

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.

NUNEATON TOWN DEAL BOARD

Date: 2nd October 2020

From: Director – Regeneration & Housing (NBBC)

Subject: Town Investment Plan Progress Update

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Board with an update in relation to the progress regarding the formulation of the Town Investment Plan (TIP).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Board note the report.
- 2.2 That Board endorse the local prioritisation criteria detailed at paragraph 5.2.
- 2.3 That Board agree an approach to project prioritisation, the options for which are detailed at paragraph 5.3.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 The Towns Fund process is in two phases with a decision gateway at the end of each. The first phase requires the submission of a TIP. The TIP will then be assessed by the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), with Heads of Terms offered to towns whose TIP is judged to be of sufficient quality.
- 3.2 There are 3 cohorts for the submissions for the TIP – July 2020, October 2020 and January 2021. At its meeting on 19th June 2020, the Board resolved to apply during cohort 2, and that the date for the submission of the Nuneaton TIP be 30th October 2020.
- 3.3 MHCLG established a Towns Hub and appointed ARUP as the Town Deal Delivery Partner (TDDP). The TDDP works with each town to offer support and advice, aimed at securing the best deal for each town. The project team is working closely with the TDDP to formulate the TIP, and advice has been sought and received in a number of areas.

4. Current Progress

- 4.1 There have been a number of delays experienced during September. These have been associated with the late submission of projects and the requirement for further refinement of those projects, along with the lack of completed or appropriately completed Section 2 templates. The Section 2 templates identify costs, co-funding, outcomes and outputs, in addition to narrative sections demonstrating for example, alignment with national and local policies and strategies.

- 4.2 There is a knock on effect as follows:
- Significant sections of the TIP narrative cannot be completed without the identification of the shortlisted projects, including the Delivery Plan, the Theory of Change and the shortlisted project descriptions and associated golden thread;
 - The projects cannot be shortlisted until they have been assessed by Consultants in line with Her Majesty's Treasury Green Book Appraisal (GBA);
 - Prioritisation cannot be completed without the GBA;
 - Timescales currently agreed for the governance process cannot be met.
- 4.3 Effectively, this equates to 2 weeks lost productivity. Due to identification of the issues and knock-on effects, over the last 2 weeks, the project team have been pre-empting outcomes and outputs in an attempt to pull back some days. It is possible that some of the work undertaken will be abortive however, this will not be known until the projects have been prioritised.
- 4.4 Given the delays experienced, Board are requested to consider deferring its Board meeting on 23rd October 2020 and move to Wednesday 28th October 2020, to allow sufficient time for the final version of the TIP to be presented for approval.

5. Project Prioritisation

- 5.1 The project team has worked with the TDDP to utilise their Project Prioritisation Tool and formulate local criteria relevant to Nuneaton. The local criteria will be in addition to the GBA assessment. The GBA assessment will be undertaken by consultants and comprises the following elements;
- Value for Money (likeliness to deliver social value in terms of costs, benefits and risks)
 - Achievability (deliverability given organisational capability and skills)
 - Commercial viability and feasibility of procurement
 - Affordability (financing and affordability given existing budgets)
- 5.2 The Project Prioritisation Tool includes a first 'sift' of projects in order to produce a long list to go forward to the next round. The first sift looks at a number of criteria, with a straight pass / fail for the following;
1. Is it a capital project?
 2. Does the project fit within the Towns Fund town boundary?
 3. Is the project Ask within the Towns Fund financial limit (cost of all projects proposed within £25m or £50m through MHCLG route)?
 4. Does the project broadly fit with the town's vision and strategy?
 5. Can the project be delivered within the Towns Fund timeframe?
- 5.3 The first sift has been completed by the project team and the long list of projects is attached at Appendix A. It should be noted that clarification is outstanding in relation to the amount of project cost included within the Towns Fund Ask. This relates to those projects where co-funding has yet to be secured. This means that the total value of the projects for the Towns Fund element is either £23,200,990, or rises to £25,622,900 should unsecured co-funding be omitted. It is also important to

remember that £1m advance funding has been received, leaving a maximum £24m bid. It should however be noted the Towns Fund Guidance states;

‘Towns should not bid for the full £25m or more unless there is an objective rationale to do so.’

- 5.4 Advice was sought from the TDDP in relation to the formulation of the local criteria. Their suggestion was that the criteria should be aligned to our Town Deal objectives. The following criterion has been reviewed by the TDDP and the potential for weighting this criterion will be explored further with the TDDP;

Criteria 1 - Does the project align with more than one objective?
Criteria 2 - Does the project align with consultation feedback?
Criteria 3 - Does the project diversify the town centre offer?
Criteria 4 - Does the project align with local programmes and strategies?
Criteria 5 - Does the project support COVID-19 recovery?
Criteria 6 - Does the project positively contribute to sustainable transport / use of renewable energy?
Criteria 7 - Does the project either contribute to or support improved skills/educational attainment?
Criteria 8 - Does the project contribute to the reduction of inequality/improvement of health and wellbeing?
Criteria 9 - Does the project support innovation & growth?
Criteria 10 - Does the project support digital / 5G opportunities within the town?
Criteria 11 - Does the project improve the leisure, culture or heritage offer within the town?

- 5.5 Once finalised, the projects must be assessed and shortlisted against all agreed criterion. Given the reduced timeframes for completion, the following options are identified:

1. Prioritisation is undertaken by nominated Officers from both Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC's) and Warwickshire County Council in consultation with the Chair of the Board. ;
2. A smaller panel of Board members who have not been previously involved with project identification, is identified to undertake the prioritisation;
3. A combination of the above is identified to undertake the prioritisation.

It must be noted that the current evaluation timeframe has reduced as a result of the delays noted within Section 4. As a result, those nominated to undertake the prioritisation must be able to commit to completing and returning their assessments within a 2 day time frame. This timeframe is currently anticipated to be Tuesday 20th and Wednesday 21st October 2020, with all assessments being returned by close of business on the second day of assessment. This timeframe may change dependent upon GBA deadlines and the finalisation of outstanding projects and Section 2 templates. For this reason, option 1 is considered the most practical way forward.

- 5.6 The completed prioritisation assessments will then be moderated to ensure consistency of approach, on Thursday 22nd October 2020. It is proposed that NBBC's Creditors and Procurement Manager undertakes the moderation exercise, as a person independent to the process.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The delays experienced have put extreme pressure on an already tight timeframe. However, the project team are committed to submitting the TIP on 30th October 2020. The TDDP is conducting a 'check and challenge' on Thursday 1st October 2020, and the Board will be verbally advised of the outcomes and recommendations of this at this Board meeting (2nd October 2020).
- 6.2 Dependent upon the feedback from the check and challenge, and completion and collation of all outstanding information, it may be expected that further information is requested by MHCLG during their first phase assessment process.

Project Title	Description	Total Cost	Towns Fund Ask	Comments
The Saints	Purchase and remediation of a prominent heritage building to provide social enterprise incubation space, training spaces and a Learning Zone. The building will also accommodate creative and cultural training and performance spaces, supporting local schools	£1,867,000	£1,829,000	Together for Change established the Saints Project and is a registered charitable organisation attached to the Diocese of Coventry. This charity has already fund raised and will contribute £31,000. Additionally, Lovell are contributing a further £7,000 towards the project. Costs will be finalised by 02.10.20
Weddington Road Cycle Link	The provision of a segregated two-way cycle track over a distance of 0.9 km, separated from both traffic and pedestrians. The route will link to other key cycling routes and will improve safety and accessibility for cyclists in residential and employment sites in the north to the rail station and Town Centre.	£1,904,000	£1,704,000	A total amount of £200,000 has been secured from Section 106 developer contribution, with £150,000 received to date, and the remaining £50,000 due to be received in 2022/23.
Nuneaton Station Second Access	The provision of a second access to the rail station and transport interchange to improve bus, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity for residents and businesses to the north of the town, and also ensure convenient drop off by car.	£8,000,000	*£8,000,000	Query potential WCC CIF Funding. There is the potential for match funding sources to be sought for this project, including developer funding contributions from future housing developments to the north of the town centre, however no match funding has been secured at this point in time.
E Mobility Hub	The development of an E-mobility hub to provide an uplift in the number of electric vehicle charging points across the town centre, including access to fast and rapid charging.	£250,000	£250,000	WCC, in conjunction with NBBC, has secured funding through the Government's OLEV On-street Residential Charging Fund. The OLEV funding will provide 8 charging points in Borough Council owned car parks at the Pingles Leisure Centre in Nuneaton (4 no.) and Bedworth Leisure Centre, Bedworth (4 no.) within 2020/21, however a future bid for OLEV funds could extend provision into residential streets within the town that lack off-street parking.

Project Title	Description	Total Cost	Towns Fund Ask	Comments
Corporation Street and Queens Road Junctions	Highway and active travel improvements to four connected elements of the western part of the A444 Ringway which circles the town centre: ie the replacement of a current roundabout with a signal-controlled junction; significant improvements to the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure on the western section of the A444 Ringway; the provision of a high-quality bus stop area to facilitate future bus routing through the Town Centre; and bus, pedestrian and cycling only access into the Town Centre including the implementation of a bus lane.	£7,577,000	£5,577,000	£2m contribution from Warwickshire County Council, unsecured, application in progress. There is the potential for match funding sources to be sought for this project, including developer funding contributions from developments within the Town Centre as part of the 'Transforming Nuneaton' regeneration scheme. This will be explored further should this project be selected for the next stage of the Towns Fund process.
Re-imagining Nuneaton Museum and Art Gallery	To build a glass extension to the existing Nuneaton Museum and Art Gallery to extend the gallery space, add new community meeting space and improve the environment of the cafe, in order to augment the attractiveness of the existing collection and transform the venue into a multi-functional community space with an arts and heritage theme.	£3,250,000	*£750,000	£78k of Section 106 money is already secured. The project is the subject of a potential Heritage Lottery Fund application to the amount of £1.75 million, however the stage 1 lottery bid to the National Lottery Grants for Heritage is currently suspended due to COVID 19 but is expected to re-open in 2021. If this application is unsuccessful then we will seek to obtain the full amount from the Towns Fund.
Parks Revival	Improvements to parks including creating a supplementary public space for events and improving pedestrian and cycle access to Riversley Park; ground reinforcement and utility connection point improvements, landscape, information and cycle path enhancements and the creation of a terraced performance area at George Eliot Gardens; the creation of new footpaths, in combination with existing paths from the southern built up edge of the Town, Pingles Leisure Centre through to the Town centre.	£830,000	£623,990	Match funding is 'section 106' funding secured as part of planning consents from private developers.

Project Title	Description	Total Cost	Towns Fund Ask	Comments
George Eliot Visitor Centre	To re-purpose an existing outbuilding at Griff House, now a hotel and restaurant but formerly the childhood home of internationally famous writer George Eliot, into a Visitor Centre providing exhibition and sales space, meeting/learning space and a home for the George Eliot Fellowship archive.	£220,000	£20,000	Match funding is 'section 106' funding secured as part of planning consents from private developers.
Digital, skills and Innovation Centre	To re-locate NWSL College's commercial facing functions within the town centre. The project has 4 objectives: 1, provide a real commercial environment within which to train. 2, provide a digitally enabled space to teach new skills. 3, to provide incubation space with onsite support. 4. relocate the award winning NWSLC Catering and Hospitality Department and restaurant.	£3,700,000	£3,700,000	The location for this site has yet to be identified; Final build and fit out costs are yet to be confirmed as does the requirement for land / building acquisition. The identified cost is heavily caveated as this point.
Wheat Street Junction	Highway and active travel improvements on the A444 Wheat Street junction located on the eastern part of the A444 Ringway by 1. adding a 4th arm to provide access to the Wheat Street development site, increasing the current capacity of the junction, 2. altering the existing cycling layout to connect with a planned future cycle route along Wheat Street, and 3. realignment of pedestrian and cyclist crossings on all junction arms to increase safety for both modes.	£1,247,000	£747,000	£0.5m contribution from Warwickshire County Council, unsecured, application in progress. There is the potential for match funding sources to be sought for this project, including developer funding contributions from developments within the Town Centre as part of the 'Transforming Nuneaton' regeneration scheme. This will be explored further should this project be selected for the next stage of the Towns Fund process.

Total **£28,845,000** **£23,200,990** **TF Ask including whole project costs £25,622,990*

*NB: Potential match funding not secured. Final decision relating to including whole project cost within the bid will be clarified Thursday 1st October 2020