

Growing Places Fund – Project Update

The Growing Places Fund round 3 process is currently being held to allow a full assessment of the options available for supporting economic recovery post COVID-19. As part of this assessment, SELEP are seeking to understand the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the Growing Places Fund projects put forward for consideration as part of the current round of funding.

We would be grateful if you could complete the short questionnaire below regarding your Growing Places Fund round 3 project. We appreciate that it is likely to be too soon for you to have a complete understanding of how your project will be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic but any insight you can offer at this stage into the expected impacts on the project would be appreciated.

Project name: Cockle Wharf

Questionnaire completed by: Tim Rignall, Capital Programme Manager, Southend on Sea Borough Council

Question 1: In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, and the anticipated requirement for social distancing measures to be observed over an extended period of time, is your project still viable and deliverable?

Yes ☒

No ☐

If yes, please complete the remainder of the questionnaire.

Question 2: Please explain how your project will directly support economic recovery post COVID-19. Please identify those market sectors which will be specifically supported through delivery of the project.

The project looks to secure the long term future of the fishing industry in South Essex. Cockle Wharf (also known as Leigh Port) is home to the fishing and cockling industry on the north bank of the Thames. As part of the North Thames FLAG (Fisheries Local Action Group) survey work has been undertaken to look at how the port infrastructure can be improved to secure and sustain the fishing industry going forward. That survey work has identified significant issues in terms of port access; stability of the quay wall; the surface of the port area; and a requirement for dredging. Without works to address these issues there is a real threat to the long term future of the industry in South Essex. If the industry was to relocate from South Essex this would compound local economic issues caused by the COVID-19 lockdown.

The business case makes it clear that the port and the industry make a significant contribution to the visitor economy in Leigh and the wider and Southend area. They also have a positive impact on the hospitality, leisure and retail sectors across Southend. The cockle sheds are cited as one of the main attractions for visitors. Without the fishing industry in Leigh local pubs, restaurants, cafes and shops will find it even harder to bounce back and sustain their businesses.

The GPF loan provides the investment needed to secure the long term future of the industry in Leigh with benefits both for the direct and indirect economy. The extent of these benefits are set out in the business case.

Question 3: Please indicate the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to affect the following areas of your project submission. It would be useful if you could provide a high-level explanation of any expected impacts.

- Project scope:

Reduced project scope ☐ Project scope unchanged ☒ Increased project scope ☐

Summary of expected impact on project scope (if applicable):

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Total project cost:

Reduced project cost ☐ Increased project cost (within available budget) ☐
Project cost unchanged ☒ Increased project cost (above available budget) ☐

Summary of expected impact on total project cost (if applicable):

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Availability of match funding:

Reduced match funding available ☐ Match funding available as per Business Case ☒
Increased match funding available ☐

Summary of expected impact on availability of match funding (if applicable):

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Delivery programme:

Accelerated delivery ☐ Delivery programme unchanged ☒ Delivery programme extended ☐

Summary of expected impact on delivery programme (if applicable):

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Scale of benefits offered:

Reduced project benefits ☐ Scale of benefits unchanged ☒ Increased project benefits ☐

Summary of expected impact on scale of benefits offered by the project (if applicable):

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Repayment schedule:

Accelerated repayment ☐ Repayment schedule unchanged ☒ Delayed repayment ☐

Summary of expected impact on repayment schedule (if applicable):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Please return the completed questionnaire to Helen Dyer, SELEP Capital Programme Officer at helen.dyer@southeastlep.com by close of play on **Monday 18th May 2020**.