

URGENCY ITEMS - MINUTE OF DECISION

Delegation arrangements for dealing with matters of urgency

Paragraph 7.2.1 of the Council's Constitution provides that Chief Officers may take urgent decisions if they are of the opinion that circumstances exist which make it necessary for action to be taken by the Council prior to the time when such action could be approved through normal Council Procedures. They shall, where practicable, first consult with the Leader and Chairman (or in their absence the Vice-Chairman) and the Opposition Spokesperson of the appropriate committee.

Given the current emergency in respect of the Covid 19 pandemic and the decision taken to suspend committee meetings while social distancing measures continue, the urgency decision provision under Paragraph 7.2.1 of the Council's Constitution has been widened to extend the consultation to include the Leaders of all the political groups on the Council.

Subject: **Newark Towns Fund – Submission of Town Investment Plan
Heritage Action Zone – Entering into Contract with Historic England**

Appropriate Committee: **Policy & Finance and Economic Development Committees**

Details of Item (including reason(s) for use of urgency procedure):

That the Chief Executive, utilising officer delegated powers will:

1. Submit to the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government (MCHLG) a copy of the Newark Town Investment Plan (TIP), as approved by the Newark Towns Board on or before 31 July 2020; and
2. Will enter into a contract on behalf of Newark & Sherwood District Council with Historic England for Newark to become a Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)

Newark Towns Fund and Town Investment Plan

In November 2019 Newark-On-Trent was one of 100 towns nationally identified as eligible to apply to Government for up to £25m. Proposals were required to be worked up via and approved by a Towns Board and reflected in the submission of a draft Towns Investment Plan to Government.

The Newark Towns Board has now met on 5 occasions and has worked to develop and agree Newark's challenges, an overall strategy for change and a number of flagship ambitious, transformational and critically deliverable projects with various organisations and industry. This strategy and investment is contained within a draft TIP which will now be presented to Government, which was approved by the Newark Towns Board on 17 July 2020. The TIP remains draft and not for publication until such time as the Government has agreed its contents and signed Heads of Terms with the Council to fund the projects. Such terms will be presented in due course, if, as, and when negotiations with the Government progress.

The TIP development process has involved extensive consultation with partners, the public, and local government. There have been 6 no. meetings of Towns Board sub groups which have focused on themes of 1) Education, Business and Skills, 2) Infrastructure, 3) Town Centre & Culture. There have been at least two presentations to all Town and Parish Councils within the towns fund area in addition to two briefings of all Members of the District Council. Public consultation was done remotely, using an online survey (over 1700 responses), CVS telephone interviews and a creative writing competition for schools in lockdown on the future of Newark. Cohort 1 of Towns Fund TIP submission must be made on or before 31 July 2020. After that, there is an up to 2 month period of negotiation with Government to agree Heads of Terms and a final TIP. There is then an up to 12 month period to develop businesses cases and draw down monies on any agreed projects. It is expected updates will be provided to the September and November cycles of Committee, notably Economic Development and Policy and Finance.

Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)

In May 2019 Historic England launched a Heritage High Street Action Fund (known as a HAZ) aimed at finding new ways to champion and revive historic high streets. 69 high streets across England, including Newark were successful at this expression of interest stage.

Since that time officers have been working with colleagues from Historic England to refine the HAZ boundary (Appendix 1) and agree the scope of the proposals, which will be:

- Urgent condition surveys and appraisals of key heritage at risk within the HAZ area, (including the Corn Exchange and former White Hart Inn);
- Shop front and upper floors 'development guide';
- Public realm and way-finding feasibility and visioning;
- Review of the local council tax and business rate regime to encourage repurposing and better utilisation of floor space, including upper floors;
- Tenant Advice document which will provide advice on how to approach lease and repair arrangements and good practice for re-negotiating leases (on both sides);
- Publication of a local book on Newark Heritage by Historic England.
- Creation of a cultural program of events, led by Inspire but created and delivered by a Cultural Consortium including NSDC.

In tandem with the above, the Newark Conservation Area Appraisal is to be completed by the end of 2020.

Equalities Implications

One of the key aims of the Cultural Programme is to engage with all members of the community. This work is on-going and will continue through the lifetime of the HAZ Scheme. We anticipate that new groups will form and we will make it a priority to seek out 'hard to reach' communities and encourage people to participate in our community and cultural activities and events. We are committed to moving from engagement and participation to partnership working and co-production with our communities.

Financial Implications

Towns Fund Revenue

Work to complete the TIP has been absorbed within the £162,019 awarded to the Council as part of its Towns Fund revenue allocation as part of the launch of the Towns Fund Prospectus in November 2019. Any additional revenue commitments will be sought from an additional revenue 'ask' as part of the TIP negotiation with Government

Towns Fund Capital

Some of the TIP proposals are on Council-owned land. Any detailed business case(s) for projects developed would need to be worked through in consultation with the Council. All will be subject to separate decisions, depending on budgetary timings by the Policy & Finance Committee and/or Full Council.

HAZ Revenue Current Year

For the current financial year, a total of £47,750 was expected to be committed by NSDC. This includes a contribution towards the HAZ officer post (this will be slightly less than anticipated due to the delay in appointment from April) and the tax and rates review. Modest sums would go towards key buildings such as the Corn Exchange and former White Hart. Historic England's contribution for this financial year is £86,250. See Appendix 2 for summary.

HAZ Revenue Future Years

For year 2021/22, NSDC contribution is £42,750

2022/23 - £23,250

2023/24 - £11,250

The total expenditure over the whole 4 years is £125k.

The remaining monies will be made up of £275k from Historic England and £150k from the private sector (eg. businesses who will contribute to shop front replacements).

Decision

1. Submit to the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government (MCHLG) a copy of the Newark Town Investment Plan (TIP), as approved by the Newark Towns Board on or before 31 July 2020; and
2. Entering into a contract on behalf of Newark and Sherwood District Council with Historic England for Newark to become a Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)

Reason for Decision

To secure funding for the transformational regeneration of the town and to protect and enhance the towns listed and non-listed assets.

Members Consulted:

**Councillor David Lloyd
Councillor Keith Girling
Councillor Paul Peacock
Councillor Peter Harris
Councillor Gill Dawn**

**22nd July 2020
22nd July 2020
Voicemail on 22nd July 2020
Voicemail on 22nd July 2020
22nd July 2020**

Signed 

Date 26 July 2020

APPENDIX 1

