



Report to: Cabinet Meeting - 14 May 2024

Portfolio Holders: Councillor Paul Peacock, Strategy, Performance & Finance
 Councillor Matthew Spoons, Sustainable Economic Development

Director Lead: Matt Lamb, Director - Planning & Growth

Lead Officer: Neil Cuttell, Business Manager - Economic Growth & Visitor Economy, Ext. 5853.

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report, Key Decision
Report Title	Newark Long Term Plan for Towns Fund
Purpose of Report	To outline the next steps in progressing the Newark Long Term Plan for Towns funding opportunity including the creation of the required Vision (including alignment with the Newark Town Centre Masterplan & Design Code) and the three-year Investment Plan for 2024-2027 (referred to as the Town Investment Plan 2, TIP2 for ease).
Recommendations	That Cabinet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) note the update on the Long-Term Plan for Towns Fund for Newark; and b) recommend to Newark Towns Board a number of Newark & Sherwood District Council priority projects and programs we would wish to be considered by them in the preparation of the Newark LTPfT Fund Investment Plan (TIP2), as detailed at paragraph 2.3 of the report.
Alternative Options Considered	<p>The Council do have the option not to accept the opportunity of the Long-Term Town Fund. This has been discounted as an option on the basis that the funding presents another opportunity to work with partners to achieve genuine transformational change for the Newark Community, aligning fully with the objectives of a range of partners and NSDC's own stated objectives within the Community Plan (2023).</p> <p>NSDC also has the option not to promote to the Newark Towns Board any priorities, projects, or programs. This is also discounted on the basis that the Council's priorities and Community Plan has been shaped with many partners and communities and there are a number of projects upon which</p>

	the Council will lead which could deliver genuine, long-term, and legacy transformational change.
Reason for Recommendations	The LTPfT opportunity will allow sufficient funding to unlock a range of outputs and allow the Council to deliver on a range of shared priorities if they are also agreed by the Newark Towns Board and are included in the proposed TIP2.

1.0 **Background**

- 1.1 In October 2023, the LTPfT was announced by government and fifty-five towns in the UK were identified for an investment of £20m over 10 years to drive ambition and regeneration within Towns. Newark was one of the fifty-five towns identified for this opportunity. To secure this funding, government have stipulated that Newark will need to develop a 10 year Town Plan Vision and a 3 year Investment Plan. Both plans will be shaped and adopted by a Towns Board with mandated representation including community leaders, employers, local authorities and the MP.
- 1.2 In March 2024, Newark & Sherwood District Council took the lead on facilitating the Newark Town Board and its membership. The Newark Town Board was originally set up in January 2020 with on the remit of developing the Towns Fund Town Investment Plan (TIP1) and subsequent submission, in July 2020, for a £25m funding opportunity. The first meeting of the renewed Newark Town Board took place on the 1st March 2024, and then a second meeting on the 28th March 2024. The Town Board now has monthly meetings programmed up to July 2024 to ensure that there is oversight and strategic direction in the creation of the Investment Plan. The Board will continue to operate beyond this submission date on at least a quarterly frequency.
- 1.3 The Government have provided updated guidance on the Town Board membership and sought to ensure that areas make the local Board inclusive. The guidance has stated that the Chair of the Board cannot be an elected representative, and that membership should include strong community presence, as well as participation from the private sector, education and government. The Town Board continues to have memberships which represent a range of stakeholders, including the guidance provided by Government. Mr Tom Cartlegde (Benoy, Nottingham Forest Football Club) has been elected as the Chair of the Board.
- 1.4 The Government have also provided an updated data pack that contains analysis of Newark across a series of statistical measures and identifies why the priorities are recognized. The data pack is open to the public and can be found here; [Newark-on-Trent -local data profile \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) The identified priorities of the Long-Term Town Fund are:
- Safety & Security
 - High Streets, Heritage & Regeneration
 - Transport and Connectivity

- 1.5 The Town Board has identified, as an opportunity to shape its strategic thinking, the Newark Masterplan, the development of which started in September 2023 with adoption anticipated in Summer 2024. The Town Board recognises the synergy between the Town Vision being developed and the TIP2 submission by 1 August 2024. When approved, the Government will release to this Council £1.6m Capital and £0.4m Revenue per annum for 10 years through to 2033/34 subject to submission of three yearly Investment Plans.
- 1.6 Newark & Sherwood District Council is identified as the accountable body for the Long-Term Town Fund and will act as facilitator and secretariat of the Newark Town Board. The Council has a community leadership role in bringing forward the creation of the Vision within the Newark Masterplan, and working with partners to deliver a Town Investment Plan that is agreed by the Board and owned by the Community.

Newark Town Centre Masterplan & Design Code

- 1.7 The Newark Masterplan was jointly commissioned by Historic England and Newark & Sherwood District Council in September 2023. The Masterplan intends on setting out the Vision for the Town, key principles and objectives, a design code, and interventions that may assist in achieving the Vision. The commissioned consultants are undertaking a programme of activity that includes a comprehensive consultation programme enacted in October 2023 to February 2024 that allows the community to shape and influence the creation of the Masterplan. During these dates over 1,500 responses have been received through workshops, questionnaires, and engagement exercises including a market stall presence and involvement with students at the local college.
- 1.8 The Newark Masterplan is due for completion in August 2024, and the substantial Vision will be submitted within the Long-Term Town Fund Investment Plan on 1 August 2024. As of May 2024, the programme for the Masterplan is at the point of testing the draft vision with key stakeholders and reviewing the key themes and objectives with Historic England and Newark and Sherwood District Council. The Newark Masterplan website contain information on the programme, consultation and emerging vision and priorities and can be viewed here: [Newark Masterplan Website](#).

2.0 Option and Recommendations

Long Term Plan for Towns (LTPfT) Fund

- 2.1 In developing the Long-Term Town Fund Investment Plan a long list of programmes and projects is being collated by the Council for appraisal by the Town Board. These interventions will be assessed against the emerging Newark Vision, an economic and social appraisal, community need, project maturity, and a benefit cost ratio. This will allow all the variables to be considered to utilise the grant funding provided to achieve the best outcomes and impact within the designated time. Further the assessment will also consider how the funding can be utilised as leverage for other funding programmes to have a greater impact for the community on agreed projects, this could include future resources from the East Midlands County Combined Authority, Lottery Funded Programmes, and Shared Prosperity Fund.

2.2 Newark & Sherwood District Council would also propose a series of interventions whereupon the Council will lead on the programme or project. The Council has identified the projects through the Community Plan, residents survey and engagement with stakeholders and would therefore propose these projects to the Town Board for investment from the Long-Term Town Fund.

2.3 Council-led projects are at various stages of maturity and are detailed below for:

1. Newark Market Place and Events: the Market Place remains a Jewel In the Crown and has come through strongly as a place where there is potential to encourage greater use, function and activity, including physical, seating, and public realm enhancements. The Market Place is already identified as a site for change as part of the Newark Cultural Heart Towns Fund project, supported by £1.5m capital grant. It is considered that the Council, in partnership or liaison with Newark Town Council, could raise ambitions for transformation change further if additional LTPfT grant funding were made available for both physical change, and a calendar of ongoing events;
2. Stodman Street Phase 2 (St Marks): As detailed elsewhere on this agenda, the St Marks site is identified in need of change and repurposing. Whilst the Council will consider acquisition to secure control (also utilising Towns Fund 1 support) significant additional grant will likely be required to deliver future ambitions.
3. Enhanced CCTV: A detailed feasibility business case has been undertaken in relation to CCTV monitoring and options to bring the service in house in order to deliver significant CCTV improvements. This was presented to Cabinet in December 2023 and the detailed feasibility report returned to cabinet for consideration and approval in March 2023. Cabinet approved the consideration of progressing this project subject to Long Term Town Fund approval and noted the significant benefits this project would offer in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour alongside event co-ordination and management.
4. Creative Spaces and Palace Theatre Transformation: A partnership was developed in early 2024 to design a project that would build, refurbish and reinvigorate spaces for culture and creativity in Newark with a focus on creative industry skills and career pathways. This proposal was approved through a Portfolio Holder decision in March 2024. Partners plan to develop physical and digital spaces in Newark where high-quality activity happens, supporting, developing and retaining technical creative skills. The project will build transformational new dressing rooms and a studio at the Palace Theatre, providing modern accessible facilities for staff and performers, community groups and the NPO-funded theatre participation programme, futureproofing the sustainability and viability of this historic building and cultural hub. Digital cinema equipment will be installed in the theatre, increasing access to world-class arts and community screenings, linking to content created by young people through the other project venues. In the partner venues it will: convert buildings at Newark College into a dynamic digital hub for film/media students, refurbish workshops and create a new music venue in the world-renowned School of Musical Instrument Crafts, and refurbish digital music facilities and recording studio at Magnus Academy for student and community use. Solar-powered lighting will be installed at St Mary's Church, improving and enhancing the ambitious NLHF funded restoration and activity plan.

5. Grant Regimes – Members will be aware that the Council has successfully developed proposals under the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) & Rural Prosperity Funds (RPF) between 2022-2025. Projects and programs across 3 thematic priorities (Supporting Business, Community & Environment, and People & Skills) have proven successful in helping local businesses and students thrive. It is recommended that a similar and ongoing grant regime could be created and administered for the lifetime of the LTPfT plans, allowing business and community groups ongoing access and opportunity to bid into funding.
6. Sustainable Public Transport: movements and active travel within and around the Town remain critical to the future success of communities, residents and businesses. The work undertaken on Active Travel and the need for strategic thinking on public transport priorities, penetration, and sustainability will all contribute to creating a future Town which is fit for purpose. Whilst it is accepted that this agenda may be beyond what a single organisation or the LTPfT available budget can achieve it is nevertheless important that any future Plan seeks to address this issue.

2.4 The Council will, in undertaking the role as accountable body for the LTPfT funds, require some capacity funding to facilitate the Town Board, undertake active consultation and communication on the projects, monitor and evaluate the projects and complete the relevant due diligence for government. This is yet to be defined but will be raised, subject to agreement, with the Board. For awareness a similar approach was taken with respect to the Newark Towns Fund where a proportion of funding was set aside to fund project management, program management, and communications.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Financial Implications (FIN24-25/1809)

3.1 Detailed financial implications for all projects will be investigated as an integral part of assuring each project's business case. These will be presented for consideration at Cabinet, ensuring a robust approach to the viability and sustainability of each project.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None