

**MARKET TOWNS INITIATIVE**

Summary: This report seeks Cabinet approval of the recommendations made by the Market Towns Initiative Working Group, in order to award grant funding to successful applicants from North Norfolk’s four inland market towns.

Options considered: All applications and funding options have been considered.

Conclusions: The Market Towns Initiative Working Group has compiled a list of all bids received alongside recommendations on whether or not to award funding. Overall, the project has aimed to provide an opportunity for the Council to support its inland market towns during a period of change, whilst also allowing residents an opportunity to have a positive impact on their towns.

Recommendations: It is recommended that;

- (1) That Cabinet approve the MTI Working Group’s recommendations to award £266,869.72 of funding across all eligible/approved applications outlined in the report.
- (2) That Cabinet request the MTI Working Group to continue to monitor the outcomes of any/all applications that receive approval.
- (3) That a second round of applications be operated to award any remaining funds, in accordance with the MTI prospectus.
- (4) Delegated authority be given to The Head of Economic and Community Development to draft suitable conditions in respect of the approved applications and to issue the grant decision letters accordingly.

<p>Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Nigel Dixon</p>	<p>Ward(s) affected Fakenham, Holt, North Walsham &amp; Stalham</p>
<p>Contact Officers, telephone number and email:</p> <p>Emma Duncan, Head of Legal Services ext 6045 Emma.Duncan@north-norfolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Rob Young, Head of Economic and Community Development ext 6162 Robert.Young@north-norfolk.gov.uk</p>	

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. This report seeks Cabinet approval of the recommendations made by the Overview & Scrutiny – Market Towns Initiative Working Group in order to award funding to suitable applications from eligible organisations in North Norfolk's four inland market towns.
- 1.2. Members will be aware that during the budget discussions (and subsequent approval at Council) funding was allocated to the Market Town Initiative, bringing a total budget allocation of £400,000, allowing for £100,000 to be allocated to each market town.
- 1.3. The MTI fund was established to assist with regeneration of the four inland market towns in the District; the Coastal resort towns having been able to access external grants much more readily and have been the focus of key investment projects. The MTI prospectus set out the expectations of how the initiative will help our inland market towns to thrive. It seeks projects that will bring about improvements in these towns that will help raise their profile as better places to work, live and visit.
- 1.4. The prospectus set out the following expected outcomes from MTI projects (i.e. benefits or impacts that can be recorded now and/or in the future) that we would expect to evidence as a result of investment from this fund.
  - Local groups or organisations working together to achieve benefits that can have tangible positive impacts on the town and its centre
  - Engagement with residents and visitors to improve the town centre, making it a more attractive place to visit
  - An increased number of people visiting the towns, improving footfall and spend in the town centres

## **2. Market Towns Initiative Applications Summary**

- 2.1 The fund was open to eligible organisations wishing to implement projects in each town, in support of the fund's objectives.
- 2.2 Applications for the fund were judged against the criteria set out in the prospectus available at the below address: <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/media/4377/market-towns-initiative-prospectus.pdf>
- 2.3 Organisations wishing to make an application were given appropriate guidance from officers at NNDC, and were asked to engage with their local communities or those with an interest in the proposed project or its outcomes. Evidence of such engagement was a key factor in the consideration of the applications.
- 2.4 Applications were made using the application form available at the following link: <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/media/4378/mti-application-form.pdf>.
- 2.5 Applications were submitted both via post and email by the deadline Friday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2018.
- 2.6 A total of thirteen applications were received from across the four market towns, requesting a total of £633,293.91 from the available £400,000. A breakdown of this total request can be seen in the table below:

Town	No. Applications	Total Available (£)	Total Requested (£)	Total Remaining Gross (£)
Fakenham	4	£100,000.00	£102,559.11	-£2,559.11
Holt	6	£100,000.00	£268,027.00	-£168,027.00
North Walsham	1	£100,000.00	£99,575.00	£425.00
Stalham	2	£100,000.00	£163,132.80	-£63,132.80
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>£400,000.00</b>	<b>£633,293.91</b>	<b>-£233,293.91</b>

- 2.7 Details of all applications received are listed below including the associated recommendations and reasons for the recommendations from the MTI Working Group. Three applications were not supported as they did not meet the criteria/align with the guidelines of the MTI fund.
- 2.8 If Cabinet approval is given, successful applicants will be sent an offer letter, detailing the conditions that will have to be satisfied in order to receive funds. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application, with the reasons for the decision and, where appropriate, details of how to apply to the next funding round.

## **Fakenham**

### Fakenham Hawk & Owl Trust

The application sought funding as a contribution to the purchase of Star Meadow Fakenham and the associated legal fees to establish a nature reserve.

The application was not supported as it did not fall within the guidelines of the MTI fund.

### Fakenham Town Council (A)

The application sought funding for a regenerative project that would provide a facelift for rundown shop fronts and signage in the town centre.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND** funding of £24,341.67.

### Fakenham Town Council (B)

The application sought funding to design and print a heritage guide with a map and information about the town, to be used by residents and visitors.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND** funding of £2,525.

### Active Fakenham

The application sought funding to coordinate, resource and market a large number of events in the town centre.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND** funding of £35,550.

## **Holt**

### The Holt Society

The application sought funding to design and print a pamphlet and five notice boards to provide information on the Holt Owl Trail to residents and visitors.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND** funding of £7,210.

### Love Holt

The application sought funding to implement a major marketing campaign for the town designed to increase visitors and trade.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND** funding of £26,000.

### Holt Community Centre (A)

The application sought funding to improve the internal offerings of Holt Community centre, including improvements to the stage, lighting and audio equipment.

The application was not supported as it did not fall within the guidelines of the MTI fund.

### Holt Community Centre (B)

The application sought funding to improve the external appearance and facilities available at Holt Community centre, including improvements to the car park, external rendering, outside area and external doors.

The application was not supported as it did not fall within the guidelines of the MTI fund.

### Holt Town Council

The application sought funding for four separate projects including an accessible 'Yellow Brick Route', a Holt park and ride scheme, creating a Shirehall Plain culture space and a Fish Hill/Star Plain amenity space.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND** funding of £17,514 in support of elements of the proposal that were considered to align most closely with the purposes of the fund but not those proposing to remove car parking from the town centre (due to the impacts of the scheme on parking and traffic management, or evidence of community support).

### Holt People's Forum

The application sought funding to implement an enhancement scheme for Fish Hill including pedestrianisation and the purchase of various items of street furniture.

The application was not supported due to a lack of supporting information as to the impacts of the scheme on parking and traffic management, or evidence of community support.

## North Walsham

### Regenerate North Walsham and North Walsham Town Council

The application sought funding to implement three major improvement projects split between improving St Nicholas Court, the town centre and attracting more visitors to the town.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND** funding of £99,575.

## Stalham

### Stalham Town Council

The application sought funding to improve the tourism offer of the town with an aim to attract more visitors by making improvements to the Staithe and its connection to the town centre via improvements to signage.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND** funding of £32,204.70, towards the elements of the proposed scheme that were considered to align most closely with the purposes of the fund.

### Stalham Area Business Forum

The application sought funding to implement multiple regenerative projects in the town centre including new signage, aesthetic improvements, external power supplies and a guide to the town's shops.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND** funding of £22,171.25 towards the elements of the proposed scheme that were considered to align most closely with the purposes of the fund.

- 2.9 In summary, the MTI Working Group recommends a total of £266,869.72 of funding to be awarded across the four towns. This would leave a total of £133,130.28 of funding left over from the original £400,000 available. The MTI Working Group recommends that a second round of applications be welcomed to allow for the remaining money to be awarded in accordance with the prospectus and initial application process. The closing date for these applications will be Tuesday 12th February with the results announced at Cabinet on Monday 4th March. Please see below for a town specific breakdown of recommended awards/remaining totals:

Town	Total Available (£)	Total Recommended Award (£)	Total Remaining Net (£)
Fakenham	£100,000.00	£62,416.67	£37,583.33
Holt	£100,000.00	£50,724.00	£49,276.00
North Walsham	£100,000.00	£99,575.00	£425.00
Stalham	£100,000.00	£54,154.05	£45,845.95
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£400,000.00</b>	<b>£266,869.72</b>	<b>£133,130.28</b>

### **3. Scheme detail: Governance**

- 3.1 On governance arrangements, in order to be considered eligible applicants were required to provide evidence of both their governing documents or constitution, alongside evidence of their accounts and audit information where applicable.
- 3.2 The Officer group assessed the bids to ensure that the appropriate governance and accounting safeguards listed above are in place in respect of any funding agreements. Where not yet available, these checks will be included as part of the grant funding conditions and monitored as part of the ongoing dialogue with successful applicants.
- 3.3 The Working Group carefully selected bids from applicants that were either directly or part-owned and run by the communities that seek to benefit, the governance arrangements of these organisations were already confirmed at this point by Officers during the bid appraisal process described above.

### **4. Scheme detail: Engagement and Monitoring**

- 4.1 Listening and engaging with our communities in the towns is a key factor in ensuring that the MTI is robust, transparent and fit for purpose and that the projects are delivered successfully and owned by the communities that they affect.
- 4.2 Members decided that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was best placed to establish and implement the scheme. Similarly, it is expected that Cabinet would continue to utilise the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a means to monitor any feedback and the outcomes at the stage of project delivery.
- 4.3 In ensuring the MTI Framework meets community's needs;
  - To engage with and receive evidence from the community as to whether there are any further projects that meet the MTI objectives that would be able to be included in the scheme and to make recommendations to Cabinet.
- 4.4 In delivery and monitoring the scheme;
  - Once the winning bids are established in each town, to receive any further information required in order to release funding in-line with the scheme's aim and objectives and to provide challenge and oversight to the selected projects, making recommendations to Cabinet to allocate funding.
  - To monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the scheme and to report to Cabinet on their findings.

### **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1. The Market Town Initiative represents a good opportunity for the Council to support its inland market towns during a period of change.
- 5.2. The MTI Working Group recommends a total of £266,869.72 of funding be awarded across the four inland market towns. This would leave a total of £133,130.28 remaining from the original £400,000 available. The MTI Working

Group recommends that a second round of applications be welcomed to allow for the remaining money to be awarded under the original conditions. The closing date for these applications will be Tuesday 12th February with the results announced at Cabinet on Monday 4th March.

**6. Implications and Risks**

Reputational risk to the Council is a possibility if funding is either awarded incorrectly, or an irrational decision is taken not to award any funding.

**7. Financial Implications and Risks**

The funding for the project has already been allocated within the budget for 2018/19. Financial information has been sought from applicants in order to ensure that the financial risk to the Council is minimised, and so that funds can be reclaimed if not used within the guidelines of the Market Towns Initiative, or grant conditions are not complied with.

**8. Sustainability**

No impacts upon sustainability arise from this report.

**9. Equality and Diversity**

The Equality and Diversity policies of applicants relevant governing bodies has been sought where applicable in order to ensure compliance with NNDC policy.

**10. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations**

No impacts upon matters relating to crime and disorder are believed to arise from the applications for which funding is recommended.