



Council

Thursday 29 November 2018

FELIXSTOWE SOUTH SEAFRONT REGENERATION PROJECT – APPLICATION TO COASTAL COMMUNITIES FUND (CL 30/18)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides information on the intention to submit an application to the second stage round of the Coastal Communities Fund for a grant of £950,000 for the Felixstowe South Sea Front Regeneration Project and recommends that a Stage 2 submission be made.
2. The deadline for the first stage application was 30 April 2018, but the notification on the success of the projects has been delayed, notification was given by MHCLG that this application has successfully passed Stage 1. A full application for Stage 2 is required to be submitted early in the new year.
3. This report seeks approval for delegated authority to be given to a Strategic Director, in the event of the bid being successful to accept the grant, should it be successful and agree to the terms and conditions of a contract, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member for Economic Development.

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| Is the report Open or Exempt? | Open |
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| Wards Affected: | All Wards |
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| Cabinet Member: | Cllr Geoff Holdcroft, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development Geoff.holdcroft@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk |
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Tourism is of vital importance to the economy of Felixstowe, attracting 842,100 visitors, worth an estimated £55 million and supporting 10% of all employment (Economic Impact on Tourism Report, Felixstowe, 2016). Regeneration of the seafront is embedded in local strategies and evidence reports and, with the work on the Seafront Gardens to the north of the pier, the Council wishes to now turn to redevelopment of the area to the south.
- 1.2 Outline plans and concepts to redevelop the south seafront area, from Martello Park to the Pier have been drawn up for the council-owned land and assets, including the potential for a new iconic café site and a 'box-park' style artisan business unit area. An opportunity to bid for funding for these projects is available through round 5 of the Coastal Communities Fund, which opened in spring 2018. An application for the first stage of this programme has been made and has been successful. The Council has now been invited to complete a fuller application form and a business plan for Stage 2. The current Council scheme will seek £950,000 from the CCF to regenerate the area through capital projects, with the provision of business support through the revenue aspects.
- 1.3 The south seafront regeneration and the potential for tourism growth have been identified in the 'Local Strategy for the Felixstowe Peninsula' (April, 2006). Furthermore an Options Appraisal Report of Martello P Area (Peter Vaden, 2016) identified the potential for a cultural and heritage area around Martello P, including the opportunities for the artisan business units and a quality café. The landscape around the area was identified as an opportunity for promoting walking and cycling. Recent tourism workshops held in Felixstowe including a recent community survey (March 2018) and Felixstowe Horizons Engagement Event (July 2018), support the regeneration programme, including cultural activities, active seafront, retail opportunities and a quality eating establishment.
- 1.4 Planning permission has been secured for a new café, restaurant and community facility as an important early element of the scheme. This longstanding aspiration for the seafront will be the first aspect of the programme to be brought forward and an anchor for the wider south seafront (DC/18/3173/FUL). The intention is to create an iconic building accommodating in the region of 400sqm of floor-space to act as a focal point for the southern part of the resort, to complement the existing leisure offer at Martello Park and to increase visitor footfall to the south seafront. Not only will the café offer a revenue stream for the Council, but has the potential to offer a dedicated and adaptable space for diverse community and inclusive uses. The Council will seek to tender for an operator to run the café offer on a lease-hold basis.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) programme runs until 2021 and is designed to support the economic development of coastal communities by promoting sustainable economic growth and jobs, so that people are better able to respond to the changing economic needs and opportunities of their area.
- 2.2 The Coastal Communities Fund Round 5 has £40 million available for spend from April 2019 to end of March 2021 and is open for projects over £50,000.
- 2.3 Funding for Round 5 will cover the period 2019-20 to 2020-21 with funds becoming available from April 2019. Funding will go to projects over £50,000 that will ultimately lead to regeneration and economic growth, whilst directly or indirectly safeguarding and creating sustainable jobs. The four priority areas include economic diversification and innovation; SME support through business development and targeted infrastructure; improvements to public spaces and addressing issues of flooding, coastal erosion and

bathing water quality where they are part of an economic regeneration strategy that will create jobs.

- 2.4 The outcome of the submissions to Stage 1 was pushed back, but was released earlier this month, with a full submission date in January 2019. Therefore, the turnaround for a Stage 2 application is very quick, but projects are required to be fully developed before an application can be made. For example, any Capital project would need to be at Riba Stage 4 prior to submission and this is the expectation for the café project.

3 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?

- 3.1 The proposed projects provide a strong commitment to a range of actions for the Council, across economic development, tourism, leisure and communities.
- 3.2 The programme also delivers key objectives from the Felixstowe CCT Economic Plan, including: development and delivery of economic growth in Felixstowe; supporting new developments and projects that contribute to the vitality of the town and wellbeing of residents; developing the tourism offer; preserving and promoting heritage; developing an entrepreneurship culture; supporting skills and employability of young people.
- 3.3 The programme seeks to prioritise tourism focussed development and regeneration, under Policy SPP20 of the Felixstowe Area Action Plan, which encompasses this area and supports and promotes high intensity tourist uses in the area between the Spa Pavilion and Martello Park, with a high proportion of these to be located along the Sea Road frontage. The policy welcomes proposals which actively encourage new resort experiences and resort related uses will be supported on the Sea Road frontage. This supports the overarching policies of SP9 and SP21 in the Local Plan which promote additional and improved tourism offer in Felixstowe.

4 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The current costings for the café element are upwards of £1.2 million and, while much of this will form the bulk of the CCF application, further external funding is being sought, along with funds already within the Council's capital programme. A full business case for the programme is required for the Stage 2 application, which will set out options. Should the Stage 2 application not be successful, the business case will be revised and options brought to the relevant Committee.
- 4.2 In terms of State Aid, this project involves upgrading infrastructure that will contribute at a local level to improve the consumer environment, which is permitted under General Block Exemption Regulations (GBER) Article 56 and cultural and recreational services through multifunctional recreational is permitted under GBER Article 55.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The plans for the south sea front have been developed in consultation with a range of partners including Felixstowe Forward, Felixstowe Town Council and the Suffolk Coast Destination Management Organisation (DMO). A presentation on the south sea front plans was given to over 140 business representatives and people from the local community at a public consultation event organised by Felixstowe Forward on the 6th July; with a further 300 members of the public attending a drop in session that day to give their comments. The planning application for the café has been subject to public consultation with local representations considered in the Committee report presented to the Planning Committee on 20 September 2018(DC/18/3173/FUL). The proposal was

approved by the Planning Committee and has the full support of the Town Council's Planning Committee.

6 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The proposal will add substantially to the regeneration of part of Felixstowe Seafront which requires public and private investment for economic growth. As an anchor regeneration development, it will help to make Felixstowe a more attractive destination and significantly add to the resort's visitor economy. The proposal will also generate jobs, with a direct economic benefit and it will also provide indirect benefits to the area through greater footfall along the South Seafront by acting as a destination complementing the recent Pier and Historic Garden destination investment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That an application to the second stage round of the Coastal Communities Fund be made for a grant of £950,000 for the Felixstowe South Sea Front Regeneration Project be approved
2. That, in the event of the application being successful, delegated authority be given to a Strategic Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, to accept the grant and to agree the terms and conditions of a contract, be approved

BACKGROUND PAPERS Please note that copies of background papers have not been published on the Council's website but copies of the background papers listed below are available for public inspection free of charge by contacting the relevant Council Department.

| Date | Type | Available From |
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| 20 September 2018 | Planning Application File Ref No DC/18/3173/FUL and C12/0068 (Martello Park masterplan) | SCDC's Planning Public Access www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk |