



**REPORT FROM: HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
MANAGER**

TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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NELSON TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To approve the submission of the Nelson Town Investment Plan to MHCLG and, should Nelson be successful, authorise the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Town Deal Board to negotiate the Heads of Terms for a Town Deal, which will then be brought to this Committee for agreement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Policy and Resources Committee:

1. Approve the Nelson Town Investment Plan for submission to MHCLG, and
2. If successful, authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Town Deal Board to negotiate the Heads of Terms for a Town Deal, which will then be brought to this Committee for agreement.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To enable the Town Investment Plan to be submitted to MCHLG by the Friday 12th February deadline.
2. To enable the terms to be negotiated in a timely manner and brought back to this Committee for approval.

Background

1. At its meeting in November 2019, it was reported to this Committee that Nelson was one of 101 towns invited to develop proposals for a Town Deal.
2. A Town Deal is an agreement in principle between Government, the Lead Council and the Town Deal Board. The 'Deal' will establish the Government's in principle agreement to provide up to £25mill of funding from the Towns Fund (or over £25mill in exceptional circumstances) in order for a number of strategic regeneration/growth projects to be delivered, overseen by the Town Deal Board.
3. The overarching aim of the Towns Fund is to 'drive the sustainable economic regeneration of towns to deliver long term economic and productivity growth', through:
 - **Urban regeneration** – ensuring towns are thriving places for people to live and work by, e.g. strengthening cultural and economic assets, site acquisition, preparation, remediation and / or development,
 - **Skills and enterprise infrastructure** – e.g. driving private sector investment and small business development, ensuring towns have the space to support skills and small business development,
 - **Connectivity** – improving transport networks and digital connectivity.
4. In order to agree a Town Deal, Town Deal Boards must prepare a Town Investment Plan. This should set out a clear vision and a strategy that will set the direction for the economic turnaround of the town over a decade, including economic recovery from the current COVID crisis. The Plan must be based upon robust evidence of need and opportunity, should reflect local priorities and be designed with the involvement of local businesses and communities.

Developing the Nelson Town Investment Plan

5. During the last few months the Nelson Town Deal Board, with support from consultants Hatch, have overseen a robust process for developing the Nelson Town Investment Plan in line with the Towns Fund guidance. This has involved:
 - The preparation of a persuasive socio-economic narrative, including a COVID-impact study, which provides an understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the town,
 - The development of a 10-15 year vision and set of strategic objectives for the Plan,
 - The development of a long list of possible priority interventions to address the needs and build upon the opportunities,
 - The appraisal of the long list of interventions against a set of critical success factors in order to arrive at a shortlist of priority investments for which Towns Funding will be sought,
 - The development of these priority projects in further detail by dedicated project working groups to help create a compelling case for investment,
 - The engagement of a wide range of stakeholders and the local community to seek their views and input throughout the process.
6. The development of the Town Investment Plan has also encompassed the early stages of work carried out by Cushman and Wakefield on the development of a **masterplan for Nelson**. The masterplan will provide a spatial regeneration framework for the town, and

the development of the two have become intertwined during the last few months to ensure that they are aligned.

7. The Town Investment Plan has drawn on the initial consultation and engagement work carried out on the masterplan and a number of the long list project ideas also emanated from this early work. A more detailed report on the draft masterplan will be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.
8. Informed by the early stages of the masterplanning work, Members will also be aware that in June 2020 the Council submitted a bid to the Government for **Future High Street Funding (FHSF)** for Nelson. FHSF was intended to provide the catalyst investment in the town centre and the Town Deal would provide a complementary package of interventions around this.
9. On 26th December it was announced that Nelson's FHSF bid had been unsuccessful. The Town Deal Board has urgently considered the implications of this decision for our Town Investment Plan and agreed that investment for the town centre remains a key priority for the town and should form part of our Towns Fund request.

The Nelson Town Investment Plan

10. A copy of the final draft Nelson Town Investment Plan is attached as Appendix A to this report. It will be considered for agreement by the Town Deal Board on the morning of 11th February and the outcome will be reported verbally to this committee.
11. The Plan sets out a strong, fresh vision for Nelson underpinned by 9 strategic objectives and three cross-cutting principles, as follows:

Our vision for Nelson:

“A healthy, vibrant and confident town fulfilling its role as a key centre on the M65 growth corridor; offering high quality services, aspirational education, diverse employment and housing opportunities; all set within safe and attractive spaces which inspire and energise our residents.

Nelson is a town proud of its social and industrial heritage, inspiring landscapes, and multi-cultural identity.

Together we will build a future everyone can aspire to, underpinned by inclusive and sustainable growth and community involvement.”

Our strategic objectives for Nelson over the next 15 years (2020-2035) are:

- 1) To instil pride and a strong sense of identity and belonging to create a cohesive and welcoming community where residents feel connected, involved and empowered.
- 2) To ensure that public service provision meets the needs of all residents to enable them to thrive.
- 3) To increase confidence and aspiration to succeed through improved access to skills and quality jobs.
- 4) To provide a better choice of housing through renewal and new build to enhance quality and affordability.

- 5) To support health and well-being through access to quality open spaces, active walking and cycling routes, and responsive recreation and leisure provision.
- 6) To reinforce the town's role as a key service centre serving the needs of its catchment set within an attractive, safe and welcoming environment.
- 7) To drive resilience and growth through a diverse business base which celebrates innovation, entrepreneurship and ambition to grow.
- 8) To re-energise and breathe new life into heritage assets and redundant buildings.
- 9) To enhance digital and physical connections to support inclusion and economic growth.

These are underpinned by three cross-cutting themes which are intrinsic to the Towns Fund:

- Collaboration and engagement
- Clean growth
- Economic recovery

12. The Plan identifies **8 key projects** for which Towns Funding is sought and these are summarised in the table below:

Town Deal Projects	Approx. Towns Fund Ask	Delivery lead & partners
Revitalised Nelson: Seeks to bring high profile, long-term vacant and underused buildings and sites in the town centre/edge of town centre back into use, e.g. for residential and commercial purposes.	£10.7mill	Lead: PBC with developers, Registered Providers
Healthy Town: The Healthy Town project will result in new leisure facilities for young people at Wavelength's as well as improvements in Nelson's three parks. The project will provide new reasons to visit the town and seeks to address poor health issues, including high levels of childhood obesity, by encouraging more active lifestyles which improve health and wellbeing.	£3.8mill	Lead: Pendle Leisure Trust and PBC
'This is Nelson': A 5-year arts and culture programme that actively engages Nelson's communities in the town's development to facilitate ownership, pride and a shared identity. This will be achieved through programmes of activity, events and the re-activation of places and spaces.	£0.8mill	Lead: InSitu, with Building Bridges, SuperSlowWay, Creative Lancashire
Advanced Digital Skills Hub and Academy: will create a new skills facility within Nelson and Colne College's main building and a smaller facility within the town centre. As well as creating new learning facilities, the project will provide high-quality creative workspace that inspires, supports and encourages enterprise in service and digital technology.	£2.5mill	Lead: Nelson and Colne College
Pendle Youth Employment Service (YES) Hub: The YES Hub will support Pendle's 16-24-year olds to overcome barriers to employment. It will provide a 'one stop shop' where young people can go to access a range of information, advice and guidance alongside a breadth of learning, training, health improvement and employment opportunities.	£0.6mill	Lead: PBC with Dept for Work & Pensions, Active Lancashire, Lancashire Skills Hub, Nelson & Colne College
Modernising Nelson's Industrial Offer: Seeks to acquire and redevelop sites for new employment uses.	£4mill	Lead: PBC with developer
Business Resilience and Improvement: The provision of capital grants to support expansion projects including premises, plant and machinery to support the creation of sustainable jobs and improved productivity within the manufacturing sector.	£2mill	Lead: PBC with Boost Business Lancashire, Growth Lancashire
Accessible Nelson: seeks to improve traffic flow, movement and parking around the town centre and improve the quality of the environment and public realm on key gateway routes into and through the town. This will improve people's perceptions and experience as they enter the town, provide an enhanced setting for local businesses and some investment sites, and improve sustainable transport links in order to encourage more walking and cycling to destinations within the town.	£5.5mill	Lead: PBC with LCC

13. The Board are seeking £29.9mill of Towns Funding to deliver these projects. It is estimated that the projects will lever in a further £40mill of other funding from the public and private sector.

Outcomes and Impact

1. Over its lifetime, the Plan will benefit 33,000 residents and generate:
 - £3.5mill labour supply impact
 - £23.2mill social return on investment
 - £15.5mill wider land value uplift

2. Wider benefits will include:
 - 690 jobs created, support and safeguarded
 - 139 new homes delivered
 - 23,400 sq m public realm improved
 - 11,500 sq m new commercial floorspace
 - 4646 sq m refurbished commercial floorspace
 - 14 town centre/edge of town centre buildings and spaces reactivated
 - 38 businesses supported
 - 1200 new learners assisted (per annum)
 - 23,465 sq m of parks green spaces and leisure infrastructure improved
 - 2.5 km of walking and cycling routes improved (minimum)
 - Improved perceptions of the town by residents/businesses/visitors

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

13. Residents and a wide range of stakeholders have been involved in the development of the Plan at various stages using a variety of techniques. This work was guided by a stakeholder engagement plan which was draw up and agreed by the Board at an early stage.
14. The early phases of the engagement activities focused upon identifying issues and opportunities, and developing the vision and the long list of project ideas. Activities included:
- Workshops and 'drop in' sessions and with local stakeholders, businesses and residents,
 - Detailed one-to-one discussions with 30 stakeholders, including local businesses,
 - Analysis of posts about Nelson on the Government's #MyTown portal
 - A survey on the Nelson Town Deal website which resulted in over 400 responses
 - Creative engagement activities aimed at harder to reach groups, including telephone discussions and on-line focus groups with 95 young people, 2 'digital talking society' events involving residents, businesses and the Youth Council, and a social photography project which engaged 28 businesses.
15. The more recent engagement activities have focused upon strategy and project development.
- A wide range of stakeholders have been involved in project working groups established to work up the shortlisted projects in greater detail,
 - There has been a further opportunity for residents and others to 'have their say' / provide comment on the shortlisted projects through the Nelson Town Deal website.
 - This has been supported by social media campaigns and information in the local press.

16. A future stakeholder engagement plan has been developed and agreed by the Town Deal Board to guide ongoing engagement during the implementation phase of the Plan.

Programme Governance / Accountable Body Role

17. At its meeting on 16th January 2020, this Committee agreed that Pendle Council, as the Lead Authority, would act as the Accountable Body if a Town Deal is agreed.

18. The Council would sign the Heads of Terms, along with the chair of the Board, and be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the delivery of individual Towns Fund projects, submitting regular reports to the Towns Hub and receiving and accounting for the Towns Fund allocation.

19. An amount of funding has been built into each project to help resource this Programme Management function should we be successful in securing a deal.

Next Steps

20. Following submission, Town Investment Plans will be assessed by MHCLG and Heads of Terms will be offered to towns with submissions of sufficient quality within approximately 2 months. Heads of Terms should then be agreed within a further 2 month period.

21. Should Nelson be successful, this committee are asked to agree that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Town Deal Board, is authorised to negotiate the Heads of Terms for a Town Deal, which will then be brought to this Committee for agreement.

22. Following the agreement of Heads of Terms, towns will then have up to one year to develop agreed projects in detail, complete and assure comprehensive business cases and submit a summary document to MHCLG to show that this has been completed in line with any conditions in the Heads of Terms. Only then will funding be released.

23. It is the lead council's responsibility to develop agreed projects in detail, undertake necessary feasibility studies and to help develop detailed business cases. This will be done through the existing project Working Groups that have developed initial project proposals and reports will be taken to the Board as the projects develop. These project development costs will be built into the Towns Fund ask for each project and will essentially be reimbursed if the business case summary is approved by MHCLG.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: The Town Investment Plan for Nelson will set a clear vision and a strategy for the economic growth of the town over the next decade. The Plan will be focused upon the area within the agreed town deal boundary.

Financial: If Nelson is successful in securing a deal the Council will act as the Accountable Body. Costs associated with resourcing a Programme Management function have been built into the Plan. The Council may have to stand some of the capitalised costs associated with the development of business cases for the projects, however, these will be reimbursed if projects are approved. If projects are not approved then abortive costs will be a call on revenue budgets.

Legal: None as a result of this report.

Risk Management: None as a result of this report.

Health and Safety: None as a result of this report.

Sustainability: Town Investment Plans are guided by sustainability - economic, social and environmental. 'Clean growth' is also a core principle of the Towns Fund and is one of the cross cutting themes of the Plan.

Community Safety: None as a result of this report.

Equality and Diversity: None as a result of this report.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Nelson Town Investment Plan

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nelson Town Deal Governance – 16th January 2021

Nelson Town Deal, Masterplan and Future High Streets Fund - 21st November, 2019