

# MAKING MANSFIELD PLACE BOARD

## Agenda Item 6

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Towns Fund</b>
<b>Presenting authority / representative:</b>	Mansfield District Council Geoff George Regeneration Programmes and Projects Manager
<b>Report author and contact details:</b>	Geoff George <a href="mailto:ggeorge@mansfield.gov.uk">ggeorge@mansfield.gov.uk</a>
<b>Value of decision:</b> n/a	
<b>Partners affected:</b> All	<b>Date of consultation:</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
<b>Purpose</b>  This report provides the latest on the Towns Fund, referencing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The completion of the final project's Full Business Case (FBC) and its endorsement;</li><li>• A programme overview and confirmation of a submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on Monitoring and Evaluation Performance and Baseline Reporting.</li></ul>	
<b>Background</b>  Previous reports have set out the background of the Government's award of £12.3M to support the Town Investment Plan. This report offers details of the latest position.  Specifically, following the Board's previous endorsement of five projects, the work on the sixth and final project has been concluded. It has now been the subject of endorsement through consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair and submitted to DLUHC within the requested deadline of the 13 <sup>th</sup> January 2023. This is subject to the Board's attention and ratification of the endorsement of the submission as set out below.  Plus, the report confirms the submission to DLUHC of required Monitoring and Evaluation Performance and Baseline Reporting, submitted in line with a deadline of the 16 <sup>th</sup> December 2022, signed off by the Chair of the Board but requiring the full Board's attention.  Finally, the report will be accompanied by a verbal update on the latest on progressing all the Towns Fund projects.	
<b>Full Business Case Endorsement - Future Technology Skills Exchange (West Notts College)</b>  Board members will recall from previous meetings that the Town Investment Plan's final project the "Future Technology Skills Exchange" was the final project requiring completion of its FBC, the required consultation, approval process and endorsement by the Board. Board members will be pleased to note that this has now been completed (thus concluding the FBCs for all 6 of the Towns Fund) but subject to the Board's ratification of the endorsement by the Vice Chair of the Board.  Place Board members can be reassured that the Vision West Notts (VWNC) sponsored project was the subject of external assessment and review, confirming the acceptability of the FBC. Members will also recall each Towns Fund project was linked with a Place Board member, in this case to Mansfield Ashfield 2020 (MA2020) via Jane Box, Chair and Ella McManus, Director of Operations. Their comments were addressed to their satisfaction as part of the early consultation, summarised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There was no financial liability on MA2020, noting they were requested to be involved in a management group supporting its delivery and roll out. The ambition here is to secure a strong engagement with the</li></ul>	

Mansfield business community with MA2020 playing a helpful role in making this happen. The management group is an informal vehicle to help VWNC and NTU achieve the wider ambitions of the project and MA2020 are happy to participate;

- Clarification was requested on STEM and employer / student engagement and how digital developments could be factored in. Clarification was offered on this point and specifically on how the project will address the increasing expectations of / opportunities available to SMEs to do businesses digitally, to maximise their on line presence and the adoption of and investment in digital technologies. There are opportunities to support growth within the digital sector, the businesses that are at the forefront of digital development, facilitating investment in innovation and research and development. They can influence this as we go through the proposed management group.
- Finally discussion were held about linkages to other significant developments in the area, such as the Advanced Manufacturing facility in Ashfield. When partners met with the Levelling Up Task Force, we worked closely with Ashfield DC and VWNC / NTU on the agenda and in planning for the visit we discussed the synergies between the various projects being developed across the area and it was confirmed that there was a positive commitment to ensuring that the various projects are complementary and with VWNC and NTU actively involved in the respective projects, the projects will work closely together.

The FBC was then the subject of a presentation and review to the Council's Section 151 Officer and the project agreed, subject to conditions. A summary of the FBC with agreed recommendations was effected and **a copy accompanies this report for all Board members' review**. Ordinarily, the project would then have been the subject of endorsement by the Board but a deadline of the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2023 for receipt by DLUHC of all outstanding Project Summaries prevailed against this.

Given this, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board, a process was agreed whereby their endorsement could be achieved and the project submitted before this date; this being subject to the full Board's ratification of the decision at this Board meeting. On submission, DLUHC officials were informed of this process and an anticipated decision to be achieved at this Board meeting.

The Board will also note that the Chair of the Board Andrew Cropley absented himself from the endorsement process, given a conflict of interest with the project being sponsored by VWNC. In this light, the endorsement process was undertaken by the Vice Chair, Richard Crisp of the Mansfield Building Society. In endorsing the project, Richard sought (and was offered) confirmation that:

- The impact assessment, a condition of completion before signing-off, had been satisfactorily completed;
- The conclusion of planning issues was achievable;
- The valuation was required for drawing down EFSA match and was not for any third party land transaction - all land is owned by VWNC;
- The conclusions and conditions were suitably addressed and clarified.

The Project Summary was duly sent to DLUHC before the deadline, being subject to the Board's ratification of this decision.

Board members will note that a further revised Monitoring and Evaluation was submitted alongside the Project Summary, related to the wider returns made to DLUHC as outlined in the section below.

### **Project Monitoring and Submission to DLUHC - Performance and Baseline Reporting**

In November 2022, DLUHC wrote to all Towns Fund local authorities concerning requirements to carry out performance and assurance reviews of payments before the release of further funding and ensure delivery of the funds' objectives. This part of the report confirms that a submission was made in accordance with the [M&E guidance](#), and this will be a formal, twice yearly exercise to enable DLUHC to make annual payments in line with the schedule, the next payment being for financial year 2023/24.

A completed performance monitoring template and baseline template covering the period April to September 2022 were requested the deadline by Friday 16 December 2022. This was achieved within the timeline. Board members will note that DLUHC has confirmed receipt and acknowledged that all is looking well for passing on to the review stage.

The Council has also received a payment in accordance with the profile previously submitted. DLUHC confirmed this would not have been made unless summary documents and the associated Monitoring and Evaluation plans had not passed review. However, given the payments were based on the profile previously submitted, the subsequent Project Adjustment Request (reported at the October 2022 Board meeting) as submitted to DLUHC is subject to a formal decision. Both parties are looking to review the profile of expenditure now all six projects have completed and approved Full Business Cases submitted to government.

The returns were required not only to be signed by the Council's Section 151 Officer but by the Chair of the Place Board. As this deadline fell outside of our cycle of meetings, in agreement and consultation with the Chair, the return was signed by him, noting it would be the subject of formal endorsement by the Board at its meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023. The recommendations reflect this requirement.

More recently, Board members will note that DLUHC's Assurance and Compliance Team has written to the Council on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2025 seeking the completion of a Statement of Grant Usage form, to be signed off and returned by the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023. Assurance reviews form part of the assurance cycle, as indicated in the Levelling Up Funds Local Authority Assurance Framework. This will have to be signed off by the Council's Head of Finance and S151 Officer and is hand at the time of writing this report.

The Council remains in close contact with DLUHC and its regional representatives over required reporting and returns.

### **Towns Fund – Project Progress**

Overall, the submission to DLUHC of the final Project Submission demonstrates positive progress on the Towns Fund programme overall, noting the outstanding requirement of an agreement to the re-profile as referenced above. A summary of the position regarding the individual projects will be offered at a future meeting, with a report and presentation being offered.

The Board plays an important role in overseeing the strategic management of the programme and the endorsement of submissions to Government and at this stage, it can be confirmed that aside from the re-profiling, there are no concerns over progress with individual projects, with the risks being duly managed. The proposed report will also reflect on the most appropriate engagement of members on the respective projects going forwards, to be reviewed in the light of the Forward Plan governance arrangements being discussed elsewhere on this meeting's agenda.

#### **Exempt information:**

None

#### **Recommendation(s): It is recommended that the Board:**

- 1. Notes the submission of the final Project Summary for the Vision West Nottinghamshire College Future Technology Skills Exchange to DLUHC by their 13<sup>th</sup> January 2023 deadline and its sign-off on behalf of the Board by the Vice-Chair. The Board's ratification of this submission is sought;**
- 2. Notes the submission made to the Towns Fund Team at DLUHC, ratifying the Board's agreement to this submission having been made by the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022 deadline;**
- 3. Receives a verbal update on the individual projects and the overall summary progress with the programme, with a fuller report and presentation of progress with each project to follow at a future meeting.**

**1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

N/A

**2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)**

N/A

**3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 N/A

**4 DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN THIS REPORT**

4.1 N/A