

REPORT OF: HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
MANAGER

TO: NELSON TOWN DEAL BOARD

DATES: 7th August 2020

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TIMETABLE FOR DEVELOPING THE TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To outline a proposed workplan for achieving an October submission of the Nelson Town Investment Plan, for consideration by the Board. To set up a sub-group and identify project champions to consider and develop project proposals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Board considers the proposed workplan outlined in Appendix 1 and decides if they wish to work to an end of October submission.
2. That the Board establishes a project development sub-group and identifies project champions to start to develop projects in more detail.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

1. To decide on a date for submitting the Town Investment Plan.
2. To lead on project development work and develop the initial project proposals.

ISSUE

Background

1. At the last Town Deal Board meeting on 3rd July, members were updated on the latest Town Deal guidance issued by Government. It was agreed that a timetable of actions for developing the Town Investment Plan be brought back to this meeting to decide whether to submit the Plan at the end of October or the end of January.
2. To help with the skills and capacity required to complete the Plan, the Council has engaged economic development consultants 'Hatch Regeneris'. Hatch have worked alongside Barrow and Preston to produce their Town Investment Plans, which are due to be submitted in July.

3. Attached at Appendix 1 is a proposed workplan/timetable provided by Hatch. This shows the key stages of work required to complete the Plan and the proposed timescales for doing so, should the Board wish to submit in October.
4. In terms of comments / observations on the workplan:
 - The workplan is incredibly tight. It means that some stages of the work will need to overlap, where otherwise they would run more consecutively.
 - There is no scope for any delays.
 - The details of the projects on our draft 'long list' (Appendix 2), where they are identified as requiring Towns Funding, would need to be worked up in more detail in the coming weeks. This is to enable them to be appraised and prioritised in order to create a project 'shortlist'. Shortlisted projects would then need to be developed in further detail to meet the requirements of a 'Towns Fund Project Template' which will form part of the Town Investment Plan submission. As some of the projects on the long list are currently only ideas, it may be difficult to develop them in sufficient detail for an October submission. Good quality project proposals will be key to a good Town Investment Plan.
 - Time will be limited for developing any new project ideas which may emerge from the draft socio-economic narrative and from a better understanding of the emerging impacts of COVID. The narrative will, amongst other things, help to identify the sectors and assets that will deliver growth and the barriers holding the town back (some of which we already know).
 - The Town Deal Board will need to meet at fortnightly intervals at times over the course of the next few months in order to make key decisions in quick succession.
 - The Board will need to make a recommendation to Pendle Council's Policy and Resource Committee regarding the Plan prior to submission. This Committee will meet on 15th October, therefore the draft final Plan will need to be ready by the 8th October.
5. It is worth highlighting to the Board that a January submission would follow the same work programme but would allow more 'breathing space' for the logical sequencing of tasks to take place, and perhaps more time for the Board to consider the outcomes of the key phases of work.
6. A January submission could enable projects to be developed in more detail, which would potentially save/shorten time in the next phase of developing the Town Deal (development of project business cases) after Head of Terms have been agreed with Government.
7. Irrespective of an October or January submission, Nelson would have chance to revise and resubmit their Plan if it was unsuccessful when assessed first time round.
8. The Government has established a 'Towns Hub' to provide impartial advice and support to Town Deal towns. They are offering a 'check and challenge' exercise prior to Town Investment Plans being submitted and assessed. It would be helpful to factor in such a session, irrespective of whether the Board aims for an October or January submission.

Project development sub-group and Project Champions

9. It is recommended that a small project development sub-group is set up to move forward project related work in between Board meetings. An initial task would be to review the long list of initial project ideas and consider if those identified as requiring Town Funding are in line with the key parameters of the Fund.
10. Further work then needs to be carried out to develop the potential Towns Fund projects in more detail. It is proposed that a short project concept is completed for each, so that the scope of the information provided is consistent. This will also enable the projects to be appraised and shortlisted on a consistent basis.
11. Project champions are therefore asked to be identified for relevant projects on the initial project long list. It would make sense for these champions to be members of the sub-group.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: None directly arising from this report.

Financial: None directly arising from this report.

Legal: None directly arising from this report.

Risk Management: None directly arising from this report.

Health and Safety: None directly arising from this report.

Sustainability: None directly arising from this report.

Community Safety: None directly arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity: None directly arising from this report.

APPENDIX 1 – Proposed Workplan

APPENDIX 2 – List of initial project proposals