

**Sandwell Towns Fund Superboard
Towns Fund Project Confirmation Stage**

May 2021

Subject:	Towns Fund Project Confirmation Stage
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1. To consider and agree the approach to all Smethwick Projects proceeding within the £23.5m allocation.
- 1.2. To agree that the Chair of the Superboard sign the project confirmation tables & recommend them for signature and submission by the SMBC Chief Executive / S151 Officer.
- 1.3. To receive the draft monitoring and evaluation plans for comment and recommend them to the S151 Officer for submission

2. Purpose of the report

- 2.1. To outline the requirements from MHCLG of the project confirmation stage.
- 2.2. To propose to Superboard an approach to proceed with all Smethwick projects follow the signing of Heads of Terms for £23.5m.
- 2.3. To provide details of the project confirmation tables and draft monitoring and evaluation plans for submission to MHCLG.

3. Background and Main Consideration

Project Confirmation Stage Requirements

- 3.1. After agreeing Heads of Terms, Towns have two months to confirm which projects will be taken forward as part of their Town Deal, this should include the following information on each project: -
 - Towns Fund ask
 - Match-funding total and breakdown
 - Expected outputs and outcomes
 - Plan for addressing key conditions
 - Whether the project will be fast-tracked
 - Proposed financial profile and the Revenue/Capital split (approval at MHCLG's discretion)
 - A draft monitoring and evaluation plan

- 3.2. This information is to be submitted in the form of a Project Confirmation Table and a draft Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (1 per project) and must be submitted to MHCLG by 24 May 2021. A final monitoring and evaluation plan is required at the Summary Business Case Stage (after local approval of a project FBC).

Response to Heads of Terms General Conditions

- 3.3. Each Town received a set of general conditions as part of the Town Deal which we are required to respond to at project confirmation stage. These general conditions and the draft response is as follows:

- **Local Assurance of FBCs**

- 3.4. The Heads of Terms set out that project assurance should be conducted in line with agreed routes for each individual project, that Towns must complete business cases for the projects being taken forward and that Towns must submit a Summary Document within 12 months of the deal being agreed.

- 3.5. Assurance of Towns Fund Full Business Cases will be conducted by the Council's Strategic Finance Team in accordance with the Councils Financial Regulations and Procedures and established process for Capital Projects. This will ensure green book compliance, compliance with Towns Fund Heads of Terms, compliance with Towns Fund Guidance and will assess risk to the council of delivering and completing the project. A minimum threshold must be passed for a project to be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

- **Equality Impact Assessment to be conducted at Town Level**

- 3.6. The Heads of Terms set out that an Equality Impact Assessment must be conducted at Town level incorporating impacts across all projects

- 3.7. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken for each Town. The Draft will be reviewed by the Superboard at an early opportunity and will be finalised following completion of all project Full Business Cases.

- **Each Project to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment as required**

- 3.8. The Heads of Terms set out that each project must conduct an Equality Impact Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment as required.

- 3.9. As part of the Full Business Case requirements, each Sandwell Towns Fund project will be required to conduct an equality impact screening and an environmental impact screening as a minimum, and a full assessment if this is required as a result of the screening. The screening/assessment will be reviewed as part of the assurance process and will be included as part of the approvals required on the Full Business Case.

- **West Bromwich specific condition**

- 3.10. In addition to the above general conditions for all three Towns, West Bromwich Heads of Terms included an additional condition which was that more detail should be provided on the private sector engagement and how this has informed the Town Investment Plan and projects.
- 3.11. Building on previous business engagement data through the Vision 2030 / Inclusive Economic Development work, a selection of West Bromwich companies across the West Bromwich TIP boundary area were directly contacted as part of the Business engagement strategy to develop the Evidence base which contributed to the TIP. Below is a list of the specific businesses that were targeted.
- Forkers - Construction
 - Jacopa Ltd - Environmental Technologies
 - Sandwell Community Caring Trust - Health & Social Care
 - Steel & Alloy - Manufacturing
 - Robinson Brothers – Manufacturing
 - William King Ltd - Manufacturing
 - Sheldon Clayton - Transport
 - Transervice - Transport
 - Espirit - Construction
 - Kingspan - Construction
- 3.12. Furthermore, Town Centre business representation was included on the West Bromwich Local Board in the form of Lisa Hill, Lead Officer, West Bromwich BID. This was to ensure one voice represented the wide views of the Town Centre businesses which operate in West Bromwich to assist in the TIP development.
- 3.13. A workshop also was carried out on Wednesday 30th September 2020 during which a number of local businesses from the High Street attended, to provide their views and input into the TIP development. Lisa Hill also provided the keynote speech to this workshop.

Response to Smethwick Project Funding Allocation

- 3.14. The Heads of Terms Offer that has been accepted for Smethwick is for £23.5m. The ask across the 6 Smethwick projects was for £25m and all projects are eligible for the full funding amount they asked for. This represents an overall funding pressure of 6%.
- 3.15. Options have been explored for how to proceed with Smethwick projects in light of the funding offer without reducing the outputs desired. Following review, the proposal is for a 6% budget reduction to be applied to all Smethwick Projects. This target can be achieved through attracting additional match funding, use of other funding streams, cost refinement or in the last instance, altering scope. (nb/ Where any change of scope is proposed that impacts on project outputs this will need to be raised through the change request process with MHCLG).

- 3.16. This proposal is felt to offer a solution that enables all projects to continue their FBC development without dependency on other projects. It is intended that this is kept under review, and the approach revised in the event that it renders any of the projects unviable.
- 3.17. The table within the appendix sets out the funds following the application of the 6% target.
- 3.18. The proposal was presented to Smethwick Project Leads on 20 April 2021 and will be presented to Smethwick Local Board on 13 May 2021. Comments from the Smethwick Local Board meeting taking place on 13 May 2021 will be relayed during the Superboard meeting.
- 3.19. The project confirmation tables for Smethwick reflect this proposed approach to funding.

Other changes reflected in the Project Confirmation Tables

- 3.20. West Bromwich project confirmation tables reflect a reallocation of £310,000 between the Walking and Cycling Scheme Project and the Town Hall Quarter Project due to changes that were made within the Accelerated Funding Programme to bring forward Phase 1 of the Walking and Cycling Scheme in place of the Town Hall Tower works.

Draft Monitoring and Evaluation Plans

- 3.21. In April 2021, guidance was received around the Monitoring and Evaluation for Towns Fund which is a single framework covering both the requirements on Town Deal areas and Future High Streets Fund areas. The guidance details the approach, evaluation process, mandatory reporting requirements, frequency of reporting and how data should be collected.
- 3.22. The Towns Fund Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is grounded in an overarching Theory of Change (ToC) and sets out pathways to achieving both the funds objectives as well as the underlying assumptions from activities undertaken, through the outputs they deliver, the outcomes achieved and the targeted impact.
- 3.23. As the accountable body, the council is responsible for reporting twice a year on inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. This includes several mandatory indicators along with selection of optional indicators from the framework that are relevant to each project. Local Evaluation and Monitoring can take place alongside the Government's framework.
- 3.24. Where projects are being delivered by Partner Organisations, a Partnership Agreement between the Council and the Partner Organisation will be agreed which will include the monitoring and reporting requirements.
- 3.25. An overview of the mandatory reporting requirements is outlined below in tables 1 and 2: -

Table 1 – Overview of what we are required to report on across the ToC (Theory of Change) Levels

ToC Level	What you are required to report on:	When
Level 1 Inputs & Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount spent directly on project delivery (either local authority or implementation partners) • The amount of co-funding spent on project delivery (private and public) • The amount of co-funding committed (private and public) • The percentage of projects starting on time according to contract 	Semi-annually through the monitoring form
Level 2 Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of temporary full-time jobs supported during project implementation • The number of projects successfully completed • The percentage of projects completed within budget • The percentage of projects completed on time 	Semi-annually through the monitoring form
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of staff in the regeneration team at the local authority • The amount budgeted for economic development teams and functions • Project specific output indicators (see 5.6 and 5.7 below) 	Annually through the monitoring form
Level 3 Intermediate outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment on: - • Leadership and Vision • Delivery capacity and capability • Financial viability and ability to attract investment • Accountability, collaboration, and responsive governance. <p><i>Please note that the collection of qualitative data is for learning purposes only and will not be used for performance management.</i></p>	Annually through the monitoring form
Level 4 Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) permanent jobs created through the projects • The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) permanent jobs safeguarded through the projects • Year on Year monthly percentage change in footfall (mandatory for Future High Streets Fund places) 	Annually through the monitoring form

Table 2 – Overview of what we are required to provide updates on.

What you are required to provide updates on:	When
<p>Project Expenditure: Expenditure on project activities by local authorities or, in the case where a partner is implementing the project, their expenditure on project activities to date. This will also include forecasted spend.</p> <p>Project Progress: A brief narrative to explain the below progress you are reporting on.</p> <p>Project Changes: Any material changes to project designs or plans should be disclosed and described, including any timing delays.</p> <p>Risks: Updates should be made to the project risk schedule using a RAG rating, as well as an explanation of the risks and required mitigation steps. The RAG rating will be used to flag any issues that require action or amendments. This will also allow changes in risk to be tracked over time.</p>	Semi-annually through the monitoring form
<p>Feedback on local engagements and how your overall investment strategy is progressing. Questions to aid the qualitative feedback will be provided in the monitoring forms.</p>	Annually through the monitoring form

3.26. An overview of the project-specific indicators that have been proposed by Project Leads is included below for each town. Targets have been included where it has been possible to quantify them ahead of FBC development.

West Bromwich Draft Project Level Measures

Project	Draft Measures	Target
Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering Centre	Amount of capacity of new or improved training or education facilities	390
	Number of closer collaborations with employers	TBC
	# of learners/trainees/students enrolled at new education and training facilities	TBC
	% of learners gaining relevant experience/being 'job ready' (as assessed by employers) (<i>Proposed Local Measure</i>)	TBC
Digital Den	Amount of capacity of new or improved training or education facilities	TBC
	# of learners/trainees/students enrolled at new education and training facilities	TBC
	% of learners gaining relevant experience/being 'job ready' (as assessed by employers) (<i>Proposed Local Measure</i>)	TBC
Retail Diversification Programme	# of sites cleared	TBC
	Amount of rehabilitated land	TBC
	Amount of floorspace rationalised	TBC
	Amount of land brought into public ownership	TBC
Urban Greening	Amount of new parks/greenspace/outdoor space	TBC
	# of trees planted	TBC
	# of learners enrolled in new education and training courses	TBC
Town Hall Quarter	Number of improved community/sports centres	TBC
	# of heritage buildings renovated/restored	TBC
	Amount of capacity of new or improved training or education facilities	TBC
	Number of visitors to arts, cultural and heritage events and venues (<i>Proposed Local Measure</i>)	TBC
Cycling and Walking Provision	Total length of resurfaced/improved road	TBC
	Total length of new cycle ways	TBC
	Total length of new pedestrian paths	TBC
	Usage of new walking and cycling routes (<i>Proposed Local Measure</i>)	TBC

Smethwick Draft Project Level Measures

Project	Draft Measures	Target
Albion Family in the Park	Number of new community/sports centres	1
	Amount of capacity of new or improved training or education facilities	2000
	Number of visitors to arts, cultural and heritage events and venues (<i>Local measure will need to be defined therefore suggest we mark target as tbc until FBC</i>)	TBC
	# of learners/trainees/students enrolled at improved education and training facilities	2000
	Amount of new office space	259
	# of learners/students/trainees gaining certificates, graduating or completing courses at new or improved training or education facilities, or attending new courses	1500
Midland Met Learning Campus	Amount of capacity of new or improved training or education facilities	1280
	# of learners/trainees/students enrolled at improved education and training facilities	1280
	Number of closer collaborations with employers	TBC

Project	Draft Measures	Target
	# of learners/students/trainees gaining certificates, graduating or completing courses at new or improved training or education facilities, or attending new courses	TBC
	% of learners gaining relevant experience/being 'job ready' (as assessed by employers) (<i>Local Measure definition to be agreed</i>)	TBC
Grove Lane Regeneration	# of residential units provided	100
	Amount of rehabilitated land	12000m2
	Land values (<i>local measure proposed</i>)	TBC
Rolfe Street Canalside Regeneration	# of residential units provided	125
	Amount of rehabilitated land	10000m2
	Land values (<i>local measure proposed</i>)	TBC
Ron Davis Centre Expansion	Amount of capacity of new or improved training or education facilities	400
	# of learners/trainees/students enrolled at improved education and training facilities	200
	# of learners/students/trainees gaining certificates, graduating or completing courses at new or improved training or education facilities, or attending new courses	200
Cycling and Walking Provision	Total length of resurfaced/improved road	TBC
	Total length of new cycle ways	TBC
	Total length of new pedestrian paths	TBC
	Usage of new walking and cycling routes (<i>Proposed Local Measure</i>)	TBC

Rowley Regis Draft Project Level Measures

Project	Draft Measures	Target
Rowley Regis College	Amount of capacity of new or improved training or education facilities	505
	Number of closer collaborations with employers	TBC
	# of learners/trainees/students enrolled at new education and training facilities	505
	% of learners gaining relevant experience/being 'job ready' (as assessed by employers) <i>Local measure proposed</i>	TBC
Canal Network Connectivity	Increase in cycling journeys on canal towpath (<i>Proposed Local Measure</i>)	40%
	Increase in overall visitor numbers to canal (<i>Proposed Local Measure</i>)	40%
	Total length of pedestrian paths improved	7.13km
	Total length of new cycle ways	7.13km
	Automatic / manual counts of pedestrians and cyclists (for active travel schemes)	40%
Britannia Park Community Hub and Greenspace	Number of new community/sports centres	1
	Amount of existing parks/greenspace/outdoor improved	TBC
	Visitors to park (<i>Proposed Local Measure to be defined</i>)	TBC
	# trees planted	TBC
Blackheath Bus Interchange and Public Realm	Total length of resurfaced/improved road	TBC
	# of improved public transport routes	TBC
	Total length of new cycle ways	TBC
	Amount of public realm improved	TBC
	# of transport nodes with new multimodal connection points	TBC
	Road traffic flows in corridors of interest (for road schemes)	TBC
Cycling and Walking Provision	Total length of resurfaced/improved road	TBC
	Total length of new cycle ways	TBC
	Total length of new pedestrian paths	TBC
	Usage of new walking and cycling routes (<i>Proposed Local Measure</i>)	TBC

3.27. The draft project measures and framework were introduced to Local Boards for input.

Rowley Regis Local Board	In relation to the Rowley Regis College project a suggestion was made for monitoring to be conducted in relation to the number of collaborations made with VCS organisations. Following discussion with the Project Leads and a review of the monitoring framework, it is proposed that this is initially managed as part of the steer for the project rather than reported through the monitoring and evaluation framework. This approach will be reviewed during FBC development and a local metric can be included within the final version if required.
West Bromwich Local Board	<p>A discussion was held around the importance of understanding residents' perceptions of the area and how these might change over time as a result of the Towns Fund and other interventions. This is not part of the Towns Fund Monitoring and Evaluation Framework but would provide useful additional insight.</p> <p>This measure has been proposed within the Monitoring and Evaluation plans. Further discussions will take place to identify a potential methodology to collect this insight for all 3 Towns, linked to the Council's review of a Performance Management Framework.</p> <p>A discussion was held in relation to Community Wealth Building and monitoring local jobs created. The mandatory reporting includes jobs created through project implementation along with jobs created as a result of the project. A proposal for capturing information relating to local employment will be developed and this will be applicable to all 3 Towns.</p>
Smethwick Local Board	<i>Smethwick Local Board are due to meet on 13/05/21 and a verbal update will be provided during the meeting</i>

4. Source Documents

Project Confirmation Tables

Draft Monitoring and Evaluation Plans

MHCLG Guidance for Business Cases (Dec 2020) and Monitoring and Evaluation (April 2021)