



Report to: Cabinet Meeting: 14 October 2025

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Paul Peacock – Strategy, Performance & Finance  
Councillor Claire Penny - Sustainable Economic Development

Director Lead: Matt Lamb, Director - Planning & Growth  
Sanjiv Kohli, Deputy Chief Executive & Director - Resources

Lead Officers: Neil Cuttall, Business Manager - Economic Growth & Visitor Economy  
Sarah Husselbee - Economic Grants and Programmes Manager  
Bonnie Mitchell - Newark Cultural Heart Programme Manager (Events & Market Place)

Report Summary	
<b>Type of Report</b>	Open Report / Key Decision
<b>Report Title</b>	Newark Towns Deal Projects Update
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To provide an update on the local delivery of the UK Government's Towns Deal programme and the progress made in relation to remaining and completed scheme projects.
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) note the updates associated with the Towns Deal projects, including the revised scheme name of the 'Local Regeneration Fund', as detailed in 1.3 of this report;</li> <li>b) approve an additional revenue budget of £40,000 funded by the Change Management Reserve, towards the design phase of the Newark Market Place improvement scheme (Newark Cultural Heart), as detailed in paragraph 2.10 of this report and;</li> <li>c) approves delegated authority for the Deputy Chief Executive / Director – Resources in consultation with Council's Director - Planning &amp; Growth, for the Council to enter into a varied or new lease agreement via a surrender and regrant with Newark Town Council, as detailed in paragraph 2.14 of the report.</li> </ul>
<b>Alternative Options Considered</b>	It remains an option for the Council to decline to participate within the remaining activity associated with the Towns Deal scheme (or newly re-named Local Regeneration Fund), refusing to accept grant funding and deliver final projects. This approach is not recommended as it would represent a missed opportunity to deliver transformative change within Newark.

<b>Reason for Recommendations</b>	To ensure Members are aware of the recent updates and developments associated with the Towns Deal programme, and to support the progression of remaining and live schemes.
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## 1.0 **Background**

- 1.1 The UK Government's Towns Deal was first announced in November 2019 as £3.6bn fund designed to invest in 100 towns across the country and address the challenges recognised by the Government. The scheme prospectus notes that "Towns do not always have the fundamental building blocks of a strong local economy in place. The evidence shows they can face some significant challenges: an ageing population without the skills necessary to attract new firms; fewer people going on to and returning from higher education, fewer economic opportunities in the surrounding region; and less direct foreign investment than in cities. Growth is held back where this is compounded by poor transport and digital connectivity."
- 1.2 In July 2020, local proposals for scheme delivery were developed by the Council with support from the local governing board, the Newark Town Board. This included the creation of a 2020 Town Investment Plan, setting out the 30-year ambition for programme investment within Newark. Proposals were required to demonstrate long term economic and productivity growth through investment in connectivity, land use, economic assets including cultural assets, skills and enterprise infrastructure. The priority projects identified and approved for Newark were:
- Air and Space Institute - to create new jobs locally and train the next generation of skills-matched aviation professionals with military and civil partners including pilots, engineers and ground staff.
  - YMCA Newark and Sherwood Community and Activity Village - constructing a new state of the art home to sports and leisure facilities, music and art spaces, conferencing, a wellbeing and health delivery service suite, culinary training, an outdoor skate park and an Olympic climbing wall.
  - The Castle Gatehouse project - to enhance the experience of Newark's foremost historical asset and transform the Castle into a major attraction for residents and visitors alike.
  - The redevelopment of 32 Stodman Street (the former Marks and Spencers) - to create high quality Town Centre residential living and new commercial and office space, creating activity and footfall.
  - Newark Cultural Heart - to support increased footfall, dwell time and an enhanced public space through a combination of a) Town Centre events delivery and the animation of spaces and b) Public realm improvements for Newark Market Place.
  - 20 Minute Cycle Town - to work with a range of partners to transform Newark into a '20-minute town', giving people the ability to meet most of their everyday needs within a 20-minute walk, cycle or local public transport trip from their home.
- 1.3 On 2 September 2025, the UK Government announced the shift from Towns Deal as known to date to become part of the new 'Local Regeneration Fund'. This fund is described as a consolidation of existing local growth capital funds (Levelling Up Fund, Town Deals, and the Pathfinder Pilot) and changes are intended to empower local

authorities, accelerate project delivery and improve value for money. The full amount of funding will continue to be available for all committed projects across the existing LUF 3 and Towns Deal programmes. Changes to projects are expected to be felt predominantly in terms of monitoring, reporting and branding arrangements, as well as flexibility associated with the change control process. Any further updates received regarding the amended scheme will be shared in due course, noting a revised and consolidated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be issued by the UK Government, with a legal review, prior to completion.

## **2.0 Projects Update**

2.1 Several local Towns Deal projects have now successfully completed, and the impact and outcomes of investment continue to be monitored closely by the Council and partners, and reported to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). This includes collecting and analysing a range of economic growth and community development related metrics, in both qualitative and quantitative forms.

2.2 There are three projects remaining to complete within the Towns Fund portfolio; Castle Gatehouse, 32 Stodman Street and Newark Cultural Heart, however these projects are now well advanced in their development or delivery. Project progress and risks continue to be monitored by the project teams from a delivery perspective, as well as at a programme level to ensure compliance with funding requirements and key grant deadlines.

### **2.3 Castle Gatehouse**

2.4 The exciting and transformational project will secure the castles future, deliver an improved public access and visitor experience and enhance and protect the surrounding gardens and green space. Following Full Business Case (FBC) approval, the project is progressing well in terms of its delivery, with works starting on site in July 2025. Public consultations took place this summer, with the site now remaining closed until completion. Cabinet may be aware that the project team has experienced delays due to archaeology findings on site however the project remains forecasted to complete by Autumn 2026 and the works timeline will continue to be monitored closely.

### **2.5 32 Stodman Street**

2.6 Activity is progressing on site at 32 Stodman Street, with the scheme expected to be complete in Summer 2026. The project is being carried out in several phases with internal works now within phase 1. The project was previously delayed due to archaeology findings on site; however, activity is now proceeding as expected and risks continued to be monitored by the project team. The commercial units to be delivered as part of the scheme are now being advertised, with positive interest shown to date.

### **2.7 Newark Cultural Heart**

2.8 The Newark Cultural Heart programme comprises both an events and animation project and a public realm improvement scheme for the Newark Market Place. Working together with delivery partners Newark Town Council, Lincoln College Group

and Newark Cultural Consortium, the town centre events, and animation plan was approved by the Newark Town Board Chairs and is underway for 2025/2026. An evaluation of the events programme will also be completed to identify the impact that it has delivered.

- 2.9 In February 2025 the Council commissioned, with the support of delivery partner Newark Town Council, the next stage of design and feasibility work for the Market Place. The Newark Market Place improvement scheme has since progressed to its next stage of development following a Newark Town Council Member briefing on 2 September 2025. In their role as both leaseholders of the space and operators of Newark Royal Market, the Town Council is closely involved in the design process and remain committed to its development. The Town Council agreed the layout of the space and the following design principles within the approved initial design; trees, planting, benches, alfresco dining, market stalls in the central and eastern areas of the Market Place and lighting including catenary wires. This now concludes RIBA stage 2 design and feasibility works.
- 2.10 Due to delays with stakeholder feedback and negotiations on the initial designs, there has been an increased number of design reiterations, with associated cost implications. There is therefore an additional revenue budget requirement of £40,000 to facilitate and conclude the final stage of designs. Future scheme costs, beyond this amount and following final design stages, would then be capitalised and funded by government grant. This remains subject to Full Green Book Business Case (FBC) approval by the Newark Town Board, the Council's Cabinet and the Section 151 Officer, in accordance with assurance processes.
- 2.11 To progress the final designs and feasibility works, the Council will continue to collaborate with key partners and stakeholders including Newark Town Board, Newark Town Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Historic England and Nottinghamshire Police.
- 2.12 Local Authority Planning consent is not required for the project works, however consent from Nottinghamshire County Council will be necessary to proceed with highway works. Substructure materials and depths will need to be compliant with National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) standards.
- 2.13 In evolving the design recommendations and feedback, the Town Council has agreed to a revised market layout accommodating 45 semi-permanent market stalls, with flexibility to increase this number with pop-up stalls. Furthermore, as operators of the market service, Newark Town Council will seek to relocate Newark Market for a period of 12 months to allow the Market Place scheme to be implemented.
- 2.14 NSDC is the Landlord of the Newark Market Place, with Nottinghamshire County Council responsible for the highways and footpaths within the space. NSDC leased all of its Market Place demise to Newark Town Council on a 99-year lease agreement which began in April 2015, ending on 31 March 2114. Upon agreement of a final design for the scheme, a varied or new lease agreement via a surrender and regrant between Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC) and Newark Town Council is required. At present, NSDC does not have authority to implement any scheme without consent from the Town Council and there would be implications in respect of any works and

the existing repairing obligations. A varied or new lease agreement will need to be finalised with Newark Town Council and include provision for ongoing management, use, maintenance, repairs and standards, roles and responsibilities, and licensing powers. With this in mind, it is recommended that delegated authority is given to the Deputy Chief Executive/Director – Resources in consultation Council’s Director - Planning & Growth, to enter into a varied or new lease agreement via a surrender and regrant for the Market Place with Newark Town Council.

- 2.15 Through the emerging Newark Town Centre Masterplan and Design Code, the Market Place remains a key focus with redevelopment plans being actively shaped. This includes continued resident and stakeholder engagement taking place throughout September 2025. Following on from this, public and trader engagement specific to Newark Market Place is planned for the next design stage of the project and will conclude late 2025.
- 2.16 Key work strands associated with the next steps of the Market Place improvement scheme delivery include finalisation of the lease agreement requirements, final designs and feasibility works and highways approvals, all of which support the development of the FBC. A further report will be brought to Cabinet in early 2026 to seek Cabinet approval for the FBC. Upon FBC approval, government grant funding stipulates a requirement for spend by March 2028.

### 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.

#### Legal Implications – LEG2526/8941

- 3.1 Cabinet is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report. The Legal team will need to be instructed in relation to the negotiation and completion of the Lease or variation of Lease with Newark Town Council.

#### Financial Implications (FIN25-26/5699)

- 3.2 The following budgets are available for the projects mentioned within this report:

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Total budget</b>	<b>Towns Deal Grant</b>
<b><i>Capital</i></b>		
Stodman Street	12,880,000	3,980,000
Castle Gatehouse	6,564,860	3,310,000
Cultural Heart Market Place	3,610,000	3,610,000
<b><i>Revenue</i></b>		
Cultural Heart Events	650,000	600,000
Cultural Heart Market Place	201,737	93,737

- 3.3 As shown above, the Cultural Heart Revenue has been increased by £50,000, funded from Plans for Neighbourhoods grant to support the final year of events and evaluation, as approved by the Town Board and Section 151 Officer.
- 3.4 The Cultural Heart Market place funding of £93,737 has been increased by £8,000 from existing revenue budgets, £100,000 Capital Feasibility Reserve and now requires a further £40,000 from Change Management taking the total to £241,737 to complete the feasibility stage.
- 3.5 The full costs of the scheme will be firmed up once the final design stage is complete and the FBC can be approved. At this point, the Capital budget will be accessible.

### **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.

### **Levelling Up Fund Round 3**

Levelling Up White Paper, 2022

Levelling Up Fund Prospectus and Guidance, 2022

Sherwood Levelling Up Bid, July 2022

Cabinet Report, Levelling Up Submission and UK Shared Prosperity Fund, June 2022

Cabinet Report, Sherwood Levelling Up Fund Update, November 2022

Cabinet Report, Ollerton Hall, July 2023

Cabinet Report, Ollerton Town Centre Regeneration and Bank purchase, December 2023

Cabinet Report, Sherwood Levelling Up 3 Update – Ollerton & Clipstone, March 2024

Cabinet Report, Sherwood Levelling Up 3 Update 2 – Ollerton & Clipstone, June 2024

Cabinet Report, Levelling Up Fund (LUF) 3 Update, July 2024

Cabinet Report, Sherwood Levelling Up, Long Term Plan for Towns Fund and UKSPF / UKRPF Fund Update, November 2024

Cabinet Report, Levelling Up 3 Programme Update, December 2024

Cabinet Report, Levelling Up 3 Programme Update, April 2025

### **Cabinet**

[14 May 2024, papers](#)

[14 May 2024, meeting report](#)

[24 September 2024, papers](#)

[24 September 2024, meeting report](#)

[18 February 2025, papers](#)

[18 February 2025, meeting report](#)

### **Newark Town Board**

[17 July 2020, meeting report](#)

[22 April 2021, papers](#)

[22 July 2021, papers](#)

[26 November 2021, meeting report](#)

[26 November 2021, papers](#)

[17 March 2022, papers](#)

[17 March 2022, meeting report](#)

[15 June 2022, papers](#)

[15 June 2022, meeting report](#)  
[17 November 2022, papers](#)  
[17 November 2022, meeting report](#)  
[15 March 2023, papers](#)  
[15 March 2023, meeting report](#)  
[1 March 2024, meeting report](#)  
[27 March 2024, papers](#)  
[27 March 2024, meeting report](#)  
[29 April 2024, papers](#)  
[29 April 2024, meeting report](#)  
[27 June 2024, papers](#)  
[27 June 2024, meeting report](#)  
[11 September 2024, meeting report](#)