

# Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

October 2020



DWP Department for Work and Pensions



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*Kidsgrove town centre*

# 1. Foreword

We are proud to present this Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan to Government.

The Plan outlines a strong vision and set of objectives for capitalising on Kidsgrove's strengths; addressing the town's historical lack of investment and the complex challenges it faces. This Plan has been developed and agreed by the Kidsgrove Town Deal Board. It has been informed by a public call for project ideas. This was supplemented by extensive consultation with stakeholders including Kidsgrove's local community as well as the private, public, and voluntary sectors to identify and develop our investment priorities.

We are clear about the issues faced in Kidsgrove and now have an agreed and cohesive plan to address them. Many of the challenges and opportunities identified in this Plan are long-standing in nature. However, a historical lack of investment in Kidsgrove has meant the challenges have remained unaddressed and the opportunities unexploited. The need for investment has never been greater given the social, health and economic challenges we are now facing from COVID-19.

Our Plan presents a comprehensive programme of investment to meet local needs and contribute to the Government's 'levelling up' agenda. This includes investment in:

- Chatterley Valley - Kidsgrove's only strategic employment and Enterprise Zone site – and employment units at West Avenue;
- A comprehensive package of investment to redevelop and revitalise Kidsgrove Town Centre:
  - Land acquisition and delivery of a Shared Service Hub.
  - A new rail station and transport interchange;
  - Access, towpath and public realm improvements along the Trent and Mersey canal that runs directly through Kidsgrove town centre;
- The re-development and re-opening of Kidsgrove Leisure Centre; and
- Kidsgrove's Parks to provide high quality green spaces and outdoor sports facilities for all.

Town Deal investment will deliver transformational change in Kidsgrove including the redevelopment of the town centre; creation of over 2,000 jobs and approximately £80m of operational GVA. In addition, Town Deal investment will increase aspiration, confidence and pride in Kidsgrove whilst also raising the town's profile and finally ensuring it can achieve its potential.

On behalf of the Kidsgrove Town Deal board, we endorse this plan and stand ready to deliver the programme of investment we outline in this document. We are now asking Government to support Kidsgrove to realise our long-term vision; unlock the town's significant potential; and make Kidsgrove a place where existing and future residents choose to live.



**Dan Gray**  
Executive Director, Property – Aspire.  
Chair of Kidsgrove Town Deal Board



**Simon Tagg**  
Leader of Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council  
Vice Chair of Kidsgrove Town Deal Board



## 2. Executive Summary

Kidsgrove is located on the North Staffordshire and South Cheshire border. It is a growing, well-connected town with a strong community, proud heritage and rich natural environment. Kidsgrove and its satellite villages offer residents an attractive, affordable location to live with excellent road and rail links to major nearby cities.

This Town Investment Plan presents a long-term strategic vision to unlock Kidsgrove's potential via a co-ordinated programme of regeneration. This Plan therefore represents a once in a lifetime opportunity for Kidsgrove to build on its strengths and assets and address the challenges that impede its goal of becoming a more desirable place to invest, work, live and visit. It sets out that, by 2030, Kidsgrove will be:

*“A dynamic and well-connected town via its rail station and access to and from the M6, which is strategically located on the border of the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine. Kidsgrove will capitalise on its location; strategic employment sites and heritage and leisure assets, including the canal network, to forge a reputation as an attractive, welcoming and successful town which is a desirable place to live and invest.”*

Kidsgrove's community is at the heart of this Town Investment Plan, underpinned by extensive public, private and voluntary sector engagement. This has developed buy-in, ensured the priority projects reflect local needs, and forged effective linkages to existing and proposed activity. Town Deal funding will therefore maximise investment, catalyse Kidsgrove's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and create the conditions for sustainable long-term economic growth. This Town Investment Plan ask is for £25m of investment to deliver a holistic programme of regeneration activity framed around seven priority projects:

- **Chatterley Valley** – Investment to bring forward the development of the only strategic employment site in Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough, located within the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone, to drive inward investment in Kidsgrove, with the potential to generate 1,940 jobs and £72 million GVA per annum in the local area once developed.
- **West Ave: light industrial units** – A 2.83-hectare site to be taken forward as a multiple unit scheme focused towards B2 and B8 uses, to meet commercial demand in the local economy.
- **Kidsgrove Station** – Delivery of a new station building for Kidsgrove and contribution to a multi-modal interchange and expanded 200-space station car park to meet the needs of station users and the local community and capitalise on the longer-term opportunity presented by HS2.
- **Canal enhancement** – A programme of interventions to create a safe new, attractive canal corridor, high quality public realm and an alternative off-road routeway to benefit both visitors and the residents of Kidsgrove.
- **Shared Service Hub, land assembly & Housing investment** – Delivery of a Shared Service Hub, bringing together public sector assets to provide a one stop shop from which residents can access services, alongside the delivery of new older persons housing and a wider programme of land assembly to “create” a town centre, increase footfall and improve accessibility.
- **Kidsgrove Sports Centre** – Investment to refurbish and re-open Kidsgrove Sports Centre to the public under community management. This presents the opportunity to secure a vital asset within Kidsgrove town centre to provide leisure opportunities to Kidsgrove residents and address local health and wellbeing challenges.
- **Kidsgrove Parks** – A programme of investment in Clough Hall Park and Newchapel Recreation Ground – key recreational sites/green spaces within the Town Deal Investment Area – to improve the quality of the facilities on offer, widen the audience and promote year-round use.

These projects will address the key challenges facing Kidsgrove that are articulated in the Investment Plan. The town suffers from low levels of productivity and a weak employment base which is being exacerbated by COVID-19. Kidsgrove lacks a defined town centre which is characterised by a poor sense of arrival and outdated buildings; residents experience poor health outcomes and have low levels of physical activity; and Kidsgrove's key heritage assets - the canal and its parks - are underexploited and suffer from a historic lack of investment.

The wide-ranging programme of regeneration activity proposed in this plan will address the issues identified, maximise Kidsgrove's strength and positively benefit the town's current and future residents. Specifically, this plan will deliver:

- The redevelopment of 52.2 hectares of land;
- 142,522m<sup>2</sup> of additional, high-quality commercial floorspace;
- 1,494 temporary jobs during construction, translating into a GVA impact of £66.3m; and
- 2,118 FTE jobs upon completion of the programme of investment, translating into a GVA impact of £79.7m per annum

This programme of investment will transform Kidsgrove by delivering both new and well-established projects reflecting community priorities. Town Deal investment represents a once in a lifetime opportunity for Kidsgrove. It will deliver investment to reinvigorate the town centre and its key assets and employment sites. This Town Deal will therefore deliver significant and wide-ranging benefits for both current and future residents and demonstrate confidence in Kidsgrove's long-term future.



*Small independent shops line the A50 Liverpool Road, which bisects the town centre.*



### 3. Contextual analysis

Kidsgrove is a unique, well-connected town of 23,663 people<sup>1</sup> in the borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire. The town lies near the Staffordshire and Cheshire border, between the Midlands Engine and the Northern Powerhouse and has excellent transport links. It is located on the A500 within a ten-minute drive from the A34 and the M6 connecting it to and from the West Midlands, the North West and further afield, with Manchester, Liverpool and East Midlands Airports less than 50 miles away by road. Kidsgrove also benefits from excellent rail links with a mainline rail station, providing services to local centres such as Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent as well as direct links to large cities such as Manchester, Birmingham and London. Nearly a quarter of a million people enter and exit the station annually, with this number nearly doubling in the last decade. Station usage will increase further once rail services are improved through the introduction of HS2. This comprehensive mix of connectivity gives Kidsgrove superior accessibility to and from regional and national networks unrivalled by other nearby towns.

Kidsgrove's transport infrastructure has been vital in allowing the town to develop strong advanced manufacturing, logistics and trade sectors, which are key employers in the local area. In recognition of this strength and the area's ability to drive significant demand for industrial floorspace, the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone, comprising six key sites totalling 140 hectares, was formed along the strategic A500 corridor. One of the Enterprise Zone's sites, the 38-hectare Chatterley Valley West, is located within the Kidsgrove Town Deal area and represents a significant opportunity for employment growth, the importance of which is heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kidsgrove has a strong history of coal mining and pride in its industrial heritage. Early in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Clough Hall estate and other coal mines and ironworks grew and became vital for regional and national industries. To this day Kidsgrove retains a range of unique heritage assets including the Harecastle Tunnel on James Brindley's Trent and Mersey Canal. Built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to service the coal mines, and at 1.6 miles is one of the longest in the country. It is currently used for leisure purposes, with 8,000 boats passing through annually, providing Kidsgrove with untapped leisure and tourism opportunities. The town centre also retains some high-quality heritage architecture from this period, including Kidsgrove Town Hall, the former Methodist Church and the Masonic Hall.

Today, Kidsgrove is a well-connected, growing town with a strong community and competitive house prices. However, Kidsgrove lacks an attractive residential offer to appeal to higher income residents, which – teamed with the closure of valuable community facilities – often sees it lose out to nearby Cheshire market towns. Town Deal investment presents the opportunity to unlock Kidsgrove's potential via a co-ordinated programme of regeneration that builds on its strengths and assets to become a more desirable place to invest, work, live and visit. However, this potential is hampered by a number of issues facing the town centre:

- The town lacks a defined "centre" and is split across the A50 Liverpool Road, a main thoroughfare, which impacts pedestrian flow and gives the town a disjointed feel;
- While there are pockets of quality independent retailers, there is a proliferation of value-oriented stores which impact the vibrancy of the town centre. The presence of two supermarkets located on the edges of the town centre limits connectivity to the remainder of the centre and the ability of smaller operators to benefit from the presence of these stores; and
- A number of valuable town centre assets are significantly underutilised. For instance:
  - Kidsgrove rail station is outdated, in need of investment and offers a poor sense of arrival.; active and public transport links to and from the station are poor; while the station is virtually invisible in the town centre with no clearly legible connection to/from it.
  - Kidsgrove benefits from a number of parks and green spaces. They are characterised by a lack of quality leisure facilities and, in some instances, high levels of anti-social behaviour.
  - Kidsgrove Sports Centre closed due to its deteriorating condition and is now in a state of disrepair which is symbolic of historic under investment in Kidsgrove. Kidsgrove now lacks any public leisure facilities, exacerbating the poor health outcomes recorded for Kidsgrove's residents.

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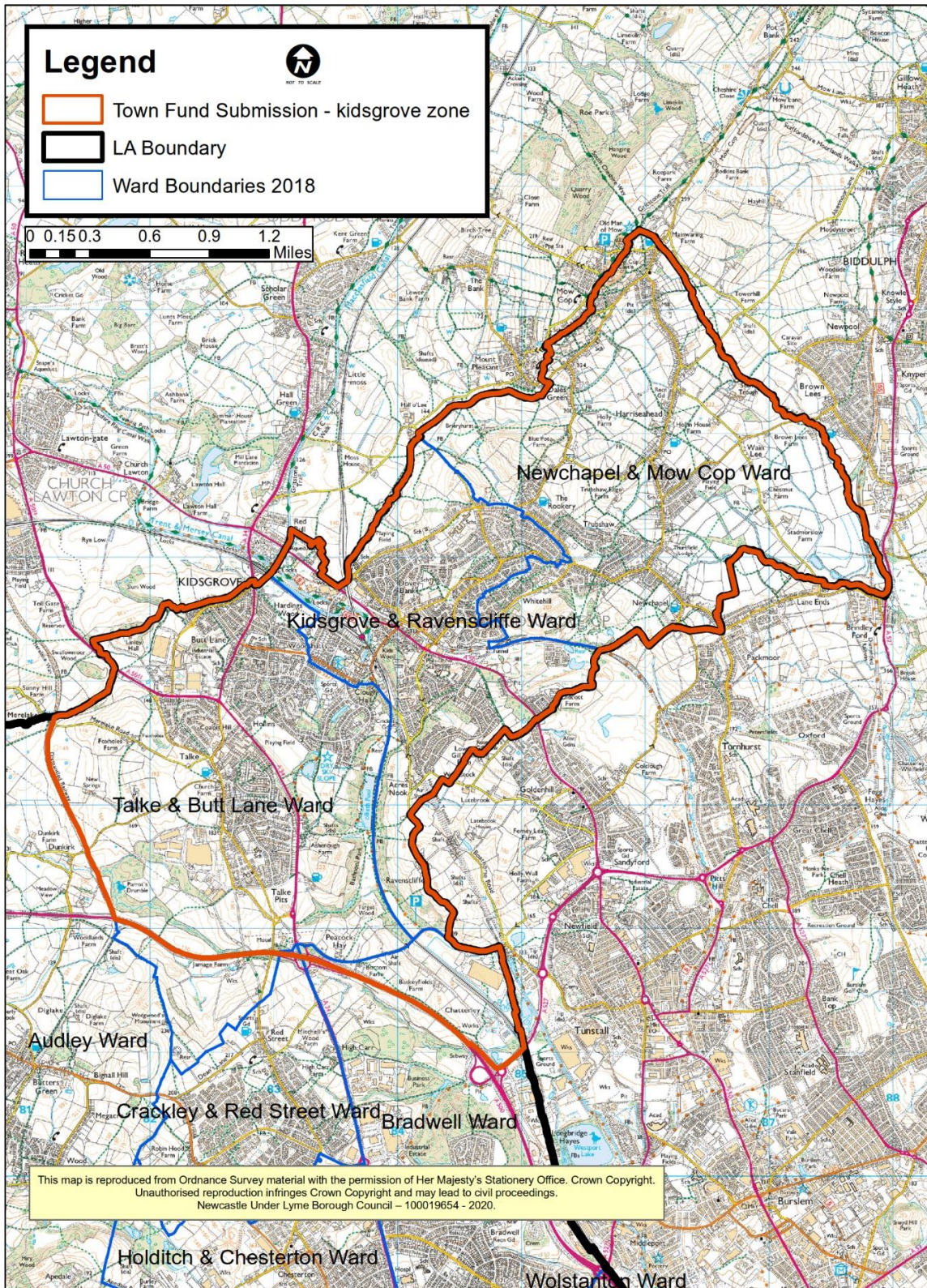
<sup>1</sup> ONS Population estimates - small area based by single year of age - England and Wales 2018



# Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment Area

The Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment Area consists of the Newchapel and Mow Cop, Kidsgrove and Ravenscliffe, Talke and Butt Lane wards, and part of the Bradwell Ward to the North East of the A500 that includes the Chatterley Valley Enterprise Zone. Kidsgrove is the main retail and service centre, while other small nodes of convenience retailing and services exist, such as Butt Lane village centre. Affinity Staffordshire, a 40-store retail outlet including major names, such as M&S, Nike, Sports Direct and Gap, is located in Talke Pits, to the South West of Kidsgrove.

Figure 1. Kidsgrove Town Deal Boundary





The Kidsgrove Town Deal boundary includes areas with strong logistics and advanced manufacturing capability, along the A34 and A500 corridors. Central to Kidsgrove's request for Town Deal funding is Chatterley Valley West, a 38-hectare strategic employment site which forms part of the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone. It offers the potential for over £2.5 billion of investment over the next decade<sup>2</sup>, and represents a strategic growth opportunity for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough and the wider Staffordshire economy. The area takes in Talke, home to Jamage Industrial Estate which has a range of warehousing, and industrial units, Butt Lane's Nelson Business Estate and Linley Trading Estate with key employers including AAH Pharmaceutical, Arnold Clark and Reliance Medical.

The Town Deal area includes large quantities of green and open spaces for residents and visitors to use including Clough Hall Park, Newchapel Recreation Ground, Bathpool Park, Birchenwood Park and the Trent and Mersey Canal. This broad composition of uses make the Town Deal Investment Area an interesting and unique regeneration proposition.

## Kidsgrove's assets and strengths

Kidsgrove has a variety of strengths and assets that the Town Investment Plan will build upon and exploit:

### Urban Development<sup>3</sup>

Kidsgrove and its satellite villages offer an attractive, affordable location to live, with average house prices at £146,123 well below the West Midlands figure of £229,597<sup>4</sup> and prices recorded in neighbouring Cheshire (£255,653<sup>5</sup>). Kidsgrove has an opportunity to develop an attractive new build offer appealing to higher income residents. This is currently lacking within Kidsgrove's residential offer and often sees it lose out to nearby Cheshire market towns despite it having a prime location on the West Coast mainline link.



*New build housing in Kidsgrove – Cooper Place*

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/news/ceramic-valley-already-attracting-significant-interest>

<sup>3</sup> Cooper Place, Kidsgrove. Source of Photograph – Primelocation.co.uk

<sup>4</sup> HM Land Registry

<sup>5</sup> Source: Rightmove. Data based on past twelve months of sales from August 2020.



## **Parks and Green Spaces**

Kidsgrove possesses several outdoor green spaces that provide leisure opportunities for residents and visitors such as Clough Hall Park, Newchapel Recreation Ground, Birchenwood Park and Bathpool Park, which includes Kidsgrove Ski Centre. The town's rich coal mining heritage and legacy infrastructure, such as the canal system, act as a focal point of visitor activity and provide an amenity benefit for its residents. Consultation with stakeholders and residents highlighted the importance of Kidsgrove's heritage as a source of pride and assets such as the Trent and Mersey Canal, Harecastle Tunnel and heritage architecture provide a strong foundation to build upon.



*Bathpool – one of the recreational beauty spots for Kidsgrove residents and visitors.*

## **Economy, enterprise infrastructure and skills**

Kidsgrove has a strength in logistics and advanced manufacturing sectors linked to its strategic location and excellent connectivity. Key local employers include JCB, which occupies a 35000 sq. m warehouse in Chatterley Valley, AAH Pharmaceuticals, Arnold Clark and Reliance Medical and market data suggests there are further opportunities to build upon these sectoral strengths.

Kidsgrove has strong performing schools. Primary and secondary schools such as The King's CofE (VA) School, St John the Evangelist Catholic, Dove Bank and St Thomas Primary schools all received Good OFSTED ratings in their most recent inspections. As a Borough, Newcastle-under-Lyme has a higher proportion of intermediate apprenticeship achievements (52.9%) than the national average (46.9%). This extends to higher apprenticeship achievements and links to high-performing institutions such as Newcastle and Stafford College, rated Outstanding by OFSTED. Kidsgrove also benefits from close proximity to both Keele and Staffordshire Universities, while its transport connectivity provides opportunities for students to commute to institutions in Manchester and Birmingham. This makes Kidsgrove a very attractive place for families and offers the potential to build a strong community of skilled workers alongside a programme of investment to revitalise the town centre.

## Connectivity

Kidsgrove has excellent transport connectivity. Its geographical location positions it as a gateway to North Staffordshire with easy access to major motorway and arterial road networks, including the A50, A34, A500 and the M6, with Manchester, Liverpool and East Midlands Airports lying less than 50 miles away by road. Kidsgrove station is one of the town's strongest assets, registering 235,000 entries and exits in 2018/19, up from 141,000 at the turn of the decade<sup>6</sup>. It provides quick and regular access to nearby Stoke and Crewe as well as hourly services to Manchester and London via Birmingham. These connections will become faster and more frequent via the introduction of HS2 meaning Kidsgrove will have a direct rail links to the nearby HS2 Hub at Crewe.

The Borough also has an extensive network of routes for cyclists away from roads along greenways, canal towpaths and riverside paths, plus a large network of less busy roads many of which are traffic calmed but fully open and permeable to cyclists. National Cycle Network Route Five runs through Kidsgrove on its journey from Reading to North Wales.

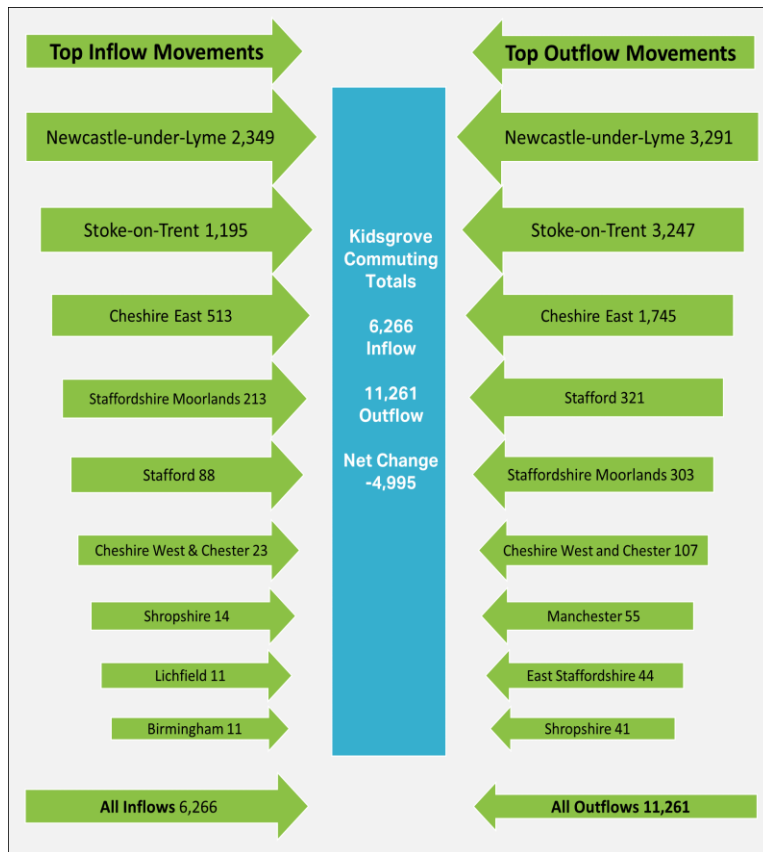


*Despite its central location, Kidsgrove station is of poor quality and lacks status and visibility within the town centre.*

<sup>6</sup> ORR Estimates of station usage



Figure 2. Kidsgrove's Prominent Inflow and Outflow Journey to Work Movements<sup>7</sup>



Kidsgrove's close proximity to Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme means the town is a net exporter of labour – 11,261 people travel out of Kidsgrove for work compared to 6,266 that commute in. A significant amount of people work and live within the town (1,564).

Kidsgrove excels in digital connectivity. Superfast broadband is almost universally available with higher average speeds than both regional and national averages<sup>8</sup>. This further strengthens Kidsgrove's ability to attract and host firms. Kidsgrove is also in position to benefit from Staffordshire's 5G demonstrator programme that aims to provide a blueprint for 5G in the UK and enable Staffordshire to grow to a £36bn economy<sup>9</sup>. As working from home becomes more prevalent, Kidsgrove's digital capability leaves the town perfectly poised to take advantage of increased home working whilst also offering excellent transport links and competitive house prices.



Entrance to the 1.6 mile long Harecastle tunnel on the Trent & Mersey Canal built by Thomas Telford in 1827.

<sup>7</sup> Census 2011 Location of usual residence and place of work (OA level)

<sup>8</sup> Think Broadband – 2019 UK Superfast and Fibre Coverage

<sup>9</sup> Staffordshire 5G demonstrator



## Challenges facing the town

### Urban Development

One of Kidsgrove's major weaknesses is the lack of a defined town centre. The town is bisected by the A50 Liverpool Road meaning it lacks a coherent retail and business core. Key public sector and community assets, such as the library, job centre and post office, are in separate, ageing buildings that restrict ease of access, particularly for the older<sup>10</sup> and vulnerable residents who typically rely on these services. In addition, while the station and canal are key local assets, stakeholder feedback highlights that these lack status and visibility due to the current configuration of the town centre and are widely considered to be run down and in need of modernisation.

Kidsgrove town centre has suffered from a historic lack of investment. As a result, some existing retail stock is dated and in need of renewal. Consultation feedback reported the town centre lacks vibrancy and an offer that encourages people to 'dwell' which impacts town centre footfall and levels of spending. This is exacerbated by the presence of two supermarkets located on the edge of town centre, neither of which are well connected to the remainder of the centre, which limits the potential for smaller operators to benefit from the footfall they generate.

Kidsgrove has also been impacted by the closure of its leisure centre in 2017, as a result of its deteriorating condition and increasing maintenance costs. This has left a prominent town asset in a state of disrepair whilst leaving a significant gap in the town's ability to meet the health and wellbeing needs of its residents. Kidsgrove records a higher proportion of children with excess weight in Reception Year and obese children in Year 6<sup>11</sup> and performs poorly compared to the England averages in terms of average life expectancy and the proportion of residents with limiting long term illnesses<sup>12</sup>. Closing the leisure centre has exacerbated this situation with community consultation identifying that 63% of the population no longer participate in sporting activities since the closure of Kidsgrove Sports Centre. Well documented links between poor health and wellbeing and the ability to secure or sustain employment and educational opportunities, as well as the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, justifies the health and wellbeing focus within this Town Investment Plan.



*Empty shops on the main road through Kidsgrove town centre highlight the need for investment.*

<sup>10</sup> 22.7% of the population in Kidsgrove are aged 65 or over, compared with 18.2% nationally

<sup>11</sup> Staffordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2019

<sup>12</sup> Source: Fingertips, Public Health England

## Skills & Enterprise Infrastructure

Despite a network of good performing schools and high-quality universities and FE colleges nearby, Kidsgrove currently has a significantly higher proportion of those without qualifications (32.5%) compared with the West Midlands (26.6%) and national averages (22.5%). This reflects relatively poor GCSE attainment and is exacerbated by poor physical access to the main local FE colleges. The English Indices of Multiple Deprivation highlight that areas within the Kidsgrove and Ravenscliffe and Talke and Butt Lane wards fall within the 10% most deprived in terms of Education, Skills and Training nationally<sup>13</sup>.



*The King's CE (A) School opened in 2015. It sits opposite Kidsgrove leisure centre. Its lack of quality outdoor sports facilities is being addressed by the Town Deal Advance Payment.*

This has implications for the town's productivity performance, as reflected in Borough-wide statistics which show Newcastle-under-Lyme as having a GVA per head of £16,588, significantly lower than West Midlands (£23,964) and England (£29,356) averages. It will be vital to address the relative dearth of high-level skills in the economy and ensure that educational attainment improves at all levels to turn around the town and Borough's productivity record.

While Kidsgrove and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough have registered low levels of unemployment in recent years, anecdotal evidence suggests that there are pockets of long-term and inter-generational unemployment within more deprived, former industrial communities. COVID-19 is likely to have a severe impact on Kidsgrove's labour market. 30% of Newcastle-under-Lyme's working age population was furloughed or accessed the Self-Employment Income Support Schemes (SEISS) as of June 2020, representing 16,600 of a total 55,200 eligible employments. Furthermore, the claimant count had risen from 2.0% in June 2019 to 4.8% in June 2020<sup>14</sup>. COVID-19 raises the prospect of scarring effects on the labour market, leading to the depreciation of skills and human capital, wage decline and increases in generational and long-term unemployment and underemployment, exacerbating the challenges the labour market was experiencing before the pandemic. These impacts also extend to happiness, health, and job satisfaction, sometimes experienced years after economic shocks such as that associated with COVID-19<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> MHCLG English Indices of Deprivation 2019

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Business/Coronavirus-COVID-19-support-for-businesses/Economic-Bulletin-Issue-1-July-2020-final.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/cepeo/2020/07/02/the-coming-storm-the-long-term-harm-that-unemployment-causes/>



## Connectivity

Whilst Kidsgrove benefits from good rail connectivity, access to and from the town by bus, car and active travel modes are all in need of improvement. Local bus provision is characterised by long journey times, poor timetabling, reliability and cost, a situation that has been further exacerbated by a contraction of commercial bus services<sup>16</sup>. North Staffordshire saw bus journeys reduce from 10.4 million in 2017/18 to 9.3 million in 2018/19. This comes against the backdrop of a 40% reduction in journeys over the past decade<sup>17</sup> reflecting the fact that just 5.0% of journeys to work were by bus in Kidsgrove<sup>18</sup>, compared with 8.1% across the West Midlands. Over three-quarters of journeys to work were made by private car, compared with the national average of 60.2%. A reliance on car journeys means Kidsgrove also suffers with traffic congestion. The A50, A5011 and A34 are significant sources of air pollutants affecting air quality. The A50 is particularly prone to congestion at peak times, resulting in it being designated as part of an Air Quality Management Area<sup>19</sup> in 2015 due to exceedance of NO<sub>2</sub> levels.



*A southbound train speeds across the canal in Kidsgrove.*

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/your-bus-service-being-cut-1731795>

<sup>17</sup> Travel Choices 2020

<sup>18</sup> ONS Census 2011 QS701EW - Method of travel to work

<sup>19</sup> 2019 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)





*JCB World Logistics Centre on Chatterley Valley - the innovative building has a BREEAM 'excellent' rating.*

## Key opportunities for the town

As outlined above, Kidsgrove faces a wide range of challenges and opportunities that can be addressed via Town Deal funding to unleash the town's potential as a destination of choice to invest, work, live and visit. The Town Investment Plan recognises the immediate challenges of COVID-19 for Kidsgrove and includes investment to support and create employment, exploit locational advantages as well as provide the basis for the long-term economic wellbeing of its residents.

### Employment and Economic growth

Chatterley Valley West is a strategic employment development site within the Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment Area. It sits in the A500 corridor, the location of an industrial and logistics cluster of activity. Chatterley Valley gives access to the M6 motorway, A50 trunk road and the West Coast Mainline via a live railhead. It comprises 38 hectares (94 acres) of employment land with outline planning consent for high quality B1, B2 & B8 uses. The site is part of the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone, six areas that will regenerate over 240 hectares of largely brownfield land over the next decade<sup>20</sup>.

Chatterley Valley West has the potential to bring a further 1,940 jobs and £72 million GVA per annum in the local area and therefore represents a significant economic growth opportunity for Kidsgrove, the wider sub-region and the Midlands Engine. Its importance is only reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic as the site could drive inward investment and secure jobs to spearhead Kidsgrove's economic recovery.

### Promoting enterprise

An independent property review, commissioned by Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council to inform this TIP, identified the industrial market as performing particularly strongly with robust interest recorded in recent years. It found:

- Deals of 10,000+ sqm demonstrate opportunities for businesses requiring larger stock with notable deals including 35,675 sqm of land sold to JCB Group;
- Kidsgrove has industrial estates with adjacent land that offer opportunities to accommodate further growth compared to the industrial estates along the A34.

The provision of new light industrial units at West Avenue has been identified as a priority through the development of this TIP to take advantage of opportunities to provide additional employment space within Kidsgrove and generate/safeguard employment at a time when the impact of COVID-19 is adversely affecting economic performance and livelihoods.

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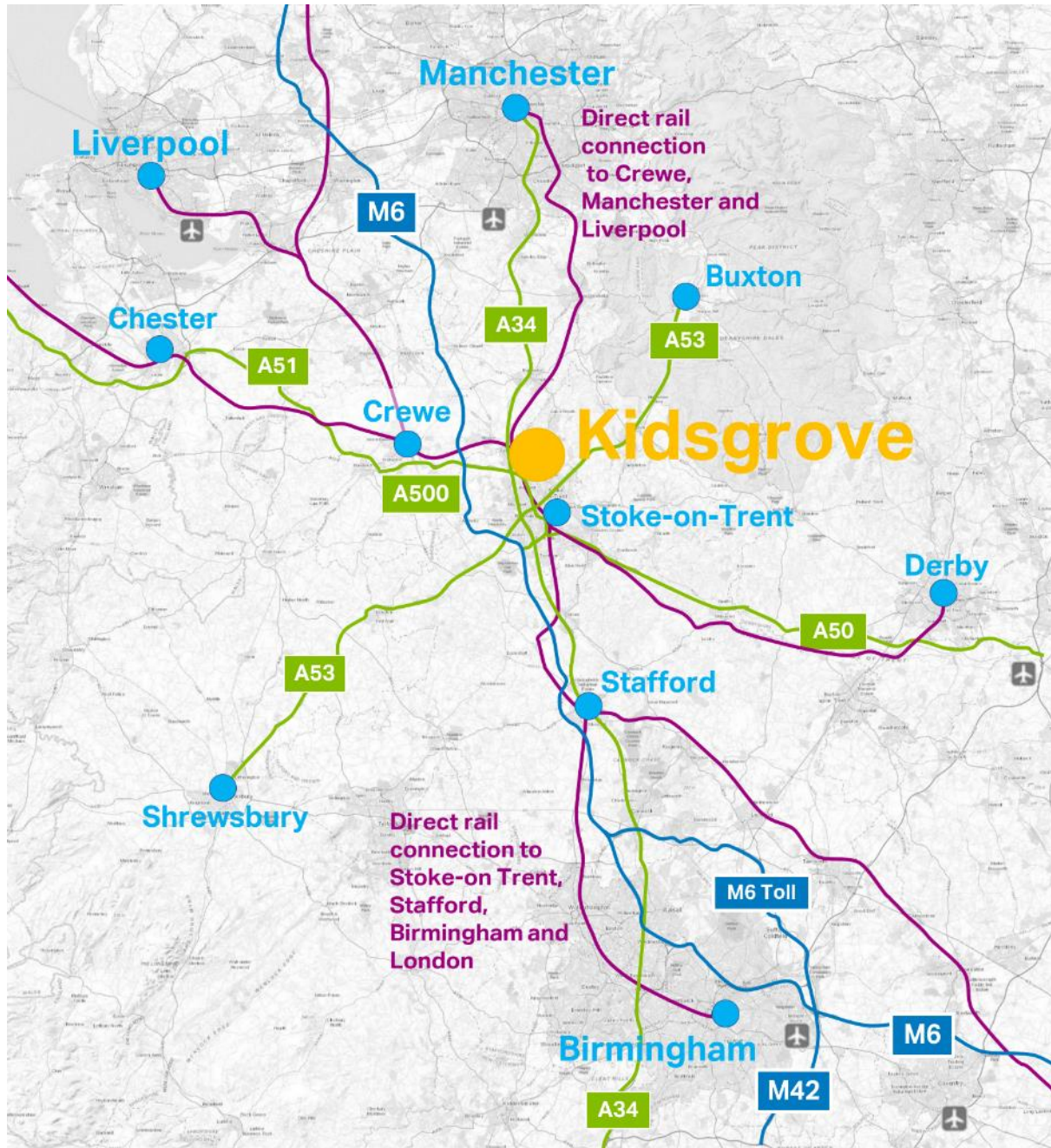
<sup>20</sup> <https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/news/ceramic-valley-already-attracting-significant-interest>



**Maximising connectivity**

*'Kidsgrove Station is in a poor state yet used by many commuters. The bridge feels unsafe and rotting away, and most of the station is inaccessible with barriers up. The ticket office and facilities are not good enough, and the carpark is full during the week. It could be a hugely successful station at a crossroads, but most trains pass through. Please invest in Kidsgrove Train Station for a better future for the town and nearby residents.'* - Kidsgrove resident

Figure 3. Kidsgrove's key transport links



Kidsgrove Station, and future linkages to HS2 services in particular, represents a key growth opportunity for the town. Crewe is a 15-minute rail journey from Kidsgrove with 34 trains travelling from Crewe to Kidsgrove on an average weekday. The Crewe HS2 Hub will see 18 trains per hour running to and from London by 2033, and an additional 12 trains per hour to and from Birmingham<sup>21</sup>. It will therefore transform Kidsgrove's rail connectivity and attractiveness as a place to live and invest. The redevelopment of Kidsgrove station has been a long-term priority with widespread local support. Network Rail's Access for All programme is currently funding an upgrade to the station's footbridge whilst plans are in place for a new 200 space car park and station interchange, coordinated and funded by East Midlands Rail and Staffordshire County Council. Town Deal funding will maximise the impact of these commitments by delivering a modern station and gateway to Kidsgrove town centre.



*Kidsgrove station - in need of investment to improve accessibility and user experience.*

### Creating a new Town Centre

*'Improve the town centre aesthetic and architecture. There are some good buildings to work with. Improvement should be achievable. There is a fantastic community culture within the town, and they deserve to benefit from an improved environment' - Kidsgrove resident.*

The opportunity to create a coherent town centre would transform Kidsgrove by providing a focal point for town centre activity and ensuring services are provided from modern and welcoming facilities. The Town Deal could lead to the first steps being taken in re-developing Kidsgrove Town Centre through land acquisition and the development of a shared service hub and improved residential offer. This would provide a spatial focus and development opportunity that could transform the town when combined with investment in Kidsgrove rail station. A significant part of the land required for assembly is in public ownership giving greater certainty, reducing risk and allowing a major step in the longer-term development of the town as a whole. Furthermore, consultation to date with relevant Local Government, Public Health, Housing and Government departments with an interest and land holding in Kidsgrove has identified strong support for the shared service hub concept and the wider redevelopment of the town centre.

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways\\_and\\_roads/roadworks/major-projects/hs2\\_in\\_cheshire\\_east/hs2\\_stations\\_and\\_trains.aspx](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways_and_roads/roadworks/major-projects/hs2_in_cheshire_east/hs2_stations_and_trains.aspx)



**Improving health and wellbeing**

*Kidsgrove is in need of sports and leisure facilities therefore I would like to see Kidsgrove swimming pool and leisure centre upgraded and reopened with particular focus on sports youth clubs and activities for the local young people who currently have no provisions here' – Kidsgrove resident*

The derelict Kidsgrove Sports Centre is owned by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and its local community delivery partner, Kidsgrove Sports Centre Community Group. Proposals have since been drawn up for the phasing of capital works to enable the dry and wet-side facilities at Kidsgrove Sports Centre to be brought back into use, overseen by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and thereafter operated by the Kidsgrove Sports Centre Community Group. This represents a major opportunity to address the health and wellbeing needs of Kidsgrove's residents and to secure a vital community, health and leisure hub within the town centre to further drive footfall. The project has received overwhelming support from the local community and is a key priority for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.



*The now derelict Kidsgrove Leisure Centre. Reopening the centre is the focus of overwhelming support from the community and has been accelerated by the Town Deal Advance Payment.*



*Kidsgrove Town Hall, one of several attractive heritage buildings in the town.*



## 4. Strategy

This strategy has been developed to build on Kidsgrove’s strengths, address its challenges and capture the opportunities identified. It centres on the need to capture the opportunities presented by the strategic employment site within the Town Deal Investment Area; to define the town centre and maximise the impact of Kidsgrove Station; and to enhance and broaden the leisure offer to improve health and wellbeing outcomes. This context has informed the vision and objectives for the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan developed by the Town Board.

Vision	
<p><i>“A dynamic and well-connected town via its rail station and access to and from the M6, which is strategically located on the border of the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine. Kidsgrove will capitalise on its location; strategic employment sites and heritage and leisure assets, including the canal network, to forge a reputation as an attractive, welcoming and successful town which is a desirable place to live and invest.”</i></p>	
Objectives	Cross Cutting Themes
<p>To drive growth and opportunity through enhanced enterprise infrastructure in Kidsgrove</p>	<p>Diversification and consolidation</p>
<p>To create a connected, accessible town centre which links key assets, retains the heritage and uniqueness of Kidsgrove, promotes active travel and diversifies and drives new demand and footfall</p>	<p>Clean and inclusive growth</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Collaboration</p>

### Vision

The Town Investment Plan’s vision is that, by 2030, Kidsgrove will be:

*“A dynamic and well-connected town via its rail station and access to and from the M6, which is strategically located on the border of the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine. Kidsgrove will capitalise on its location; strategic employment sites and heritage and leisure assets, including the canal network, to forge a reputation as an attractive, welcoming and successful town which is a desirable place to live and invest.”*

The vision reflects the importance of Kidsgrove’s strategic location, which has been key to the development of strong logistics and advanced manufacturing industries, with its proximity to and from the strategic road network and mainline station being key to driving inward investment and retaining residents to the town. Feedback received from local stakeholders outlined the importance of the town’s heritage assets, such as the Harecastle Tunnel and Trent and Mersey Canal, to Kidsgrove’s identity and sense of place, which should be celebrated and enhanced through the Town Deal. The historic lack of investment in the town is reflected in the need to regenerate the town centre, rail station and leisure centre to attract new residents, drive footfall, expenditure and secure a sustainable future for the town.

## Objectives and Cross Cutting Themes

The vision for Kidsgrove is underpinned by a set of three strategic objectives and cross-cutting themes.

### Objective 1: To drive growth and opportunity through enhanced enterprise infrastructure in Kidsgrove

Facilitating inward investment and promoting business growth relies on having an appropriate business environment in terms of the supply of sites and premises which provides sufficient capacity for growth, physical and digital infrastructure and an appropriately skilled workforce. This will be important for Kidsgrove to retain its competitiveness and continue to stimulate business activity and secure the jobs of the future. Improvements to the town's enterprise infrastructure will help to promote the town as a place for business, while supporting growth of its existing businesses and to build a more productive economy. This is particularly pressing considering the need to secure access to new opportunities and drive the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Objective 2: To create a connected, accessible town centre which links key assets, retains the heritage and uniqueness of Kidsgrove, promotes active travel and diversifies and drives new demand and footfall

Improving the flow and pedestrian connectivity between Kidsgrove's key assets, including the rail station, canal and the town centre, is a vital objective of the Town Investment Plan. It will ensure the station buildings and linkages to the station; public sector services; areas of public realm; and key pedestrian routes into the town areas are welcoming and attractive for town centre users by promoting footfall and usage. Enhancing the area around the station, pedestrian routes linking the town and redefining the town centre to consolidate service delivery and increase demand and footfall will be crucial in delivering the vision for Kidsgrove.

### 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

The need to enhance Kidsgrove's leisure offer is a significant community issue, reflected in a third of the #Mytown responses for Kidsgrove and the community's interest in taking ownership of, and running, Kidsgrove Sports Centre. Activities delivered under this objective will ensure that Kidsgrove Sports Centre, a vital local asset, is reopened. Town Deal monies will also be invested to ensure Kidsgrove's parks and playing facilities are vibrant, well maintained and provide a broad, accessible range of activities to meet the needs of Kidsgrove's residents across all ages.

Three cross-cutting themes will be critical in the successful delivery of the vision across all objectives. These are:

#### Diversification and consolidation

Improving the resilience of the town centre by bringing in new uses to capture activity, act as service hubs and to support economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic;

#### Clean and inclusive growth

Ensuring investments benefit Kidsgrove across all demographics, targeting places of need which will help to promote growth that is clean and equitable.

#### Collaboration

Continuing the partnerships between Kidsgrove Town Deal Board members, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and local stakeholders in identifying, developing and delivering projects. The vision

will not be delivered in isolation and requires ongoing collaboration between stakeholders to ensure opportunities in Kidsgrove are effectively identified, realised and embraced by the community, applying the knowledge and expertise of partners.





*The transformational plans for Kidsgrove will benefit future generations.*

## Prioritisation of Town Investment Plan Projects

The Kingsgrove Town Deal priorities have been identified via an extensive period of consultation and engagement. Project ideas that emerged from this process were scored using a prioritisation process that was tested and agreed by the Kingsgrove Town Deal Board. It scored long-listed projects based on a two-phase method using the following criteria:

- **Strategic fit** – Assessing a scheme's fit with the Town Deal objectives, namely:
  - Urban regeneration and land use;
  - Skills and enterprise infrastructure; and
  - Connectivity.
- Projects identified were also tested against economic development priorities within the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's Economic Development Strategy and the Stoke and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's (SSLEP) Local Industrial Strategy. Weighted scores were applied to each scheme based on their fit with both Town Deal and local policy priorities. The scoring was weighted towards the Town Deal intervention objectives whereas a project's fit with the local and SSLEP priorities were given an equal weighting meaning schemes with poor alignment to the Town Deal intervention framework were given a low priority.
- **Assurance** – Schemes were tested against the parameters of the Green Book and typical approaches to business case appraisal. A proportional approach was taken to testing scheme assurance as most of the schemes identified are at an early stage of development. A full 'assurance process' (e.g. undertaking a detailed assessment of scheme BCRs and a full options assessment) was not considered appropriate at this stage. Instead, schemes were tested against the following criteria in line with the principles of the Green Book:
  - Economic case
    - Is the scheme potentially transformational in its impact?
    - Would the scheme provide a positive economic return?
  - Financial case:
    - Is the scheme's Town Deal Funding request affordable?
    - Will the scheme leverage funding from non-Town Deal sources?
  - Commercial case:
    - Does the scheme demonstrate clear evidence of demand, need, or support?
    - Is the scheme viable and sustainable?
  - Management case:
    - Do the scheme's timescales fit with Town Deal funding?
    - Does the lead body have a track record of successfully delivering similar schemes?

The approach to prioritisation provided a scored and ranked list of projects. High priority projects were approved by the Town Deal Board for development work by dedicated project working groups. This resulted in some early projects being discounted due to uncertainties with, for instance, demand or short-term deliverability being identified. However, the prioritisation process also resulted in the identification of a sizeable project pipeline to take forward in Kingsgrove in the medium to long term. The priority projects to be taken forward are summarised below:



Project	Description	Town Deal Ask
<b>Objective 1: To drive growth and opportunity through enhanced enterprise infrastructure in Kidsgrove</b>		
<b>Chatterley Valley</b>	Chatterley Valley West represents the only strategic employment site in Kidsgrove and the wider Borough and is a priority for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council and SSLEP. The 38-hectare site, located within the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone and allocated to B1, B2 and B8 uses, could drive inward investment to Kidsgrove and generate 1,940 jobs and £72 million GVA per annum in the local area once developed. However, the development of the site is constrained by high upfront abnormal costs owing to the undulating profile of the site and ground conditions linked to the area's coal mining heritage, which has caused a significant viability gap for the developer, Harworth Group. In order to address this, Town Deal funding is required to deliver site access and associated water main diversions, as part of the project's Section 278 agreement, to de-risk the site and allow it to be brought forward.	£3.68m
<b>West Avenue light industrial units</b>	West Avenue is a 2.83-hectare site to be taken forward as a multiple unit scheme focused towards B2 and B8 uses. This has been developed in response to the lack of capacity in other sites, with a limited supply of appropriate units south of the A34 corridor; robust demand for B2 and B8 uses in the Kidsgrove town deal area and the lack of fit-for-purpose start-up and grow on space available locally. Furthermore, the associated plans to encourage industrial uses away from Kidsgrove town centre through the land assembly associated with the Shared Service Hub would provide capacity to rehouse town centre businesses and encourage the development of a more sustainable, attractive town centre.	£1.10m
<b>Objective 2: To create a connected, accessible town centre which links key assets, retains the heritage and uniqueness of Kidsgrove, promotes active travel and diversifies and drives new demand and footfall</b>		
<b>Kidsgrove Station</b>	Town Deal investment will deliver a new station building for Kidsgrove. It will include a new ticket office, back office facilities, toilets, retail space and communal areas. Town Deal investment will also contribute to a new multi-modal interchange, real-time bus passenger information, improved cycling and walking facilities, a dedicated drop-off and pick-up areas for taxis and buses and improved access to the Trent and Mersey Canal which runs adjacent to the rail station, as well as a new 200-space station car park to benefit station users.  The Town Deal investment will maximise the impact of ongoing investment from Network Rail's Access for All programme, which has allocated funding for a fully accessible footbridge to three platforms, remediation works to the four platforms due to historic coal mining. In addition, to enable passenger service vehicles to directly serve the Station, the road access bridge over the canal requires strengthening, with Network Rail having confirmed the delivery of these works.	£5.17m
<b>Canal enhancement</b>	In order to address years of underinvestment, a range of interventions are proposed to the canal to create a safe new, attractive canal corridor and an alternative off-road routeway to benefit both visitors and the residents of Kidsgrove. These include: an upgraded towpath and the installation of solar lighting; the provision of a continuous sealed surface suitable for all users; high quality areas of public realm; improvements to access points at key locations to improve safety and provide access for all; installation of orientation signage; and the realignment of the pathway at Harecastle Tunnel to provide better all year-round access.	£2.20m

<b>Shared Service Hub, land assembly &amp; Housing investment</b>	Kidsgrove town centre is currently “bisected” by the A50 Liverpool Road, resulting in the lack of a defined centre and impacting footfall within certain parts of the town. In order to address this challenge and redefine the town centre, the Shared Service Hub will bring together public sector assets – the library, job centre and post office and a range of health services – to provide a one stop shop from which residents can access these services which are currently dispersed across the town. The Shared Service Hub proposal will link to a satellite facility providing targeted youth services in response to an identified lack of existing facilities and high levels of antisocial behaviour in Kidsgrove. The land take for the Shared Service Hub will also be used to define a clear route to link Kidsgrove Station through to the town centre with this currently obscured by a number of low quality, older industrial and retail premises which blight the town centre and reduce footfall between the station and town centre. The proposal will be delivered through a partnership approach with Aspire (housing provider) to deliver new housing and provide a consolidated hub for services and community activity.	£8.29m
<b>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</b>		
<b>Kidsgrove Sports Centre</b>	Kidsgrove Sports Centre was mothballed in June 2017 as a result of its deteriorating condition and increasing maintenance costs and is now in a state of disrepair. This has not only resulted in a vacant building in a prominent town centre location but has left a significant gap in the town’s ability to meet the health and wellbeing needs of its residents. The project is for the refurbishment of Kidsgrove Sports Centre, to allow the re-opening of the dry and wet-side facilities to the public under community management, with proposed designs to satisfy user requirements and provide a 25-year life span for a key community asset. This presents the opportunity to secure a vital asset within Kidsgrove town centre to provide leisure opportunities to Kidsgrove residents.	£2.45m
<b>Kidsgrove Parks</b>	Clough Hall Park and Newchapel Recreation Ground are key recreational green spaces within Kidsgrove. Both parks have seen limited recent investment leaving them in need of modernisation. Investment in Clough Hall Park will upgrade the pavilion to facilitate community uses and greater use by sports teams such as the rugby club; enhanced security measures to address antisocial behaviour; and improvements to pitches, paths and tennis courts to encourage greater all-year round use of the park. In the case of Newchapel Recreation Ground, the proposed investment will introduce planting and wildflower meadows to bring year-round interest and increase biodiversity, play facilities, formal footpaths for improved connectivity and accessibility, seating and disabled parking to widen the audience and use.	£2.10m
<b>Total</b>		<b>£24.99m</b>



The Town Deal ask of £25m will result in a programme of investment totalling £165.6m within Kidsgrove. This stands to have a transformational impact on Kidsgrove and its residents and address years of underinvestment in the town.

Indicator	Output
Land redeveloped	51.3ha
Floorspace delivered	138,742m <sup>2</sup>
Jobs (Temporary - Construction)	1,494
GVA (Construction)	£66.3m
Jobs (FTE - Operation)	2,118
GVA per annum (Operation)	£79.7m

## Strategic Plan

The strategy to deliver the Town Investment Plan is based on a clear understanding of Kidsgrove's strengths, assets, challenges and opportunities. The ambition of the Town Investment Plan is to create the conditions for sustainable long-term economic growth and achieve the vision for Kidsgrove.

Below we set out the rationale and need for intervention under each objective, with key priorities over the short, medium and long term and programmes which will enable this to be achieved.

### Objective 1: To drive growth and opportunity through enhanced enterprise infrastructure in Kidsgrove

#### Rationale

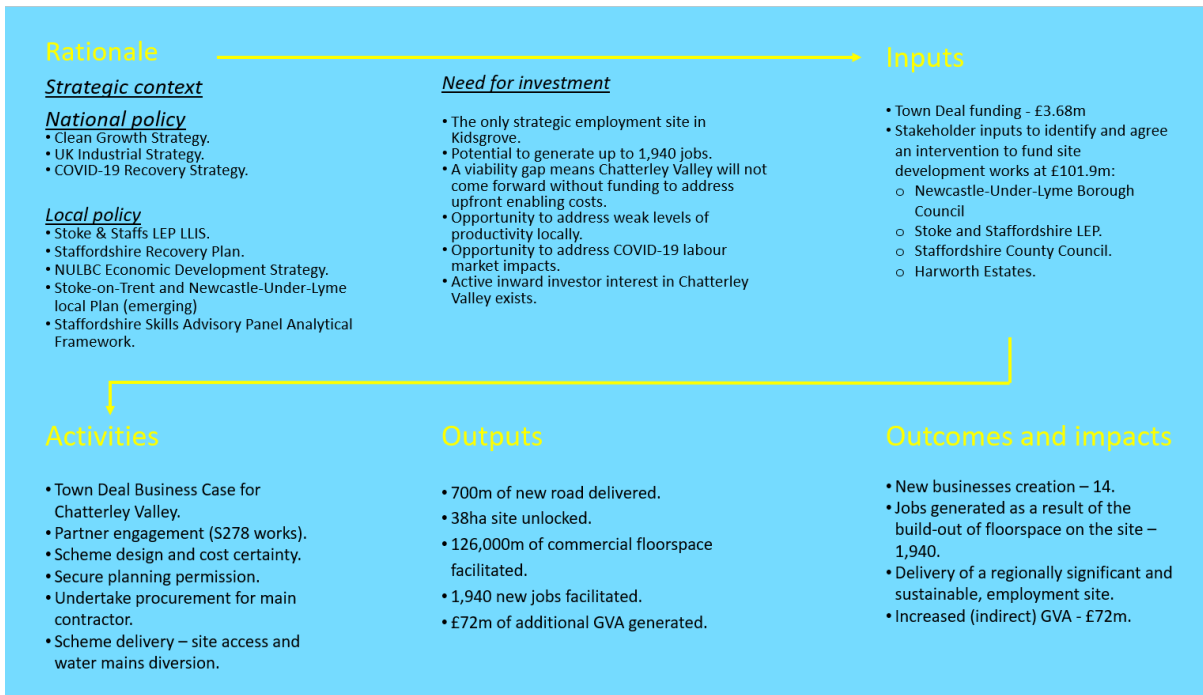
Kidsgrove has established a strength in the manufacturing and logistics industries, linked to the skills of its workforce and unrivalled connectivity. An independent review of Kidsgrove's industrial property market has indicated further growth potential such is the robustness of demand for large scale industrial space. Feedback also suggests a lack of appropriate start up and grow on space within the Town Deal boundary. As such, there is potential for further growth, investment and job creation within the industrial segment. This would support the findings of the Staffordshire Recovery Plan<sup>22</sup> which identifies the need for continued development of employment sites to support growth and investment within the county, particularly within the clean, digital, highly productive businesses that will generate future jobs growth.

#### Short term priorities

The key short-term priorities of the Town Investment Plan under this objective are outlined below. These interventions will build growth and resilience in the local economy, ensuring a suitable mix of sites and premises is ready and available to take advantage of future business investment opportunities, in particular the clean, digital, highly productive businesses that will provide the jobs of the future:

- **Chatterley Valley** – Site access and associated water main diversions for the 38-ha Chatterley Valley site, helping de-risk the development and address high upfront costs for the developer, and bring forward investment to deliver 1,940 jobs and £72m GVA to the local economy.

<sup>22</sup> Staffordshire County Council Our five-year strategy to respond to the COVID-19 crisis



- **West Avenue light industrial units** – Bring forward the West Ave scheme, a 2.83-hectare site to be taken forward as a multiple unit scheme focused towards B2 and B8 uses. This will capitalise on robust demand for these uses south of the A34 corridor and the lack of fit-for-purpose start-up and grow on space available locally.



**Medium to longer term priorities**

The following medium to long term aspirations are focused on the development at key sites in Kidsgrove town centre and the A34 corridor, capitalising on strategic location and attracting further investment. Priorities include:

- Mixed use development in proximity to the station and canal network;
- Secure high value, high growth businesses within Chatterley Valley to drive productivity improvements;
- Staffordshire 5G demonstrator.



**Objective 2: To create a connected, accessible town centre which links key assets, retains the heritage and uniqueness of Kidsgrove, promotes active travel and diversifies and drives new demand and footfall**

**Rationale**

The need to focus interventions within Kidsgrove town centre was clearly identified during consultation with local stakeholders. This is in recognition of the challenges facing the town centre in terms of its current configuration, with the lack of a defined centre and disconnect between key assets within the town. The focus on the town centre is also reflective of the opportunities available to Kidsgrove and the assets within the town that are currently underutilised. In particular Kidsgrove station, whilst seeing significant growth in station patronage, lacks status within the town centre, offers a poor sense of arrival due to the quality of the station buildings, has poor links via public or active modes to the town centre. In its current condition, the station lacks the infrastructure to realise growth opportunities offered by the Joint Local Plan and HS2. The Trent and Mersey Canal was identified as a unique, heritage asset which is perceived as an underperforming, underutilised asset by the local community, with the need for investment to reinvigorate the canal-side environment and promote active travel.

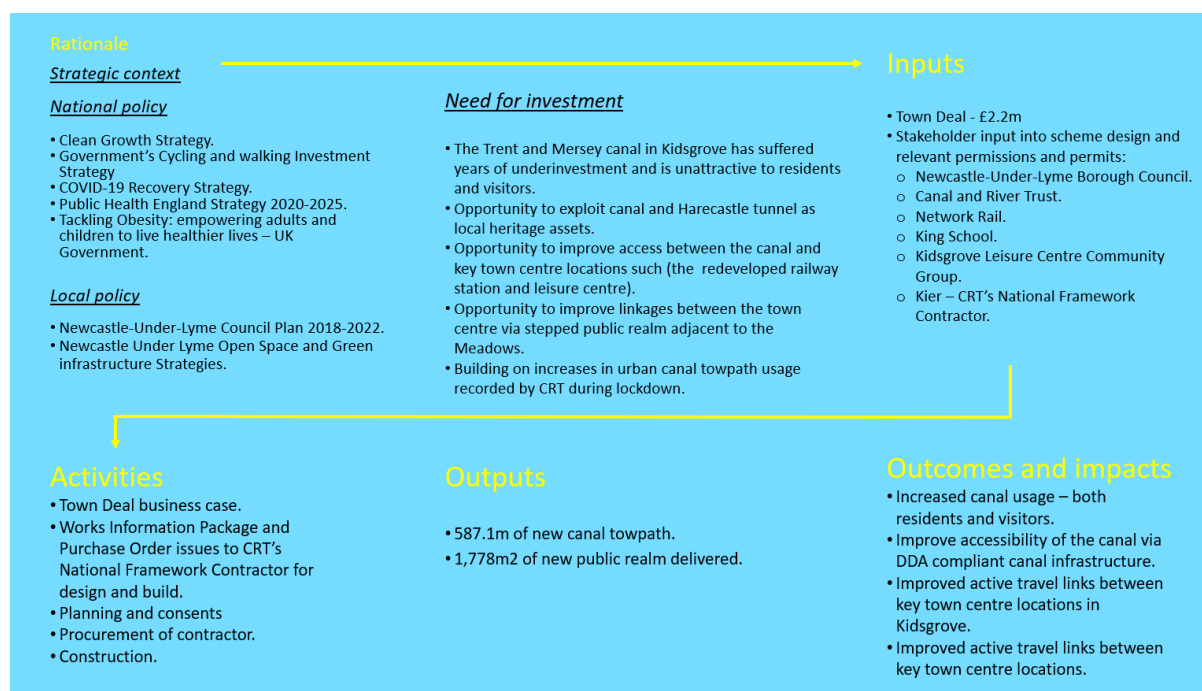
**Short term priorities**

The key short-term priorities of the Town Investment Plan under this objective are outlined below. They are designed to increase footfall and breathe new life into Kidsgrove town centre, building resilience and creating the conditions to unlock growth and future development. The short-term focus of the Town Investment Plan will deliver:

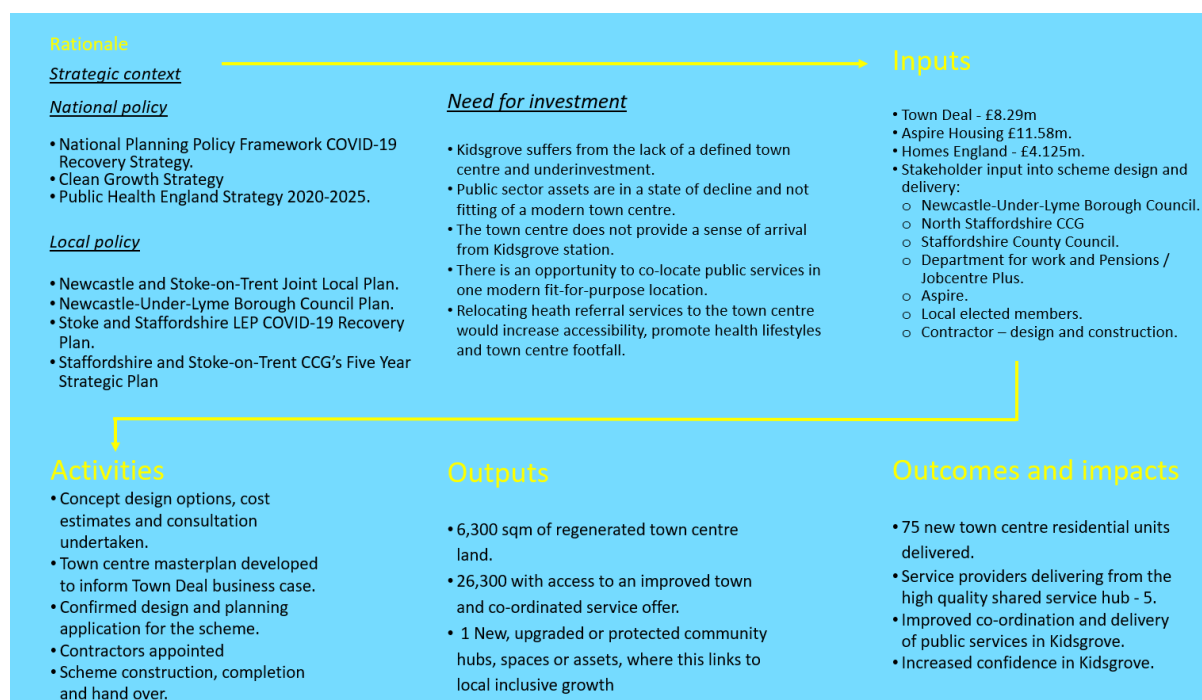
- **A new station and transport interchange for Kidsgrove** – Delivery of a new, modern station building, a new multi-modal interchange, and 200-space car park at Kidsgrove Station, with improved access to the Trent and Mersey Canal which runs adjacent to the rail station.



- **Investment along the Trent and Mersey Canal at Kidsgrove** – A safe, attractive canal corridor and an alternative off-road routeway to benefit both visitors and the residents of Kidsgrove with continuous sealed pathway, lighting and attractive public realm.



- **A town centre shared service hub** – The shared service hub will provide a modern facility that brings together key public sector assets – including a Health Hub, library and Job Centre – which are currently dispersed across the town centre in poor quality buildings. This will provide a one-stop-shop from which residents can access these services and will link to a satellite youth centre which will provide activities and services for young people such as careers advice and guidance. The land take for the Hub will also be used to define a clear route to link Kidsgrove Station through to the town centre with this currently obscured by a number of low-quality, older industrial and retail premises.





**Medium to longer term priorities**

The medium to longer term priorities are focused on opportunities to redevelop or repurpose vacant or underutilised town centre buildings and accommodate high-quality mixed-use developments, with areas in proximity to the station and high-quality canal corridor likely to drive demand. Priorities include:

- The redevelopment of vacant/underutilised town centre buildings such as Kidsgrove Town Hall;
- Supporting Aspire's investment strategy for Kidsgrove;
- 5G demonstrator; and
- Mixed use developments to accommodate residential and commercial uses in Kidsgrove town centre.

**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**

Kidsgrove residents of all ages suffer from poor health outcomes compared to national averages. This includes low average life expectancy at birth; high levels of limiting long term illnesses, hospital admissions and deaths from circulatory and respiratory diseases and cancer<sup>23</sup>. Poor health outcomes have been exacerbated by the closure of Kidsgrove Sports Centre, which was mothballed in 2017 due to the building's condition, leaving Kidsgrove without any formal leisure facilities. COVID-19 raises the potential for further impacts on both residents' mental and physical health and subsequently their ability to access employment. For instance, almost one in five adults (19.2%) was likely to be experiencing some form of depression during the coronavirus pandemic as of June 2020<sup>24</sup>. High quality, affordable, and accessible leisure facilities, combined with easily accessible support services, will help to reverse trends in health outcomes seen in Kidsgrove and promote healthy lifestyles within the community.

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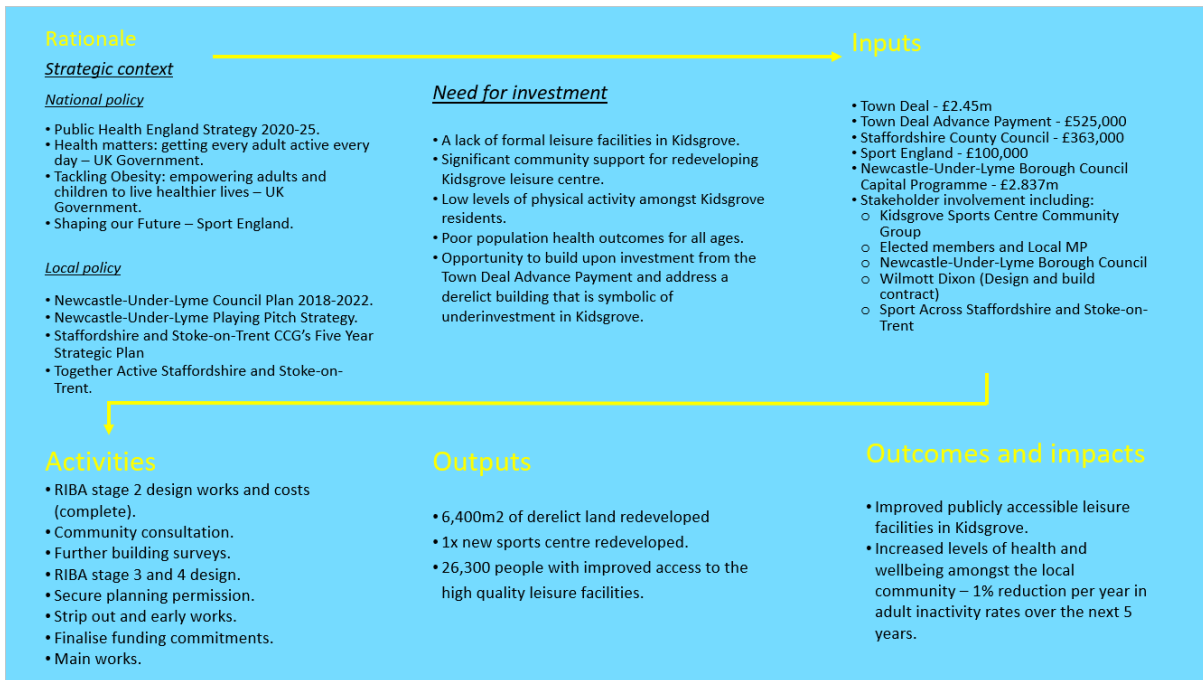
<sup>23</sup> Staffordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2019

<sup>24</sup> ONS Coronavirus and depression in adults, Great Britain: June 2020

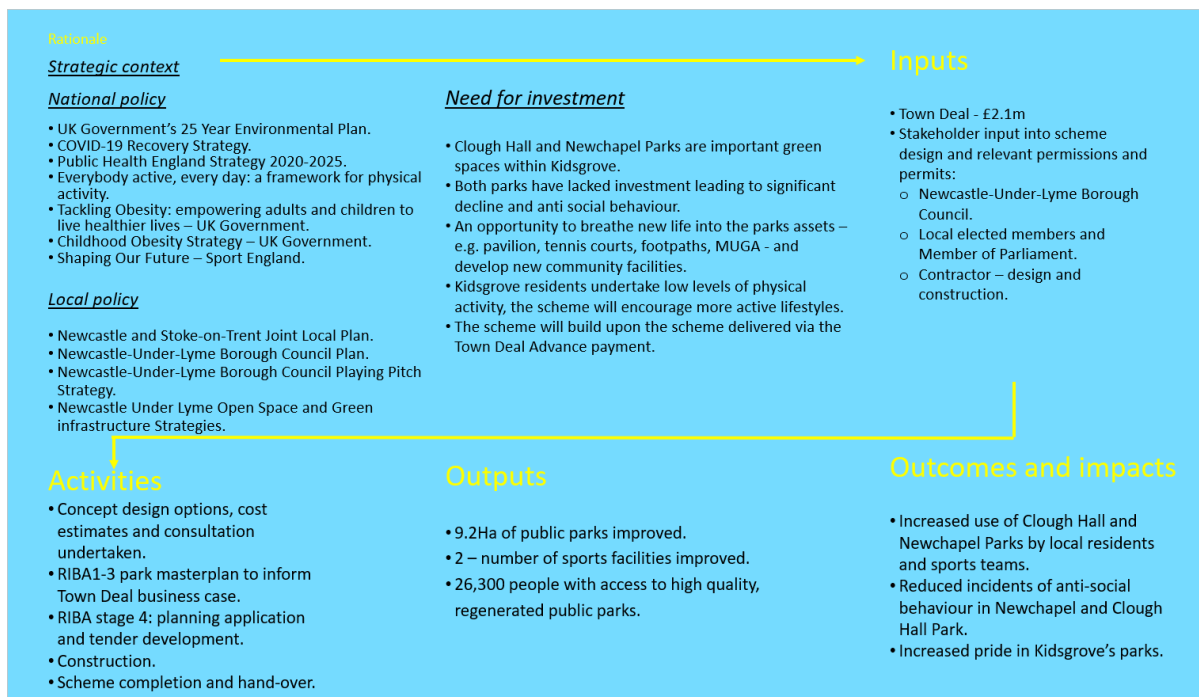
**Short term priorities**

The key short-term priorities of the Town Investment Plan under this objective are outlined below. These interventions will support improved access to sports and leisure opportunities, boosting participation, activity levels and health and wellbeing outcomes for Kidsgrove’s residents. The short-term priorities will build on the investment delivered through the Towns Fund Accelerated Funding and create conditions for further investment in Kidsgrove’s leisure assets:

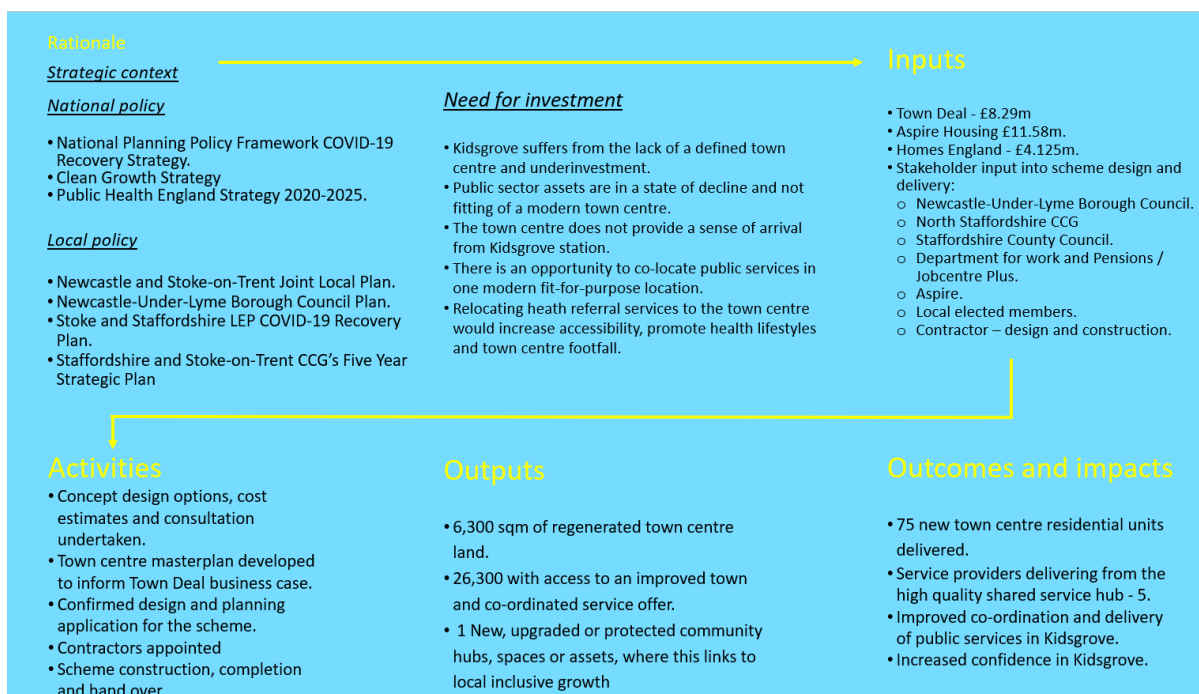
- **Investment in Kidsgrove leisure centre** – The refurbishment and re-opening of the dry and wet-side facilities at Kidsgrove Sports Centre, to be managed by the local community. Town Deal investment will address the community’s priorities; transform the town’s leisure facilities; and replace a symbol of under-investment in Kidsgrove with a modern and community-led facility.



- Upgrades to Kidsgrove's parks** – Improvements to Clough Hall Park, including refurbishment of the pavilion; enhanced security measures; improvements to drainage for both pitches and paths; and improvements to the tennis courts; and Newchapel Recreation Ground through the introduction of planting and wildflower meadows, play facilities, formal footpaths, seating and disabled parking to widen the audience and use.



- Delivery of a town centre 'Health Hub'** – Provided as part of the Shared Service Hub within the town centre to deliver a range of services and support including screening, disability support, mental health care services, physiotherapy and dispensing with links to existing GP delivery through referrals and link workers and to activities at the redeveloped Kidsgrove Sports Centre.





**Medium to long term priorities**

The medium to long term priorities for Kidsgrove focus on embedding a life-long activity habit in Kidsgrove's residents. This will be secured by investment in new assets and the refurbishment, modernisation and upkeep of existing facilities, supported by improvements to transport infrastructure to encourage active travel. Key priorities are:

- Further pedestrian and cycling network investments to promote active travel (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP)/ explore DfT's new £2bn walking and cycling package); and
- Improvements to playing pitches/sports facilities in line with NuLBC's Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy.

## Spatial strategy

The Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan has a strong spatial focus on channelling investment towards the town centre; strategic employment sites and key community leisure assets. This is based on a number of key factors outlined within this section, namely:

- The lack of a defined, accessible town centre and perceived falling footfall and vibrancy;
- The need to redevelop or upgrade key assets to deliver the aspirations of the local community and change perceptions of Kidsgrove as a place to live and invest; and
- The lack of an appropriate mix of commercial floorspace in suitable locations to drive employment growth and create opportunities for Kidsgrove's residents, businesses, and inward investors.

Focusing on these priorities will supercharge the regeneration and long-term economic sustainability of the overall Town Deal Investment Area, spreading prosperity across communities and driving the area's recovery from the impact of COVID-19.

The overview, presented below, provides the spatial context for the projects within the Town Deal Investment area.

Figure 4. TIP Spatial Overview

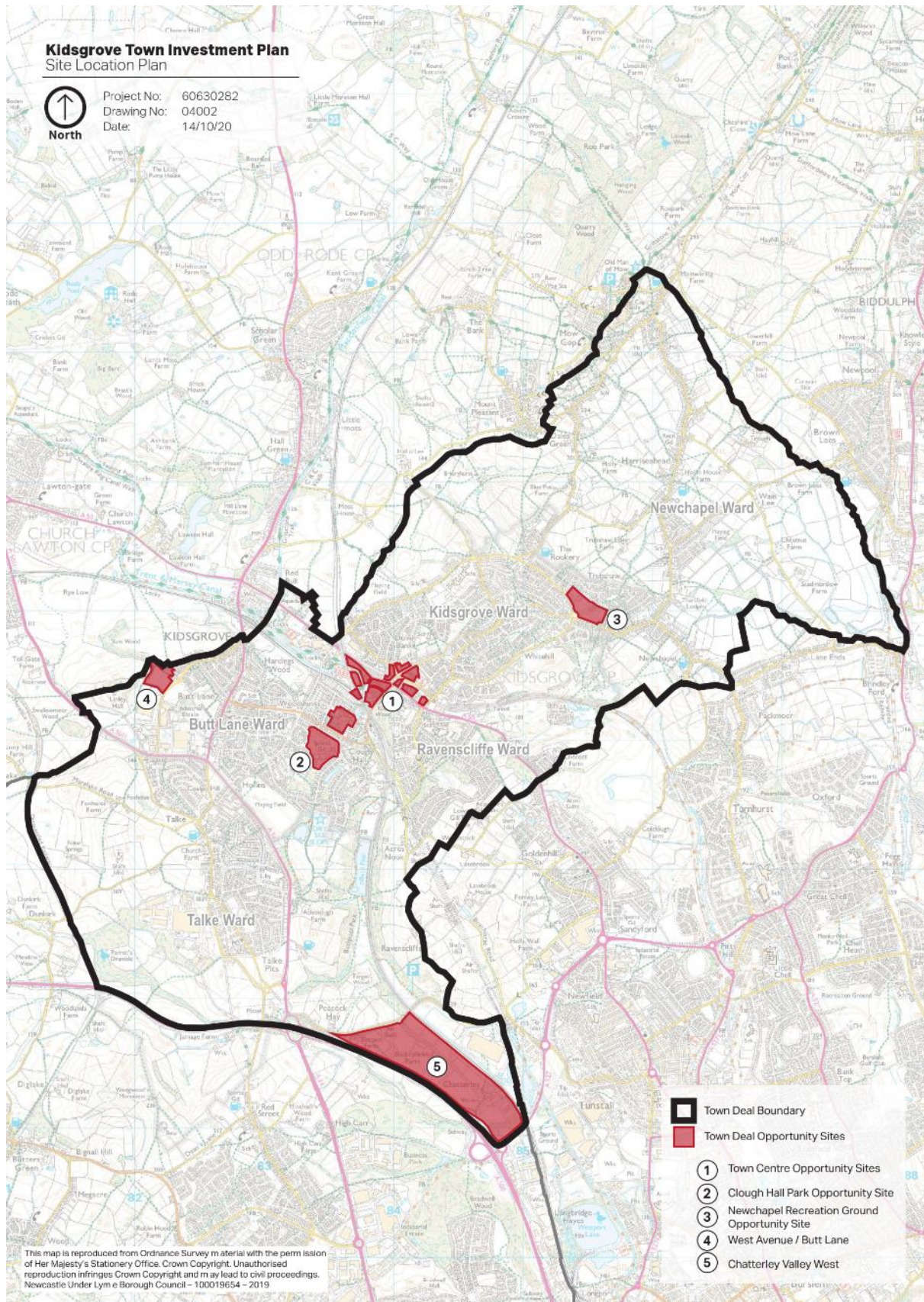
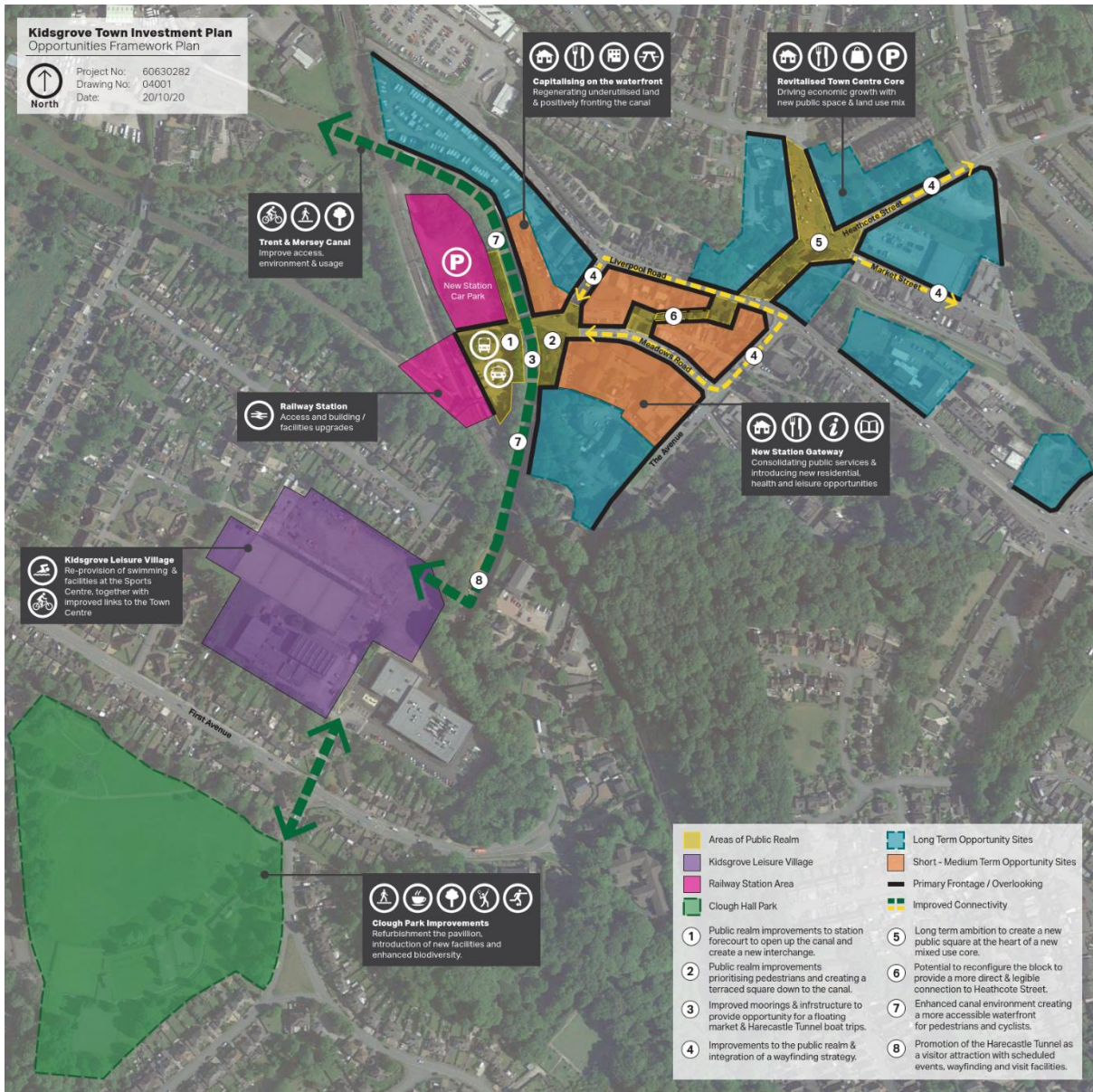




Figure 5. TIP Town Centre plan



## Mapping of aligned and complementary strategies, programmes and investments

The programme of investment put forward in the Kidsgrove TIP delivers against numerous UK Government policy priorities. The focus on upgraded enterprise infrastructure and transport accessibility will work towards “maintaining livelihoods and restoring the economy” in line with the COVID-19 Recovery Strategy, whilst also supporting economic growth and productivity improvements, key focuses of the UK Industrial Strategy. The reconfiguration proposed to Kidsgrove town centre and its key assets including the station and canal will support the delivery of Clean Growth and align with the Cutting Carbon White Paper alongside the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy through encouraging active travel and more sustainable modes. Moreover, improvements to parks and green spaces align with DEFRA’s 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment, while the re-opening of Kidsgrove Sports Centre will empower adults and children to live healthier lives, in line with government plans to reduce obesity.

**Table 1. Kidsgrove TIP Alignment with National Policy**

Intervention	COVID-19 Recovery Strategy	Clean Growth Strategy	Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy	Culture White Paper	Post 16 Skills Plan	A Green Future	UK Digital Strategy	UK Industrial Strategy
Kidsgrove Station Interchange								
Canal								
Shared Service Hub and older persons housing								
Chatterley Valley								
West Avenue Light industrial units								
Kidsgrove Sports Centre								
Health Hub								
Clough Hall Park								

At the local level the programme of investment delivers the priorities of SSLEP’s Local Industrial Strategy, particularly through its focus on Chatterley Valley and the West Avenue light industrial units. The focus on Kidsgrove Station and associated interventions within the town centre to support active travel and modal shift directly address the objectives of the Joint Local Plan (JLP), Local Transport Plan, NuLBC Air Quality Action Plan and Staffordshire County Council (SCC) Climate Change Strategy. The re-opening of Kidsgrove Sports Centre and renovation of Kidsgrove’s parks meets the objectives within the SCC Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Active Lifestyles Strategy. Furthermore, the Shared Service Hub and focus on Enterprise Infrastructure align neatly with the Staffordshire County Council’s five-year strategy to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

**Table 2. Kidsgrove TIP Alignment with Local Policy**

Intervention	Joint Local Plan	SCC Local Transport Plan	SSLEP Local Industrial Strategy	SSLEP Strategic Economic Plan	NuLBC Economic Development Strategy	SSLEP Skills Strategy	NuLBC Air Quality Action Plan	SCC Climate Change Strategy	SCC Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Active Lifestyles Strategy	SCC Recovery Strategy
Kidsgrove Station Interchange	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned
Canal	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned
Shared Service Hub and older persons housing	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned
Chatterley Valley	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned
West Avenue light industrial units	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned
Kidsgrove Sports Centre	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned
Clough Hall Park	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned



## Engagement and delivery

Local stakeholders have been at the heart of the development of the Kidsgrove TIP and will continue to drive the second stage of agreeing a Town Deal, which will include completing business cases based on the selected content of Town Investment Plans with government. Engagement has taken place via the diverse membership of the Kidsgrove Town Deal Board and by the approach to engagement adopted by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.

### The Kidsgrove Town Deal Board

The Kidsgrove Town Deal Board has guided the development of the Town Investment Plan, acting as the vehicle through which the vision and strategy for the town has been defined. Board members are listed in Figure 6. The Board is chaired by the Executive Director of Property at Aspire, a leading housing provider, property developer and local employer, and includes representatives from the private sector, local government, the Local Enterprise Partnership, the third sector, the Member of Parliament and other local organisations including North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Keele University and The King's CE School<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, with two TIPs being developed within the Borough – Newcastle-under-Lyme and Kidsgrove – there is co-membership across Boards which has facilitated collaboration and read across between the two areas to ensure complementarity and that the plans are more than the sum of their parts.

**Figure 6. Kidsgrove Town Deal Board members**

- Dan Gray (Chair) – Aspire Housing Group
- Cllr Simon Tagg (Vice Chair) – Leader, Newcastle-Under-Lyme BC
- Jonathan Gullis, MP for Stoke-on-Trent North
- Cllr Paul Waring, Kidsgrove Town Centre CIC
- Cllr Gill Burnett, Kidsgrove Sports Centre Community Group
- Cllr Phillip White, Staffordshire County Council.
- Cllr Kyle Robinson, Kidsgrove Town Council
- Ian Donaldson, Autonet Insurance
- Lisa Healings, VAST
- Paul Hodgkinson, Keele University
- Rob Leese, DWP
- Zoe Papiernik-Bloor, The Audience Agency
- Nicola Lewis Smith, Canal and River Trust
- Dr Emma Sutton, NHS
- Andrew Thompson, Kidsgrove Neighbourhood Plan
- Mark Parkinson, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP
- Emily Verow, The King's CE (A) School

### Consultation and engagement – plan development

Outside of monthly Board meetings, Board members and project stakeholders have also been tasked to develop the priority projects that were agreed to be taken forward within the TIP. These working groups were based on the three objectives of the TIP and were instrumental in developing the project detail, providing advice rooted in the local experience and constructively challenging proposals.

A range of wider stakeholder engagement activities have been undertaken to inform the TIP and ensure it is owned by the local community:

- 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.
- A "Vision Survey" was developed and distributed to Board members to inform the development of the vision for Kidsgrove. Eleven detailed responses were received. This feedback, along with the discussion at Board meetings, the #MyTown responses and conversations with individual stakeholders ensured the vision was representative of the views of the broad Kidsgrove community.
- Individual consultation sessions have been held with both Board members and members of the local community, to provide their views on Kidsgrove's key strengths, the challenges facing the town, opportunities for improvement and associated priorities and what they want the town to look like by 2030. 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.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/all-services/business/business-information/kidsgrove-town-deal>

- A commercial property market assessment was undertaken with feedback being sought from 22 local property agents and prominent landowners.
- All 63 property owners and businesses within the central area of Kidsgrove that is the focus of this TIP were formally contacted about the Town Fund opportunity and their investment priorities. One-to-one interviews were conducted with those who were willing to participate.
- A “Call for Projects” survey was distributed to allow residents, organisations and businesses to submit project or investment ideas that fit against three themes of the Town Deal Fund and could be included the Town Deal Investment Plans. This was distributed through various channels, including the social media profile of the local MP, community organisations such as VAST; the Town Council and Kidsgrove focused social media accounts. A total of 22 project ideas were submitted for the Kidsgrove TIP via this survey.
- Project working groups were also established for key stakeholders to shape priority projects such as Kidsgrove Leisure centre; Kidsgrove town centre; ‘Enterprise’ (Chatterley Valley and West Avenue); and Kidsgrove station. These groups built on previous engagement activity such as:
  - **Kidsgrove Sports Centre** – This has been subject to significant community engagement with consultations having reached over 4,000 respondents in total, which has informed the plans for refurbishment and operation of the Centre. The TIP is delivering the aspirations of the community that were identified by this previous consultation activity.
  - **Kidsgrove Rail Station** – The station has been a priority for the local community for many years. The successful Access for All funding application had 23 letters of support and a petition with 642 signatures while a consultation event hosted by the Kidsgrove Rail Station Regeneration Project saw over 150 attendees across members of the public, rail users and local businesses, with overwhelming support for the project which forms part of this TIP.

### Consultation and engagement – ongoing

Consultation and engagement have been central to the development of this TIP. The involvement of local stakeholders will be vital to develop the projects within the TIP. The following processes will be adopted to maintain buy-in and successfully deliver projects that receive Town Deal funding:

- The Kidsgrove Town Deal Board will continue to meet on regular basis to guide and provide oversight on all the projects that are shortlisted for Town Deal funding.
- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council will appoint a dedicated Project Manager and an Officer who will oversee the process.
- Working groups for priority projects have met regularly throughout the TIP development process. These groups will continue to meet during the business case and scheme development process.
- Drop-in and virtual consultation sessions will be held with residents, business and any interested stakeholders to collect feedback on high profile projects such as Kidsgrove Station and redeveloping Kidsgrove Town centre.
- Regular updates on key projects will be highlighted in the local press, via a quarterly Town Deal newsletter, and the Kidsgrove Town Deal pages of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council website.
- Finally, engagement and consultation will continue via Kidsgrove Neighbourhood Plan which is currently under development. The Plan shares the same timescales and themes of the TIP. The Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to extensive local public consultation and this will also be an opportunity to inform and promote the TIP initiatives and benefits to the wider public by creating links and narrative with the Neighbourhood Plan process over the period of the plan (which in most cases is 10 years).
- A stakeholder engagement plan is outlined below. This will be updated throughout the process of delivering Kidsgrove’s Town Deal projects.

Table 3. Stakeholder engagement plan

Stakeholder Groups	Project	Objective for Engagement	Type of Engagement	Frequency
Kidsgrove Town Deal Board – including local MPs and elected members.	All Kidsgrove Town Deal Projects awarded Heads of Terms by MHCLG.	To drive delivery; monitor progress; and make key decisions that direct the implementation of Kidsgrove's Town Investment Plan.	Zoom or face-to-face meetings.	Monthly
Kidsgrove residents, businesses and visitors.	All Kidsgrove Town Deal Projects awarded Heads of Terms by MHCLG.	<p>Enable residents, businesses and visitors to input and provide feedback on project plans and scheme designs. It will also enable Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council to communicate the benefits Town Deal investment will deliver and provide updates on project delivery.</p> <p>To mobilise local people in project delivery, for example Friends of Park; Social enterprise at the Railway Station; and Go Kidsgrove CIC.</p> <p>To catalyse local people as advocates for their local area and its future prospects.</p>	<p>Public engagement via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drop-in consultation sessions including engagement held in public spaces (e.g. on the canal, at Kidsgrove Railway Station, Kidsgrove's Parks and town centre) via events and outreach work.</li> <li>- Kidsgrove Town Deal website.</li> <li>- Press releases to local print media outlets.</li> <li>- Presence on social media platforms – Twitter and Facebook.</li> <li>- E-Newsletters – General and Business.</li> <li>- Information Leaflets / Brochures.</li> </ul> <p>The format of any consultation activity will be dependent on COVID-19 restrictions. A more detailed community engagement plan will therefore be developed upon award of Heads of Terms and updated regularly to reflect any changes to COVID-19 guidance.</p>	As and when required
Landowners, agents and investors	Chatterley Valley; West Avenue; Kidsgrove Town Centre and Shared Service Hub.	Identify potential investment and development opportunities in Kidsgrove; leverage private sector funding and maximise the potential of Town Deal funding.	<p>Engagement will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Targeted drop-in sessions.</li> <li>- Kidsgrove Town Deal website.</li> <li>- Formally writing to businesses if required.</li> <li>- Individual meetings where required.</li> <li>- Formal partnerships or legal agreements.</li> </ul>	Quarterly including on-going engagement as and when required.
Key public sector stakeholders – Staffordshire LEP; Staffordshire County Council; DWP; North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group; and Kidsgrove Town Council	Chatterley Valley; Kidsgrove Town centre and Shared Service Hub; Kidsgrove Leisure Centre; Kidsgrove Station; Parks Investment.	Informing scheme and business case development including shaping a project's technical requirements; reflecting service or facility user requirements; identifying appropriate links to complimentary investments and securing match funding.	<p>Engagement will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular and ad-hoc email and written correspondence.</li> <li>- Formal face-to-face or Zoom meetings as and when required.</li> <li>- Formal legal agreements to take forward scheme delivery.</li> </ul>	Ongoing.



<p>Project sponsors and user groups – Aspire; Kidsgrove Rail Station Group; Canal and River Trust; Kidsgrove Leisure Centre Community Group; Newchapel Residents Association.</p>	<p>Kidsgrove town Centre and Shared Service Hub; Kidsgrove Station; Canal Improvements; Kidsgrove Leisure Centre; Parks Investment;</p>	<p>These groups will inform project delivery by advising on design options and providing specialist, technical expertise to inform project delivery (e.g. operational rail industry expertise). They will also provide a means by which community or user engagement can take place.</p>	<p>Engagement will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formal engagement will take place via working groups that will be established to take forward any project awarded Heads of Terms.</li> <li>- Formal agreements to take forward scheme delivery.</li> <li>- Ad-hoc communication by email and telephone calls as required.</li> </ul>	<p>Monthly meetings</p>
<p>Rail and public transport users and representative groups (North Staffordshire Rail Partnership)</p>	<p>Kidsgrove Railway Station; Kidsgrove Town Centre and Shared Service Hub; Canal improvements</p>	<p>Raise awareness and gain feedback on the proposed investments in Kidsgrove.</p>	<p>Engagement will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular scheduled user group meetings to provide progress updates and consultation sessions to inform scheme design.</li> <li>- Regular email newsletters to inform of project progress and ensure engagement is maintained in between six monthly meetings.</li> </ul>	<p>Bi-Annual meeting.  Bi-annual email newsletter updates</p>

## Delivery Plan

The following table sets out the phased delivery of the Kidsgrove TIP:

**Table 4. Kidsgrove TIP Delivery Plan**

	Agree Heads of Terms with MHCLG	Business case development (inc optioneering)	Funding Release	Planning	Start construction	Completion
Chatterley Valley	December 2020	Jan – Dec 21	Jan 22	May – Nov 21	Mar 22	Jul 24
West Avenue light industrial units	December 2020	Jan – Dec 21	Jan 22	Jan – Jun 22	Jul 22	Apr 23
Kidsgrove Station	December 2020	Jan – Dec 21	Jan 22	Mar – May 22	Jan 23	Dec 24
Canal	December 2020	Jan – Dec 21	Jan 22	2024/25 <sup>26</sup>	2022/23	2025/26
Shared Service Hub	December 2020	Jan – Dec 21	Jan 22	Jan 22 - June 23	Jul 23	Oct 25
Kidsgrove Sports Centre	December 2020	N/A Shovel Ready Scheme	Jan 21	N/A	Jan 21	Nov 21
Kidsgrove Parks	December 2020	Jan – Dec 21	Jan 22	Jan – Jun 22	Sept 22	Apr 23

The proposed Towns Fund investment programme is deliverable in its entirety by 2025/26. The Delivery Plan and its associated milestones have been developed by stakeholders with a significant track record of project delivery and oversight, including Aspire, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council, the Canal and River Trust and Network Rail. Technical input has been provided by a range of specialists including AECOM's Economic Development; Master Planning; Transport; Cost Consultancy; and Landscape Architecture teams. This Plan also draws on expertise from Harworth Group/Cushman and Wakefield (Chatterley Valley), Kier (Trent and Mersey Canal), Network Rail and East Midlands Rail (Kidsgrove Station) and Willmott Dixon (Kidsgrove Sports Centre), therefore providing assurance as to its deliverability.

## Business case development

Business cases will be developed for Town Deal projects once Heads of Terms have been agreed. The Town Deal Board will oversee the development of business cases and subsequent delivery of the TIP, ensuring compliance with the Heads of Terms Agreement with government. During the business case development process, project owners will be required to report any progress, issues and delays to the Town Deal Board to ensure they are addressed in a timely manner, through the coordination of resources and engagement of additional stakeholders. Upon implementation of the projects, the Board will receive Progress Monitoring Reports and collation of information submitted by each project to record activity, achievement, financial draw down and outputs and to explain variation from expected profiles.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council will remain the Accountable Body for the implementation of the TIP. The Council will adopt a programme management approach to support the development of detailed business cases and subsequent delivery of the TIP, preparing and monitoring a comprehensive programme and delivery plan for the TIP priority projects; monitoring and evaluating project and overall programme progress and submitting periodic monitoring reports to the Towns Hub.

<sup>26</sup> Note overlap due to phasing of works. Planning not required for canal-side improvements to be delivered but is needed for the stepped public realm element of the scheme.

