

Good morning

Please find attached a briefing which provides information for Town Forums and similar place-based partnerships, Town Councils, commercial and community partners with an interest in developing and regenerating town centres in Northumberland. The briefing includes:

- Northumberland Town Investment Programme Briefing
- Annex 1: Future High Streets Fund Guidance Summary
- Annex 2: Northumberland Town Economy Matrix
- Annex 3: Northumberland Town Investment Programme Expression of Interest (EOI) Form

Town Investment Programme

The County Council is currently encouraging partners to work together to develop a *Northumberland Town Investment Programme*, with the purpose of fully establishing a future pipeline of interventions to boost economic performance in town centres across the county.

Much of this work is already developing in towns across the county, for instance through Town Forums which have been established in a number of towns. The Town Investment Programme is therefore an ongoing process through which the council will work with partners. The enclosed briefing explains how we propose to develop this during 2019.

Future High Streets Fund

Aligned to this, you will no doubt be aware that in the Autumn Statement the Chancellor announced that a new fund would become available in early 2019 called the Future High Streets Fund. The briefing includes a summary of the issued guidance regarding this fund which indicates a number of factors that limit the localities that may be eligible in Northumberland.

The Government guidance indicates that Northumberland County Council is solely responsible for submitting one application for one town in Northumberland by the 22nd March 2019. The County Council wishes to encourage as many ideas as possible and will look to our strongest possible bid, that fully meets the criteria, to represent the County nationally. In order to achieve this the Council is now undertaking a town-based assessment considering the fund criteria.

If you believe that your town and your project is eligible for Future High Street Fund please complete the attached Expression Of Interest form as soon as possible but no later than 5pm on Monday 4th February. An internal process will then take place, checking Expressions against laid down Government criteria culminating in a decision by Cabinet on which bid to support going forward by the end of February.

The County Council's Town Investment Programme is not solely focused on Future High Street Fund. The Council wants to hear all ideas, whether eligible for the Fund or not, in order to assess how we can support the development of these ideas and projects going forward.

Therefore, all Towns are encouraged to complete the Expression of Interest form and return it to me, although this does not have to be by a certain date. A member of the team will then discuss your proposals with you.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss this further

Regards

Tony
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