

## West Bromwich Town Deal Board 9 November 2023

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Project Reporting</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Rina Rahim, Towns Fund Programme Manager

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To receive an update on project progress and monitoring information for the period of April to September 2023.

### 2. Background and Main Considerations

- 2.1. As West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis Towns Fund Programmes are in Phase 3 – Delivery, monitoring is a key aspect to ensure the Accountable Body and DLUHC track progress of the fund and the projects it is delivering.
- 2.2. To ensure the Accountable Body and Town Deal Boards receive reporting on a regular basis to monitor project progress, expenditure and risks, it is a requirement set by the Programme Management Office that West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis project leads must submit Monitoring, Evaluation and Claim Returns on a quarterly basis, as a minimum.
- 2.3. The projects submitted their first Monitoring and Evaluation Report to DLUHC in December 2022, which reported on progress up until September 2022. Returns were formally approved by DLUHC in April 2023.
- 2.4. A second Monitoring and Evaluation Report was submitted to DLUHC in June 2023, which reported on the period October – March 2023. Returns were formally approved by DLUHC in September 2023 and as a result, payments have been released to Sandwell Council for the financial year 2023/24.
- 2.5. The third Monitoring and Evaluation Report reporting for the period July – September 2023 is due to be submitted by 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 following approval by the Town Deal Board and S151 sign off.
- 2.6. The quarterly Monitoring and Evaluation Returns for April – June 2023 and July – September 2023 have been amalgamated to produce the required DLUHC format of reporting April – September 2023. Returns will be presented to Board Members, who are asked to consider and approve the submission prior to submitting to DLUHC.

A summary of the project progress to date is detailed below:

- **Digital Den** - Financial drawdown complete and funding has been spent as per FBC. The project continues to monitor outcomes and co-funding from GGCE.
- **Sandwell MEC** – Financial drawdown complete and funding has been spent as per FBC/ subsequent PARs. The new learning facility is now open to learners with an opening ceremony scheduled for Qtr3 23/24.
- **Town Hall Quarter** – Final costs plans have been submitted by the contract. Full details are being reviewed by internal Design team to ensure scheme of works are agreed prior to signing contract. Value engineering has been required to bring the refurbishment costs within budget, however additional funds have been requested from SMBC to provide a 10% contingency.
- **Retail Diversification Project** – Project Adjustment Request currently being considered by Board via delegated authority. Negotiations continue to acquire key sites.
- **Urban Greening** – Both phases 1 and 2 are complete. The Cultural Programme continues with events planned throughout the Towns Fund delivery period.
- **West Bromwich Connected** – Phase 3 consultation planned to commence in November/ December 2023.

## 2.7 Project Adjustment Requests

Two change requests have been submitted to the Town Deal Board and Accountable Body, relating to Retail Diversification Programme and Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering Centre. Both requests were approved via delegated authority as set out in the DLUHC Towns Fund PAR Guidance July 2023.

Members are to note that DLUHC latest guidance does not allow for the introduction of a new project. Funds can be redistributed to other projects in the Town should an approved project not proceed.

## Appendices

West Bromwich Town Deal Reporting April to September 2023 (Private Item)

## Source Documents

DLUHC Towns Fund PAR Guidance July 2023