



| Report of: | To: | Date |
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| Councillor Peter Le Marinel, Planning Policy and Economic Development Portfolio Holder | Council | 24 January 2024 |

Executive Report: Planning Policy and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1** To inform council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Planning Policy and Economic Development Portfolio as set out below.

2. UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)

- 2.1** Wyre's UKSPF team secured the first English district visit from the central Government UKSPF Director, Carmen Suarez Garcia. The visit gave Wyre an opportunity to showcase the ongoing plans and projects made possible through the Fund, as well as enabling discussions about the aspirations and needs for the future for the borough. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities visiting party were welcomed to Fleetwood Market to see the ongoing futureproofing work. Their visit ended at the Marine Hall where they met with the Chair of the Future Fleetwood Board, and where the developing seafront regeneration plan and requirement for major investment was discussed.

- 2.2** A panel comprising representatives from Wyre Council, the Chair of Greater Garstang Partnership Board and Lancashire County Council, selected two projects for Rural England Prosperity Fund business grant awards. One award is to JJ Sandhams for a new cheese packaging machine and the other award is to JM & JI Pye (Old Holly Farm) for the conversion of farm buildings to small industrial units. The projects will support local businesses to create jobs, improve productivity and enable use of new technologies / processes.

- 2.3** Grant agreements for the REPF community infrastructure grant programme have been finalised for the two successful projects. Claughton Memorial Village Hall works include the renovation and refurbishment to the ground and first floor, increasing public access and multi-use and Hambleton Village Hall's project will introduce glazed bi folding doors to increase flexibility and enable use of a dark underutilised space.

3. Poulton Town Centre Framework Consultation

- 3.1** Development of the Poulton Town Centre Regeneration Framework (PTCRF) is complete following a consultation held in November 2023. Participants were given an overview of the purpose of the consultation and background to the regeneration framework along with a series of questions looking at the vision, objectives and interventions, so as to identify key priorities and inform the approach of future implementation.
- 3.2** With regards to the key objectives, participants selected improving the public realm, building the independent retail offer and encouraging greater activity and events in the town. Comments showed a desire for a bigger and more varied retail offer and an improved town centre experience in terms of events and café culture in Market Place – moving the emphasis away from the night time economy as the sole attraction or offer.
- 3.3** The PTCRF was taken to Cabinet for adoption on 10 January 2024.

4. Local Plan Housing Evidence Consultants Appointed

- 4.1** Justin Gardner Consulting have been commissioned by the council to prepare a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) for Wyre. The HNA will provide up to date evidence regarding the need for housing to meet the needs for different groups, including the amount of affordable housing needed across the borough. The commission will provide recommendations to support the council preparing the new Local Plan and support the wider delivery of affordable housing.

5. Fleetwood Market

- 5.1** The Fleetwood Market improvement/decarbonisation project is now approaching completion, despite delays last year owing to nesting gulls, and more recently because of adverse weather conditions, including consecutive storms Babet and Debi. The re-roofing works are now completed, other than some cladding and fascia detailing. Completion is now programmed for 26 January 2024.
- 5.2** In the meantime and to account for the disruption experienced we have offered all tenants within the Market further discounts on their rents to support them through the winter months. The latest proposal provides for a rent free January and a phased discount on rents until April 2024 for all indoor tenants. A lower percentage discount for the outdoor tenants has been applied as they do not pay a service charge and have suffered less disruption. This support is costing the council £52,634 and has been offered to mitigate further loss of trade and so far this support has been welcomed.

6. Comments and questions

- 6.1** In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with procedure rule 11.5.