

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL



CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET

2nd September 2025

Report Title: Kidsgrove Town Deal Update and Contract Awards

Submitted by: Deputy Chief Executive

Portfolios: One Council, People & Partnerships, and Finance, Town Centres and Growth

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

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes ☒	No ☐
To seek approval from Cabinet to award contracts and grant agreements for the new Enterprise Units, the community learning facility on Kings Academy, Canal pathway improvements, the highway / public realm improvements to The Meadows, Station Road, Market Street, The Avenue, Heathcote Street and Kings Street, and Station improvement works as part of the Kidsgrove Town Deal projects.			
<u>Recommendation</u> That Cabinet: 1. Notes the progress made with the schemes in Kidsgrove as part of the Kidsgrove Town Deal. 2. Approves the alternative schemes following the Shared Services Hub project revisions. 3. Approves that the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, and Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships, progresses legal agreements to enable continued delivery of projects. 4. Notes the progress made with the delivery of the Kidsgrove Station works and agrees that a further report will be presented as soon as practicable outlining the scheme and the budget.			
<u>Reasons</u> To seek approval from Cabinet to award contracts and enter into funding agreements for the community learning hub on the Kings Academy site, new small-scale enterprise units on the Meadows, canal pathway and access improvements, and, highway improvements earmarked from the original consultation at The Meadows / Station Road, and Market St / The Avenue / Heathcote St, along with public realm improvements by Kings Street parade, as agreed by the Kidsgrove Town Deal Board in May 2025, and to note progress made on the Kidsgrove Train Station project with a view to entering into a funding agreement with East Midlands Railway in order that works can commence as soon as possible.			

1. **Background**

- 1.1 As reported to previous Cabinet meetings, the Council has secured Town Deal Funds for the redevelopment of several key regeneration sites across Kidsgrove Town Centre and its wider area as defined in the Kidsgrove Town Deal area.
- 1.2 At its meeting in May 2025, The Kidsgrove Town Deal Board agreed revisions to the Shared Services Hub project and now the Council will be progressing these alternative schemes on the Boards behalf.
- 1.3 The most recent Kidsgrove Town Deal Board, held in July 2025, agreed a revised scheme to the Kidsgrove Train Station and a funding agreement will now be signed in order that the scheme can progress to construction on site.

2. **Updates**

2.1 **Shared Service Hub Alternative Schemes**

At the Kidsgrove Town Deal Board meeting held on the 29th May 2025 it was agreed that the Shared Services Hub would be replaced with the following alternative schemes.

2.2 **Community Learning Hub**

This new facility will be provided on the Kings Academy site as a learning resource for the wider community. The hub will provide adult learning opportunities and will see the relocation of the Academy's catering hub. It will link to a satellite facility providing targeted youth services in response to an identified lack of existing facilities and higher levels of antisocial behaviour in Kidsgrove.

The Town Deal budget for the facility is £1.5m and the Academy is currently finalising design and costs for the submission of the Project Adjustment Form to MHCLG subject to Town Deal Board approval, with completion by March 2027.

A grant agreement will be developed and signed by the Kings Academy to undertake the work.

2.3 **Enterprise Units on The Meadows**

The scheme proposed is that the existing car park on Meadows Road is reconfigured to create approximately 20 parking spaces. Three of these will be reserved for the users of the small business units. The business units will comprise 29 sqm / 312 sq. ft of active floor space and staff kitchen and toilet facilities.

The identified budget for the facility is £1.5m, and the Council is currently finalising design and costs for the submission of the Project Adjustment Form to MHCLG subject to Town Deal Board approval, with completion programmed for March 2027.

The Council will undertake these works directly and will undertake a procurement exercise to secure a contractor to construct these works.

2.4 **Canal Pathway Improvements**

Thanks to efficiencies in project delivery by the Canal and River Trust an additional area, which connects the canal towpath to the Avenue was included in the canal connectivity project. These works by the Canal and River Trust have now been

completed. The remaining element that was agreed by the Kidsgrove Town Deal Board as part of the reallocation of funds from the Shared Service Hub is to enable improvements to a Public Right of Way on a path connecting the canal towpath with a nearby residential area. Subject to confirmation by Staffordshire County Council, as this is a Public Right of Way they will be able to deliver this work. Subject to this confirmation, an agreement will be developed with Staffordshire County Council to undertake the work.

2.5 Highway improvements at The Meadows / Station Road, and Market St. / The Avenue / Heathcote St.

As previously reported to Cabinet, the schemes now consist of complete resurfacing Meadows Road / Station Road, introducing a one-way traffic system from the A50 towards the Avenue, and the introduction of uncontrolled crossing points and associated updating of kerbs, signage and road layouts.

Market Street will see the introduction of a one-way section from the Home Bargains pedestrian ramp to the junction with Heathcote Street along with a short section of time limited parking. Vine Bank Road will see the installation of speed bumps.

Improvements to the cycle and pedestrian route from Mount Road, through to Tesco will encourage a shift to more sustainable travel for short local journeys.

The budget for the facility is £1m and Staffordshire County Council is currently finalising design and costs and undertaking the required consultation. As this is part of the previously approved scheme it is continuing as previously agreed for the submission of the Project Adjustment Form to MHCLG subject to Town Deal Board approval, with completion by March 2027.

A grant agreement will be developed with Staffordshire County Council to undertake the work.

2.6 Public realm improvements to Kings Street Parade

An uplift of the public realm outside the parade of shops on Kings Street will be undertaken and improvements made to the adjacent car park at Kings Street / Heathcote Street. This will complement the one-way proposals in Market Street. The public toilets at Heathcote Street will also be refurbished.

The budget for the public realm improvements is £1.8m and the Council is currently finalising design and costs for the submission of the Project Adjustment Form to MHCLG subject to Town Deal Board approval, with completion by March 2027.

The Council will undertake these works directly and will undertake a procurement exercise to secure a contractor to construct these works.

2.7 Kidsgrove Railway Station works

As previously noted by Cabinet, there has been an issue with the costs of underpinning the car park due to subterranean mine works. EMR have submitted options to the Kidsgrove Town Deal in July 2025 who have selected a reduced in scope scheme which ensures all works are undertaken outside the 'remediation zone' (an area of the station complex that Network Rail insist needs ground remediation) thus avoiding costly ground remediation costs.

The revised scope, whilst not as ambitious as originally anticipated, will include a full refurbishment to the existing station building including a full recladding with new

windows and doors, internal updates to the toilet facilities, interior upgrades and the provision of a cycle store. The on platform waiting room will also be refurbished in a similar manner.



There will also be minor improvements to the external areas / parking areas / access points and landscaping that sit outside the remediation zone.

These works will address the stakeholder feedback at the time the Town Deal Investment Plan was established and agreed with Government and the Town Deal Board in that the station will be upgraded to a more modern facility which will attract more users of the station and the service, whilst acknowledging the fact that the works have been reduced in scope due to the complex ground conditions with the requisite cost implications.

The budget for the works is £3.85m and the costs of the of scope / scheme is now £3.35m (including risk and optimism bias allowances – normal for these type of infrastructure projects). The scheme is being worked up and approvals from MHCLG and Network Rail are being sought by EMR to mitigate risks to ensure the delivery of the scheme. A further report will be presented to Cabinet for approval to enter in agreements / contracts for the delivery of the scheme as soon as possible.

3. Next steps

- 3.1** Subject to Cabinet approval, the Council will implement funding agreements with East Midlands Railway, The Kings Academy, the Canal and River Trust and Staffordshire County Council for the works under their control (see above) and will procure a contractor for the Enterprise Units and public realm works at Kings Street. The progress of these schemes will continue to be reported to the Council, the Kidsgrove Town Deal Board and MHCLG as required.

The proposed timescale for activities is:

- Community Hub at The Kings Academy – completion by March 2027.
- Enterprise Units at The Meadows – completion by late 2026.
- Canal path improvement works – complete in 2025.
- Highway improvements at The Meadows / Station Road, and Market St. / The Avenue / Heathcote St. – completion by mid-2026.
- Public realm improvements to Kings Street Parade – Mid 2026
- Station refurbishment works – mid/late 2027

5. Recommendation

That Cabinet:

1. Notes the progress made with the schemes in Kidsgrove as part of the Kidsgrove Town Deal.
2. Approves the alternative schemes as a result of the Shared Services Hub project revisions.
3. Approves that the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, and Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships, progresses legal agreements to enable continued delivery of projects.

4. Notes the progress made with the delivery of the Kidsgrove Station works and agrees that a further report will be presented as soon as practicable outlining the scheme and the budget.



6. Reasons

- 6.1 The Council as accountable body for the Town Deal Funds it is important to receive updates on progress and risks, which are provided through the update reports to the Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee.

7. Options Considered

- 7.1 Not applicable

8. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 8.1 The Local Government Act 2000 - powers to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Borough.
- 8.2 The Council will need to make sure that its commercial activities are legally and state aid compliant, including having regard to the Public Sector Duty within the Equality Act 2010, statutory guidance on local authority investments and The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- 8.3 All commercial projects and investment opportunities will be examined to ensure that they are within the Council's powers and legal implications will be identified on a case-by-case basis.

9. Equality Impact Assessment

- 9.1 The development of these projects does not create any specific equality impacts.

10. Financial and Resource Implications

- 10.1 There are financial implications on the Council for these externally funded projects. If the projects do not go ahead the grants could either be re-profiled into other project or new projects, with the ultimate sanction of returning the allocations back to MHCLG.

11. Major Risks & Mitigation

- 11.1 There are risks associated with wider projects including securing planning permissions for the enterprise units, the Kings Academy facility and the public realm improvements as well as risk associated with the build out / implementation of these schemes. As with all other Town Deal schemes, individual risk assessments / registers will be provided for each scheme.

12. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)



13. **One Council**

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council

We will make investment to diversify our income and think entrepreneurially.

- The new Enterprise Units will provide an income stream for the Council.

One Digital Council

We will develop and implement a digital approach which makes it easy for all residents and businesses to engage with the Council, with our customers at the heart of every interaction.

One Sustainable Council

We will deliver on our commitments to a net zero future and make all decisions with sustainability as a driving principle.

- The works undertaken will seek to be carbon neutral.

14. **Key Decision Information**

14.1 This is a key decision due to the value of funding being granted to the Council and its multi-ward impact.

15. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

- a. Cabinet Report June 2025 – Town Deal Update
- b. Cabinet Report March 2021 – Town Deal Update
- c. Cabinet Report March 2016 – Chatterley Valley
- d. Cabinet Report January 2022 – Chatterley Valley
- e. Cabinet Reports related to Kidsgrove Sports Centre
 - Cabinet 12 October 2022
 - Cabinet 9 June 2021
 - Cabinet 17 March 2021
 - Cabinet 9 September 2020
 - Cabinet 22 April 2020
 - Cabinet 18 March 2020
 - Cabinet 15 January 2020
 - Cabinet 6 November 2019
 - Cabinet 16 October 2019

16. List of Appendices

16.1 None

17. Background Papers

17.1 None