

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S
REPORT TO**

Cabinet
13 January 2021

Report Title: Newcastle Town Deal

Submitted by: Executive Director Commercial Development and Economic Growth

Portfolios: Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: Crackley and Red Street, Bradwell, Holditch and Chesterton West, Wolstanton, May Bank, Cross Heath, Knutton, Silverdale, Thistleberry, Town, Clayton, Westlands, Keele, Westbury Park and Northwood

Purpose of the Report

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

Recommendation

That:

1. That Cabinet formally endorses the submission of the Newcastle Town Deal Investment Plan
2. That Officers are authorised to continue working with the Town Deal Board and other organisations as necessary to progress development and delivery of projects in the Newcastle Town Deal Investment Plan in readiness for submission to MHCLG and upon confirmation of the grant
3. That the multi-disciplinary officer group established to support delivery of the Advance Town Deal Projects continues this role to support delivery of the Newcastle Town Investment Plan
4. That the Executive Director Commercial Development and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder Corporate and Service Improvement. People and Partnerships are authorised to pursue delivery of the Newcastle Town Investment Plan.

Reasons

To enhance the economic, social and community wellbeing of the Newcastle Town Deal area. To deliver on the Newcastle 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 Newcastle.

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 Newcastle 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 and productivity sustainably 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.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 In line with guidance set out in the Towns Fund Prospectus, the Council established a Town Deal Board for the Newcastle 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 Newcastle Town Deal.
- 2.2 Development of the Town Investment Plan (TIP) was also supported by the appointed consultancy AECOM who were selected following a competitive procurement process.
- 2.3 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 Newcastle.
 - 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. Newcastle received 104 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 Newcastle, supplemented by #MyTown responses and conversations with individual stakeholders to ensure the vision was representative of the views of the broad Newcastle community.

2.4 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.

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

a. Objective 1: Digital –

- i. A Smart Newcastle – Digital Infrastructure. A mechanism designed to increase the number of businesses and households with connections to high speed digital networks and associated teaching / learning activities.

b. Objective 2: Transport –

- i. Sustainable public transport solutions Investment to improve and provide sustainable bus services in Newcastle-Under-Lyme
- ii. Town Centre Permeability Funding A package of measures designed to improve pedestrian and cycle access to Newcastle Town Centre
- iii. EV Charging Electric vehicle charging in town centre car parks

c. Objective 3: Development of Key Sites –

- i. Key Gateway sites
- ii. Development of sites contained in the Knutton Masterplan
- iii. Chesterton Cross Street development

d. Objective 4: Culture -

- i. Development of The Astley International Centre for Performing Arts

2.6 The Newcastle 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 representing a significant investment in the Newcastle town Deal area.

2.7 Following submission of the Newcastle 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 Summer 2021 onwards.

2.8 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 the grant monies and ensure the Council fulfils its obligations as accountable body for the Town Deal.

2.9 At this stage of development the Newcastle 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.

3. **Proposal**

- 3.1 That Cabinet formally endorses the Newcastle Town Deal Investment Plan.
- 3.2 That Officers are authorised to continue working with the Town Deal Board and other organisations as necessary to progress development and delivery of projects in the Newcastle Town Deal Investment Plan.
- 3.3 That the multi-disciplinary officer group established to support delivery of the Advance Town Deal Projects continues this role to support delivery of the Newcastle Town Investment Plan.
- 3.4 That the Executive Director Commercial Development and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder Corporate and Service Improvement. People and Partnerships are authorised to pursue delivery of the Newcastle Town Investment Plan.

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

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

5. **Options Considered**

- 5.1 The Council is not obliged to pursue delivery of the Newcastle 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 Newcastle 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 delivery arrangements for the Town Deal. This includes:
 - Upholding the Seven Principles of Public Life (The Nolan Principles);
 - Developing a delivery team, 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 or Public Sector Equalities Duties

- Helping develop detailed 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 Newcastle Town Investment Plan is intended to seek benefits for all residents of the Newcastle 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 Newcastle 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 202/21.

8.3 The Newcastle Town Investment Plan includes a revenue element of £1.2 million for project management/Board support and assurance and business case development. It is likely that the Council will need extra capacity in some form to fulfil its obligations as set out in 6.1 above.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 At this stage the critical risk would be that the Newcastle Town Investment Plan is not accepted by Government. The mitigation against this is that the Newcastle Town Investment Plan is fully compliant with the guidance received and has robust governance arrangements in place.

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

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

10.1 Clean and inclusive growth is a cross cutting theme of the Newcastle Town Investment Plan.

11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 This is a key decision as it requires the Council to administer funds to the value of £25 million

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 4 December 2019

12.2 September 2020

13. **List of Appendices**

N/A

14. **Background Papers**

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