

Title: Future High Streets Fund update

Lead Officer: Martin O'Neill

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ella Billiald / Councillor Chris King

Wards of the District directly affected: Brunswick, Clarendon, Willes

<b>Approvals required</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	22/6/2023	Ella Billiald/Chris King
<b>Finance</b>	22/06/2023	Andrew Rollins
<b>Legal Services</b>	N/A	Ross Chambers
<b>Chief Executive</b>	22/06/2023	Chris Elliott
<b>Head of Service(s)</b>	22/06/2023	Philip Clarke
<b>Section 151 Officer</b>	22/06/2023	Andrew Rollins
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	22/06/2023	Andrew Jones
<b>Leadership Co-ordination Group</b>	22/06/2023	Chris Elliott
<b>Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?</b>	No	
<b>Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?</b>	No	
<b>Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?</b>	Yes, Confidential Appendix 1	
<b>Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?</b>	No	
<b>Accessibility Checked?</b>	Yes	

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## Summary

The report presents an update on the projects being funded by the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF). There is also a confidential element in respect of one of those project sites.

## Recommendation(s)

- (1) That Scrutiny notes the progress being made in respect of the projects being funded through the FHSF
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### 1 Reasons for the Recommendations

- 1.1 Members may recall that Warwick District Council was successful in its bid to the FHSF in 2020. The total amount of funding awarded amounted to £10.015million. The deadline to utilise this funding is 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. This report provides Members with an update as to progress against the projects included in the funding bid.
- 1.2 As well as the FHSF, there is also co-funding from private investment and Warwick District Council for some of the projects with FHSF. It should be noted that only the FHSF must be utilised by the above date. If projects are still being developed beyond that date, the co-funding can still be utilised.
- 1.3 A FHSF update report was submitted to Cabinet in Feb 2023. This Scrutiny Report is a further update for July 2023 containing the latest position.

### 1.4 The FHSF projects

- 1.4.1 **Sustainable Movement** – this project was designed to deliver new East/West cycle routes through Leamington Spa town centre. Officers were working closely with colleagues at the County Council on the design of this scheme, in conjunction with the submitted Mini Holland proposals. The Mini-Holland scheme was a Government backed Active Travel initiative designed to invite proposals for new or improved cycleways and footways. Warwickshire County Council was successful in securing £100K to develop a study and produce a report to be submitted to Government. Unfortunately, the Mini-Holland bid was not successful and indeed the Government withdrew this form of funding and so WCC are now having to re-think their approach as to how this work can now be taken forward. The funding allocated from FHSF for this project is £506,000 with co-funding through CIL in the amount of £0.5million. Officers are now urgently engaging DLUHC to seek to re-allocate this funding to alternative live projects within the FHSF Programme.
- 1.4.2 **Spencer Yard** – works have commenced on this site and this is now well advanced. The completion of the works is due at the end of August / early September 2023 and as such, all of the FHSF funding will have been utilised by that date. Tenants have been secured for the URC and the former Nursery, and the Old Dole office is being marketed. COGENT is a well-established marketing agency and SEA Institute is a global leader in creative media education and will run the URC branded as 'The Fold'. These two tenants will occupy the majority of the Spencer Yard development and in turn will bring a significant amount of economic and educational benefits to the town centre as well as new jobs and advanced training facilities. The total amount of funding that has been

allocated to Spencer Yard from FHSF is £1.5million with private sector co-funding of £3.6 million from the Council's development partner CDP.

**1.4.3 Town Hall Creative Hub** – FHSF spend has commenced on this project through the procurement of conservation architects to undertake stakeholder consultation and arrive at design options. The design stages have progressed and a planning application was submitted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023. The planning application was considered and approved at the meeting of Planning Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023. Officers will now proceed to put the tender out for the Main Contractor in July with an aim to start on site in October 2023. The majority of the work will be undertaken using the FHSF monies to the end of March 2024 deadline with WDC funding seeing the project through to completion anticipated by the end of July 2024. The total FHSF allocation for this project is £951,000 with co-funding from WDC in the amount of £787,000. This funding will be utilised to deliver phase one of the entire development and improvement plans for the Town Hall. Further funding will be sought to deliver future phases which are not part of the FHSF Programme. Phase one includes; improvements to the access to the Town Hall, enhancements to the entrance, reworking the reception area and the ground floor corridors to create a welcoming space for networking and exhibition space. Improvements and enhancements will be made to the staircase leading to the first floor where more exhibition and meeting areas will be created to enable the asset to become the creative Hub as set out in the FHSF bid. These proposals are all subject to relevant planning permissions.

**1.4.4 Stoneleigh Arms** –The pre-development work at the site of the Stoneleigh Arms former public house and the Old Schoolhouse to the rear of the Stoneleigh Arms is underway.

As the current condition of both buildings is extremely poor and unsafe, working under a WDC licence, the council's development partner CDP have commenced demolition work to the rear of the Stoneleigh Arms in order that detailed structural survey work can take place. However, this work has highlighted that the current structure is unsafe to undertake a full structural survey and so the current recommendation contained in the upcoming planning application due to be submitted towards the end of June is for demolition and rebuild in a similar style. In terms of the future use of these buildings, local engagement has been undertaken and further engagement work (including a planning pre-application submission) was undertaken. Following that, a planning application will be submitted at the end of June with a view to commence work on site in September. The development completion is anticipated for September 2024. Officers are confident that the entire allocation of FHSF will be utilised by 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2024, by which time approximately 75% of the entire development will have been completed.

**1.4.5** Consideration is being given to the potential future uses for the buildings. CDP's architects are due to present officers with options in the near future. There is likely to be an active frontage onto Clemens Street, artists space contained within the new development, a café and possibly a micro-brewery. Overall the building will be a flexible mix of uses to support local creatives and if feasible there may be some office space included which is much in demand in Leamington to support grow on space for the creative sector and games companies. There is also a proposal to introduce a "pocket park" to the rear of

the Stoneleigh Arms building to link up with the Old Schoolhouse which is also part of this overall development.

#### 1.4.6 **Confidential Site – Update in confidential appendix 1**

1.4.7 **Spend Profile** - a summary of the current spend profile against the FHSF allocation is shown at appendix 2.

## **2 Alternative Options**

2.1 This is an update to Overview and Scrutiny and no alternative options are, at present, being presented whilst these projects are being progressed.

## **3 Legal Implications**

3.1 Officers are working in close collaboration with colleagues from Stratford DC Legal Services across all of the FHSF projects. This will ensure that all relevant legislation, lease and disposal arrangements and all other statutory requirements are being met and the interests of the council are foremost in the decision-making process.

## **4 Financial**

4.1 The entirety of the WDC co-funding required to deliver the FHSF projects has already been approved by Cabinet and through the award of the FHSF funding. There is also an element of private co-funding from the council's development partner CDP.

## **5 Environmental/Climate Change Implications**

5.1 All of the developments and projects being delivered as part of the FHSF programme will be undertaken using sustainable construction methods and these will be agreed as part of any Development Agreements that are required in respect of each project.

5.2 With regards to Spencer Yard a comprehensive energy and sustainability strategy was submitted as part of the planning application. CO2 emissions are proposed to be reduced through a combination of enhanced building fabric standards, low energy LED lighting, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, low carbon heating via air source heat pumps and on-site electricity generation from roof mounted photovoltaic panels. Sustainable modes of transport are also being encouraged by providing covered cycle storage with showering and changing facilities on-site, improved public realm works including lighting and planting to improve the pedestrian experience, and reducing the number of car parking spaces on site.

5.3 The EPC ratings on the Old Dole Office and the Nursery are expected to be A, and C on the URC which is an achievement for a Listed Building.

## **6 Analysis of the effects on Equality**

6.1 Throughout the stakeholder consultation processes held to date on the FHSF projects, the interests of a diverse range of representatives have been sought to ensure the projects are inclusive and take account of equality and the diverse range of future users of these developments.

## **7 Data Protection**

7.1 Not applicable to this report and the FHSF programme.

## **8 Health and Wellbeing**

8.1 The FHSF programme and the projects being delivered as part of this allocation of funding are designed to achieve the regeneration of currently unused and to a large extent dilapidated buildings in the south of Leamington Spa town centre. One of the primary objectives of the programme is to improve the health and well-being of residents and visitors as well as those who work in the town centre by providing usable, modern, sustainable and attractive places in a location that is currently run down and underutilised. As well as the obvious economic benefits these projects will bring to the town centre, it is of prime importance that the health and well-being of all those who utilise them will be improved through the rejuvenation of the built environment in this area of the town centre.

## **9 Risk Assessment**

9.1 As part of the FHSF bid, officers put forward a robust risk management process. This process centres around a comprehensive risk register which is maintained and updated throughout the life of the programme.

## **10 Consultation**

10.1 All of the individual projects that form the overall FHSF programme have or will undertake stakeholder consultation to inform decisions being made on these developments. In particular, the consultation is designed and tailored to each individual development site with a view to gaining an informed and inclusive future use of the buildings having due regard to residents, visitors, businesses, and other local stakeholders.

### **Background papers:**

N/A

### **Supporting documents:**

N/A