



**REPORT FROM: PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND  
REGULATORY SERVICES MANAGER**

**TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 22<sup>nd</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2022**

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## **BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND GROWTH PROJECT – TOWN DEAL BOUNDARY BUFFER ZONE**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To consider the recommendations from the Nelson Town Deal Board to create a 0.5 mile buffer zone to the existing Town Deal boundary for the Business Resilience and Growth project.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That this Committee:

- (1) Approve in principle the creation of a 0.5 mile 'buffer zone' to the existing Nelson Town Deal boundary for the Business Resilience and Growth project.
- (2) Approve only allowing applications from businesses within the Nelson Town Deal boundary in Year One of the project.
- (3) Approve reviewing the take up from businesses within the Nelson Town Deal boundary at the end of Year One, with a view to allowing applications from businesses within the buffer zone in Year Two should the evidence suggest demand for the funding was low and businesses within the existing boundary would not be disadvantaged.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) In order that highly appropriate businesses that are on the edge of the existing Nelson Town Deal boundary do not lose out on the opportunities offered by the Nelson Town Deal grants, where they will provide benefits to the town's economy.
- (2) In order that Nelson benefits from the inclusion of these businesses.

## **Background**

### **1. Nelson Town Deal Business Grants**

The Business Resilience and Growth project was considered and approved by the Town Deal Board and the Council's Policy and Resources Committee in May. The Project Summary Document is currently with Government and we are expecting their funding decision later in the summer.

### **2. Progress and the issue**

If approved, manufacturing businesses within the Nelson Town Deal area boundary will be able to apply for a maximum of £100,000 to assist their businesses. This will in turn help the Nelson local economy. In the process of carrying out soft market testing when developing the business case, the Council received feedback from a number of local businesses located just outside the official Nelson Town Deal boundary who could benefit from the funding, with some expressing an interest in it.

The official Town Deal boundary is attached to this report (APPENDIX 1). The boundary includes key industrial areas such as the Whitewalls and Lomeshaye Industrial Estates, but does not include a number of important manufacturing businesses in the Nelson (BB9) postcode who are just on the edge of the officially designated TD boundary. This includes:

- a) Lower Clough Mill – adjacent to Nelson and Colne College but approximately 50m outside of the current boundary, as well as the former AC/DC building opposite the College.
- b) North Valley Business Park off Reedyford Road, again just outside of the boundary.
- c) Northlight – whilst this is a mixed use scheme there is scope for some manufacturing space. It is an important local business landmark site within a very small distance of the official Town Deal boundary.
- d) Vantage Court/Riverside

The location of some of the premises reflects the fact Nelson is a former mill town where industry often sits alongside housing in old mills. There is a continuous built up area through Colne, Nelson and Brierfield which means that any boundary round the Nelson area could be considered somewhat artificial.

### **3. Resolving the issue**

In order that these important businesses are included in this project it was suggested that a buffer zone is created which would allow applications for this business funding from these businesses and others which may also be in the near vicinity.

The buffer zone suggested is 0.5 mile from the official boundary as “the crow flies”. In addition to meeting the criteria to be accepted for these grants, any business within this buffer zone would be asked to state additional reasons why they should be accepted for these grants.

These additional reasons would include the number of existing employees who are from the Nelson area, and local supply chain links to Nelson. Just like every business that applies for

these grants these companies would have to go through a strict scoring matrix and standard procedure to meet all eligible criteria and outputs. The creation of this buffer zone would only apply to this Town Deal project.

The Nelson Town Deal Board considered the creation of this buffer zone at its meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> August 2022 and approved this recommendation. A proviso was added that within year one of the project that the existing boundary would apply and that subject to review of how many applications came through, then the buffer zone would be introduced thereafter.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have confirmed that they are happy for the Town Deal boundary to be extended with the half mile buffer around the existing boundary on the condition that they are provided with the following:

- a definitive map of the new boundary, and
- an assurance that the Town Deal Board have been consulted and agreed these changes with any affected neighbouring MPs or local authorities.

It is therefore recommended that the Council's Policy and Resources Committee approve this recommendation.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

**Policy:** None arising directly from this report

**Financial:** None arising directly from this report

**Legal:** None arising directly from this report

**Risk Management:** None arising directly from this report

**Health and Safety:** None arising directly from this report

**Sustainability:** None arising directly from this report

**Community Safety:** None arising directly from this report

**Equality and Diversity:** None arising directly from this report

**APPENDICES** APPENDIX 1 – Nelson Town Deal Boundary Map

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS** - None