

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S
REPORT TO**

Cabinet
11 November 2020

Report Title: Kidsgrove Town Deal

Submitted by: Executive Director Commercial Development and Economic Growth

Portfolios: Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: Newchapel & Mow Cop, Kidsgrove & Ravenscliffe, Talke & Butt Lane, Bradwell

Purpose of the Report

To update on the work to produce the Town Investment Plan for the Kidsgrove Town Deal area and consider the next steps in its delivery.

Recommendation

That

1. Cabinet formally endorses the Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment Plan and will receive a further report on the outcome of the Town Investment Plan submission at the point that this is received from government
2. That The Executive Director Commercial Development & Economic Growth is authorised to work within existing Council resources to continue to support the Town Deal Board and other organisations as necessary to progress development of projects in the Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment
3. That a multi-disciplinary officer group is established to oversee delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan

Reasons

To enhance the economic, social and community wellbeing of the Kidsgrove Town Deal area. To deliver on the Kidsgrove Town Centre objective in the Growth Deal for Newcastle-under-Lyme 2019 – 2023. To pursue Council Plan Objective Four A Town Centre for All as it relates to Kidsgrove.

1. **Background**

1.1 In September 2019 the government invited 100 places to develop proposals for a Town Deal as a part of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund. Within the Borough both Newcastle and Kidsgrove were invited to participate in this valuable opportunity to drive significant investment into the Borough. This report focuses on the Kidsgrove element of that work.

1.2 The objective of the Towns Fund is to drive long-term economic growth and resilience, and to improve living standards, productivity and sustainability in these areas. It will support the long-term transformation of towns through investment in connectivity, place, enterprise and skills. Including:

- Urban regeneration, planning and land use: ensuring towns are thriving places for people to live and work, including by: increasing density in town centres;

strengthening local economic assets including local cultural assets; site acquisition, remediation, preparation, regeneration; and making full use of planning tools to bring strategic direction and change.

- Skills and enterprise: driving private sector investment and ensuring towns have the space to support skills and small business development.
- Connectivity: developing local transport scheme that complement regional and national networks, as well as supporting the delivery of improved digital connectivity

1.3 Since the announcement officers across the Council have worked with Members to drive activity, establish a Town Deal Board and develop a Town Investment Plan (“TIP”).

2. **Issues**

2.1 In line with guidance set out in the Towns Fund Prospectus, the Council established a Town Deal Board for the Kidsgrove area. The Board membership includes public, private and voluntary sector representation. The Board has been responsible for shaping the proposals for the Town Investment Plan with support from the Council in its role as accountable body for the Kidsgrove Town Deal.

2.2 The Town Deal Board has a Terms of Reference that is in line with Government requirements for the Town Fund programme and has adopted a number of the Council’s policies to ensure good governance standards.

2.3 Development of the Town Investment Plan was also supported by the appointed consultancy AECOM who were selected following a competitive procurement process.

2.4 To support development of proposals that respond to local need and opportunity, consultation with a wide range of local stakeholders took place including:

- Individual consultation sessions were held with both Board members and members of the local community. Consultees were drawn from a number of sectors and a variety of interests to ensure the TIP drew from a diverse range of opinions and priorities for the future success and long-term sustainability of Kidsgrove.
- A “Call for Projects” survey was used to encourage residents, organisations and businesses to submit project or investment ideas that were in line with the three themes of the Town Deal Fund and which offered good prospects of delivery. The call for projects was distributed through various channels, including the social media profile of the local MP, community organisations such as VAST, the Town Council, Locality Action Partnerships and Ward Members.
- MHCLG’s #MyTown campaign provided a platform for communities to outline how Town Deal funding could transform their town. Kidsgrove received 46 responses which were analysed and used to shape the vision and interventions outlined within the TIP.
- The team preparing the TIP has presented at various local stakeholder group sessions to inform them of the work being undertaken such as the Newcastle-under-Lyme Employment and Skills Group, and to gain a greater understanding of local conditions, examples of best practice and priorities.
- A “Vision Survey” was developed and distributed to Board members to inform the development of the vision for Kidsgrove, supplemented by #MyTown responses and

conversations with individual stakeholders to ensure the vision was representative of the views of the broad Kidsgrove community

2.5 Small project groups, comprising Board members, project stakeholders, AECOM and the Council were used to develop the priority projects that the Board agreed to take forward in the Town Investment Plan.

2.6 The Town Investment Plan has projects proposed within 3 strategic objectives

- a. Objective 1: To drive growth and opportunity through enhanced enterprise infrastructure in Kidsgrove
 - i. Investment in enabling works at Chatterley Valley to release a significant employment site.
 - ii. Investment in enterprise units.
- b. Objective 2: To create a connected, accessible town centre which links key assets, retains the heritage and uniqueness of Kidsgrove and delivers and drives new demand and footfall.
 - i. Upgrade facilities at Kidsgrove station to complement improvements funded by the Access for All programme.
 - ii. Canal enhancements to create a safe attractive canal corridor
 - iii. Shared service hub & housing investment, to bring together services that are currently dispersed through the town into a one stop shop.
- c. Objective 3: To maximise the leisure and recreation opportunities available in Kidsgrove, providing facilities that are supported by communities and opportunities for residents to improve their health and wellbeing.
 - i. Kidsgrove Sports Centre
 - ii. Park Improvements

Further detail is set out in the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan which is Appendix One to this report.

2.7 The Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan is asking for circa £25 million funding from Town Deal monies. This investment will be matched from a number of other sources as set out in the Town Investment Plan representing a significant investment in the Kidsgrove town Deal area.

2.8 Following submission of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan, the Investment Plan will be assessed by the Government's Town Hub who will offer feedback and progress to Heads of Terms for projects selected for further business case development. On this basis it is expected that project delivery would take place from April 2021 onwards. The results of the Government's assessment will be reported to Cabinet at the point when it is received by the Council.

2.9 Following the award of Advance Town Deal Funding (considered by Cabinet in September 2020) an internal multi-disciplinary officer group was established to ensure the proper oversight and administration of Town Deal grant monies. Whilst this group is currently focused on the delivery of the Advance Town Deal projects it is proposed that the function of this group should evolve to oversee delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Deal programme and ensure the Council fulfils its obligations as accountable body for the Town Deal. Terms of Reference for this group have been established to set out its remit and reporting responsibilities within the Council and to the Kidsgrove Town Deal Board.

2.10 At this stage of development the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan is not expected to present a fully worked up business case for each project but it is expected

to give a level of detail to enable Government to assess the strategic fit and deliverability of the projects proposed within the Investment Plan. It is important however that development of the projects does not stall whilst feedback from Government is awaited as there is a body of good will and a degree of momentum that has been gained that would risk being lost if project development is suspended. It is proposed that working within existing Council resources Officers will continue to work with stakeholders to progress projects so that they are ready to proceed as quickly as possible to full business case development.

3. **Proposal**

- 3.1 That Cabinet formally endorses the Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment Plan and will receive a further report on the outcome of the Town Investment Plan submission at the point that this is received from government.
- 3.2 That The Executive Director Commercial Development & Economic Growth is authorised to work within existing Council resources to continue to support the Town Deal Board and other organisations as necessary to progress development of projects in the Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment Plan.
- 3.3 That a multi-disciplinary officer group is established to oversee delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan.

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

- 4.1 Delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan is a significant opportunity to attract Government funding to the Kidsgrove Town Deal area to support its economic, social and community wellbeing.
- 4.2 To deliver on the Kidsgrove Town Centre priority of the Growth Deal for Newcastle-under-Lyme 2019 – 2023.
- 4.3 To maintain momentum of delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan.

5. **Options Considered**

- 5.1 The Council is not obliged to pursue delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan but its delivery is in line with Council Plan Objective four A Town Centre for All and the priorities of the Growth Deal for Newcastle-under-Lyme 2019 – 2023.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 As Accountable Body for the Kidsgrove Town Deal the Council has a number of obligations, including to ensure that decisions made by the Town Deal Board are in accordance with good governance principles and to support transparent delivery arrangements for the Town Deal. These obligations include:
 - Upholding the Seven Principles of Public Life (The Nolan Principles) in all of the Board's activities;
 - Developing a delivery team, transparent delivery arrangements and agreements;
 - Ensuring that decision are made by the Board in accordance with good governance principles;
 - Ensuring transparency requirements are met through publication of information on the Council's website or on a Town Deal specific website;
 - Developing agreed projects in detail and undertaking any necessary feasibility studies;
 - Undertaking any required Environmental Impact Assessments and meeting all Public Sector Equalities Duties

- Develop detailed, costed business cases;
- Liaising with potential private investors in identified local projects and schemes;
- Signing the Heads of Terms Agreement with Government;
- Monitoring and evaluating the delivery of individual Town Fund projects;
- Submitting regular monitoring reports to the Towns Hub;
- Receiving and accounting for the Town's funding allocation.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 The nature of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan is intended to seek benefits for all residents of the Kidsgrove Town Deal area. Individual projects will require Equality Impact Assessments as their business case development is done.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 The Council was allocated £162,019 development funding to support development of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan.

8.2 In delivering the Town Deal the Council will be expected to manage the grant payments as needed. Subject to all projects being successful this equates to £25 million over 6 years from 2020/21.

8.3 The Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan funding includes an element for project management/Board support and assurance and business case development. In line with Town Fund guidance this is allocated within individual projects. It is likely that the Council will need extra capacity in some form to fulfil its obligations as set out in 6.1 above, and to resource the additional professional support (i.e. legal services) required to support projects which are outside of the core provision currently budgeted for.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 At this stage the critical risk would be that the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan is not accepted by Government. The mitigation against this is that the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan is fully compliant with the guidance received and has robust governance arrangements in place. However should the full Town Investment Plan not be accepted by Government the Town Deal process does allow for a period of further negotiation and development at the Heads of Terms stage which is set out in The Government's Towns Fund Guidance document.

9.2 Individual project specific risk assessments will be developed as a part of the business case development process.

9.3 A further risk is inadequate management of projects to ensure delivery on time and within budget. This is mitigated through proper project planning, resourcing and compliance with governance arrangements.

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

10.1 Clean and inclusive growth is a cross cutting theme of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan. Projects in the Investment Plan include improvements based around a key public transport hub at Kidsgrove Railway Station and the aspiration to improve the flow and pedestrian connectivity between Kidsgrove's key assets including the train station, canal and town centre.

11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 The Town Deal area includes the Wards of Newchapel & Mow Cop, Kidsgrove & Ravenscliffe, Talke & Butt Lane and Bradwel

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

- 12.1 4 December 2019
- 12.2 9 September 2020

13. **List of Appendices**

- 13.1 Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan

14. **Background Papers**

- 14.1 Kidsgrove Town Deal page on the Council's website: <https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/all-services/business/business-information/kidsgrove-town-deal>
- 14.2 Kidsgrove Town Deal submission video: <https://youtu.be/kFw635Iijlo>
- 14.3 Towns Fund Prospectus November 2019 (MHCLG)
- 14.4 Towns Fund Guidance June 2020 (MHCLG)