

Report to Sandwell Towns Fund Superboard

2 October 2020

Subject:	Learning from Cohort 1 Town Investment Plans
Presenter:	Tammy Stokes – Interim Director Regeneration and Growth Rebecca Jenkins – Towns Fund Programme Manager Julian Pye – Towns Fund Delivery Partner
Contact:	rebecca_jenkins@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

That the Superboard notes the learning from Cohort 1 Town Investment Plans provided by the Towns Hub Delivery Partner and that this is being used to prepare Sandwell's TIPs

2 Purpose of the report

- 2.1 To outline the learning from Cohort 1 Town Investment Plans compiled by the Towns Hub Delivery Partner and identify how this is being used to prepare Sandwell's TIPs.

3 Current position/Background Details

- 3.1 Sandwell's Town Investment Plans (TIPs) are being prepared for submission as part of Cohort 2 on 30 October.
- 3.2 Cohort 1 Towns submitted their TIPs at the end of July 2020. Town Deals have yet to be announced for Cohort 1 Towns, but the Towns Hub Delivery Partner have released lessons learnt from the Cohort 1 TIP submissions, following their assessment by Government.



3.3 Information has been shared with all Towns via the Towns Fund website: townsfund.org.uk and via the Towns Hub Delivery Partner.

3.4 Key messages from the lessons learnt are as follows with comments around how these are being approached in Sandwell's 3 TIPs to make the Sandwell TIPs a strong submission:

3.4.1 Make your TIP personal – e.g. have you been specific enough about the unique features and characteristics of your Town, have you brought it to life with images, do you have a compelling vision for your Town. Have you applied the tip-ex test to your TIP so that if the Town name was removed, it would still be clear which Town is being described?

To aid the development of a Vision and set of priorities for each of Sandwell's Towns, the strengths and opportunities of each Town were identified. These will be included within the TIP narratives. As part of the TIP drafting process, we will apply the 'tip-ex' test recommended. A recognisable image for each Town will be included on the front cover of the TIP with other images throughout

3.4.2 Stakeholder Engagement – have you engaged with your communities from the outset and throughout and used the information gathered in your proposals

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan has driven the engagement activity within Sandwell's Towns Fund Programme. This has built on the wealth of previous engagement work e.g. Vision 2030, and Inclusive Economy and involved new engagement and consultation activities throughout the Towns Fund Programme right from the ideas generation stage, through to consulting on the proposed shortlists. The information gathered has shaped the selection of priorities for each Town and the project ideas that came forward. Work is being undertaken to identify plans for ongoing engagement as part of Phase 2, and the delivery phase of the Towns Fund Programme. This will be explained in each of the TIP submissions.

3.4.3 Evidence Base – make links to existing strategies and plans, show how the evidence base has informed proposals. Use of clear diagrams and info graphics should help make the TIP a spatial document and will bring it to life, in addition to helping manage the word count.

An evidence base was compiled for each Town to drive the selection of priorities and aid ideas for projects. The evidence base has been further refined as a result of engagement activities. Links to existing strategies have been utilised through the Sandwell Towns Fund Programme (e.g. Inclusive Economy, Climate Change, Sandwell's Cycling and Walking Strategy). The Inclusive Economy and Climate Change Strategies are key pillars of Sandwell's Vision 2030 and have been used within the project prioritisation process to ensure that the proposed shortlists make strong contributions to these key strategic areas. This will be clearly outlined in the TIP submission.

3.4.4 Project Prioritisation – Establish a clear project prioritisation process early on and make sure this is clearly explained in the TIP. Avoid having too many projects; the impact will be dissipated and effort and resources spread too thinly. What are the small number of big things that stakeholders will really get behind and can make a difference to address the main issues you have identified

Superboard approved the project prioritisation criteria and process to apply. This was also reviewed by the Towns Hub Delivery Partner and found to be robust. The process and criteria will be clearly explained in the TIP submission. As a result of the project prioritisation Superboard will consider the proposed shortlist for each Town. 6 projects have been recommended to be shortlisted for West Bromwich and Smethwick and 7 projects for Rowley Regis.

3.4.5 Golden Thread – make sure there is coherence across your identified projects and their link to the challenges, aims and vision

The Sandwell Towns Fund Programme has followed a logical process of identifying a vision and priorities for each Town, based on the evidence base and engagement activities, and then bringing forward projects within a long list to address the priority areas. The proposed shortlist has

been tested against the vision and priorities. This golden thread will be shown within the TIP submission.

3.4.6 Visualise – use maps to visualise your project locations spatially

Maps are being prepared for inclusion in the TIP

3.4.7 Outputs v. Outcomes – be clear in the TIP about the outputs from interventions and the outcomes

This will be displayed clearly within the TIP documents as part of the golden thread. Project outputs will be clearly identified through the Outline Business Case Stage for inclusion in the TIP and then refined at Full Business Case stage.

3.4.8 Capital Strategy – where the LA is investing, make sure there are clear links to the Capital Strategy

These links will be explained clearly in the TIP with input from the Council's S151 Officer

3.4.9 Risk – Be open and transparent about risks and demonstrate a strong understanding of potential impacts and intended mitigations

Risks are being identified at project level as part of developing the Outline Business Cases. An analysis of risk will be described within the TIP document

3.4.10 Governance – Demonstrate how the assurance framework and Governance has been applied and how this drives the development of the TIP

The Sandwell Towns Fund Programme has been governed by the Superboard and 3 Local Boards. As the Accountable Body, Sandwell Council will conduct additional checks on the Outline Business Cases. This will be explained within the TIPs.

4.0 Appendices

None.

8. Source Documents

- Top tips for Top TIPs blog: <https://townsfund.org.uk/blog-collection/j4wldoexacrlshp1976w7an7v7ooyv>
- Feedback from Towns Team on July Cohort TIP Submissions