

# Report to Sandwell Towns Fund Superboard

**5 August 2020**

<b>Subject:</b>	Sandwell Towns Fund Programme Update
<b>Presenter:</b>	Adrian Eggington – Chair Rowley Regis Local Board Alan Taylor – Chair Smethwick Local Board Chris Hinson – Chair West Bromwich Local Board Rebecca Jenkins - Sandwell Towns Fund Programme Manager
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## 1 Recommendations

That the Superboard notes the programme update contained in this report and the verbal updates from the Chairs of the Local Boards

## 2 Purpose of the report

- 2.1 To outline the progress of the Towns Fund programme and work to date conducted by the Local Boards

## 3. Background and Main Considerations

- 3.1 On 6 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.
- 3.5 Due to Covid-19, Government Guidance on the Towns Fund programme was delayed and timelines for the Towns Fund Programme pushed back. Detailed guidance was released in June 2020.
- 3.6 In addition, 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.
- 3.7 The Superboard and three Local Boards have been established to oversee and shape the Sandwell Towns Fund Programme.
- 3.8 In February 2020, Cabinet approved the award of contracts for consultancy support to deliver the Towns Fund for Smethwick, Rowley Regis and West Bromwich
- 3.9 The first phase of the Towns Fund Programme is to submit a Town Investment Plan (TIP). The Council's Cabinet delegated authority to the Superboard to approve the three Town Investment Plans.

- 3.10 Since the last meeting of the Superboard, the three Local Boards have been convened. The initial work of the Local Boards was conducted through the circulation of information packs and views of Local Board Members gathered via surveys and one to one discussions.
- 3.11 In July 2020, all of the Local Boards met virtually to discuss the evidence base, Towns Fund priorities for each Town, emerging interventions and proposals for the accelerated funding.
- 3.12 The Superboard will receive verbal updates from the Chairs of the Local Boards on the emerging priorities and interventions for Rowley Regis, Smethwick and West Bromwich.