

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7

NUNEATON TOWN DEAL BOARD

Date: 13th November 2020
From: Director – Regeneration & Housing
Subject: Stakeholder Engagement Plan

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Board a proposed Stakeholder Engagement Plan, a key requirement for the Town Investment Plan (TIP).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Board endorse the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That Board endorse the allocation of a further £10,000 from the Capacity Funding to continue the My Town Nuneaton website and provide additional capacity to undertake the continuing engagement.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 The Towns Fund guidance is clear that interventions supported through the Towns Fund should have the support of the community. To reflect this, the level and quality of community engagement will be a key factor when assessing and agreeing Town Deals. The Town Investment Plan must include a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, outlining the approach to be taken in relation to stakeholder/community engagement.
- 3.2 The SEP aims to build upon the engagement approach already undertaken with the support of Advent Communications.

4. Key Points

- 4.1 It is important that the level and mechanism of engagement is tailored for each project. This will ensure an appropriate approach, maximising the ability to build and maintain interest throughout the lifetime of the TIP. Each Project Lead will be responsible for the formulation of a project specific engagement plan, taking account of the engagement audience and the rationale for the project to establish objectives for the engagement.
- 4.2 Given that there are likely to be multiple projects included within the TIP, and given the potential for the need for engagement across a number of projects and other initiatives such as the Transforming Nuneaton Programme and the Future High Streets Fund, that will all involve the same stakeholder groups, it is critical that a co-ordinated process be put in place and minimise engagement fatigue. It is therefore

proposed that a Stakeholder Engagement Team (SET) be established, comprising of members of;

- NBBC Community Development Team
- NBBC & WCC Communications Teams
- Third Sector partner
- External consultancy support

4.3 The SET will be responsible for;

- The collation of the project specific engagement plans;
- Identification of cross cutting engagement to minimise engagement fatigue;
- Critically reviewing the proposed engagement approach and mechanisms
- Providing support to the Project Lead to deliver the engagement

4.4 To ensure that the My Town Nuneaton branding continues, and to provide additional external capacity for the critical engagement process, Board are requested to allocate a further £10,000 from the capacity funding.

4.5 Monitoring and evaluation are key components of programme management. Evaluation measures will be identified by each project lead, relevant to their project. These measures will be SMART and will relevant to the engagement objectives set out for their project. The SET will monitor and review progress, report regularly report to the Programme Board and the Town Deal Board, and suggest adjustments of approach as necessary, based on that monitoring and evaluation.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Appropriate and successful stakeholder engagement is a critical success factor for the delivery of the TIP. This SEP sets out the proposed approach for those projects that successfully reach Heads of Terms. It is anticipated that the SEP will require a further review once those projects have been identified.

Nuneaton Towns Fund

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

1. Introduction

Announced in November 2019, the Towns Fund is a £3.6bn Government initiative, aimed at increasing economic growth, with a focus on regeneration, improved transport, better broadband connectivity, skills and culture. Nuneaton was one of the 101 towns invited to develop proposals to receive up to £25m funding.

Each Town must establish a Town Deal Board. For Nuneaton, the Board has 16 members and is made up of business and community representatives, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) Councillors, Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Councillors and representatives from the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP), Third Sector partners and the health sector.

The Board is responsible for drawing up a Town Investment Plan (TIP). The Plan must set out a clear understanding of the Town's challenges, strengths, assets and opportunities, and identify those key investment priorities, aimed addressing those challenges and building on opportunities in order to drive sustainable economic recovery and growth, particularly in response to the current Covid-19 pandemic.

The Towns Fund guidance is clear that interventions supported through the Towns Fund should have the support of the community. To reflect this, the level and quality of community engagement will be a key factor when assessing and agreeing Town Deals. The Town Investment Plan must include a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, outlining the approach to be taken in relation to stakeholder/community engagement.

Our strategy will be to engage a wide range of people representing diverse interests in the Towns Fund work in Nuneaton. In doing so, we will show that this is just the latest of a series of major initiatives intended to support plans for the development of our town centres in Nuneaton and Bedworth.

Our approach will be to use the Towns Fund logo and key messages across a wide range of activities in different media, including social and online. We will work alongside other town centre initiatives in order to highlight how they complement one another, and how each of them contributes to the ongoing prosperity and development of our towns and will join up the engagement wherever possible.

This plan builds upon the work undertaken to date – known as Phase 1- to engage with stakeholders to understand and identify issues and opportunities, and identify potential projects for the town.

2. Engagement to date

The Council utilises a number of engagement methods across a range of media in order to maximise its engagement with the community and other stakeholders.

When formulating the project from inclusion within the TIP, Towns Fund specific engagement was undertaken with support from an external Communications and Engagement Consultant, however, consideration of other engagement feedback was also taken into account:

Between August and December 2018, consultation was undertaken in relation to the Council's Corporate Plan 'Delivering our Future'. Communities, partners, local business were invited to participate via an online survey and face to face sessions.

The approach garnered 256 responses in regards to the proposed themes and priorities, which were:

Theme one: Transformation – We want to take the Borough forward to reach its full potential, we want to create and develop opportunities to deliver the following priorities:

Priority one: Economy and business – *building on our strong economic record, growing our economy, capitalising on our strengths, promoting our Borough, telling our story*

Priority two: People – *promoting skills and improving health within our communities, empowering and supporting our employees to deliver excellent services for residents*

Priority three: Housing and communities – *enabling housing development to match our aspirations for the Borough; building homes, investing in safe, empowered, sustainable communities*

Priority four: Technology – *maximising the opportunities presented by technology for our communities and services*

Theme two: Collaboration – achieving more by working together

We recognise the importance of working with others to deliver our vision and recognise that collaboration needs to be central to our work. Our areas of focus will be:

Priority one: We will work with our communities

Priority two: we will work with our partners, businesses, suppliers

Priority three: we will work with our employees and elected members

Theme Three: Investment – making the most of what we have

We want to build and enhance what we have already. We want to encourage investment within the following priorities:

Priority one: Getting the most from our assets – *from our people, land and property*

Priority two: Maximising funding – *identifying and securing funding opportunities, being creative, maximising income streams*

Priority three: Managing our resources – *maintaining our robust financial management arrangements to deliver efficient, economic and effective services*

Priority four: Promoting *a sustainable, green economy; minimising our carbon footprint*

Priority five: Empowering *our communities to make the most of their resources*

68% of respondents agreed with the draft themes and priorities and 44% considered them to realistic and achievable.

Based upon the additional comments received during consultation, an additional priority was added and adopted as noted below:

Priority six: Environment – *cherishing our physical environment; enhancing our built environment and open spaces, maximising the value of our green spaces, improving our infrastructure*

In July 2019, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council held a 'Business Expo' for all local businesses. As part of this event, a presentation was given regarding the Transforming Nuneaton Programme. Feedback received from the event proposed that greater business diversity was needed within the town and that the aims and objectives of the programme were widely supported.

During January and February 2020, a consultation exercise was undertaken in relation to the Future High Streets Fund and garnered 640 responses. Broadly, this consultation identified the following stakeholder priorities:

- A wish to see a greater range of food drink and leisure activities within the town centre
- A high proportion felt that the town centre would benefit from improved public realm and opening up of and improvements to green spaces
- There is a need to cater for youth and younger people in terms of activities and opportunities
- Improvements to cycle and pedestrian access would be welcomed
- Improvements to the transport infrastructure is required
- Preservation of heritage buildings is important
- Smaller workspaces within the town centre is requested

Phase 1 of the Town Deal process developed the 'My Town Nuneaton' brand. Due to the restrictions in place because of Covid-19, this utilised a digital approach, by the establishment of the website [www.mytownnuneaton.co.uk] and a dedicated Facebook page. Engagement was complemented by support from our Third Sector partners at Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA), our partners in Education and also the Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses and Coventry and Warwickshire LEP, in order to maximise engagement across as many stakeholders as possible.

Phase 1 took place during August and September 2020 and garnered 312 responses. Broadly, this consultation identified the following stakeholder priorities:

- Improvements to transport infrastructure
- Improvements to cycle & pedestrian infrastructure
- 5G / Full fibre to support businesses and residents
- Improving the public realm and green spaces
- Improvements to the leisure and culture offer
- Improve the opportunity for skills development, especially for younger people
- Increase the number of smaller workspaces

The outcomes from the engagement to date were used as the starting point for the development of projects for inclusion within the TIP.

2. Principles of engagement

It is critical that the views and aspirations of our stakeholders are taken into consideration in order to ensure communities are heard, that opportunities for the future of the town are identified, and that the communities are knowledgeable and supportive of the projects included within the TIP.

Our objective is to maximise the levels of reach and engagement, by recognising that a variety of engagement mechanisms must be utilised as is appropriate for each project and its associated stakeholders.

Part of this process to date has been helping people understand why we are engaging now. The table below summarises our approach. So far our engagement has helped generate hundreds of suggestions and aspirations from people about the future of our town centre, and helped establish the key themes of our activity.

Key Stage of work to deliver the Town Investment Plan	Why engage? What do we want to know?
Early data gathering	Identifying issues and opportunities, likes and dislikes about Nuneaton to feed into the context analysis and early identification of projects.
Draft vision, strategy and emerging project proposals	Testing the draft vision and objectives – do they have broad agreement and support? What themes are emerging? Sharing information on the potential long list of projects to identify broad areas of support and the process by which a short list has been derived, and encourage stakeholders to have their say on project proposals
Draft Town Investment Plan	Project level stakeholder engagement – working up project details with relevant stakeholders/delivery partners and carrying out bespoke project-specific consultation. Sharing information on the emerging Town Investment Plan and continuing to invite stakeholders to have their say
Post submission of Town Investment Plan	Communicating updates regarding submission, next steps and the outcome of the assessment of the Town Investment Plan. Engagement tracking feedback about progress and suggestions. Discussion of Town Deal proposals alongside other town centre initiatives.
Once Heads of Terms are agreed	Project specific engagement will be identified by the Project Lead. Engagement will include but not be limited to any combination of; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of community & stakeholder support • Ability & willingness for involvement with the project and business case development • Ability & willingness to assist in the broader engagement / feedback process

We will always strive to provide clear and concise information and be proactive and inclusive in our approach.

The engagement approach will ensure that:

- Relevant information is disseminated, using appropriate stakeholder specific language and media, at appropriate points during the TIP development and delivery process;
- Particular focus will be on ensuring maximum media, stakeholder and community reach is achieved should Head of Terms be agreed following submission of the TIP;
- Opinions, suggestions and comments are captured and reviewed from all stakeholder groups;
- A range of communication and engagement methods is employed to ensure we reach as many identified stakeholder groups as possible;
- Opinions, suggestions and comments are collated and analysed to ensure robust influence of the TIP and future project and business case development processes.

3. Audiences and Stakeholder Groups

We know we have a great opportunity to continue and build upon the engagement with the population of people who live, work, visit and study in the Nuneaton.

The following broad groups have been identified, along with both the opportunities and barriers to engagement;

Audience/groups	Existing networks / places to target engagement activities for each group	Potential barriers to engagement for these groups
Residents, incl BAME and Eastern European Community	Homes, public / community buildings. Places of worship.	COVID restrictions. Lack of time. Language barriers. Disabilities, e.g. mobility difficulties, hearing or visual impairments.
Businesses and Employers and intermediaries/trade bodies	Town centre businesses, industrial estates, businesses based from home	COVID restrictions. Lack of time. Lack of reach to micro home based businesses. Engagement must be relevant and focussed. Digital platforms help make information accessible at all times.
Young People	Youth Council / Youth Groups, Colleges, Schools	COVID restrictions. Lack of interest. Appropriate channels of engagement.

Town centre visitors	Market traders and town centre shopkeepers, news feeds, town centre in person, town centre website & social media	COVID restrictions. Appropriate channels of engagement. Lack of interest
Community and Voluntary Sector Groups	Established networks and partnerships amongst Town Deal Board members. WCAVA and associated community and voluntary groups	COVID restrictions. Time/capacity to engage in current COVID crisis. Lack of interest
Public service providers	Established networks and partnerships amongst Town Deal Board members, including education providers and health care providers	COVID restrictions. Time/capacity to engage in current COVID crisis.

A wide range of stakeholder groups have been identified already, and engagement methods will be tailored to their needs and preferences to achieve best results. These groups are:

- Community groups
- Third sector partners
- Businesses
- Faith groups
- Groups of residents for whom English may not be their first language
- Broader business community representatives
- Education providers
- Sports and arts groups
- People active in social media

The future engagement will take into account the potential barriers to engagement when developing the project specific engagement approach.

4. Methods of engagement

Given the current restrictions related to Covid-19, and in recognition of the potential fluidity of the situation, it is anticipated that a continuation of a largely digital approach will be necessary in the short to medium term. However, as with the first stage consultation, it is important to include mechanisms for seldom heard/digitally excluded groups. The table below gives an overview of the Stakeholder mechanisms that will be utilised for those projects that are agreed to progress to Heads of Terms:

Engagement Type	Stakeholders	Outline Activity
Digital	All	<p>MyTown website (https://mytownnuneaton.co.uk/): Principal online directory of information and engagement.</p> <p>Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council website (https://nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/): Online directory of information and engagement.</p> <p>My Town Nuneaton Facebook page: Provision of information, signposting to consultation engagement activities.</p> <p>Vlogs: Utilising education/skills providers, business and community members to deliver updates on progress and to encourage engagement.</p> <p>E-InTouch: Utilising the Council's regular information newsletter for provision of information and signposting to consultation and engagement activities.</p>
	Business	<p>E-Newsletters / E-Bulletins: Utilising regular newsletters issued by CWCC, FSB & CWLEP. Provision of information and signposting to consultation and engagement activities.</p> <p>Webinars: Where Covid restrictions prevent / restrict face to face engagement, webinars will be utilised. Provision of information and consultation.</p> <p>MS Teams, Zoom etc: Attendance and presentation at meetings, including Branch meetings and specific interest meetings.</p> <p>Emails / Texts: Utilising the existing database to signpost to information and engagement activities.</p>

	Young People	<p>Vlogs: Utilising education/skills providers and community groups to deliver updates on progress and to encourage engagement.</p> <p>Facebook: Utilising partners' and community group pages, for provision of information and signposting to consultation.</p>
	Hard to Reach Groups	<p>Facebook: Utilising partners' and community / community support group pages, for provision of information and signposting to consultation.</p> <p>Vlogs: Utilising partner and community groups to deliver updates on progress and encourage engagement</p>
Physical (subject to restrictions)	All	<p>Face to Face: Attendance at community group events, face to face surveys at key locations around the town, to provide information and obtain feedback.</p> <p>Posters: At key locations around the town and including community and public service venues to provide signposting and encouragement for engagement.</p> <p>Regular Press Releases to the Nuneaton News</p>
	Business	<p>Face to Face: Attendance at meetings and specific interest meetings to provide information and obtain feedback.</p> <p>Face to Face: Attendance at meetings with key business leaders to provide information and obtain feedback.</p> <p>NBBC Business Expo: Established meeting of local businesses for the provision of information and to obtain feedback.</p>
	Young People	<p>Face to Face: Attendance at schools, further education providers, youth groups and relevant youth events to provide information and obtain feedback.</p>

	Hard to Reach Groups	<p>Face to Face: Attendance at meetings and events to provide information and feedback.</p> <p>Face to Face: Meetings with Group Leaders to provide information and obtain feedback</p> <p>Printed Surveys available at key community and public service venues to provide information and receive feedback.</p>
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5. Seldom heard groups and barriers to engagement

The purpose of the work reflected in this plan is to enable as many people as possible to express their views, ensure that they are heard and listened to, and that these views are considered. In particular, we wish to reach and hear from diverse groups of people from whom we often might not hear. We recognise that by doing so, we make our plans stronger.

When adopting methods of engagement and in cognisance of the barriers to that engagement, particular consideration has been given to the advantages and disadvantages of the following:

Digital; Accessible on demand. Offers ease of access for those with mobility issues and time constraints. A preferred / popular method for certain groups, particularly young people. Ability to reach a significant proportion of stakeholders. A critical communication tool to overcome restrictions caused by Covid-19. May exclude those with little or no access to digital platforms.

Partners; Our Third Sector Partners and other community based groups are critical to the successful engagement of as many sections of our community as possible. This has been recognised via the inclusion of 2 representatives from Third Sector organisations onto the Town Deal Board. Our Partners are able to support patrons to understand the subject matter, to articulate their thoughts and requirements, and to submit these for inclusion within the Town Deal process. This has been demonstrated via Phase 1 of the consultation process, whereby paper copies of consultation were made available to our Third Sector Partners. They were then able to offer support to complete the forms, along with collecting and delivering those responses to the Project Team. This approach ensures that relevant and

appropriate information is communicated to support understanding of the project rationale.

Physical; Many members of the community value face to face contact and the chance to 'speak in person'. This poses a challenge in the current environment. However, the changing situation must be continually monitored and opportunities for Covid-Safe in person engagement will be identified and may include:

- Short presentations at the beginning of existing Covid-Safe community activity;
- Tailored Vlogs to be aired at the beginning of existing Covid-Safe community activity;
- Short surveys undertaken throughout the town in a Covid-Safe manner.

This approach ensures that relevant and appropriate information is communicated to support understanding of the project rationale.

6. Management and Governance

It is clear that co-ordination of engagement activity is critical. There is a risk of stakeholder fatigue given that, in the main, multiple engagement may be undertaken with all stakeholders, across not only those projects within the TIP, but also activities aligned with other initiatives such as the Transforming Nuneaton Programme and the Future High Streets Fund, along with the development of other key plans, such as the Leisure Strategy and Local Plan review, due to commence in Spring 2021.

The responsibility for project specific engagement will lie with the Project Lead. The engagement approach will take into account the engagement audience and the rationale for the project to establish objectives for the engagement. A Stakeholder Engagement Team (SET) will be established to;

- collate the project specific Engagement Plans;
- identify cross cutting engagement to minimise engagement fatigue
- critically review the proposed engagement approach and mechanisms
- support the Project Lead to deliver the engagement

The SET will comprise members of;

- NBBC Community Development Team
- NBBC & WCC Communications Teams

- Third Sector partner
- External consultancy support

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of the engagement approach will be undertaken by the Programme Board. Evaluation measures will be identified by each project lead, relevant to their project. These measures will be SMART, and will identify against the engagement objectives set out for their project. The SET will monitor and review progress, report regularly report to the Programme Board and the Town Deal Board, and suggest adjustments of approach as necessary, based on that monitoring and evaluation.