

**NEWARK TOWN FUNDS BOARD**

**Thursday, 17 November 2022 at 4.00 pm**

**Byron Bar, Newark Palace Theatre, Appleton Gate,  
Newark NG24 1JY**

If you have any queries please contact Helen Brandham on [helen.brandham@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk](mailto:helen.brandham@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk).

## **AGENDA**

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| 1. Welcome                                         |                     |
| 2. Apologies for Absence                           |                     |
| 3. Minutes of Previous Meetings                    |                     |
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| 7. Newark & Sherwood Community Partnerships Board  | Verbal Presentation |
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## NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Newark Town Funds Board** held in the Newark Rugby Club, Kelham Road, Newark NG24 1WN on Wednesday, 15 June 2022 at 4.30 pm.

PRESENT: Tom Cartledge – Co-Chairman  
Councillor David Lloyd - Leader of NSDC and Board Co-Chairman

### Board Members

Tony Aspbury - Chairman of Development Committee (Newark & Nottinghamshire Agricultural Society)  
Linny Beaumont (Canal & River Trust)  
Kerry Clarke – School Teacher/Resident  
Keith Girling – Deputy Leader of NSDC  
Matthew Gleadell – Town Clerk (Newark Town Council)  
Sanjiv Kohli – Deputy CX, Director – Resources, s151 Officer (NSDC)  
Tom Marsden – Director of Strategic Growth (Lincoln College Group)

### Also in Attendance

Mick Baker – Chairman of Farndon Parish Council  
Neil Cuttell – Business Manager – Economic Growth & Tourism (NSDC)  
Frances Davies – Town Investment Plan Programme Manager (NSDC)  
Matt Lamb – Director – Planning & Growth (NSDC)  
Mel Phythian (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy)

APOLOGIES FOR  
ABSENCE:

Joelle Davies (NCC)  
John Latham (Lincoln College Group)  
Johanne Thomas (Urban & Civic)  
Sarah Lacey (NSDC)  
Jo Bradley (Nottinghamshire YMCA)  
Jerry Hague (N&S CVS)  
Michael Durban (University of Nottingham)  
Frank Horsley (D2N2)  
Craig Berens (Nottinghamshire YMCA)  
Graham Metcalfe (DWP)  
Paul Gascoine (Homes England)  
Steff Wright (Gustos)  
Ben Sumner (University of Nottingham)  
Nikki Burley (Emmaus Trust)  
Jane Hutchinson (NSDC)  
Matthew Ellis-Mather (Magnet Expert Ltd.)  
Kevin Guthrie (Newark Business Club)  
Darren Burke (Masdings)  
Jackie Insley (Citizens' Advice)  
David Jones (Timico)  
John Robinson – Chief Executive (NSDC)

25 WELCOME

Tom Cartledge, co-Chairman of the Group welcomed everyone to the meeting. He gave a summary of the work undertaken and progress made by the Board during the previous 12 months, noting the forthcoming larger opening of the YMCA facility and that the Air & Space Institute (ASI) was now oversubscribed.

He commented that prior to the pandemic and associated lockdowns the Board had significantly more private sector partners, querying how partnership working could be re-energised.

Matt Lamb, the District Council's Director – Planning & Growth, advised that only one business case remained outstanding, all others had been submitted for consideration. He also advised that there were 2 key risk milestones in relation to the Southern Link Road: Final Design; and Return of Tenders. It was anticipated that works would commence on site in January 2023 with the road being open to traffic in March 2024. It was also noted that works on the A46 by-pass would commence in March 2025.

26 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2022

AGREED that the Minutes of the Newark Town Board held on 17 March 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

27 TOWNS FUND PROJECTS COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

The Board considered the presentation by the Town Investment Plan Programme Manager which sought to explain the proposed identified communication interventions from 2022 through to the completion of the towns funding in March 2026.

In order to achieve the proposals, the Council's preferred option was to recruit a skilled and experienced communications officer to a new position on a fixed term contract, which would provide consistent capacity and capability. The funding for the post would be taken from part of the Programme Management RDEL. The Director – Planning & Growth added that the role would assist in the re-energising of the Board.

In considering the presentation Members of the Board commented that the role must focus on communication for the wider Newark area and not for the current projects which had no communication resource of their own.

In relation to the cost of the proposal it was reported that the salary and on-costs would be approximately £50k, leaving £15k in the Programme Management RDEL.

As an alternative, it was suggested that a suitable consultant be engaged to carry out the identified communication interventions.

AGREED that a comparison exercise be carried out between employing an individual on a fixed term basis and engaging a suitably qualified consultant prior to a final decision being made on how to fulfil the identified communication interventions.

The Board considered the presentation by the Town Investment Plan Programme Manager which sought to provide an update on the Towns Fund Projects and Future Projects.

It was reported that all summary documents had been submitted except the one for SISCLOG and that this was due to market pressures necessitating changes to the development plan. It was noted that the Council had hosted a successful Logistics Conference on 14 June to continue the dialogue with the sector. There had been positive responses to the proposals and some useful ideas and perspectives shared.

It was reported and noted that 10 priority projects had been identified to be brought forward with the Town Deal funding. There were further opportunities available at present and that it was opportune to select other projects from the initial TIP.

The 4 cornerstones of the TIP were noted as: skills, education and business; connectivity; town centre, regeneration and culture; and town centre residential. Details of the existing projects were noted and how these had been linked to those cornerstones.

Recommendations for future projects were noted as: repurposing of upper-floors of buildings around the market square; development of a Riverside Place Strategy; and roll out of ultra-fast broadband.

#### **SISCLOG**

It was noted that it would provide valuable high-tech office and industrial unit space at a key strategic location in the town and that its potential needed to be shared as widely as possible.

#### **A46 Dualling**

There was some traction on this and more information from the DfT could be released shortly. Further Council reports would likely be considered during the September cabinet cycles.

The Town Investment Plan Programme Manager advised that if anyone had any new projects they wished to bring forward that they let her know. These could then be 'pitched' to the wider group at the next meeting.

In noting the above it was confirmed that new funding had not been received. Board Members queried whether it was their role to suggest new projects when the existing ones were not completed and that was more of the role of the wider audience. The Director – Planning & Growth added that pillars of intervention had been identified and a catalyst for development. What needed to be done was giving the market confidence on how to develop the vision and environment for Newark and that a sense-check of the current projects would be beneficial.

In noting the comments a Member advised that a fusion power plant would likely be placed in the neighbouring district of Bassetlaw, adding that the provision of energy and associated works therefrom should be considered when discussing future projects.

The Board agreed that they needed to be cautious in their approach to new projects. They had been established to oversee the spending of the original funding of £25m and should be mindful that they did not morph from the original purpose to that of another. It could be that if future funding was to be secured more consultations would be needed with a focus on the whole district.

It was agreed that the governance of the Board needed to be addressed but the original purpose remained unchanged, it was to ensure delivery of the agreed projects. It was agreed that the importance of delivery should not be overlooked given the changing political landscape in the region, when plans were progressing at pace for devolved local governance in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, with the likely loss of the D2N2 as a result.

AGREED that the presentation and above comments be noted.

29 SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (SPF) AND LEVELLING UP ROUND TWO (LUF) OPPORTUNITIES

The Board considered the presentation given by the Director – Planning & Growth which sought to provide an update on the Levelling-Up White Paper, the launch of the Levelling-Up Fund 2 and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund & Multiply.

The presentation set out the various aims of levelling-up together with focus areas and mission for each of those. The themes of the Round 2 Fund were reported and noted as: Transport; Regeneration; and Town Centres & Culture. Prescribed bids for funding had to be submitted by 6 July and would either Pass or Fail. Details of the rules surrounding the bidding criteria were provided together with the overarching proposals for the area, which was within the Ollerton and Clipstone areas of the district.

Details of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund were provided and what areas must be contained within an Investment Plan, these being noted as: communities and place (active travel, high streets, sports); supporting local business (open markets, visitor economy); and people and skills (from year 3 only 2024/25 given Multiply which is an adult numeracy programme).

The Government's agenda for devolution was again discussed in more detail. It was noted that Nottinghamshire County Council had submitted their desired topics for devolvment for consideration with the majority being authorised. Proof of delivery of existing topics would likely form part of the bidding process, so the ability to show that the group had documentation to prove they were able to deliver on projects was vital.

In noting the comment that monies had to match powers under the devolution plans, the s151 Officer advised that this had been built into the deal. He added that a number of s151 Officers were hesitant about the future proposals as it required them to take a more commercial view than they would normally.

AGREED that the presentation and future funding opportunities be noted.

30 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

UPDATES

Construction College

The number of students enrolling has ensured its success. The facility will be at capacity after 2 years which is ahead of schedule. The Town Fund accelerated funds grant had kick-started the college.

ASI

An increase in construction costs has led to a delay. Construction should now commence at the start of 2023, approximately 6 months away. Students were still being recruited. Business interest was increasing. A good proportion of students were picking-up seasonal work at East Midlands Airport. Students were not only from Newark. Private landlords in the area had been in contact asking about provision of accommodation.

It was noted that the release of any good news needed to be scheduled so as its release was not impacted by the purdah period for the forthcoming May 2023 elections. It was also noted that whilst the Board was Newark based, the projects it delivered had a wider impact beyond the town.

Delivery of Existing Projects

How can the Board assist with delivering projects e.g. Newark Heart project would benefit from greater advocacy by the board members, and a communication of the key aims of the project to increase the vibrancy of the town centre and the footfall and dwell time of visitors.

Next Meeting

Reflect on venue.

Refresh on membership and scope.

Encourage private sector/medium businesses to contribute/participate.

Possible Agenda Items:

Progress on delivery of existing projects (delivery will build credibility)

How to progress the energy of the Board

Creation of next platform/governance – ahead of devolution.

Meeting closed at 6.06 pm.

Chairman

## NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Newark Town Funds Executive Board** held in the Remote Meeting via MS Teams on Monday, 5 September 2022 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT: Board Members:

Tony Aspbury (Chairman of Development Committee – Newark Showground)  
Tom Cartledge (Co-Chair of Newark Town Fund Board/Chief Executive - Benoy)  
Matthew Gleadell (Town Clerk, Newark Town Council)  
Sanjiv Kohli (Deputy Chief Executive & S151 Officer, NSDC)  
Mark Locking (CEO, Lincoln College Group)  
John Robinson (Chief Executive, NSDC)  
Steff Wright (Chief Executive, Gusto UK)

Officers:

Neil Cuttall (Business Manager – Economic Growth & Visitors, NSDC)  
Frances Davies (Town Investment Plan Programme Manager, NSDC)  
Matt Lamb (Director – Planning & Growth, NSDC)

### 1 WELCOME

The Co-Chairman, Tom Cartledge, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Newark Town Fund Executive Board.

### 2 PROJECT ADJUSTMENT REQUESTS - FINANCE PROFILE

Frances Davies advised the Executive Board on the opportunity to request amendments to the financial profile of the projects for 2022/2023. Details of the proposed changes being requested were contained within the report, noting that the deadline to do so was Friday, 9 September 2022. It was also highlighted that some of the information contained within the report required updating due to additional information coming to light after the meeting papers had been circulated.

ASI

Currently profiled at £7.1m in financial year (FY) 2022/2023 and £3m in FY 2023/2024. It was proposed to amend this to £4.3m in FY 2022/2023 and £5.8m in FY 2023/2024 due to delays in commencing construction.

In acknowledging the cost of inflation on construction costs, Mark Locking advised that, following meetings with Tom Marsden, he was able to say with a degree of confidence that the proposed amended financial profile could be met. He advised of the external financial contributions received over the summer months towards the project.

Matt Lamb advised that the deadline date of 9 September 2022 was realistically the last opportunity to reprofile the finances. Sanjiv Kohli advised that he had reviewed and approved the proposed changes. He noted that the Full Business Case for the project would be submitted on 15 September to QUOD. This would then be reviewed and back with him for assurance on 19 September.

Tom Cartledge queried as to the latest position of the expansion of the construction college. Mark Locking confirmed that there had been a good intake for the 2022/2023 year and that it was timely to look to the future. It was agreed that future discussions be held in relation to expanding the breadth of courses offered and where funding may be accessed if not from the Newark Town Fund.

#### Stodman Street

Currently the total grant sum of £2.2m was profiled into 2022/2023. It was proposed to move £700k to FY 2023/2024, leaving £1.5m profiled against FY 2022/2023. Again, this was due to delays caused by major asbestos removal and uncertainties in procurement of construction contractors.

Frances Davies advised that the procurement exercise to appoint construction contractors was scheduled to finish on Saturday, 10 September 2022, 1 day after the request for financial reprofiling was required and that it was not possible to delay the submission. She further advised that the procurement exercise had been seeking a fixed price contractor which had resulted in a lower-than-expected level of interest and that this could lead to the exercise being unsuccessful.

If the exercise was successful, it would be possible to spend £1.5m in the current financial year and move £700k to the next financial year. If it was not successful, then it would not be possible to spend the required monies. The situation had been highlighted to central government.

Tom Cartledge queried whether any obligation had been placed on contractors to use a local workforce. Neil Cuttall advised that this obligation had been included in the procurement process. He also confirmed that should the exercise be unsuccessful, alternative options were available.

#### Newark Heart

The capital allocation totalling £1.5m was split over 3 years 2022/2025. The proposal was to move £300k profiled for 2022/2023 to FY 2023/2024, as a capital pot of £900k would be more effective in buying transformation change, leaving £600k for FY 2024/2025.

Frances Davies advised that data from footfall, survey responses and retail sales figures would inform the future decision of how the capital monies would be best utilised.

Tom Cartledge queried whether any information was known as to how the 'beach' in Newark had been received. It was noted that the perception from retailers was positive and that they would wish to see it return in future years. Footfall had marginally increased with qualitative analysis showed that retailers had said that people were staying longer in the town.

### SISclog

It was proposed to move the total £800k capital and £200k revenue from FY 2022/2023 to FY 2023/2024. This was due to the delays caused by the DoT's announcement in February 2022 of the preferred route for the dualling of the A46. The route had necessitated a redesign of the project.

Frances Davies advised that this was the only project that a summary document had not been submitted. She confirmed that this was on track and would be completed by the end of September 2022.

In relation to associated initiatives, Tony Asbury advised that he believed that it was possible to bring in commercial interest at the Newark Gateway site, specifically automotives, adding that a major vehicle manufacturer may wish to offer a sponsorship opportunity. Matt Lamb advised he would facilitate a conversation between Tony Asbury and Tom Marsden about possible automotive apprenticeships, bearing in mind that CAZOO, who were based at Long Bennington, were in need of staff and that their location was a strategic site in the area.

In response to what contingencies were in place if the request to push monies back to the following year was unsuccessful, Sanjiv Kohli advised that general guidance was that if the monies did not exceed 50% of the total pot then there should be no issue. He also advised that central Government had been kept informed of the issues with the project.

John Robinson queried what the latest position was with the former NCC depot site, situated across the road from the SISclog site. Neil Cuttall advised that the land was up for sale but NCC had refused an offer made by NSDC. It was anticipated that the developers for the A46 would use it as a temporary base, noting that this would require the installation of utilities.

John Robinson stated that a conversation with NCC was required as it was not acceptable for the site to remain undeveloped and only being used by the A46 developers until 2030.

### General Comments

Newark Cycle Race – the initial feedback about the impact the race had had resulted in a high total of visitor footfall. The dwell time of visitors had been higher than the previous year and that of regional and national levels. It was agreed that whilst it was the Board's responsibility to increase the footfall, it was the retailers themselves that needed to facilitate an increase in customer spend. Tom Marsden suggested that a local retailer was needed on the Newark Heart Project.

In relation to the recruitment of a Communications Officer, Frances Davies advised that this was progressing and an update would be provided at the next meeting of the full Towns Board.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the update on the opportunity to request changes to the financial profile through project adjustment requested be noted; and
- (b) the Project Adjustment Requests as proposed be approved and passed for submission to CLUHC by the deadline of 9 September 2022.

Meeting closed at 3.03 pm.

Chairman

**NEWARK TOWN BOARD**  
**17 NOVEMBER 2022**

**TOWN FUND PROJECTS UPDATE**

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To update the Board on the progress made since June 2022 on the key priority projects, with a particular focus on the Air & Space Institute (ASI) and the SISCLOG/Gateway and Stodman Street projects. Further to update the Board on progress made with the Communications of the Towns Fund projects.

**2.0 Background and Updates**

- 2.1 In May 2021, Newark & Sherwood District Council (NSDC) as the accountable body for Town Fund, engaged Hatch consultants to work with the project sponsors to develop business cases for each of the projects. Additionally, NSDC commissioned an independent consultant, Quod, to act as assurers. Quod review the business cases once completed and give recommendations to the Council's s151 officer on the value for money and deliverability of the schemes.
- 2.2 Once the business cases have been completed, Hatch complete the Summary Document for submission to Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) along with the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan. DLUHC then review the Summary Document and M&E plan and once approved, they release the funds for drawn down.
- 2.3 The table below shows the status of the Summary Documents and M&E plans for each project:

| Project                 | OBC Assured                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Summary Doc Approved by Government | FBC Assured                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Construction College    | Implemented prior to signing of the Newark Town Deal via accelerated funding. Approval process via Newark Town Board, Policy & Finance Committee on the 24.09.20, s151 officer and Grant Funding Agreement, (February 2021) |                                    |                               |
| YMCA Activity Village   | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | December 2021                      | December 2021                 |
| Air and Space Institute | January 2022                                                                                                                                                                                                                | January 2022                       | September 2022                |
| 20 Minute Cycle Town    | December 2021                                                                                                                                                                                                               | January 2022                       | Not required given OBC detail |
| Stodman Street          | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | May 2022                           | February 2022                 |
| Newark Cultural Heart   | April 2022                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | May 2022                           | Expected March 2023           |
| SISCLOG                 | Expected Nov 2022                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Exp Nov/Dec 2022                   | Expected summer 2023          |
| Castle Gatehouse        | May 2022                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | July 2022                          | Expected December 2023        |

- 2.4 The Air & Space Institute is progressing according to schedule having started on site at the end of October 2022. The ground-breaking ceremony took place on 2 November 2022 and was reported by [Newark and Sherwood District Council](#), [Lincoln College Group](#), and [local](#) and [national](#) media.

## SISCLOG

Summary Documents for all projects have been submitted to government and approved, with the exception of the SISCLOG project. This project has been delayed by the A46 works, the Newark Northern Bypass, proposed by National Highways which will take a proportion of the SISCLOG/Gateway site necessitating a reworking of the original plan. In addition, a dependency of this project is the relocation of the Lorry Park, for which negotiations are ongoing.

The Towns Fund grant funds site preparation works for the SISCLOG/Gateway, a project which requires public sector intervention to move forward, and careful work is going into the business case development and appraisal process to ensure that the project will deliver value for money. This work is ongoing, but hopes to conclude in the coming weeks, and an update will be provided to the Board once the Outline Business Case has been assured.

### Project Adjustment Requests

In September 2021, it was announced by the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) that the Relocation of the Police station was no longer going ahead, meaning that this project would be removed from the programme. According to the original financial profile, £1m was allocated to this project and a Project Adjustment Request (PAR) was submitted to government in December 2021 requesting that these funds be reallocated to the other remaining projects. The request detailed which projects were proposed to receive this reallocation of funding and focussed on the Castle Gatehouse Project, Stodman Street and SISCLOG as the three projects which were construction based and later in the programme, therefore being most at risk of cost increases due to inflation.

| Project Name              | Original Towns Fund Contribution | Project Adjustment | Revised Towns Fund Contribution |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Police Station Relocation | £1m                              | Project cancelled  | £0m                             |
| Stodman Street            | £2m                              | £200k              | £2.2m                           |
| SISCLOG                   | £4m                              | £400k              | £4.4m                           |
| Castle Gatehouse          | £2.6m                            | £400k              | £3m                             |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>£9.6m</b>                     | <b>£1m</b>         | <b>£9.6m</b>                    |

Due to the sharp increases in inflation, and difficulty of access to both labour and materials (a situation which has only worsened since December 2021) these three projects were identified as being at risk of fatal issues if the project adjustment request was denied. The project adjustment request was approved by the Council's S151 officer and both of the Co-Chairs by way of an urgency report. The Project Adjustment Request was approved by government in April 2022, and the reallocation of the funds was shown in an updated Annex A1.

Since then, the situation for construction projects has worsened with higher inflation in timber, aggregate, materials and labour. The current procurement process for the Stodman Street Project has provided improved market insight to the construction sector, and discussions with contractors and other Town Fund Programme Teams have shown that inflation is having a detrimental effect on projects nationwide. It is proposed to alter the proportions of the reallocation agreed in April 2022 to reallocate grant to the Stodman Street

project, since this is currently out to tender for contractors and is ready to be delivered, and to reduce the value to the SISCLOG project following in depth cost analysis appraisals undertaken as part of the SISCLOG OBC. It is proposed to seek delegated authority for the S151 officer and Co-Chairs of Newark Town Board to sign off on this adjustment to the Project Adjustment request before submission to government.

## **Communications**

Communications for the Towns Fund projects continues to be a priority. Branding on the hoarding surrounding the ASI construction site has been commissioned and will be in place shortly. The posters have been designed to create a consistency of message that will also be seen on the hoardings at the Stodman Street site and the Castle Gatehouse site when these construction projects have started. The purpose of the branding is to advertise and inform passers by of which project they are seeing in action, and also to link the Towns Fund projects together across the town showing the cohesion that is present in the programme.

At the Newark Town Board meeting on 15 June 2022, members heard and noted the updates on the communication and marketing of Towns Fund Projects and approved proposals to explore the recruitment either of a consultant specialist or a fixed term member of staff in the Newark and Sherwood District Council establishment to provide additional capacity to fulfil the communications ambitions. Newark Town Board also approved the proposal to use part of the Programme Management grant that is given to the council from the government to support the management, including communication, of the projects. Subsequent to the Newark Town Board meeting, officers met and discussed the options concluding that a member of staff would offer better value for money, and a more consistent approach over the longer term than consultancy support.

Since then, officers have developed a Job Description for the role, and a report to the Senior Leadership team to cover the necessary internal governance processes of creating a new post. This post will be out for advert in the coming days, and a recruitment exercise will be undertaken with a hoped for start date of January 2023.

## **Performance Reporting**

The next bi-annual reporting return is due to be submitted to government by 16 December 2022. This return covers the financial programme profile, programme and project specific updates, risk reporting and reporting against the mandatory and chosen indicators for each project. The report is completed by the Programme Manager in consultation with the project sponsors for each project.

Guidance issued by government on 7 November 2022 states that Town Boards should have sight of this reporting return and the opportunity to feed into it before it is signed by the co-chairs and S151 officer and submitted. In order to comply with this guidance, once the report has been finalised, it will be shared with the members of Newark Town Board for a minimum of 5 working days allowing time for any comments. It will then be shared with the co-chairs for approval, as normal, and subsequently submitted to government by the deadline.

### **3.0 Next Steps**

- 3.1 The performance report will be completed and circulated by email to the Board by early December 2022 giving 5 working days' notice for any comments from members. The final version will then be approved by the Co-chairs and the S151 officer according to the delegated authority.
- 4.2 The recruitment exercise for the comms post will be concluded by the Programme Manager and the Manager for Communications and Marketing with the aim of onboarding a postholder by January 2023.

### **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:**

- (a) the Board welcomes and note the update to the Towns Fund projects;**
- (b) The Board gives delegated authority to the co-chairs and the s151 officer to approve the Summary Document for the SISCLOG/Gateway project, following assurance;**
- (c) the Board gives delegated authority to the s151 officer and co-chairs to approve project adjustment requests relating to the reallocation of the cancelled project, the relocation of the police station, for the benefit of the existing projects; and,**
- (d) the Board gives delegated authority to the co-chairs and s151 officer to approve the performance reporting submission to government.**

#### Background Papers

Newark Town Investment Plan, 2020  
Annex A1, April 2022

For further information please contact Frances Davies at [frances.davies@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk](mailto:frances.davies@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk)

Frances Davies  
Town Investment Plan Programme Manager  
Economic Growth & Visitor Economy

## **NEWARK TOWNS BOARD**

**17 NOVEMBER 2022**

### **CULTURAL HEART OF NEWARK UPDATE**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To update members on activity to date, including recent event feedback and plans for next phases of the project.

#### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Cultural Heart of Newark is a Town Deal project with an allocation of £1.5m of Towns Fund capital and £600k revenue, as set out in the July 2020 Town Investment Plan and included within the Heads of Terms agreed between government, the Town Deal Board and Newark & Sherwood District Council (as the accountable body) in March 2021.
- 2.2 An Outline Business Case (OBC) for the project was developed and approved by the Town Deal Board in March 2022, subject to assurance by Quod and Newark & Sherwood District Council's s. 151 officer, in line with the Town Deal Assurance Framework. Following Quod's review, the OBC was approved by the s151 officer in April 2022, allowing the submission to government of the Summary Document for the project and for funds to be drawn down.
- 2.3 The business case developed the key proposals within the Town Investment Plan, focusing on three main elements:
- Revenue funding to support a programme of events and attractions within the town centre to increase footfall and vibrancy.
  - Capital funding to make changes within the town centre that will enable and enhance the programme of events.
  - Developing a long-term approach to activities and a wider town centre offer that will be financially sustainable.
- 2.4 As set out in the Town Investment Plan, the approach for the Cultural Heart of Newark is to begin with trying and testing events and activities in order to assess their impact, learn from the experience and apply lessons to the future programme. To this end, the approved revenue funding for the project is being used during 2022-23 to support new and expanded events. As agreed at the Newark Towns Fund Executive Board meeting in September 2022, the accountable body is liaising with government on the potential to change the profile for the approved capital funding across 2023-24 and 2024-25 in order that its use can be informed by the experience of events held during 2022-23 and that a Full Business Case can be developed and approved.
- 2.5 The project is being delivered by Newark Town Council, working closely with the district council, as the accountable body. The Town Council has committed to provide match funding for the revenue element of £200k p.a. over the three years of the project. To ensure wider partner collaboration, a Cultural Heart of Newark Board has been established and is meeting regularly with representatives from a range of stakeholders including town centre retailers. The Town Council is building on its previous experience in organising and running events, expanding the programme using the Towns Fund revenue, putting in place additional resources and developing options for using the capital funding.

### 3.0 Update

3.1 Newark Town Council has produced an events calendar showing the new and enhanced events for which the revenue funding for 2022-2023 has been or will be used. This includes:

- Jubilee Steampunk promotion and street performers (June) (enhanced)
- Newark Traditions Festival performances (July) (enhanced)
- Newark on sea beach and entertainment programme (August) (new)
- Newark Music and Arts Festival (August bank holiday weekend) (new)
- Scarefest, Castle (October) (enhanced)
- Dickensian Christmas Market (December) (enhanced)
- Christmas Lights Switch On (enhanced)
- Additional regular street entertainment and activity

3.2 Resources from the approved funding have also been used to employ a dedicated Programme Development Officer (in post since September). This post will include responsibility for developing plans for the long-term viability of town centre events, activities and attractions. In addition to this role, Newark Town Council is planning to create a new events assistant role which will offer a trainee opportunity for someone interested in the events industry to support the Programme Development Officer and the Town Council to deliver the new and enhanced programme of events. Recruitment for this role is expected to conclude in early 2023.

3.3 The success of the new and enhanced events is being measured with footfall and dwell time data and surveys targeting both attendees at the events, retailers and hospitality businesses. Subjective and Objective feedback data has confirmed that all of the CHN sponsored events have been successful with high levels of regard from attendees and many retailer and hospitality outlets in the town centre. This has been collected by face to face interviews at events, analysis of footfall from the town centre footfall counters and interviews with town centre businesses. The Newark-On-Sea Beach event has produced the greatest level and volume of positivity. However, whilst it delivered substantial improvements in footfall, ambiance and reputation for the town; any significant immediate impact on general retail spend is not confirmed albeit that some retailers confirmed excellent trading during its period of operation and it was noted that some 70% of attendees would not have come into the town centre during the week of their visit, had it not been for the Beach. More detail of the events and feedback will be presented at the Board meeting.

3.4 Feedback from the events also included a number of comments from retailers in the town centre indicating their appetite to be more engaged in events to maximise their impact to increase customer spend at their shops. In order to improve engagement, the Town Council has scheduled a town centre business engagement event for January 2023. This will provide an opportunity to:

- Give an overview of the project
- Set out proposals for future events
- Gather suggestions for changes and additions to the future events programme
- Consult on options for utilising the capital funding within the programme
- Explore how retailers can drive more custom from the planned events

- Establish how retailers would prefer to be engaged in the project and wider town centre developments

3.5 Work continues to develop the approach for marketing and promotion of events and attractions, including on-line. Improvements to the on-line events calendar are being made to allow event organisers to directly add events. An update on promotion will be provided to the Board at its meeting.

3.6 Newark Town Council are developing a proposal for spending the capital allocation of the of the project (£1.5m) in order to support and sustain the new and enhanced events programme, improve wayfinding and enhance the attractiveness and ambience of the town centre. This proposal will be based on data being collected in relation to the events programme, work commissioned from Leonard Design architects, input from retailers in the retail engagement sessions, and benchmarking with comparable towns. It is likely that any significant public realm development will be identified through the Town Centre Masterplan (which is due to be commissioned in November 2022 and complete in late spring 2023), given the limited scope of the capital available. This will ensure that changes are fully integrated and aligned to the Masterplan and that a more ambitious scale of change is possible.

#### **4.0 Next steps**

4.1 As indicated above, the events programme for 2023-24 is now under development and will be refined in light of the business engagement event and the steer provided by the project board. The £200k of Towns Fund allocated for 2023-24 will again be matched by an equivalent commitment from Newark Town Council.

4.2 The Full Business Case (FBC) for the project is now under development with specialist resource due to be appointed by Newark and Sherwood District Council. Newark Town Council will be the lead client for this work and the FBC is due to be approved by the end of March 2023, including consideration by the Town Deal Board.

4.3 In parallel with the development of the FBC, the options for use of the Towns Fund capital (£1.5m) will be assessed and recommendations for this are due to come to the Cultural Heart of Newark project Board meeting in December for first consideration ahead of consideration by town centre businesses at the event in January and reporting back to the Town Deal Board in the new year.

#### **5.0 RECOMMENDATION**

That the Town Deal Board **note** the update and **endorse** the planned next steps.

#### **Background Papers**

For further information please contact Ian Harrison at [ian.harrison@newark.gov.uk](mailto:ian.harrison@newark.gov.uk)

Author: Michael Rich

Title: Interim Consultant (Economic Growth), Newark & Sherwood District Council

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