

**Sandwell Towns Fund Superboard
Towns Fund Urban Greening Full Business Case Documentation**

23 September 2021

Subject:	Urban Greening Project, West Bromwich, Full Business Case Documentation
Presenter:	Joshua Singh – Sandwell Council Regeneration Officer Chris Hinson – Chair of West Bromwich Local Board
Contact:	Tammy_Stokes@sandwell.gov.uk

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. To receive and agree the final Full Business Case for Urban Greening, including the project equality impact assessment, environmental impact assessment and monitoring and evaluation plan.
- 1.2. To recommend the Full Business Case to Cabinet for approval subject to the outcome of the Capital Appraisal review.
- 1.3. To note that in the event that the Full Business Case appraisal leads to minor amends / points of clarity being required, these will be addressed by the Project Lead in conjunction with the Chair of the Local Board, the Chair of the Superboard and the Council's S151 Officer.
- 1.4. To note that in the event that the appraisal leads to a recommendation of substantial changes to the Full Business Case, that this will be reported to Superboard with a revised Full Business Case presented for consideration.
- 1.5. That subject to Cabinet's approval of the Full Business Case, that the Chair of the Superboard sign the Project Summary Document for submission to MHCLG in consultation with the S151 Officer

2. Purpose of the report

- 2.1. To present the Full Business Case for the Urban Greening project for agreement including an equality impact assessment, environmental impact assessment and monitoring and evaluation plan.
- 2.2. To outline the comments and input from the West Bromwich Local Board.

3. Background and Main Considerations

- 3.1. On 3 March 2021, Heads of Terms for a Town Deal for West Bromwich were offered by Government. This included an offer of an overall funding package of £25m and agreement to the 6 proposed projects for West Bromwich. The Heads of Terms offer is subject to the appraisal and approval of a Full Business Case for each project and the submission of a Summary Document (one per project) by March 2022.
- 3.2. The Town Deal for West Bromwich was signed on 24 March 2021.
- 3.3. Details of the projects put forward for West Bromwich Town Deal were re-confirmed with Government in the form of a Project Confirmation Table. These were considered by Superboard on 17 May and submitted following approval from the Council's S151 Officer.
- 3.4. Collectively, there are 17 Towns Fund projects that have been approved by MHCLG. To co-ordinate the process across the 17 Towns Fund projects, Sandwell's Towns Fund projects were organised into 3 tranches. This will enable projects to proceed to Phase 3 (delivery) when they are ready and to manage the work required to develop and appraise the Full Business Cases in line with the Government's deadlines.
- 3.5. The Urban Greening Project is within tranche 2 and the Full Business Case has been prepared for Superboard's agreement.

Full Business Case Contents

- 3.6. The Towns Fund Business Case Guidance, December 2020, outlined that Towns Fund Full Business Cases should be compliant with the HMT Treasury Green Book (2020). This sets out that Full Business Cases should address five cases; Strategic Case, Economic Case, Commercial Case, Financial Case and Management Case.
- 3.7. Preparing a project business case using the five-case model provides decision makers and stakeholders with a proven framework for structured thinking and assurance that the project: Provides strategic fit and is supported by a compelling case for change, will maximise public value, is commercially viable, is affordable and is funded and can be delivered successfully by the organisation and its partners
- 3.8. Sandwell's Towns Fund Full Business Cases have been prepared according to this model.

Appraisal and Approval of Towns Fund Full Business Cases (FBC)

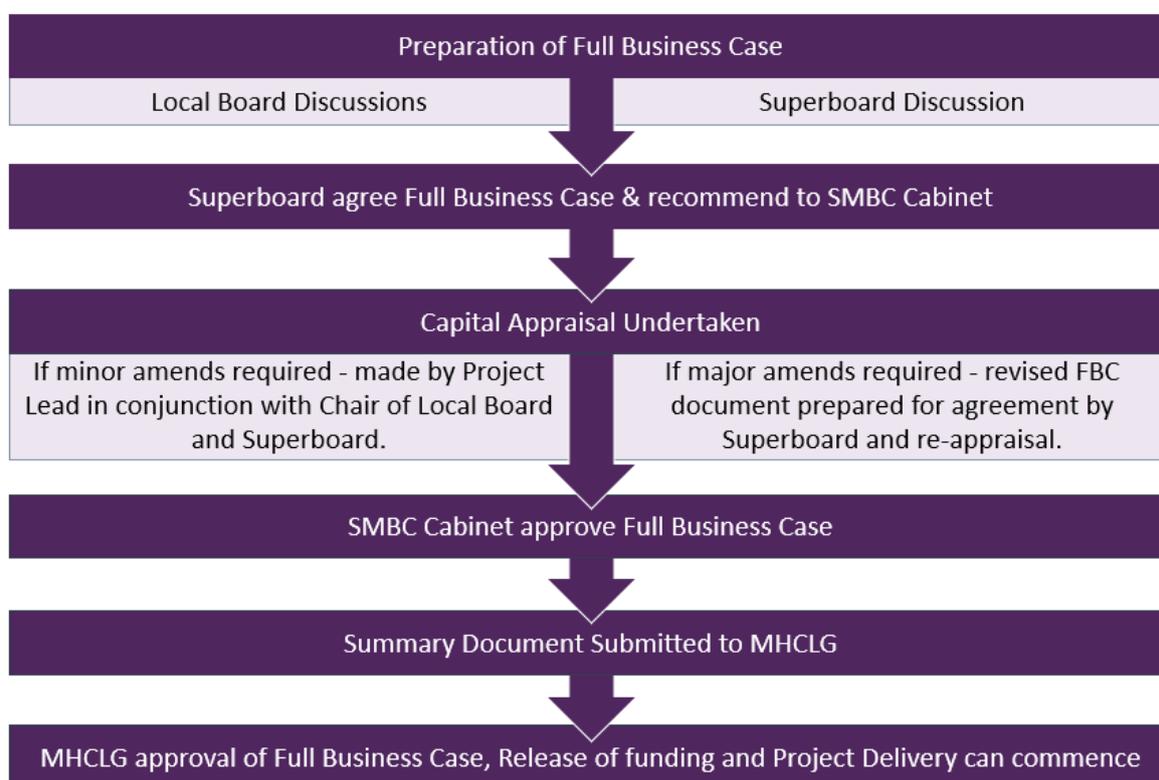
- 3.9. The Towns Fund Business Case Guidance, December 2020 set out that local assurance process should be followed for Towns Fund business case appraisal and approval led by the Council as the Accountable Body for the Towns Fund. In Sandwell, the process is for Full Business Cases to be reviewed by the Council's Strategic Finance Team and put to Cabinet for approval once an appraisal threshold is met.
- 3.10. Following Superboard's consideration and agreement to a project Full Business Case, the project will then be submitted for appraisal by the Council's Strategic

Finance team. This appraisal will include a review of each of the 5 cases contained within the Full Business Case (strategic case, economic case, financial case, management case, commercial case). It will ensure compliance of the Full Business case with the Government's Green Book Standards for business cases, along with ensuring viability, value for money, and deliverability. The Full Business Case will be scored and a threshold must be met for the project to be recommended for approval by SMBC Cabinet.

- 3.11. In the event that the appraisal leads to minor amends / points of clarity being required, these will be addressed by the Project Lead in conjunction with the Chair of the Local Board, the Chair of the Superboard and the Council's S151 Officer.
- 3.12. In the event that the appraisal leads to a recommendation of substantial changes to the Full Business Case, this will be reported to Superboard and a revised Full Business Case presented to Superboard for consideration.

Submission of Full Business Case to MHCLG

- 3.13. Once a Full Business Case has been approved by Cabinet, a Summary Document will be prepared and submitted to MHCLG for review.
- 3.14. The Summary Document contains an overview of each Business Case, how it has been appraised, and confirmation that key conditions from the Heads of Terms have been addressed (where applicable).
- 3.15. The Chair of the Superboard will be a signatory on the Summary Document.
- 3.16. The Summary Document will be assessed by MHCLG before funding is released. MHCLG may require submission of the Full Business Case.
- 3.17. An outline of the process for approval of a project Full Business Case is as follows:



Urban Greening Full Business Case Summary

Project Description

- 3.18. The Urban Greening project is located within West Bromwich Town Centre and West Bromwich Central ward. The project will implement new and enhance existing greenspace to improve the appearance of the town centre, complementing planned infrastructure works and establish a path from the centre to Sandwell Valley.
- 3.19. The project includes delivery of a Cultural Programme alongside the Capital development works. Community involvement and artistic interpretation will be a key component in improving the physical and mental wellbeing of people.

Summary of Strategic Case

- 3.20. West Bromwich town centre is suffering economically and aesthetically. Retail is reducing in size and profitability. This trend is accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The eastern part of West Bromwich town centre is one of the hardest hit areas with decreased footfall and consequent increasing numbers of void retail units. West Bromwich is in the 40% most deprived areas in England. An appointed cultural provider will collaborate with SMBC officers, local communities and artists to create opportunities for local people to engage in and enhance the capital programme of new greenspaces to provide a new outlet for leisure activity.
- 3.21. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of local greenspace. Throughout lockdown it had become increasingly clear that having accessible greenspace improves the physical and mental wellbeing of people. Urban greening of the town centre and the creation of a linear park and other ecological assets will contribute positively to physical and mental wellbeing and help address issues of climate change and tackle pollution, offsetting vehicle emissions.
- 3.22. Engagement with residents and business owners have demonstrated clear demand for investment, improvements and modernisation to improve the perception of the town. 73% of respondents cited unattractiveness, in one form or another, as a notable feature.
- 3.23. The project has been brought forward as part of the West Bromwich Town Deal through its contribution to the town priority to reinvigorate the town centre.
- 3.24. The Urban Greening project links to the West Bromwich Masterplan and Sandwell's Tourism & Visitor Growth Strategy. It has the potential to link to the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Delivery and Legacy mode workstreams through the provision of new signage along the route. This creates a 'destination place' in West Bromwich that can amplify the Games' message and Commonwealth themes, in support of public realm improvements and the delivery of a town-wide cultural 'games' programme. It will also provide a link to the Commonwealth Games Live site proposed at Sandwell Valley.

Economic Case

- 3.25. The Urban Greening project will provide local people with economic, environmental and health benefits in addition to improving the appearance and people's perceptions of the town centre. The demand is clear from consultation activities, that increasing the provision of urban greening is a priority for local residents and businesses.
- 3.26. The main risks have been identified for the project and are being proactively managed through regular risk review and escalation, as required. The main risks are as follows:
- *Cost escalation*
 - *Design and timing of Phase 2 (Public realm delivered along Bull Street) as this is interwoven with the Towns Fund Retail Diversification Programme project*
 - *There may be potential timescale delays/ slippages as a result of approvals and MHCLG approvals*

Management Case

- 3.27. The project management is resourced through existing capacity within the Local Authority and will be overseen by the Project Manager who will report frequently to the Programme Management Office, West Bromwich Local Board and Sandwell Superboard.
- 3.28. The delivery of this project is not dependent upon the delivery of any other TIP projects but will complement the Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Project and the Retail Diversification Programme project, improving the overall connectivity and aesthetic of the town. In addition, the Urban Greening project complements the Accelerated Funding Programme: the delivery of upgraded outdoor market stalls.
- 3.29. The delivery of this project is not dependent upon the delivery of any other TIP projects but will complement the additional skills delivery from the Sandwell Mechanical Engineering Centre and the Town Hall Quarter project, raising the overall standard of education.

Financial Case

- 3.30. The project value is £1,315,000 comprising £1,220,000 from Towns Fund and match funding of £95,000 from Arts Council. Long term running costs will be met by Sandwell Council, however sponsorship opportunities are being explored to increase the revenue income for the project.

Commercial Case

- 3.31. Procurement - Sandwell Council's Highways framework agreement will be used to undertake work for the Urban Greening Project. A tender will be published to award the contract for the Cultural Programme in line with SMBC and national procurement regulations.
- 3.32. Specific social value targets and/ or requirements to be included as part of the contract evaluation. Conditions will include the requirement to use/ engage with local businesses/ schools and labour through subcontractor appointment where possible.

- 3.33. The project value is above the threshold set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 therefore a formal Contract Notice on the Central Government Contracts Finder website is required.

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.34. An equality impact assessment has been conducted and is appended. The assessment has indicated that there are no anticipated adverse impacts on any groups with protected characteristics as a result of this proposal.
- 3.35. The equality impact assessment has identified specific positive impacts for the following groups with protected characteristics:

Age: Improving social, cultural, educational and economic benefits for young people and adults

Disability: Through improving mobility and accessibility in the public realm and accessible street furniture

Race, Sex, Gender Reassignment and Sexual Orientation: Through creating a welcoming environmental for all residents, creating and maintaining a vibrant high street and an attractive town centre

Environmental Impact Assessment

- 3.36. An Environmental Impact Screening has been undertaken and is appended. The screening has identified that Schedule 1 and 2 of the EIA regulations do not apply to this project and therefore a full assessment is not required.

West Bromwich Local Board Feedback

- 3.37. Local Board Members were satisfied with the development of the Full Business Case and supporting documentation.

Appendices

Urban Greening Full Business Case document including:

- Consultation and Engagement Plan
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Risk Register
- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Source Documents

Urban Greening Project Confirmation Table

West Bromwich Town Deal Heads of Terms

MHCLG Business Case Guidance, December 2020

MHCLG Monitoring and Evaluation Guidance, April 2021