

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has been included in the relevant Forward Plan

Report of the Executive Director of PLACE

Principal Towns Investment Programme

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To update Cabinet on the Principal Towns Investment Programme (Cab.11.1.2017/13) and to seek approval to progress the funding allocation for the principal town of Royston.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **Cabinet approve the proposed Principal Towns allocation for Royston (Appendix B Masterplan and Section 4).**
- 2.2 **Cabinet notes the extension of the project to 31 March 2021 to ensure the effective completion of all schemes contained within the programme**

3. Introduction

- 3.1 Following the approval of the Principal Towns Investment Programme (Cab. 11.1.2017/13) officers across the Communities and Place Directorates have been working on a co-production delivery model, which has included an extensive consultation exercise with elected members, local community groups and businesses. This was carried out to identify and develop projects at a local level. The identification of schemes has been further underpinned with the development of supporting financial and outcome-based businesses cases.
- 3.2 In June 2018, Arcadis were appointed to undertake a master planning exercise covering the principal town of Royston. Work has now been completed providing a long term strategic vision for Royston as well as helping to identify the work packages that can be delivered within the duration of the Principal Towns programme.
- 3.3 Following the completion of the consultative phase, the programme has now firmly moved into active delivery. The current programme is predicted to run up until 31 March 2021 to make sure there is effective delivery of a diverse and complex programme.

4. Principal Towns - Business Case - Royston

- 4.1 A variety of public space improvements have previously been made throughout Royston, including work at Pocket Park on Church Street, the development of the community area at The Wells and the introduction of a themed fence throughout the high street.

This area has an active and functioning community partnership, which has a strong presence in the community and successfully manages The Grove. Royston has also seen a considerable investment of housing development; this has the potential for more people to work in the local area if there were increased opportunities.

The master planning exercise identified a range of opportunities for Royston. It considered ways to improve the local economy, improve green and public spaces, while enhancing the viability of the high street. These activities should be undertaken while making sure that initiatives are of high quality and sustainable for the future.

- 4.2 The action plan included in Appendix B sets out predicted costs and timescales for individual opportunities. This presents an assessment of the potential economic and social benefits. These actions cover both short term (Zero to two years) and long term (two years +) aspirations.
- 4.3 Not all of the projects identified in the action plans are suitable for delivery through Principal Towns funding. They will form part of the longer-term strategic vision for the area. The Principal Towns programme has provided a clear vision for those areas, providing a platform to explore future funding opportunities to bring forward schemes at a later date.
- 4.4 Further consultation with elected members has helped to refine the short and long-term priorities. The business case reflects recommendations from the feasibility study with some of the long term aspirations brought forward for delivery within the programme following local member consultation and where feasible within the life of the programme. The proposals for Royston are;

Workshop Units

It has been highlighted that there is a lack of employment workspace available in Royston that allows for residents to work locally.

Through initial discussions with Enterprising Barnsley it has been highlighted that:

- From the 110 enquiries received to date in 2019/20, 18 percent have been for units sized under 1,000 sqft.
- In 2018/19 383 enquiries were received, 13 percent were for units sized under 1,000 sqft.
- Of the 1.2 M available Sqft which is currently being marketed by the council, there are only four available industrial units that are sized under 1,000 sqft.
- There seems to be a clear gap in the market for small MWS industrial / workshop / hybrid units up to 1,500 sqft.

Royston was highlighted as one of the borough's most important places for economic growth. This could support Barnsley's spatial growth priorities outlined in the Barnsley Workspace for Growth Report (May 2018).

Currently, it is proposed to build five sustainable, managed industrial and workspace units on the former Monckton Colliery Site which forms part of Rabbit Ings Country Park. The site is unused derelict land which is adjacent to an already established industrial unit, and does not impact on the work and aspirations of the Nature Reserve.

The land where it is proposed to build the units is under ownership of the Landtrust. Initial meetings with Landtrust and Groundworks have resulted in an agreement that the land will be released at no cost to be developed.

Groundwork (who already maintain Rabbit Ings) will be crucial in maintaining the workspace site, making sure that the units are being used for their intended purpose and that the site itself is kept in good condition.

The units will provide facilities where entrepreneurs can start or grow their enterprises. The units are important for business start-ups and established small businesses that need high-quality workspaces, and will increase employability and raise income. Rental values for the units will vary dependent on size and fixtures. Any rentals collected from the units could potentially be used to expand the site, providing ongoing maintenance of the buildings, and support to community groups in improving the high street.

In delivering these units, a social enterprise will be created which will be linked to an existing community partnership. This will provide a sustainable solution to make sure funding is available to keep the high street maintained well into the future.

When undertaking the planning stage of the site, it will be a priority to make sure the buildings are environmentally friendly. Options such as bio-mass heating and solar panels will be explored, as well as electric car charging points and cycle racks. External European match funding options are currently being investigated. This is currently at the Expression of Interest stage. If successful, it is hoped that a further £600,000 would be invested into the site, increasing the numbers of units to up to 15. This increase could mean that the units would be of differing sizes, appealing to a wider range of small growing businesses.

The scheme has been worked through the Social Value Engine tool, and is currently showing a return of £3 for every £1 spent by Principal Towns.

Public Realm

Public realm improvements have been highlighted as a priority to be taken forward.

This includes:

- Improving the look of park entrances that are situated on the high street.
- Providing directions to the high street from the Trans Pennine Trail.
- A scheme for the shop frontage shutters at The Wells to improve the look of the area when shops are closed.

Royston Indicative Costings

Workspace units	£400,000
Public Realm	£35,000
Fees & Contingency	£43,500
Total for approval	£478,500
Potential Royston shop front allocation	£120,000
Total proposed allocation for Royston	£598,500

5. Implications for Local People/Service Users

- 5.1 Residents of Principal Towns and Local Centres will see significant positive outcomes from the programme. This proposal will develop workspace units that will attract employers and increased employment opportunities to Royston. More jobs in the town are likely to increase footfall and contribute to a vibrant economy. Overall, this scheme is likely to have a sustained positive impact in providing new business space and new jobs, providing funding to revitalise the local high street.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Consultations on the financial implications have taken place with representatives of the Service Director - Finance (S151 Officer).
- 6.2 This scheme utilises funding set aside as part of the 2017-2020 Capital Programme, as identified in the Principal Towns Investment Programme report (Cab.11.1.2017/13).
- 6.4 The attached business case put forward for approval equates to £478,500.
- 6.5 Expenditure identified within this scheme will be managed within the resources available.
- 6.6 Procurement regulations will be adhered to for all tendering.
- 6.7 The financial implications relating to this proposal are shown in Appendix A of this document.

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1 The two Project Managers posts will be extended from 31st March 2020 to 31st March 2021.
- 7.2 Additional highways design and project management resource has also been allocated and appointed to the programme. This will deliver the project at a faster pace and provide additional capacity.

8. Communications Implications

- 8.1 A new communication and marketing plan has been created, which will implement an integrated approach, targeting a range of stakeholders such as residents, ward councillors and local businesses. The plan aims to raise the profile, achievements and progress of Principal Towns and Local Centres across the borough.

Channels such as social media, website content, email mailers and the media will be used to tell the story of our Principal Towns, the journey so far and what is yet to come providing an opportunity to share and celebrate successes.

9. Promoting Equality & Diversity and Social Inclusion

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed in order to inform the development of this programme.
- 9.2 The EIA has focused on how this scheme can promote better access inclusion to shops. This will improve access for people from diverse communities, including disabled people and older people.
- 9.3 The access to some facilities and services is currently limited in the Principal Towns particularly for disabled people. Access visits have been arranged through the 'My Barnsley Too' forum. These results of will be fed in to business cases where appropriate.
- 9.4 Plans have been put in place to encourage grant applicants to consider undergoing an assessment of their general accessibility. This will allow businesses to be listed on the Disabled Go website and participate in schemes such as Dementia Friendly, Breast Feeding Friendly and a Safe Places, helping to promote a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

10. Consultations

- 10.1 Community consultations have taken place, which have encouraged residents to have their say and voice their thoughts about improvements that could be made in their local area. This included conversations with the Ward Alliance and community engagement at various events.

Internal consultation has worked with Elected Members in Royston, which has also developed the understanding of what could be achieved in each area.

In terms of delivering the units, consultation has taken place with Landtrust to make sure there is a smooth transition of site ownership.

11. Risk Management Issues

- 11.1 The risks and the mitigation are listed below:

Risk	Mitigation
Expectation that all projects in the action plans will be delivered, rather than ones highlighted for delivery in the first two years.	Expectations will be managed through delivery of an all member briefing and continued communications with elected members and wider community.
Effective delivery of proposed projects.	Mitigated by extension of project timescales and additional resource, including the Project Support Officer and Highways Technician. Established relations now in place with other Council services i.e. Highways and planning.

12. List of Appendices

Appendix A - Financial Implications

Appendix B - Arcadis Report - Royston

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