

CABINET	DATE 21 October 2020	ITEM NO 6
TITLE High Streets Heritage Action Zone – Woolwich Town Centre	WARD(S) Woolwich Common and Woolwich Riverside	
CHIEF OFFICER Director - Regeneration, Enterprise & Skills	CABINET MEMBER Planning & Regeneration	
LEAD OFFICER: Assistant Director – Regeneration & Property	IS THE FINAL DECISION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT TO BE MADE AT THIS TIME? Yes	
DECISION CLASSIFICATION - Key Decision		

I. Decision required

This report makes the following recommendations to the decision-maker:

- I.1 To approve the Council entering into a Grant Funding Agreement with Historic England for £1,766,134 to achieve the objectives of the High Streets Heritage Action Zone for Woolwich Town Centre.
- I.2 To approve the Council setting aside a match funding contribution of £2,040,166 composed of capital budget and contributions from Section 106 agreements.
- I.3 To approve entering into a fixed term lease of a vacant unit from British Land on Powis Street to create a heritage and community drop-in centre to provide a space to engage with the area's history and the personal heritage of its residents.
- I.4 To approve the procurement of an architect in order to facilitate the delivery of the objectives of the High Streets Heritage Action Zone for Woolwich Town Centre and delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills to appoint an architect.
- I.5 To approve the procurement of a works contractor in order to facilitate the delivery of the objectives of the High Streets Heritage Action Zone for Woolwich Town Centre and delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills to appoint a works contractor.

- 1.6 To approve the Council conducting a series of bidding rounds to allow local businesses and organisations to apply for grant funding to support the delivery of the High Streets Heritage Action Zone for Woolwich Town Centre.
- 1.7 To delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills to make grants (up to a value of £50,000) to local businesses and organisations to support the delivery of the High Streets Heritage Action Zone for Woolwich Town Centre.

2. **Links to the Royal Greenwich high level objectives**

- 2.1 This report relates to the Council's agreed high-level objectives as follows:
 - Promote economic prosperity
 - Ensure a healthy and safe living environment
- 2.2 The project relates to the High Streets Heritage Action Zone which details the Council's ambitious plan to deliver renewal and regeneration in Woolwich town centre.

3. **Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 In May 2019 Historic England launched a multi-million pound fund which will allow them to work with partners to find new ways to champion and revive historic high streets through the High Streets Heritage Action Zone scheme.
- 3.2 In July 2019 the Royal Borough of Greenwich submitted an expression of interest to Historic England for the High Streets Heritage Action Zone focusing on Woolwich town centre conservation zone.
- 3.3 Historic England selected 69 high streets to receive a share of the £95 million fund with Woolwich being one of those high streets.
- 3.4 Following the selection, the Royal Borough of Greenwich submitted the final proposed programme and has recently received confirmation of the awarded funds (see appendix A).
- 3.5 The Heritage Action Zone is a four-year programme, which was originally proposed to run from April 2020 to March 2024 however due to the Covid-19 Crisis this time frame will be extended. The Royal Borough of Greenwich has been successful in securing funding of £1,766,134 from Historic England. The Royal Borough of Greenwich will match fund a total of £2,040,166. This

match funding has been identified through S106 monies, capital projects. In addition there will be percentage contribution from major landowners.

- 3.6 To support the high street as the home of local shops, services and businesses a programme of grants for improvements to shopfronts and facades will be provided to restore and reinstate historic features. The Woolwich Traders Forum evidences the commitment of local businesses to the area, and the grant programme will address the poor condition of many of the heritage assets along the high street, reduce perceptions of neglect and help local businesses stand out and thrive. Several significant place-making opportunities will also be implemented, including landmark wayfinding and threshold improvements to shop entrances within the shop front improvement project scope.
- 3.7 To support the social vitality of the town centre, a multifunctional cultural and community space will be created in the heart of the Conservation Area. This will be by way of a fixed term lease, with support and in partnership with British Land. A vacant unit on Powis Street will be used to create a heritage and community drop-in centre, which will provide a space to engage with the area's history and the personal heritage of its residents. Within this space there will be a host of activities, exhibitions and displays drawn from material in the local archives, with an opportunity to meet and talk to the Greenwich archivist. It would also host engagement and participation events as well as opportunities to be used by local community groups for events/meetings. This space will act as a 'Woolwich Front Room' by way of a focal point of the project and activities.
- 3.8 Council directorates will work in close partnership with its Culture, Tourism and Heritage Office to market and promote the Cultural Programme to local businesses, residents, visitors and key stakeholders. RBG regularly host and provide funding for a range of initiatives within the open spaces of Woolwich and the surrounding areas. Activities feature local and international performers and range from large-scale spectacular participatory performances, street theatre, lantern parades and busking to community-run events and sponsor activation. The cultural programming aims to involve and inspire the entire community, utilising the High Street as a hub to bring diverse sectors of the community together across economic and social divides, increasing footfall and bringing economic benefit to the area.
- 3.9 The vision for Woolwich is centred on the role of heritage assets as a catalyst to support the economic growth and social vitality of the town centre. The complex and varied history of the town centre, including the individual histories and heritage of its people, can unite its diverse and often divided population.

- 3.10 A more attractive high street, that is capable of attracting a diverse range of users, is a key principle of the vision. Powis Street and the adjacent squares and spaces will become a social hub that unites the diverse population of the area.
- 3.11 By enhancing the environmental quality of the high street and its historic character, the town centre can attract residents from the Royal Arsenal and nearby neighbourhoods. This would help to address the lack of spending capacity to support a diverse retail offer and enhance Woolwich's competitiveness relative to other town centres.

4. **Available Options**

- 4.1 Option 1
To agree to the Council entering into a grant funding agreement with Historic England and to setting aside the required match funding to progress with the High Streets Heritage Action Zone scheme for Woolwich Town Centre.
- 4.2 Option 2
To not agree to the above.

5. **Preferred Option and reasons for recommendations**

- 5.1 The preferred option is option 1, to agree to the Council entering into a grant funding agreement with Historic England and to setting aside the required match funding to progress with the High Streets Heritage Action Zone scheme.
- 5.2 This scheme will be a vehicle for galvanising the wide and varied partnerships who have outlined their support for this project, including key landowners, to ensure commitments to champion this vision for the town centre and the special character of the area and to ensure successful project outcomes.
- 5.3 To accompany a string of major investments the council wants to strengthen the sense of civic pride in Woolwich and improvement of local facilities / infrastructure will make Woolwich a vibrant place to live, work and conduct business.

6. Consultation Results

- 6.1 Drop in sessions have been held for the local businesses providing them with the opportunity to discuss the bid and as a result the Royal Borough of Greenwich have received several letters of support.
- 6.2 An initial meeting was held to engage and inform key community leaders about the expression of interest submission, which focused on the following themes: heritage; culture; what retail offer people would like to see and how to remove the severance between the Royal Arsenal and the town centre.
- 6.3 The Royal Heritage Trust are fully supportive of the scheme and are very keen to contribute to facilitating cultural opportunities and heritage legacies on the high street. There is close involvement as part of the Cultural Consortium and Woolwich Works alongside a high level of interest from Arts and Cultural organisations already operating in Woolwich.

7. Next Steps: Communication and Implementation of the Decision

- 7.1 Due to the current Covid-19 Crisis the official announcement and launch of the project by Historic England has been postponed and will happen later in the year (date subject to confirmation).
- 7.2 Historic England and the Royal Borough of Greenwich are currently finalising the grant agreement terms and conditions in preparation for project delivery.
- 7.3 RBG Regeneration will develop in partnership with Historic England a detailed tender specification to procure an architect to lead Design and Implementation Team to develop both the High Street Shopfront / Façade improvements and Place Making proposals. A key element of this procurement will be for a specialist retail support organisation to be part of the overall Design and Implementation Team to work with the businesses and landowners of selected for shop front and façade improvements to ensure ongoing commercial viability as a means of securing long term stewardship of heritage assets. This procurement will be carried out in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- 7.4 The lead architect will work alongside RBG Council Business Engagement and Communications to provide engagement, design and project management services, ensuring best value for money by consolidating works into one package for implementation and ensuring coherence and quality of design

proposals along the high street buildings and individual properties. The Council will procure and approve all capital works and the lead architect will project manage delivery.

- 7.5 The Council will procure a works contractor to complete the works to achieve the objectives of the High Streets Heritage Action Zone for Woolwich Town Centre. This procurement will be carried out in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- 7.6 The Council will develop a ‘Heritage Vision for the High Street’ which reflects the diverse and vibrant make-up of the area and its rich culture and history through extensive community and stakeholder engagement activities.
- 7.7 RBG Culture, Tourism and Heritage will develop project specific cultural programme and shaping this within the RBG existing cultural infrastructure that linking to the Heritage Action Zone programme to the Council’s Woolwich Heritage Vision and Visit Greenwich’s Destination Management Plan in partnership with Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust, The Cultural Forum, visit Greenwich, Historic England, stakeholders and the wider community
- 7.8 Developing the vision for identifying Place Making opportunities and celebrating the heritage and culture of Woolwich, we will work with the community and stakeholders to feed these into the project outputs
- 7.9 The Council will create a meanwhile multifunctional cultural and community space (‘Woolwich Front Room’) in the heart of the Conservation Area. The meanwhile use of a vacant unit on Powis Street to create a heritage and community space will provide a space to engage with the area’s history and the personal heritage of its residents, including exhibitions in partnership with Greenwich Heritage Trust.

8. Cross-Cutting Issues and Implications

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<p>Legal including Human Rights Act</p>	<p>The Council has instructed DWF Law LLP, as external legal advisers. They have reviewed this report and have provided the following legal comments. The Council is entitled to reply upon the advice of DWF Law LLP.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1. The Council has the power to enter into a grant funding</p>	<p>Sangita Arya Assistant Head of Legal Services, (Property and Regeneration) 21st September 2020</p>

	<p>agreement with Heritage England, and conduct a series of bidding rounds leading to the Council entering into a series of grant funding agreements with individual shop owners pursuant to section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>2. The Council shall conduct separate procurement exercises, in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's contract standing orders, in order to procure an architect and a works contractor to complete a specification for works and the works to the shop frontages.</p> <p>3. The Council has the power to enter into a lease with British Land in order to create a heritage and community drop-in centre pursuant to section 120 of the Local Government Act 1972.</p>	
<p>Finance and other resources including procurement implications</p>	<p>Cabinet are requested to approve that the Council enters into a Grant Funding Agreement with Historic England for £1,766,134, to achieve the objectives of the High Street Heritage Action Zone for Woolwich Town Centre. In agreeing to enter in to the grant funding agreement Cabinet are also requested to agree that the Council sets aside a match funding contribution of £2,040,166. The decisions requested at 1.3 – 1.7 will develop the operational requirements of the programme.</p> <p>The Council match funding of £2,040,166 has been identified within existing capital budgets and s106 agreements. In addition to these amounts, the programme has assumed a level of landowner contribution. These will need</p>	<p>Jason Coniam Accountancy Business Change Manager 21/08/2020</p>

	<p>to be robustly managed, any deficits in the contributions from landowners compared to those forecast may result in a budget pressure on the programme.</p> <p>This programme will include work, which the Council has contracted directly, on assets the Council does not own, therefore, could potentially result in tax implications. As plans and procurements develop, these implications will need to be fully developed to minimise the impact on the Council.</p>	
Equalities	The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no apparent equality impact on end users.	Marie O'Brien – Regeneration Support Officer 21/09/2020
Social Value	The Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) will be procuring the lead design and implementation team via RBG procurement and therefore applying Social Value commitments as set out in Corporate Strategy.	Marie O'Brien – Regeneration Support Officer 21/09/2020
Staffing establishment	RBG have requested funding in the bid submission for four-year term of support from a Senior Regeneration Officer role that is required in the grant agreement.	Marie O'Brien – Regeneration Support Officer 21/09/2020
Risk management	This project will be delivered, and risk managed via the DRES Priority Investment Board.	Marie O'Brien – Regeneration Support Officer 21/09/2020
Health and wellbeing	<p>1. Empower people: by providing genuine opportunities for residents and business owners to participate shape and contribute to the delivery of place-making initiatives and promote social inclusion via a number of access points; Woolwich Front Room, consultation and</p>	Marie O'Brien – Regeneration Support Officer 21/09/2020

	<p>engagement events, use of the existing cultural infrastructure and new events along with innovative approaches to High Street activation / animation.</p> <p>2. Enhance the character, vibrancy and social value of Woolwich: by delivering original, positive and culturally inclusive initiatives and events that foster local pride and promote Woolwich’s diversity, its communities, local history and future aspirations.</p> <p>3. Achieve Community engagement and participation: by ensuring the economic, social and environmental well-being of the community through the participation and access to opportunities for residents, creative and community organisations as part of the commissioning model, heritage and cultural programme</p>	
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9. **Background Papers**

Heritage Action Zone Programme – Powis Street submission (6th December 2019)

Appendix A – Copy of grant award letter from Historic England

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