

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S
REPORT TO**

Cabinet
16 July 2024

Report Title: Kidsgrove Shared Service Hub

Submitted by: Deputy Chief Executive

Portfolios: One Council, People and Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: Kidsgrove & Ravenscliffe

Purpose of the Report

To give an update on progress with development of the Town Deal funded Shared Service Hub in Kidsgrove as it relates to ground conditions at the preferred site.

Recommendation

That Cabinet:

- 1. Authorises the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Finance, Town Centres and Growth to apply for the relevant Coal Authority permit to enable ground investigations to proceed and to obtain such necessary insurances as are needed for the development to proceed.**
- 2. Authorises the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Finance, Town Centres and Growth to proceed with ground investigations and remediation at the preferred site.**

Reasons

- Delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan is a significant opportunity to attract Government funding to the Kidsgrove Town Deal area and support its economic, social and community wellbeing.
- To deliver on the Council Plan Objective A Town Centres for All as it relates to Kidsgrove Town Centre
- To improve access to services and facilities for the residents of Kidsgrove and surrounding areas.

1. Background

- 1.1** in September 2019 the Government invited 100 places to develop proposals for a Town Deal as a part of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund. Within the Borough both Newcastle and Kidsgrove were invited to participate in this valuable opportunity to drive significant investment into the borough. This report focuses on the Kidsgrove element of that work.
- 1.2** The Council worked with a Town Deal Board for Kidsgrove to establish robust and sustainable projects to deliver change to the area. These were submitted to Government October 2020 in a Town Investment Plan for Kidsgrove. In March 2021, Government confirmed that the Town Investment Plan had been successful and awarded the Kidsgrove

Town Deal Board £16.9 million. It was necessary then to develop the projects in more detail for delivery in the form of Business Cases for each project.

- 1.3 The Kidsgrove Shared Service Hub project fits within the Town Investment Plan 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. A Business Case has been developed and the project approved by Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities for delivery.
- 1.4 The purpose of the Shared Service Hub is to provide a one stop shop for local services, increase footfall by replacing an identified lack of existing facilities and provide a base for the community to deliver a range of community led services and groups. It will also create a new gateway into the town when accessed from the Railway Station or canal tow path.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 Kidsgrove Town Deal Board has previously considered a number of locations for the Shared Service hub which have either proved not suitable, have been considered to be too far out of town or it has not been possible to come to an acceptable deal with the current landowner. The current preferred site at Meadows Road is considered the only remaining option to take forward this project.
- 2.2 In developing proposals for the Shared Service Hub a Coal Mining Risk Assessment was completed on behalf of the Council. This identified the presence of historic coal works and coal seams in the local area. This study concluded that further intrusive ground investigations would be required to determine the required remediation to enable the development to proceed.
- 2.3 Planning consent for the Shared Service Hub development was obtained in January 2024, subject to a number of conditions. Condition (18) is:

No development shall commence until the following information has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority;

- I) a scheme of intrusive investigations has been carried out on site to establish the risks posed to the development by past coal mining activity, and;
- II) any remediation works and/or mitigation measures to address land instability arising from coal mining legacy, as may be necessary, have been implemented on site in full in order to ensure that the site is safe and stable for the development proposed.

The intrusive site investigations and remedial works shall be carried out in accordance with authoritative UK guidance.

- 2.4 In order to complete intrusive ground investigation work it is necessary for the Council to obtain a Coal Authority Permit to undertake such works. A permit is required where any works may interfere with coal mining property, including coal seams and former mine workings. Such works must be completed by a suitably qualified company and remediation undertaken in line with relevant technical guidance.
- 2.5 The terms and conditions of the Coal Authority Permit, which are non-negotiable, includes provision of an indemnity by the Council to the Coal Authority against any liability for any claims, losses or damages from any party arising because of any works carried out on the site (whether permitted, unauthorised, foreseen or otherwise) by the Council, its agent or

representative or its designers and or contractors. The indemnity lasts for a period of 12 years.

- 2.6 The Council's insurance brokers have been consulted on these requirements and are in the process of preparing a proposal that will meet the requirements of the Coal Authority Permit and ensure that the Council is adequately covered for ground investigations, remediation and construction works for the required 12-year period. This will enable the Council to proceed with the application process.

3. **Proposal**

3.1 That Cabinet;

Authorises the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Finance, Town Centres and Growth to apply for the relevant Coal Authority permit to enable ground investigations to proceed and to obtain such necessary insurances as are needed for the development to proceed.

Authorises the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Finance, Town Centres and Growth to proceed with ground investigations and remediation at the preferred site.

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

- 4.1 Delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan is a significant opportunity to attract Government funding to the Kidsgrove Town Deal area and support its economic, social and community wellbeing.
- 4.2 To deliver on the Council Plan Objective A Town Centres for All as it relates to Kidsgrove Town Centre.
- 4.3 To improve access to services and facilities for the residents of Kidsgrove and surrounding areas.

5. **Options Considered**

- 5.1 The projects presented in the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan have been agreed by both the Kidsgrove Town Deal Board and the Council as the priorities for Kidsgrove following consideration of other options.
- 5.2 Cabinet has previously considered the location of the shared service hub at its meeting of 18 July 2023 approving a recommendation from Kidsgrove Town Deal Board that the Meadows Road site was the preferred location.
- 5.3 Should the Council decide not to pursue the Meadows Road option then it would not be delivering on the agreed objectives of the Kidsgrove town Investment Plan and associated business case documents.
- 5.4 In the terms and conditions of the Coal Authority permit, in this instance the Council must be the permit holder for the works.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 The Council is required to be the permit holder of the Coal Authority Permit for these works.
- 6.2 The Council is required to have a suitable and adequate level of insurance cover under the terms of the Permit.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 The location of the Shared Service Hub is intended to be accessible for all local residents of Kidsgrove Town Centre.
- 7.2 The Shared Service Hub is intended to provide the opportunity to increase the range of services provided to residents of Kidsgrove and also provide opportunities for community groups to have a bookable space.
- 7.3 The building will be designed to be fully accessible to all and will comply with current building standard requirements.
- 7.4 An Equality Impact Assessment was submitted to Government as a part of the approval process for this project. This identified a positive impact due to the project providing improved accessibility to services and potentially that opportunity to access a wider range of services in the local area.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 8.1 The project requires expenditure of Kidsgrove Town Deal funding for which the Council is the accountable body. This expenditure is within the approved project funding for the shared service hub.
- 8.2 The estimated cost of the ground investigation works is £20,000 - £25,000.
- 8.3 The cost estimate for remediation works is dependent on the results of the investigation works and the agreed remediation strategy.
- 8.4 The Town Deal allocation for the Shared Service Hub element is £6,183,000 this encompasses the build of the Shared Service Hub and wider public realm works in Kidsgrove town centre.

9. **Major Risks**

- 9.1 The principal risks for the project as it relates to this element are as follows:
- 9.2 Unable to deliver Town Deal objectives – consequences are loss of investment for Kidsgrove and no improvement of facilities for local people. Control measures include project governance processes, project approval processes and the actions of the project subgroup in managing delivery of the project and associated risks and issues.
- 9.3 Unable to procure suitable insurance for the Coal Authority Permit. – consequences, unable to deliver the full scope of actions as set out in the Town Investment Plan, lesser outcome for the people of Kidsgrove. Control measures, use of experienced insurance

brokers with experience of dealing with Coal Authority permit issues. Suitable ground risk investigation and coal mining risk assessment have been undertaken to support this work.

- 9.4 Coal Authority Permit not granted – consequences are, a delay in project delivery, increased cost of delivery, unable to deliver the project as planned. Control measures – ground investigation report and coal authority risk assessment completed. Use of suitably qualified contractors for the ground investigation works. Submission of all relevant documents to the Coal Authority.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

10.1 Delivery of the Shared Service fits within sustainable development goals Specifically, Goal 11 Sustainable cities and communities, by consolidating services in an existing town centre to support both the provision of existing services and also the introduction of new services for local residents. Goal 10 reduced inequalities by providing opportunities for service delivery and community cohesion events in an area which has some areas of deprivation as measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. Goal 3 Good health and wellbeing. Supporting the mental and physical wellbeing of Kidsgrove residents by providing facilities for social and well-being activities alongside more formal delivery of services to the local community.



11. Key Decision Information

11.1 Whilst located in the Kidsgrove and Ravenscliffe Ward the Shared Service hub is intended to deliver services to residents from a wider catchment of the Kidsgrove Town Deal area.

12. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

12.1 1 Planning Committee January 2024, approval of development. [Agenda for Planning Committee on Thursday, 4th January, 2024, 7.00 pm | Modern.gov | Connexus](#)

12.2 Cabinet July 2023 concerning delivery of the shared service hub [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 18th July, 2023, 2.00 pm | Modern.gov | Connexus](#)

12.3 7 March 2021 Concerning acceptance of the £16.9 million Kidsgrove Town Deal award and progression of project delivery. <http://svmma/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=118&MId=3425>

- 12.4 3 November 2020 Concerning authorisation of the Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment Plan and progression of project development.
<http://svmma/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=118&MId=3421>
- 12.5 4 December 2019 concerning establishment of a Town Deal Board and development of the Town Investment Plan <http://svmma/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=118&MId=3412>

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 None

14. **Background Papers**

- 14.1 Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan <https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/kidsgrove-town-deal-3/kidsgrove-town-deal>
- 14.2 Business Case for the Shared Service Hub.
- 14.3 Planning decision [planning consent 23/00638/DEEM3 \(newcastle-staffs.gov.uk\)](http://planning.consent.23/00638/DEEM3)
- 14.4 Coal Authority permit process [What is a permit and how to get one? - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)