

Thursday, 24 March 2022

Report of the Leader of the Council

Future High Streets Fund Update

Exempt information

None

Purpose

To update the Committee on the progress of the Future High Streets Fund programme

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. To note the report

Executive Summary

There has been a lot of progress since the last report, moving from a focus on the programme timeline to starting to achieve milestones.

We have now completed RIBA Stage 1 and the Stage 2 report is due mid-March. The McBains team are imbedded in the project with regular meetings and updates taking place. Over the last couple of months McBains have also been procuring specialists as required such as acoustics, asbestos, timber and a fire engineer. Currently the multidisciplinary team are active on the programme working on design, costings, risk management and planning. A range of organisations are involved to bring the necessary skills and experience to do this including specialist legal advice to support the regeneration programme. In addition Borough Council officers are working closely with the Borough Councils planning and assets team, Staffordshire County Council Highways, archaeology, ecology, conservation, Historic England and building control.

A lot of time is taken up undertaking walk-arounds to enable specialist's access to specific buildings or to talk through the programme of works more generally to give people an understanding of the change in the town centre and how that activity will be coordinated. Heads of Terms have been agreed with all parties and dates of vacant possession have been agreed. We have now taken possession of the Co op building and the demolition application has been submitted, this will take us to the next phase of actual physical work commencing whilst we also continue with design and surveys. This is a significant step forward for the project.

Projects

College Quarter: The acquisition agreement with the Co op has been signed and possession took place on 4th March 2022. This is the first acquisition and will allow for work to start on the refurbishment of the enterprise centre and preparation for the

demolition of the 1960's part of the Co op to ensure that the College can start work in time to meet the deadline of the FHSF funding. The date of the college finding out about their funding bid has moved from January to mid-March and we expect to hear shortly if they have been successful. Matt Fletcher and Mike Osbourne who run the existing enterprise centre on behalf of the Borough Council have been involved in the design of the new enterprise centre to ensure it meets the needs of businesses and will be able to operate within budget. The college are working on their planning submission and this is expected to be in the Spring.

Middle Entry: Agreement has been reached with Peer Group to achieve vacant possession enabling the HOT's to be signed and Freeths have started work on drawing up the legal paperwork. Vacant possession is due for June this year and planning submissions are expected this spring. Work continues on designing the removal of the bridges, glass covering and the new properties at the Town Hall end of Middle Entry.

St Editha's Square: Work continues on designing the square and the public realm component of the programme. SCC highways team completed a walk around with the FHSF team and ownership of the square showing adopted highways and areas owned by TBC was identified as part of this.

Castle Gateway: Discussions have been held with Nationwide regarding the structural requirements for their fit out in the Peel Café. Ongoing issues regarding fire escape routes continue however a fire consultant has been engaged and a solution has been found. Nationwide are currently looking at amended plans with the fire solution to ensure this meets their needs and is factored into the fit and layout they require.

The planning application for Peel Café is due to be submitted March and is a key element of the programmes critical pathway, as it will impact on acquiring the current Nationwide site for demolition and the timeframe for completing works for the FHSF completion date of March 2024.

Survey work has also been undertaken for the Market Street properties and conservation experts have visited the site, as well as discussions with Staffordshire archaeology department regarding the historic considerations due to the listings of the properties and their proximity to the castle. Terms have been agreed with Julie Anne Florist for vacant possession of the property and they are negotiating premises within the town centre. Options for the widening of the bridge are been drawn up, however the proximity of elements of the scheduled monument have raised issues which are currently been designed out, again liaison with the relevant bodies continues.

Engagement and Communications

A monthly drop in session every 2nd Wednesday of the month at the business lounge in the TEC has been offered, currently there has been no one attending, although this is likely to change once planning applications are submitted. Monthly communications meetings ensure we plan for appropriate opportunities to communicate with businesses and the public.

New vinyls have been added to the windows of 27 Market Street giving information about the project and a QR code which people can scan taking them to the Transforming Tamworth website for the latest information. Businesses affected by

the project have been visited to keep them informed of progress and the team will continue to do this.

Budget and Timescales

The project is working in line with the timelines set out. In terms of budget there has been engagement with McBains on project costings. A high level review has flagged initial costing concerns. These have been brought to the attention of the Programme Board and at RIBA Stage 2 the cost plan will be reviewed. Some of the costings concerns are due to the risk attributed by McBains to elements of the project. Work continues with McBains to ensure the designs remove as many of these risks as possible and now that we are getting to a more detailed stage the costing will be reviewed again and this information will be brought to the next Programme Board in April.

The action tracker is reviewed weekly by the team to ensure all work is carried out in time as required and issues can be discussed and solutions found. We also have a Risk Register that is maintained with McBains regular monthly meetings are held to update the register, any issues are raised at the monthly Programme Board meetings and we also report quarterly to the Audit and Governance Sub Committee.

Resource Implications

Both Project Officers have started and are now imbedded into the programme.

Legal/Risk Implications Background

There are no legal issues.

Equalities Implications

There are no equalities issues.

Sustainability Implications

The impact of the Future High Streets Fund programme on sustainability is taken into account by the consultant team when designing and implementing the projects.

Background Information

None

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List of Background Papers

None

Appendices

RIBA Stages

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