

Boost for Whitehaven transformation plans

AN AMBITIOUS vision to transform Whitehaven in a multi-million-pound scheme has taken a major step forward.

Copeland Borough Council has been successful in the first phase of its application for a share of the Government's £675 million Future High Streets Fund that aims to revitalise and modernise town centres.

Whitehaven is the only area in the county to be selected to go forward into the final phase of assessment, which will involve the development of a full business case for capital investment in the proposals. The council's initial bid was ranked among the UK's best by Government officials and it will now receive up to £150,000 to develop the full business case.

The strategic themes, supported by Copeland MP Trudy Harrison, include:

- working with public and private investors to repurpose, repair and renew heritage assets
- creating hubs, workspace and housing and opportunities
- acquiring land and demolishing buildings to develop creative leisure spaces, ensuring a flow between the retail area and the harbour
- modernising the high street and expanding the 'streetscapes' initiative
- developing creative transport solutions and parking provision
- initiating a digital revolution by developing digital experiences in leisure, tourism and retail

Mike Starkie, Mayor of Copeland, said: "It's fantastic news that we have progressed through the first round of this bidding process, and it's credit to our excellent team at the council that our expression of interest has been given the green light to progress.

"Whitehaven town centre continues to make major strides and has so much to offer our residents, visitors and investors, but we do recognise that something bolder, innovative and more transformational is needed to help the town grow and modernise further.

"Our vision under the Future High Streets Fund would work in combination with the exciting schemes that are already in train for Whitehaven.

"We look forward to working with our partners to develop this exciting vision into concrete plans to build a strong case for capital funding to help make it a reality."

Trudy Harrison MP said: "I would like to commend Copeland Council for submitting one of the best applications in the country.

"It is testament to the dedication of the high calibre staff, partners' clarity of vision and our collective ability to deliver this exciting and ambitious project.

"This is potentially a multi-million pound project for the town which would be transformational."

Also supporting the bid has been Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, Cumbria County Council, Whitehaven Town Council, Whitehaven Chamber of Trade, Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners, BEC and Sellafeld Ltd.

The Government is expected to announce which schemes have been successful by Spring 2020.

Copeland Council will also be looking into other sources of funding including Heritage Action Zones and the Government's £1.6 billion Stronger Towns Fund towards developing Millom, Egremont and Cleator Moor.

The Government's announcement can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multi-million-fund-to-revitalise-country-s-high-streets> [1]



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[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multi-million-fund-to-revitalise-country-s-high-streets>