of Whittlesey Station. There is no guarantee but the total of those three projects amounts to some £50m. Councillor Seaton added that it is one of the points in our favour in that we are looking at three different projects, not one, and it may give us some advantage.

Cabinet AGREED to note the contents of the report and the potential funding opportunities likely to be available to FDC in the short term, particularly the opportunity to bid for LUF funding for Wisbech of up to £20m.

Cabinet also AGREED to:

- (1) Authorise the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director and Chief Financial Officer, after agreement with the Leader and Wisbech Cabinet members, to develop a Round 2 LUF bid for Wisbech including a Town Centre Spatial Plan, as described in Section 8 of this report, and to commission the specialist external consultancy support required to achieve this.**
- (2) Approve the commissioning of the Stage 1 of the 'thinkingplace' 'Place Shaping work - Narrative Development' as described in this report at a cost of £31,400 which will be funded by Steve Barclay MP.**
- (3) Approve the commissioning of Stage 2 of the 'thinkingplace' Place Shaping work - Visual Development - as described in this report if third party funding to deliver this work can be secured.**

CAB18/21 DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Councillor Boden presented the Cabinet Forward Plan for information.

CAB19/21 PREVIOUS MINUTES (CONFIDENTIAL)

The confidential minutes of the meeting held 1 July 2021 were approved and signed.