

Council unveils vision for Whitehaven

COPELAND Council has unveiled its ambitious vision for Whitehaven in a multi-million-pound regeneration scheme.

The council has developed a scheme totalling approximately £25m, and will next month submit its bid to the Government's Future High Streets Fund for around £15m to help deliver it.

The plans which are being made public today (Wednesday, May 13) include:

- Conversion of the former Whittles building on Duke Street into a community digital hub
- Developing a cycle hub on the former Barclays Bank site, offering sales, hire, storage and repairs of bikes and e-bikes, linked with a juice bar and guided tours
- Creating a seafood restaurant and cycle-friendly accommodation on Marlborough Street
- Developing residential opportunities, focusing on the needs of young professionals and post-graduate students, with access to communal leisure and workspace
- Connecting the town centre and the harbour by creating new arcades between King Street and Strand Street, offering food court, artisan and small-scale leisure spaces

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership has already confirmed match-funding of £1,056,649 of the Local Growth Fund towards the scheme.

Mike Starkie, Mayor of Copeland, said: "We are incredibly proud to reveal our plans for Whitehaven, and I believe we have created a compelling and exciting bid to secure significant funding for the town.

"The bold schemes that are proposed tick every box in terms of the Government's criteria of connectivity and diversification.

"While repurposing unused buildings, we intend to create a more cohesive town that utilises King Street and the harbour as a united space and offers residents, workers and visitors new and high quality experiences in food, digital, culture, health and wellbeing.

"It would improve the start of the C2C as a flagship of the town, drawing in leisure and cycle tourism and make the most of Whitehaven's position of hosting three national cycle routes and linking into our Connecting Cumbria's Hidden Coast opportunity."

Copeland Council learned in July 2019 that it had been selected to go forward to the final phase of its application to the £1 billion national pot, having been ranked among the UK's best initial bids by Government officials.

The council's officers, Mayor and Councillors have spent the past nine months developing the full business case in consultation with stakeholders, residents and partners including MP Trudy Harrison, Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, Cumbria County Council, Whitehaven Town Council, Whitehaven Chamber of Trade, Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners, BEC and Sellafield Ltd.

Mr Starkie added: "I'd like to pay tribute to the talented team at Copeland Council who have worked exceptionally hard to put this bid together, and they deserve particular credit for getting it across the line despite the challenges that the Covid-19 crisis has brought."

The deadline for the council's submission is June 5. An announcement is expected this Autumn, and if the bid is successful, the scheme will be delivered by 2024.

Residents are invited to give feedback on the plans at <https://www.copeland.gov.uk/future-high-streets-fund-our-bid-whitehaven> [1]
