

Sandwell Towns Fund Superboard Shortlisted Projects

2 October 2020

Subject:	Shortlisted Projects
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1 Recommendations

That the Superboard approves the Shortlisted Projects for inclusion in the Town Investment Plans for Rowley Regis, Smethwick and West Bromwich.

2 Purpose of the report

- 2.1 To outline the progress of the Towns Fund programme and to present the proposed shortlisted projects to Superboard for approval

3. Background and Main Considerations

- 3.1 On 6th September 2019 it was announced that 101 Towns had been identified by Government to benefit from the Towns Fund. In Sandwell, West Bromwich, Smethwick, and Rowley Regis were identified. On 1st November 2019, the Government released the Towns Fund prospectus, providing some additional information about the purpose and scope of the funding as well as setting out key timescales for progressing the Town Fund.
- 3.2 Detailed guidance on the Towns Fund was published in June 2020.

- 3.3 The objective of the fund is to drive the economic regeneration in Towns to deliver long term economic and productive growth through;
- 3.3.1 **Urban regeneration, planning and land use;** ensuring towns are thriving places for people to live and work, including by; increasing density in town centre, strengthening local economic assets including local cultural assets; site acquisition, remediation, preparation, regeneration; and making the full use of planning tools to bring strategic direction and change.
 - 3.3.2 **Skills and enterprise infrastructure:** driving private sector investment and ensuring towns have the space to support skills and small business development.
 - 3.3.3 **Connectivity:** developing local transport schemes that complement regional and national networks, as well as supporting the delivery of improved digital connectivity.
- 3.4 The Town Fund comprises £3.6b of funding across 101 towns. Investment of up to £25m in each Town is available. The amount of funding allocated to each Town will be based on the Town Deal agreed with Government. The Government will consider proposals for more than £25m in exceptional circumstances and this will be subject to additional scrutiny and process. Guidance has been given that Towns applying for more than £25m should have a strongly evidenced case for the regional / national significance of their project proposals.
- 3.5 In addition to the main fund, an accelerated funding announcement was made on 30 June 2020 for up to £750,000 for each Town for projects to be delivered in this financial year. Superboard approved the projects to be submitted for the accelerated funding on 5 August 2020.
- 3.6 The Superboard and three Local Boards have been established to oversee and shape the Sandwell Towns Fund Programme.
- 3.7 The first phase of the Towns Fund Programme is to submit a Town Investment Plan (TIP). Sandwell's 3 TIPs are due to be submitted on 30 October 2020 as part of Cohort 2.
- 3.8 A key part of the TIP is to identify a set of projects to be put forward for funding driven by a Vision for the Town and a set of Priorities. Details of the Visions and Priorities for each Town were shared with Superboard on 5 August and are included in Appendix A.

3.9 Project Prioritisation Process and Criteria

3.10 At its meeting on 5 August 2020, the Superboard approved a project prioritisation process and criteria to prioritise the project ideas generated into a set of projects within the TIP that represent the best chance to transform the Town's economic prospects and be successful against the Towns Fund criteria

3.11 A 4-staged process was approved as follows:

- Stage 1 – Sift the ideas generated to ensure that the project is broadly compatible with the criteria outlined in Towns Fund guidance and with Sandwell Council's aspirations as set out in the Vision 2030. This will lead to a long list of projects
- Stage 2 – Complete a project proforma for each project on the long list
- Stage 3 – Score the long list projects
- Stage 4 – Short list the projects based on the scoring to determine which projects will be included within the TIP for investment from Towns Fund.

3.12 Superboard approved that the following criteria be used to conduct the stage 1 sift:

- Vision 2030
- Economic Growth
- The Town's Towns Fund Priorities (as determined by the evidence base)
- Towns Fund objectives as stipulated within the MHCLG guidance
- Clean Growth
- Inclusive Economy Deal and Community Wealth Building Principles
- Potential for Match Funding

3.13 Superboard approved that the following criteria be used to score the long list projects (with those marked in bold carrying a heavier weighting)

- **Local Need** (*Strategic, evidence based, place focused rationale for the intervention*)
- **Local Support** (*Does the project have clear and evident stakeholder support?*)
- **Deliverability** (*Can the project be delivered within 5 years?*)
- **Longevity** (*What are the long term financial benefits? Are they sustainable?*)
- **Value for Money** (*Are the costs proportional and represent Value for Money*)
- Clean Growth (*Contribution to clean growth & environmental sustainability*)
- Inclusive Economy and Community Wealth Building Principles (*Is the project consistent with Inclusive Economy requirements?*)
- Match Funding (*Is there potential for match funding*)

3.14 The process and criteria have been applied and feedback sought on the proposed shortlisted projects from the Local Boards ahead of the launch of the resident's survey and youth engagement.

3.15 Projects that were identified through the Towns Fund process but are not proposed to be included in the shortlist are proposed for inclusion in a pipeline of interventions for each Town for future investment.

West Bromwich

3.16 Nine projects, totalling £36m, were put forward for the long list. These were considered in the prioritisation process.

3.17 Scores for the projects ranged from 64 to 111. The highest scoring projects within the £25m funding window have been put forward in the proposed shortlist.

3.18 The proposed shortlisted projects for West Bromwich are as follows: -

Project Name	Description	Provisional TIP Ask	Match Funding identified to date
West Bromwich Digital Den	Establishing a digital hub that enables digitally excluded residents to gain access to online training resources. This includes access for children to educational resources and helping the unemployed with career support.	£42,600	
West Bromwich Green Corridor	Creating new urban green spaces across West Bromwich, beginning with a central linear park, building a route through the town up to Dartmouth Park, alongside a revamped outdoor Town Centre market offer.	£2.2m	Arts Council amount tbc
West Bromwich Town Hall Quarter	Relocation of public services into the Town hall and Central library on West Bromwich High Street by extending the existing building and opening up space for community organisations and business.	£8.1m	£100,000 – Council disability access budget £250,000 from partner tbc
West Bromwich Travel Scheme	Improved cycling and walking routes linking Sandwell Valley, Dartmouth Park, The Town Centre and throughout West Bromwich.	£3.2m	

Project Name	Description	Provisional TIP Ask	Match Funding identified to date
Securing Sandwell's Engineering: The Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering Centre	The project will regenerate Sandwell' College's 'Engineering Centre', based in Phoenix Street in West Bromwich. The Project will deliver new opportunities in construction and engineering for local adults and young people.	£2.2m - £3.7m	c.£330,000 – Sandwell College
West Bromwich Town Centre development	A comprehensive regeneration and transformation of the West Bromwich retail market through major site development work, unlocking a host of transformational pipeline projects (including the Sandwell College Science centre)	£15m	

3.19 The West Bromwich projects that are proposed to fall within a pipeline for future investment are as follows: -

Project Name	Description
KPG Community Hub	Community Hub for individuals and businesses to seek and provide information and training.
Laptop/ Tablet Loan Scheme	Council led scheme to provide loan of laptops/ tablets to support voluntary and community organisations to facilitate innovative digitally inclusive activities.

3.20 A summary of the discussion and comments on the proposed shortlist raised by the West Bromwich Local Board are as follows: -

3.21 There was a consensus as a board to move forward with the six proposed shortlisted projects for development as part of the TIP.

3.22 In relation to specific projects, board members raised queries around:

- the design of the Town Hall Quarter to ensure it is complementary to the look of the Town Hall and Library,
- the retail diversification proposal and why site assembly is required,
- ensuring through the digital den project that technology remains up to date
- ensuring that urban greening proposals consider the potential for ASB and include detailed consideration of maintenance e.g. cleaning and CCTV

Rowley Regis

3.23 15 projects, totalling £28m, were put forward for the long list. These were considered in the prioritisation process.

3.24 Scores for the projects ranged from 112 to 65. The highest scoring projects within the £25m funding window have been put forward in the proposed shortlist.

3.25 The proposed shortlisted projects for Rowley Regis are as follows: -

Project Name	Description:	Provisional TIP Ask	Match Funding identified to date
Britannia Park Project	The construction of new changing room and centre facilities, general improvements to park entrances, walkways and cycle routes throughout the park, improved lighting and security to make it a more attractive venue	£1.5m	
Rowley Regis Education Facility	The construction of a satellite education facility located in Cradley Heath through a partnership between Sandwell College and SMBC. The project will provide options for three groups of learners: 16-18-year olds; 19-24-year-old NEET; 25+ (un)employed adults.	£11.2m	Amount TBC
Canal Network Improvement: Dudley No2	Tow path improvements along Dudley No.2 Canal (between Windmill Edge Bridge and access to Old Hill Train Station) to improve walking and cycling along this route and access improvements to estate areas	£750,000	
Canal Network Improvement: Old Mainline	Tow path improvements along Old Mainline and Gower Branch canal from Tividale Aqueduct (Netherton Tunnel) to High Bridge (Rounds Green Road) to improve walking and cycling along this route and access improvements to estate areas. This includes Rose Lane and John's Lane tunnels, and building connections to Rattlechain TIP development site	£1.4m	£120,000 Greener Cities Fund
Rowley Regis Travel Scheme	Improvement of walking and cycling routes within Blackheath, Cradley Heath and Oldbury improving pedestrian mobility via sustainable modes of transport	£1.3m	

Project Name	Description:	Provisional TIP Ask	Match Funding identified to date
Energy Efficiency Scheme	Installing air source heat pumps at Darley House, Addenbrooke Court, Wesley Court and nearby blocks, improving fuel efficiency, reducing fuel poverty and replacing outdated heating systems. Utilising this first of kind project in Sandwell to upskill young residents and those seeking new opportunities to train and learn new skills in a growing and sustainable industry.	£5m	TBC
Blackheath Bus Interchange and Social Space	Pedestrianisation of Blackheath Town Centre, creation of new bus interchange and social space for improved pedestrian mobility	£3.7m	

3.26 The Rowley Regis projects that are proposed to fall within a pipeline for future investment are as follows:

Project Name	Description
Multi-Use Games Area	To install a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) or similar play area at Massey's Bank, Tividale.
Digital Connectivity – Digital Inclusion Training Programme	Council led scheme to provide loan of laptops/ tablets to support voluntary and community organisations to facilitate innovative digitally inclusive activities.
Garratts Lane, Cradley Heath	Implementation of assisted technology into the Accord Housing Development in Garratts Lane.
Land off Temple Way (Rattlechain TIP), Oldbury	The reclamation of a former landfill site and development of a sustainable community comprising around 540 aspirational homes within Tividale.
Land off Lower City Road, Oldbury	To redevelop the land off Lower City Road and the adjacent tip site to use the land for a canal side housing development.
Trees for Cities: Schools Programme	To create edible playgrounds to transform areas in school grounds into vibrant outdoor classrooms that excite and teach children about growing and eating healthy food, working with Trees for Cities to inspire other schools in the area and share resources.
Improving fuel efficiency: St Giles, Moorlands Ct: Air source heat pumps	Replacing the aging domestic heating systems at the St Giles and Moorlands Court, with a centralised air sourced heat pump district heating system.
Holy Trinity Church, Oldhill	Development of Holy Trinity Church and Centre for the benefit of the wider community of Old Hill including for the churchyard to be a safe multi-use green space.

3.27 A summary of the discussion and comments on the proposed shortlist raised by the Rowley Regis Local Board are as follows: -

3.28 There was a consensus as a board to move forward with the seven proposed shortlisted projects for development as part of the TIP.

3.29 In relation to specific projects, board members raised queries around:

- Accuracy of the cost for the Satellite Education Facility, Cradley Heath and clarification was given that this was based on a set formula that pans costs per square feet for new builds, that the DFE has provided
- Costs for Blackheath Bus Interchange and Social Space and clarification was given that surface works look minimal, however lots of work is required underground due to previous subway and toilets

Smethwick

3.30 16 projects, totalling £48m, were put forward for the long list. These were considered in the prioritisation process.

3.31 Scores for the projects ranged from 73 to 121. The highest scoring projects within the £25m funding window have been put forward in the proposed shortlist

3.32 The proposed shortlisted projects for Smethwick are as follows:

Project Name	Description	Provisional TIP Ask	Match Funding identified to date
Smethwick Travel scheme: Cycle and Walking Provision	Creating cycle and pedestrian links from two railway stations to the Town centre and the local hospital. The scheme aims to improve access and connectivity within Smethwick by delivering cycling and walking route improvements.	£4.8m	TBC - AQ Centre LEP Transforming Cities Fund – WMCA
Grove Lane Regeneration: Housing Development	Purchase of selected sites within the Grove Lane area to accelerate regeneration for housing delivery. The first phase of a comprehensive major regeneration project to deliver in excess of 800 new homes and associated infrastructure.	£4.35m	TBC – WMCA, Homes England

Project Name	Description	Provisional TIP Ask	Match Funding identified to date
Sandwell Adult Family Learning: Ron Davis Centre	The expansion of the Ron Davis centre through the addition of three extra classrooms. This will enable the expansion of the successful Sandwell Adult Family Learning services and develop English and other employability skills within the local community.	£300,000	
Youth, Community and Sports Smethwick: Albion Family in the Park	A dedicated Youth, Community, Sport and Education Space in the renovated West Smethwick Park, creating a financially sustainable, all-year round youth, community, sport and education offer for Smethwick.	£1.25m	Heritage Lottery £5m, FA Premier League & Football Foundation £1.5m
Centre for Health Education	A three-way partnership between the Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS Trust, the University of Wolverhampton and Sandwell College to create a new local and regional centre of excellence in Health Education and the first University campus in Sandwell	£14m	Amounts TBC
Rolfe Street Regeneration	Demolition and remediation to provide a stand-alone development ready site, which will provide much needed housing and potential space for small enterprises, to support the wider regeneration of the Town and link to the opportunities around the Hospital	£2m	Potential source that could be approached for 10% Potential match funding opportunity from WMCA

3.33 The Smethwick projects that are proposed to fall within a pipeline for future investment are as follows:

Project Name	Description:
Park Improvements	Improvements to parks within Smethwick Town that will complement the improvements recently made or those that are forthcoming from other funding streams. The improvements will include general cosmetic works such as repaving and draining, pool works, reinstating football and cricket pitches and landscaping.
Laptop Loan Scheme	Council led scheme to provide loan of laptops/ tablets to support voluntary and community organisations to facilitate innovative digitally inclusive activities.
Cape Arm Canal Bridge and Towpath Works	Modifications of bridge on Cranford Street over the Cape Arm Canal and towpath construction for Midland Metropolitan University Hospital.

Project Name	Description:
Chance Glassworks Regeneration Project	To regenerate the Chance Glassworks into a mixed-use site of residential, enterprise, educational and leisure space
Bearwood Community Hub	Adaption of the St Mary's Church Hall Complex into a community hub for Bearwood, to provide a combination of desk space, events space and community and childcare facilities.
Bearwood Places for People	Re-imagining the Bearwood neighbourhood urban environment. Engaging consultant urban designers and community facilitators to work with SMBC, TfWM, the local community, schools, businesses and other stakeholders.
Soho Foundry	Develop the site in stages as an innovative and sustainable centre for learning, entrepreneurship, culture and heritage, contributing to social cohesion and place-making and supporting local economic growth.
Youth Bus	Work with young people to design and commission a new Sandwell Youth Bus & when completed, deliver regular Youth Bus sessions around Sandwell. This would replace the existing Youth Bus which is now mechanically over 21 years old and has become very unreliable over the past 3 years.

3.34 A summary of the discussion and comments on the proposed shortlist raised by the Smethwick Local Board are as follows: -

3.35 There was a consensus as a board to move forward with the six proposed shortlisted projects for development as part of the TIP.

3.36 In relation to specific projects, board members raised queries around:

- The scoring mechanism and how scoring had been awarded. This was clarified in the meeting.
- Whether the Travel Scheme Project would fully address the transport links in the North of Smethwick, traffic congestion hot spots, availability of bus services and the possibility of using the bridge to alleviate congestion. The project will focus on cycle and pedestrian links from two railway stations to the Town centre and the local hospital and will lead to improvements to some of the hot spot areas.
- Housing mix and suitable accommodation, especially for those with disabilities and responding to high demand for 3 – 4-bedroom homes
- The level of training to be offered through the Health and Education proposal. This was clarified as providing training from Level 3 up to Level 7

Shortlisted Project Next Steps

3.37 Subject to Superboard approval of the project shortlists, all projects will then be refined and an outline business case created alongside completion of the TIP Part 2 document for submission. This will include further refinement of the financial ask of the TIP including confirmation of match funding and bringing the ask of the TIP from the shortlisted projects to within the £25m funding available. The Outline Business Case will also

include an outline of project delivery arrangements and risks, and the incorporation of specific design details arising from consultation activities.

- 3.38 If the TIPs are successful and a Town Deal agreed with Government, projects will then be developed to Full Business Case Stage and a Second Gateway Review conducted by Government before the release of funding.