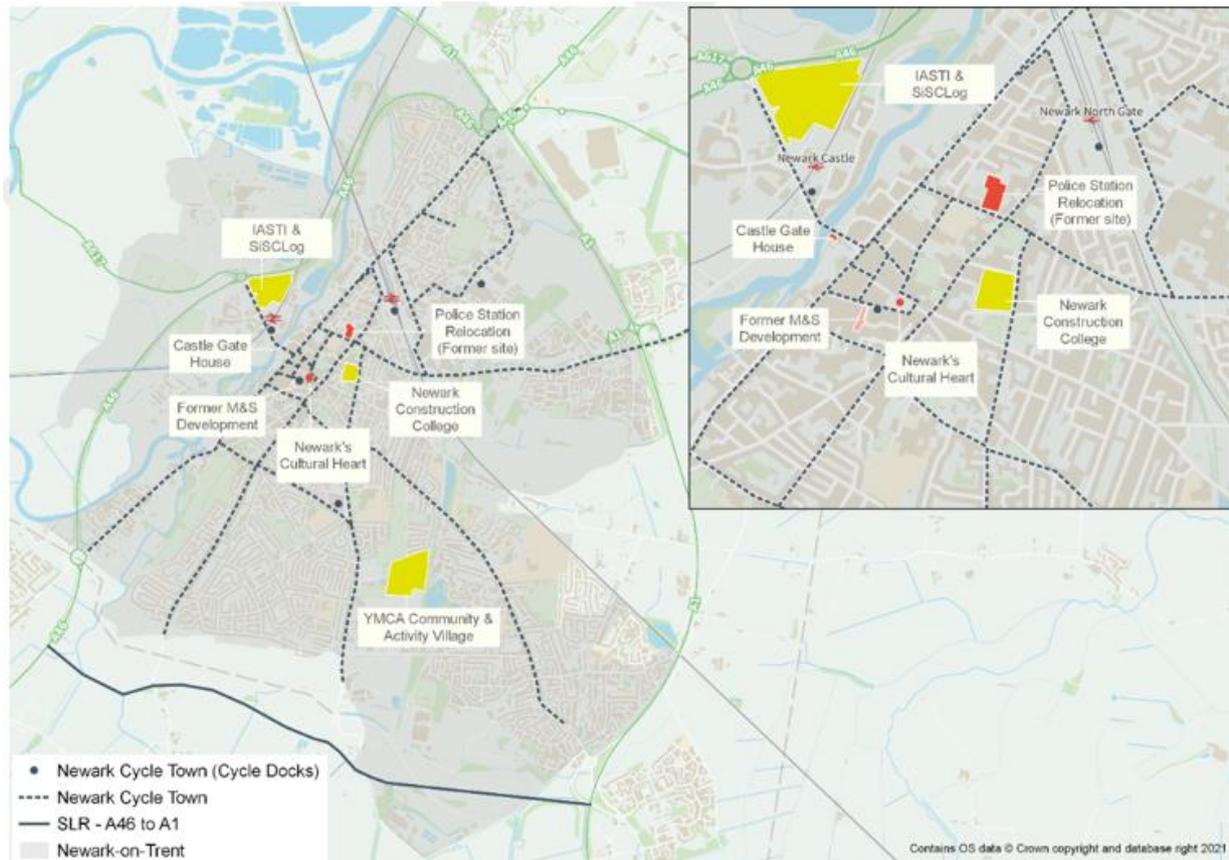


POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE
23 SEPTEMBER 2021

NEWARK TOWNS FUND UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To update on the Newark Town Deal projects.



2.0 Updates

Business Case Development

2.1 Members will be aware that the Economic Development Committee received the latest update on the Towns Fund program and projects at the meeting held on 8 September. At that meeting updates confirmed that Business Case Development was progressing at pace with the YMCA Community & Activity Village having been formally submitted to the Council as accountable body. At the time of writing approval is pending from the Council's s151 Officer. It is expected that the Full Business Case will be assured and Summary Document submitted to the Government within the next 4 weeks.

2.2 Business Cases for all of the other Towns Fund projects continue to be developed, in accordance with the following timetable:

Project	Project Sponsor	Expected sign-off
20 Minute Town	NSDC	November 2021
32 Stodman Street	NSDC	September 2021
Castle Gatehouse	NSDC	March 2022
Cultural Heart of Newark	NSDC	March 2022
IASTI®	Lincoln College Group	November 2021
Police Station Relocation	Nottinghamshire Police/NSDC	TBC
SiScLog (Newark Gateway site)	University of Lincoln/NSDC	January 2021

Program and Delivery Manager Recruitment

- 2.3 Members will recall previous support for the creation of a Town Investment Program Manager in order to oversee the delivery of the Towns Fund program and individual projects. The [recruitment process](#) has closed, with interviews taking place at the end of September.

Project Updates

- 2.4 In addition to the YMCA Community & Activity Village, Members will be aware from the Economic Development Committee papers that the Newark Construction College Centre of Excellence is now complete and is home to additional opportunities for 16-18 year olds and adults to progress in joinery, plumbing, bricklaying and gas testing. The site has been transformed as captured below.

Prior to redevelopment (2020)



Complete



- 2.5 The IASTI® (Newark) and SiSCLog projects which collectively comprise the redevelopment of the Newark Gateway site (the former Livestock Market and Lorry Park) also continue to develop. Following an open tender process, a preferred demolition contractor for the Livestock Market has been appointed. Demolition will take place in from early October until late November, with the site being hoarded until such time as the IASTI® development starts on site. A planning application for the IASTI® (Newark) development will likely be submitted in October.



- 2.6 The University of Lincoln and Universities for Nottingham continue to work with the Council and industry to develop the SiSCLog aspirations. Work includes working with industry via focus groups, the hosting of a Growth Conference on 15 October 2021, and plans to welcome a symposium of logical industry organisations to explore current trends, research and technological change in the logistics sector. With respect to site assembly and delivery Soft Market Testing (SMT) with developers is taking place with a view to concluding the Business Plan and assembling the site as part of the grant funding process.

Newark Cycle Town

- 2.10 Guided by the principle of the '20 minute town' detailed within the TIP this project targets an affordable bike hire scheme for residents, employers and employees which seeks a model shift for connectivity through walking and cycling.

- 2.11 Achieving the 20 minute town vision requires a long term, holistic approach to planning and place making. The scheme, as a starting intervention, seeks to capitalise on the existing popularity of cycling within Newark and the nationally evidenced increase in the popularity of cycling, with recently emerging figures showing that over the course of the last year participation in cycling has risen by 46%. In 2020, we saw the highest level of cycling on the public highway since the 1960s and the greatest year-on-year increase in post-war history, with many people having started cycling for shorter journeys, saving appreciable amounts of pollution, noise and CO2. Locally, website analytics for the NSDC's own cycling-dedicated pages show a vast surge in people seeking information on cycling during lockdown, providing a strong indicator of potential demand. In April 2021 the 'Cycling in Newark & Sherwood' web page received 10,987 hits, representing 7.32% of the total 150,169 hits on the Council website.
- 2.12 It is proposed to create several (up to 4) cycling hubs, offering bikes available for hire across the town. Hubs are likely to be sited at the two rail stations (for Castle Station it is proposed that the hub will be at Castle House), bus station, and town centre. The proposed bike hire offer will be pitched at a price point that would make it an affordable option for those in education and training, with potential to secure the 'buy-in' of large local employers, offering subsidised packages to a pool of potential users. Additionally, discounted community memberships will support enhanced mobility the most underrepresented and economically deprived communities.
- 2.13 The project sits alongside work underway via Nottinghamshire County Council and the D2N2 LEP focussed on cycling routes and associated infrastructure in the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LC-WIP). This bike-hire proposal will sit alongside infrastructure planning work, seeking to serve as a catalyst to grow demand, users, and integration with existing sustainable travel options.
- 2.14 The basis of this project has been shaped through discussions with Brompton Bike Hire. However, in the interests of transparency, a competitive procurement exercise will be undertaken, seeking a service operator who will work in partnership with the Council and the Town Board to deliver a scheme that meets Newark's requirements and contributes towards the overall TIP vision for enhanced connectivity.
- 2.15 Members are now invited to support a formal procurement exercise, in addition to securing employers to also sign-up. The procurement will seek the following:
- Provision of bikes for hire within the Newark Urban Area
 - Installation of secure bike storage infrastructure – 'cycle hubs' and bikes, cognisant of the bike theft challenges in the town
 - A rental process that offers an affordable, subsidised (in identified cases), simple and straightforward experience for users of all ages (including identifying age/gender/social gaps)
 - Flexibility of branding both bikes and hubs to in order to show
 - A scheme which is sufficiently flexible and scalable, allowing appropriate increase of supply as and when demand and/or additional funding arises (including match funding from local businesses)
 - A commitment to working proactively with the Council and other community stakeholders in finding innovative ways to promote wider participation in cycling
 - A commitment to securing local employers as advocates and users of the hire scheme

- Offering 'bikeability' training to equip people with the skills needed to ride confidently around the town
- Working with the Council and other partners to promote and support group activities and other cycling-focused events (e.g. such as national cycle races) to raise the profile of cycling in the town

2.16 Early discussions with large local employers has revealed a positive response to the proposals, with verbal expressions of interest in exploring match funding options, offering subsidised Corporate Memberships, sponsoring additional automated docks in other locations, or provision of virtual docks within the partner's own premises – all of which supporting increased numbers of bikes available and higher participation.

3.0 Equalities Implications

3.1 Each TIP project is required to specifically address equalities and access implications as they are developed. This will be captured through the scheme and Business Case submissions.

4.0 Digital Implications

4.1 There are digital implications within many of the TIP plans and projects identified, with the need to ensure appropriate digital infrastructure, skills and future innovative and creative employment opportunities being key to many objectives. Each project will be required to identify this as they progress.

5.0 Financial Implications (FIN21-22/1287)

5.1 A budget of £275,000 in relation to the demolition of the vacant livestock market was secured at the November 2020 Policy & Finance meeting, as was a £200,000 budget to progress the Newark Gateway development feasibility work.

5.2 The £2m funds for the YMCA Community and Activity Village were added to the Council's Capital program following the June 2020 meeting cycle. This is also the case for the additional post of Town Investment Program Manager.

5.3 As part of the Towns Fund bid, £200,000 has been offered in relation to the Cycle Town project. Paragraphs 2.10 to 2.16 above describe the project and it is currently anticipated that the delivery of this project can be kept within the Council's £200,000 estimate, albeit the total value may be larger, depending on the amount of private sector match funding into the project. The approval of a procurement process to find a delivery partner is being sought from this report, which will identify further the cost of the project and the scope of membership that can be offered to employers as private match. As a minimum, it is expected that private match should total £50,000.

6.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

6.1 The Newark Town Deal and TIP is a direct intervention of such scope and breadth that it significantly contributes to delivering all of the Council's Community Plan objectives.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

- (a) Members note the updates provided;**
- (b) Members approve £200,000 being added to the Capital Programme in relation to the Cycle Town project of the Town Investment Fund programme, funded by the Towns Fund; and**
- (c) Members support the Newark Cycle Town project, supporting that a full procurement takes place and that the Council's land-holding at Castle House adjacent to Castle Rail Station, be a location for a cycle hire hub subject to receipt of private match funding of no less than £50,000 in the form of sign-up from local employers.**

Reason for Recommendations

To continue the development the Newark Towns Strategy and Investment Plan.

Background Papers

Newark Town Investment Plan (July 2020)

Newark Towns Fund Assurance Framework (June 2021)

For further information please contact Matt Lamb on Ext. 5842

Matt Lamb

Director – Planning & Growth