



**REPORT of
DIRECTOR CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITY**

**to
PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEE
14 SEPTEMBER 2017**

HISTORIC REVIVAL WATERFRONT PROJECT OUTCOMES

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update this Committee on progress made towards the completion of the Coastal Revival Funded, Historic Waterfront Revival Project.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) that the findings of the consultants employed to undertake the Historic Waterfront Revival Project be noted;
- (ii) that Members comments on the report be collated; and
- (iii) that Council's Corporate Projects Task and Finish Working Group be requested to manage the next stages of the project as outlined in **APPENDICES 1 and 2** and paragraph 3.4.5 below.

3. THE MALDON HISTORIC WATERFRONT

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Members may be aware that the Council was successful in obtaining £50,000 of grant funding to undertake the Historic Water front Revival Project. The project brief and details of the funding were considered by this Committee on the 12 September 2016 (Minute No. 528 refers). This Committee's remit covers economic development and tourism and as a result has received reports on the Waterfront Revival in the first instance. A similar report will be considered by the Community Services Committee in October.
- 3.1.2 A grant of £50,000 was awarded to allow the Council to kick start the regeneration of Maldon Hythe and Historic Waterfront while sustaining traditional maritime knowledge, activities and skills and enhancing the historic quarter to provide a contemporary offer.
- 3.1.3 To deliver this aim, a feasibility study was commissioned and work undertaken with local businesses, community groups, charities and residents of the waterfront area, working together to find the best way forward and produce a coherent plan of action. The study was completed by Colliers International who pulled together a multi-skilled

team to provide options that were both sensitive to the historic setting and considered to be financially sustainable (assuming suitable funding is obtained).

- 3.1.4 The feasibility study ran alongside the emerging Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan (the Masterplan) and provided the Council with an early opportunity to explore, in greater detail, several projects highlighted within the master plan.
- 3.1.5 The Council is a key stakeholder in the Historic Waterfront area; land holdings include the Hythe Quay itself, Cooks Boatyard (under lease), Promenade Park and various buildings which could be re purposed or replaced in a wider development.

3.2 Links to Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan

- 3.2.1 At the meeting of this committee on the 17 January 2016 Members resolved that the Masterplan be agreed (Minute No. 779 refers). The character, vitality and cultural importance of the Maldon and Heybridge Central Area are critical to the prosperity of the Maldon District and to the quality of life of the people who live there and the experience it offers to visitors. The Maldon and Heybridge Central Area incorporates Maldon Central, the Causeway Regeneration Area and the Leisure Quarter and forms the District's focus for employment, retail, community and tourism facilities.
- 3.2.2 A significant amount of development is expected to take place in Maldon District over the next 15 years and the Maldon and Heybridge Central Area will be required to meet the needs of a growing population. It will be a thriving and vibrant destination that has strong connections with surrounding areas and is supported by its heritage assets, waterways and green spaces. It will need to support an increase in the number of employed people and a more diversified thriving economy in order to deliver a successful future and its role as a tourism and leisure destination needs to be strengthened.
- 3.2.3 The Local Development Plan (LDP) provides the planning strategy for future growth over the next 15 years and sets out the key principles for development and regeneration in the Central Area within Policy S5. In order to promote the objectives set out in Policy S5, the Council will shortly be asked to consider the Strategic Master Plan Framework and Action Plan to guide future development and area improvements within the Maldon and Heybridge Central Area.
- 3.2.4 The Historic Waterfront Project is linked to the Masterplan however, many of the aims included within the Historic Water Front Study have been long term ambitions of the Council.

3.3 Aims of the Coastal Revival Fund Historic Waterfront Feasibility Study

- 3.3.1 The purpose of the Feasibility Study was to:
 - define the opportunity that Maldon's Historic Waterfront offers;
 - co-ordinate key partners and stakeholders within the Historic Waterfront Area to work collaboratively to realise the opportunity identified;
 - analyse the strengths and weaknesses of taking key objectives, opportunity and funding bids forward to revive Maldon's Historic Waterfront;

- sustain the environmental quality whilst enhancing and encouraging investment to improve the visitor offer, increased leisure provision, access and connectivity to and from the Historic Waterfront and its resilience to flood risk;
- align the Feasibility Study outcomes with the vision and objectives within the draft Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan and Action Plan.

3.3.2 As mentioned above, the feasibility study aligns with the Policy S5 requirements and the key projects which are required to reinforce the existing land uses to create jobs and ensure a skilled employment base, and take the opportunities presented by the waterfront for regeneration, diversification and cultural attractions for leisure and recreation whilst being resilient to flood risk.

3.4 Project outputs

3.4.1 The purpose of the study is to assess options for enhancement of the Hythe Quay and Promenade Park area of Maldon. The brief is specifically to assess the viability of five different projects for potential improvement

- a) Use of Hythe Quay area for commercial activities such as specialist markets
- b) A “destination hub” in Promenade Park that could include a visitor centre, heritage centre and restaurant(s)
- c) Improvement of facilities for visiting yachts / craft at Hythe Quay
- d) Enhancement of St Mary’s Church to form a community hub
- e) Improvements to Maldon District Museum

3.4.2 The report also considers other options.

3.4.3 The Executive Summary of the Historic Waterfront Project report is provided in **APPENDIX 1**. Several copies of the full document have been placed in the Members room.

3.4.4 **APPENDIX 2** sets out the required project outputs and a summary of the consultants findings and how the Council may wish to take forward each output to delivery.

3.4.5 The Consultants recommendations are set out in the following list; The main project should be an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund Parks for the People fund for work that involves:

- restoring the qualities of the historic Edwardian park.
- creating a park café with new toilets for the public and changing rooms for the splash park to replace the current toilet block. We (the consultants) think that it would probably be optimal for it to incorporate a flexible space that can incorporate community events of different type and functions such as weddings. It would probably be a popular facility and offer a good return on investment.
- improving the appearance of the kiosks (if not replaced) and creating a more attractive outdoor seating area in their vicinity.

- extending and modernising Maldon District Museum, and employing a curator – manager. Maldon District Council (MDC) should help the museum to take a wider role in conserving and telling the whole Maldon story, including the maritime heritage.
- replacing the public realm at Hythe Quay with surfacing that is more attractive and in keeping with the heritage, and reduces the impact of parking, while not compromising the operation of the businesses there.
- adapting the Bailiff’s workshop and classroom occupied by the Gig Club to provide flexible ground floor space that can be used for activities of different sort.
- providing a better interpretation and wayfinding system, including panels that tell the story of the Battle of Maldon and Maldon Salt. This would ideally extend to the town centre and along the river.

3.5 Governance

- 3.5.1 The Historic Waterfront Revival Project has a number of distinct sub projects which cut across the remit of the Council’s programme Committees. To help ensure a joined up approach, it is proposed that the Council’s Corporate Project Working Group is utilised to manage the development of these sub projects and potential funding bids.
- 3.5.2 Reports will be required to the relevant programme Committee as and when required in order to satisfy the Councils existing Governance arrangements. The terms of reference of the Corporate Projects Working Group have already been established.
- 3.5.3 Planning and Licensing committee considered this project initially because of its links to the Central Area Masterplan, Economic Development and Tourism. However members of Community Services will no doubt be interested on the project as it focuses on areas such as the Promenade Park which that Committee manages.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Council wishes to promote a coordinated approach to development across the district and in particular in relation to the regeneration of the Historic Waterfront area which builds upon work undertaken in connection with the LDP and the Central Area Masterplan.
- 4.2 The study has identified key projects and development opportunities that if progressed would support the local economy and extend the tourism offer of the area. Crucially it has also identified where development might not be desirable or would have an adverse impact on the use of commercial activities, for example a permanent market on Hythe Quay.
- 4.3 The study outlines a number of activities that could be taken forward including a large bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Parks for People fund to sensitively improve the historic character of the Promenade Park. It is proposed that, due to the cross cutting nature of the projects outlined above, that the Council’s Corporate Project Task and Finish Working Group is requested to manage the process with reports to the appropriate programme Committees as and when decisions are required.

5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE GOALS

- 5.1 Planning supports corporate goals which underpin the Council's vision for the District and in particular protecting and shaping the District and balancing the future needs of the community and meeting the housing needs of the District.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The character, vitality, and cultural importance of the Maldon Historic Waterfront Area are critical to the prosperity of Maldon District and to the quality of life of both residents and visitors.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – Not applicable.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – Failure to appropriately plan for the future in the area could result in uncoordinated development which fails to provide for the best interests of the community and as landowner the Council itself. Funding for this project is time limited and it is necessary to commence the procurement phase of the project immediately after this report has been considered by Members. Any delay to the process could risk the deliverability of the feasibility study. It has not been possible to commence this work earlier than this date due to the need to ensure the emerging recommendations from the Masterplan could be linked into the study.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial and human)** – The production of the Historic Waterfront Feasibility Study required financial resources to employ consultants to undertake the work required on the project brief. External funding was used to undertake the study. It is likely that significant staff resource and external funding will be required to develop the next stages of the overall project, the details of which will need to be reported to members at a later stage.
- (v) **Impact on the Environment** – Appropriately planning for the future within the Maldon Historic Waterfront Area will result in improvements to the local environment, and will support sustainable development appropriate for the area.

Background Papers: None.

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