

DEWSBURY TOWN BOARD

22nd October 2020

TOWNS FUND: ACCELERATED PROJECTS 2020/21 - UPDATE

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 On the 1st July the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) wrote to Councils which have a town that has been identified as a potential recipient of Town Fund support. In the case of Kirklees MHCLG allocated £750,000 of capital funding for Dewsbury and invited the Town Board to put forward proposals for a project (or projects) that could spend this grant in this financial year i.e. by end March 2021.
- 1.2 The Town Board considered an initial list of projects for advanced funding at its meeting on the 15th July. Following comments from Board members a revised list was produced and this was circulated via Email to Board members on the 10th August. No further suggestions were received and the Council, on behalf of the Town Board, submitted the proposals to MHCLG by the 14 August 2020 deadline. Appendix One contains the list of projects submitted.
- 1.3 MHCLG informed the Council on the 25th September that all the projects in the list submitted had been approved and the £750,000 would be paid to the Council as the accountable body. The approval letter is in Appendix 2. The grant has now been received by the Council.
- 1.4 Council officers and partners are now progressing the work necessary to ensure that the projects spend the grant in financial year in 2020/21 and the programme spends the full £750,000. In parallel to the above Kirklees Cabinet will be asked on the 18th November to approve the implementation of the programme, including authority to enter into any agreements necessary to deliver the programme and the flexibility to ensure the £750,000 programme is spent in full.

2.0 Programme & Project Delivery

- 2.1 Since the approval of the submission the Council has been informed that the North Rail Partnership will now fully fund the Station Gateway proposal. Officers are waiting formal confirmation of this, but if it is assumed that this will be confirmed then this means that the £110,000 allocated from the Towns Fund advanced funding is no longer required for that purpose. If the fund is to be fully committed by the end of 2021/22 then proposals will need to be agreed that are acceptable to the Board and MHCLG and can spend the money by the end of March 2021.
- 2.3 The short timescales available to spend the money mean that the options available to spend this £110,000 are limited. For a number of reasons, it would be very difficult to introduce totally new projects and therefore it is suggested that the spare funds which are available are directed towards projects currently on the approved list.

- 2.4 A possibility is to put more resource into the Better Spaces Programme. Officers have identified the potential of carrying out environmental enhancement works at the rear of Pioneer House. This would be in addition to the works the College are planning to undertake and would provide a genuine enhancement of this important space. The attached paper provides a summary of what could be funded. If supported by the Board this would be implemented by providing a grant to Kirklees College to do the work.
- 2.5 There may be opportunities to use the spare funds on other approved projects but this will only become clear once the delivery process is further advanced. There is a need for flexibility and therefore Council officers will need to have the flexibility to direct funds to those projects that are both able to spend the money by the end of March 2021 and offer value for money.

3.0 Recommendation

3.1 The Town Board are requested to

- (i) Note the award of £750,000 advanced funding to be spent in Dewsbury in 2020/21 on the projects listed in Appendix One
- (ii) Agree the approach suggested in section 2 which allows the flexibility necessary to give the best chance that the £750,000 will be fully spent by the end of March 2021
- (iii) Agree to the Better Spaces Programme being increased, including the enhancement of the open space to the west of the Pioneer building

Contact: Peter Thompson
Peterr.thompson@kirklees.gov.uk

APPENDIX ONE: PROJECTS APPROVED

Town Fund Intervention Theme	Project Name	Description	Cost £,000	
			Town Fund 2020/1	Total
Local Transport	Station Gateway	Improvements to Dewsbury railway station inc toilets, waiting area.	110	565
	Improved Pedestrian & cycle routes	Wellington St cycleway, new /improved footpaths, secure cycle parking.	150	410
Urban Regeneration, planning & land use	Better Spaces Programme	Package of works including pedestrian subway, Library area; planting of semi mature trees, lighting, tactical urbanism and public art.	205	500
	Kingsway & Queensw'y Arcades	Lighting scheme in historic Arcades in the town centre.	80	80
Arts, Culture & heritage	Creative 'Hub'	Adaption, and other works to enable 15, Union street to become a facility for the creative sector/ community.	125	130
Skills Infrastructure	Digital Hubs	Upgrading of 4 community hubs for digital training.	80	80
Total			750	1,765

APPENDIX TWO: DECISION LETTER



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

*Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local
Government*
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Tel: 0303 444 0000

www.gov.uk/mhclg

Shabir Pandor
Shabir.Pandor@kirklees.gov.uk

25 September 2020

Dear Shabir Pandor,

On 30 June, the Prime Minister announced that government is bringing forward £5 billion of capital investment projects, supporting jobs and the economic recovery.

Thank you for submitting your proposal for the £750,000 in accelerated funding. This grant is being offered to your town to fund capital projects that are in line with the Towns Fund intervention framework.

We are pleased to confirm that funding will be made available for all the projects listed in your proposal. Your Lead Council should receive payment on or around 30 September via a S31 grant.

We remind you that this funding must be spent this financial year, on the projects approved by your Lead Council's S151 officer.

As you know, the Towns Fund aims to unleash the economic success of towns and high streets across the country, levelling up communities and ensuring everyone can contribute to and benefit from economic growth.

The impact of Covid-19 makes these investments more important than ever. We know the past few months have been hugely challenging for communities across the country and we hope that the funding that government has brought forward to this financial year will make an immediate impact in towns. The capital projects you have identified to receive accelerated funding will be key in supporting the growth and recovery of our towns during the pandemic.

We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Jennick.