

Cabinet Meeting		Agenda Item: 5
Meeting Date	11 th March 2015	
Report Title	Faversham Creek Basin Regeneration Project	
Cabinet Member	Cllr Mike Cosgrove, Cabinet Member for Regeneration	
SMT Lead	Pete Raine	
Head of Service	Emma Wiggins	
Lead Officer	Debbie Townrow	
Key Decision	Yes	
Classification	Open	
Forward Plan	Reference number:	
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the allocation of £200,000 capital funding from the reserves, as a contribution to fund the works required to replace the Faversham Creek swing bridge subject to satisfactory completion of the feasibility study. 2. To provide delegated authority to the Director of Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Finance to release the allocation of £200,000 subject to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Viability established through the technical work; - A robust costing and a full funding package to be in place; - Access to the northern bank of the basin secured to create new wharfage; - Appropriate licensing approvals in place; - Adequate arrangements secured for the operation and maintenance of the bridge in the long term; - Final design of bridge, gates and sluices agreed; - Approval of neighbourhood plan. 	

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out details of the commitment made to date in funding preliminary investigation works to determine if the rebuilding of the Faversham Creek opening bridge is a viable option. Subject to viability being established the report also

requests approval to commit £200,000 capital funding as a contribution to the rebuilding costs.

2 Background

- 2.1 Faversham Creek Basin Regeneration Project is a partnership made up of Kent County Council, Swale Borough Council, Faversham Town Council, the Faversham Creek consortium, the Faversham Creek Trust and the Brents Community Association.
- 2.2 The purpose of the project is to restore navigation to Faversham Creek Basin to conserve and bring alive the maritime heritage. The Basin will become a tourist destination. It will bring back into use a derelict area of the Creek-side, making it a destination in its own right rather than a peripheral part of the town. It will provide a link between the historic architectural centre of the town and its maritime centre, between the commercial centre and a thriving harbour.
- 2.3 The inner basin of Faversham Creek is currently full of mud and little else. If the swing bridge is restored, vessels of all types – including traditional Thames barges – can be moored. This will help the process of developing Faversham's offer to visitors and with appropriate signing and promotion lead to greater footfall from the town centre, to explore the Creekside. This will contribute to generating growth in visitor numbers with the potential for higher spend per head.
- 2.4 Before the bridge works can begin, certain technical questions need to be addressed; specifically these concern the dredging of the inner basin, for which licencing approval is required from the Marine management Organisation (MMO) and the Environment Agency (EA) respectively.
- 2.5 A Regeneration Fund Bid for £23,000 has been approved to fund the feasibility works and these are currently being completed by consultants with payment in staged payments being made against submitted invoices for completed works.
- 2.6 The whole Faversham Creek basin is within the area included in the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan that is currently being finalised and will then be submitted to DCLG by the end of February. It will then be subject to an independent examination and put to a referendum later in 2015.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The project proposes a like-for-like working replacement of the Brents Swing Bridge and sufficient dredging of silt to provide navigable access. Works to the Swing Bridge will be carried out by Kent County Council Highways & Transportation team under separate permit.
- 3.2 The costs of a renewed swing bridge and gates are estimated at upwards of £1m, with a small amount of ongoing maintenance. Following discussions, it has been

agreed that Kent County Council would fund at least £400,000 as the contribution covering its highways' role; Faversham Town Council is actively considering £175,000, possibly via a loan. There have been positive recent discussions with Peel Ports with regards to providing the additional funding required and/or work and services. An historic local company and charity have indicated that they might be prepared to consider a financial contribution to ensure these iconic features.

- 3.3 Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the request to allocate £200,000 capital funding from the reserves as the Council's contribution to the funding required for a renewed bridge and associated works to the inner basin. The contribution will be paid to whichever public sector body is responsible for the bridge works contract – Kent County Council, Swale Borough Council or Faversham Town Council.
- 3.4 Cabinet is asked to provide delegated authority to the Director of Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Finance to release the allocation of £200,000 upon satisfactory completion of the feasibility study. This will be subject to the conditions set out in the recommendations.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not to contribute to the rebuilding of the bridge and associated works. This is not recommended as Council support will be added to match funding and used to lever in the additional funds required to deliver this project.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Currently the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan is ending its formal consultation process that is managed by Swale's Planning Department. In early spring it will be examined by the external assessor to determine viability. Within the proposals are 13 sites with a potential for 100 new housing units.
- 5.2 Throughout the local Faversham consultation processes, the potential for a new swing bridge and gates has had universal support. There was an overwhelming 91.2% support for a new swing bridge and gates from consultation involving over 1,000 people in a two day exhibition and on-line survey.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	This work will be targeted to achieving the priorities against the Corporate priorities of 'Open for Business' and 'Healthy Environment'. Within the economic development strategy, creating an 'Open for Business' environment' is identified as one of four key priorities, with the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan detailed

	as a specific action. The Corporate Plan details the 'Healthy Environment' including 'Protecting and enhancing the natural environment' as one of the key objectives.
Financial, Resource and Property	Up to £23,000 has already been committed from the Regeneration Fund Bid to fund the feasibility and investigation works. The Recommendation for £200,000 for capital investment in the bridge would need to be found from the Council reserves. Some staff resource from across the authority will be required and has been allocated.
Legal and Statutory	Work is underway to secure the licences required from the Marine Management Organisation and the Environment Agency to enable the works to be permitted. Further input may be required to ensure conditions of funding are met.
Crime and Disorder	Improvements to the basin surroundings and increased footfall will reduce the opportunity for anti-social behaviour.
Sustainability	The underpinning objective to secure new investment will enhance quality of life for residents. Additional environmental sustainability may be secured as part of social value detailed in tenders completed to deliver the works.
Health and Wellbeing	Promoting a stronger economy and the social value outcome can make a positive contribution to the well-being of residents.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Each contractor / consultant undertaking works will be responsible for providing their own appropriate insurances and they will be carrying out their own risk assessments as part of their works.
Equality and Diversity	A Community Impact Assessment will be undertaken.

7 Appendices

7.1 There are no appendices attached to this report.

8 Background Papers

8.1 There are no background papers associated with this report.