

**REPORT FROM: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**TO: EXECUTIVE**

**DATE: 12 MARCH 2024**

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## **LONG-TERM PLAN FOR TOWNS: NELSON**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The report updates the Executive on progress made on the delivery preparations for the Long-Term Plan for Towns funding which has been allocated to Nelson.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) To note progress made on the delivery preparations for the Long-Term Plan for Towns funding which has been allocated to Nelson.
- (2) To agree that delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader on the arrangements for the Town Board.

### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The delegation will ensure that the Council can comply with the latest government guidance and have the required arrangements in place by April 2024.

### **ISSUE**

1. In 2023 it was announced that Nelson would be a recipient of a new Town Fund, The Long-Term Plan for Towns. This fund, which will provide a non-competitive allocation of funding to Nelson of £20 million will take an endowment-style approach. This means that funding is released over a ten-year period and local authorities have the flexibility to spend it over that period.
2. The Long Term for Towns has a focus on the following intervention themes:
  - Safety and Security;
  - High streets, heritage and regeneration; and
  - Transport and connectivity.

3. In order to unlock the new Town Funds, the borough council, working in partnership with a Town Board, must develop a Long-Term Plan for Nelson. This plan must be submitted to government by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024.
4. The Long-Term Plan will identify the town's investment priorities, in line with the requirements of the fund. To do this will require support with research and consultation with the community. A specification for external support on this has been prepared. The Long-Term Plan will comprise of a 10-year vision and an initial 3-year investment plan.
5. In February 2024, Adam Hawksbee, the Chair of the Long-Term Plan for Towns Programme, visited Nelson and spoke to elected members, officers and partners. The key messages during Adam Hawksbee's visit, and a national webinar run the same week, indicated a strong emphasis on community development.
6. The latest guidance is pointing towards a 15-person town board with even stronger involvement from the community and business (with a Chair from the local community or a local organisation/ business), and fewer local authority representatives (Adam Hawksbee suggested one lower tier and one upper tier representative) than existing town deal boards. The MP will also be one of the 15 board members. This direction of travel therefore suggests that the existing Nelson Town Deal Board might not be fit for purpose for the programme. For this reason, in other areas, councils have decided to set up a new board for this new programme, so that existing town deal arrangements and stakeholders can continue their work on the delivery of their programmes. Further guidance is expected imminently on this key issue.
7. Officers are working on proposals for the suggested local authority community and business stakeholders who would be involved in a new board. In order to have the arrangements in place for April, it is recommended that delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader on the arrangements for the Town Board. This will enable the Council to comply with the latest government guidance and make the April deadline for having appropriate arrangements in place.

## IMPLICATIONS

**Policy:** the Long-Term Plan for Towns plan will have strong links with the Corporate Plan priorities around proud and connected communities and places, good growth and healthy communities.

**Financial:** The programme will bring in significant revenue and capital funding to the area.

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

**Risk Management:** Programme delivery will involve the development of a risk register which is actively monitored and managed.

**Health and Safety:** No direct implications.

**Sustainability:** Sustainability will be brought into the programme where appropriate.

**Community Safety:** Community safety is a key part of the programme and will provide additional capacity in this area.

**Equality and Diversity:** The programme will take a strong community development approach and diversity and inclusion will be central to its planning and delivery.

**APPENDICES** - None

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS** - None