

## 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 delivery of Phase 1 of the Principal Towns programme and outline proposals relating to a proposed Phase 2 to be taken forward as a key enabling workstream within the context of the emerging Barnsley 2030 plan.

#### 2. Recommendations

##### 2.1 **This report makes the following recommendations:**

##### 2.2 **That Cabinet approve the release of capital resource to establish the Principal Towns phase 2 programme as outlined below:**

- **Establishment of a feasibility fund supporting the development of place shaping proposals for the Principal Towns of Cudworth, Royston, Hoyland, Penistone and Wombwell**
- **Note that all feasibility proposals be submitted to the Principal Towns Board for consideration and referred to the Capital Oversight Board for final approval.**
- **Additional resource allocated to the shop front improvement scheme to assist with the post Covid19 recovery of the high streets within Principal Towns and local high streets**
- **Development of regeneration proposals within Local Centres as outlined in this report**
- **Note that all regeneration proposals developed will be aligned to existing local area priorities, fully support the emerging Barnsley 2030 plan and inclusive economic aspirations ensuring that residents, communities and businesses directly benefit from the growth activity delivered.**
- **That the current Principal Towns team roles are extended to 31st March 2023 to deliver the programme**

#### 3. Introduction

- 3.1 The Principal Towns Investment Programme was established in recognition of the key role of high streets and urban centres across Barnsley. The programme was specifically established to develop initiatives at local level in line with the priority of each area. Principal Towns investment has been focused on ensuring the future

vibrancy and sustainable of high streets and centres across the borough and the places that they support.

3.2 This report aims to share the key messages in respect of the delivery of Phase 1 of the programme and outlines proposals for Phase 2 of the programme.

#### 4. **Background**

4.1 Phase 1 of the Principal Towns Programme was established in recognition of the need to develop vibrant and sustainable urban centres across the borough reflective of local priorities and need. The Phase 1 programme was therefore shaped following extensive consultation with Elected Members, local businesses, Ward Alliances, local groups and the wider community resulting in the creation of evidence based and outcome focused business cases. Developed business cases have then been transitioned into projects delivering real and tangible change with each area.

4.2 Early in the process it was identified that the Principal Towns of Cudworth, Royston, Hoyland, Wombwell and Penistone required a place based masterplanning approach in order to establish a long term growth vision for the areas. Goldthorpe was excluded from this process as the area already had a clear development plan in place. The process of developing masterplans remained community led supported by extensive consultation with local stakeholders and resulted in the production of:

- Masterplans that articulated the strategic vision for each place
- Short term prioritised investments (0-2 years) applicable for delivery in Phase 1 of the programme
- Longer term prioritised investments (2 years+).

4.3 Initial consultation across Principal Towns and Local Centres identified a common need to improve retail frontages. Consequently the decision was taken to establish a programme wide shop front improvement scheme supported by a dedicated £800,000 budget. The shop front scheme has been highly successful and has reached a position where the existing budget is currently oversubscribed.

4.4 More widely, the consultation process identified 61 individual projects specifically tailored to local need across the six Principal Towns and eleven Local Centres.

4.5 Phase 1 of the scheme is still currently in delivery but has seen a number of successes many of which are aligned/support local priorities. A summary of high level outcomes achieved to date include:

- Development of 5 Master plans highlighting short and long term priorities
- 26 projects completed at a value of £800,336
- 35 schemes currently in delivery at a value of £2,764,336
- Creation of 2 active business forums within Principal Towns helping to drive forward high streets in those areas
- 4 new community groups created
- 14 existing community groups supported
- Over 2,000 volunteer hours delivered equating to a monetary value of £27,000

- £551,000 match funding secured which equates to 11% of the overall programme value
- 67% of all spend has directly supported local businesses

4.6 The Covid19 pandemic has and will continue to have far reaching impacts on all local high streets within Barnsley. The recent Covid19 retail, leisure and hospitality impact assessment commissioned by the Council has recognised the investment in the Principal Towns programme as an area of best practice helping to position high streets strongly within the borough from a recovery perspective. This position is further evidenced by the resurgence of local high streets post Covid19 highlighting the value of Local Centres. Consequently, it is critical that the momentum achieved by the Principal Towns programme is sustained moving forward and a further phase of the programme will help to achieve this aspiration providing a firm basis supporting a long term post Covid19 recovery as well as continuing to deliver local priorities.

## 5. **Proposal and Justification**

5.1 There is a clear opportunity to build on the success of Phase 1 and this report sets out the proposed approach for Phase 2 of the programme based on three key areas of activity:

- Principal Town Feasibility Funding/Place Shaping
- Local Centre Project Development
- Expansion of the Shop Front Improvement Scheme

5.2 Although it is envisaged that Phase 2 will see some delivery on the ground the main focus of activity will be to establish a feasibility fund utilised to create deliverable, evidence based and costed proposals for the areas within scope of the programme. Prioritised projects must also be aligned to local priorities and provide a clear contribution to the attainment of emerging 2030 outcomes. The creation of fully developed plans and projects will position local areas strongly to secure future funding to bring forward delivery on the ground.

5.3 **Principal Towns Feasibility/Place Shaping** – This phase of the programme will build on the masterplans created in Phase 1 and seek to identify transformational place shaping projects within the five Principal Town areas of Cudworth, Hoyland, Penistone, Royston and Wombwell.

Projects are expected to deliver the interventions that best sustain a thriving and vibrant high street. These may be different in each of the principal towns however all initiatives will be fully aligned to the emerging 2030 strategy and are likely to include a mix of the following:

- Strategic acquisition and repurposing of buildings/land
- One Public Estate opportunities
- Consolidation of high streets and associated repurposing
- Identification of alternative uses/diversification

Phase 2 will establish feasibility funding providing resource and capacity to develop evidenced based business cases which will enable local areas to secure funding to facilitate future delivery. Officers will meet with elected members within each Principal Town in order to explore ideas and agree priorities.

Goldthorpe has been identified as being eligible to secure government Towns Funding and a Town Investment Plan is currently being developed for the area. It is therefore proposed that Goldthorpe will not be within scope of Phase 2 of the Principal Towns Programme.

- 5.4 **Local Centre Project Definition** - It is proposed that a similar but 'lighter touch' process will be undertaken within Local Centres in respect of identifying place based transformation projects where a clear need exists. The Local Centres identified in Phase 1, (Athersley, Bolton on Dearne, Darton, Darfield, Dodworth, Grimethorpe, Hoyland Common, Lundwood, Mapplewell, Stairfoot, Thurnscoe), of the project were identified in line with establishing planning definitions.

Bolton On Dearne and Thurnscoe currently fall within the identified Goldthorpe Towns Funding boundary and will therefore be factored into the emerging Town Investment Plan.

Based on activity delivery through phase 1 of the programme it is felt that there will be a reduced level of demand within the remaining areas. This therefore provides additional capacity to widen out the delivery of Phase 2 giving consideration to additional areas.

A gap analysis has been undertaken on the focus and scope of Phase 1 of the programme which has identified an opportunity to widen out Phase 2 to include the additional wards of Worsbrough, Central, Old Town and Kingstone. As the premise of the programme is to specifically focus on the regeneration of high streets and local centres it is further proposed that further consultation is undertaken within these areas in order to identify and agree the exact areas of focus.

- 5.6 **Shops Fronts** – The establishment and implementation of the Shop Front improvement scheme has been highly successful and has delivered the following outputs:

- 199 shops complete or in agreement
- £325,312 match funding secured
- 41 individual local business utilised to deliver works
- 74% of local spend

The scheme has been recognised as an area of best practice in the recently commissioned Covid19 retail, leisure and hospitality sector impact assessment. Similarly, demand for the scheme has remind high during Covid19 lockdown period which provides a clear indication that the initiative is playing a key role in sector recovery.

The existing £850,000 is currently oversubscribed and 25 pipeline requests have been received at a total value of £108,000. Based on the current level of demand, outputs achieved to date, proposed expansion of local centres and critical link to Covid19 recovery it is therefore proposed that the existing programme is expanded

with a further £200,000 being allocated to the scheme. It is projected that this additional allocation will deliver the following outputs:

- 50 number of shops supported
- £50,000 match funding secured
- Continue to support local business in the commissioning of this work.

It is recognised that the retail environment is subject to change following on from the COVID pandemic and this combined with future place shaping activity within the Principal Towns is likely to change the dynamic of the local high street in the future. The Shop Fronts scheme will need to be congruent of this risk within the context of supporting future businesses.

**5.7 Developing the Programme** – Figure 1 provides an overview of the process that will be undertaken in respect of the Principal Town Feasibility Funding/Place Shaping and Local Centre Project Definition activities.

It is critical that initiatives that are developed are:

- Deliverable
- Evidence based
- Aligned to local priorities
- Provide a direct contribution to emerging 2030 outcomes



**Figure 1 – Phase 2 Project Development & Timeline**

It is therefore proposed that projects will be identified through a consultation/engagement phase which we seek to use a range of sources including existing local area plans, local member/community engagement, existing masterplanning work and relevant evidence bases such as the recent retail impact assessment. It is envisaged that key milestones for Phase 2 are as follows:

- Consultation/engagement - December 2021

- Business case development - November 2022
- All approvals in place/Implementation - March 2023

5.6 **Delivering the Programme** - A Principal Towns Commissioning Board was established for phase 1 consisting of officers from Place, Communities, Highways, Health, Employment and Skills, Finance and externally from Barnsley Chamber. Elected Member portfolio holders for Place and Communities also form part of the Commissioning Board. The board has provided an effective governance structure in respect of the programme and therefore it is proposed that this will be retained providing strategic oversight of Phase 2.

It is further proposed that the existing programme delivery team is retained for the duration of Phase 2 providing the resource capability to achieve the identified outcomes. Resource costs associated with programme delivery will be absorbed within the Phase 2 allocated budget.

## 6. **Consideration of Alternative Approaches**

- 6.1 Option 1: Do Nothing – A failure to progress Principal Towns 2 would mean that there would be no further development of the initiatives highlighted in the masterplans to support economic regeneration which will be more imperative post Covid.
- 6.2 Option 2: Delegated Budgets – An option does exist to allocate a budget to each individual Area Council instead of progressing with a holistic programme. This would mean the proposed total capital allocation is split rather than centrally allocated. This is unlikely to result in meaningful and economically beneficial projects coming forward.

## 7. **The Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework**

- 7.1 The proposals in this report are consistent with Council's Corporate Plan as it directly contributes towards the Council ambitions of:
- Create more and better jobs and good business growth
  - Increase skills to get more people working
  - Develop vibrant town centres
  - Strengthen our visitor economy
  - People are healthier, happier, independent and active
  - People volunteering and contributing towards stronger communities

## 8. **Implications for Local People/Service Users**

- 8.1 As outlined earlier there are significant positive implications for residents of the impacted Principal Towns.

## 9. **Financial Implications**

- 9.1 Consultation on the financial implications of this report has taken place with representatives of the Service Director for Finance (The S151 Officer).

- 9.2 Cabinet has previously set aside £1.500M (Cab.5.2.2020/6 refers) for Phase 2 of the Principal Towns Programme and this report outlines the approach for the second phase of the scheme.
- 9.3 Specifically, this proposal consists of an initial drawdown of the funding as shown in the table below:

<b>Theme</b>	<b>£M</b>
Continuation of Shop Fronts Scheme	0.200
Programme / Project Support	0.291
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.491</b>

- 9.3 It is proposed to draw down resources totalling £0.200M relating to the extension of the shop fronts scheme, which was originally commissioned through phase 1 of Principal Towns.
- 9.4 A further £0.291M is proposed to fund the programme support in respect of the delivery of phase 2 of principal towns to completion by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.
- 9.5 The remaining resources of £1.009M are planned to be used to expand the existing scheme in terms of transformational projects to the local centres including Worsbough, Old Town & Kingstone as well as developing detailed Feasibility/Place Shaping proposals for the 5 main principal towns, akin to the Goldthorpe Master Plan.
- 9.6 It is proposed that drawn down and formal approval of these remaining resources in respect of the individual projects will follow the existing governance arrangements and approval framework, established as part of the Phase 1 of Principal Towns. Further scrutiny and final approval will be delivered via the Capital Oversight Board, with subsequent reports to follow in due course, where necessary.
- 9.7 The financial implications are detailed in the Appendix A to this report.

## 10 **Employee Implications**

- 10.1 The existing Principal Towns Team consisting of two Project Managers, Business Support Officer be retained until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and Highways Designer be retained until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

## 11 **Communications Implications**

- 11.1 The Principal Towns 2 Programme will be promoted effectively to the interest groups associated with the Principal Towns to engage them with in the programme. Developments will be promoted to the general public to ensure the improvements are understood and recognised. It is envisaged that as with Phase 1 of the programme, Phase 2 will be supported with a dedicated Communications Strategy.

## 12. **Consultations**

- 12.1 Consultation has taken place internally and externally with the wider community, projects will continue to be developed with further consultation with local businesses, community groups and the wider general public.

13 **Risk Management Issues**

- 13.1 A set of workshops are planned to promote the programme to ensure it targets the relevant groups and individuals.
- 13.2 Following approval of the scheme in principal, more detailed risk identification activities will take place, the existing project / scheme risk register which continue to contribute towards the broader governance arrangements for the programme as a whole.

14. **Health, Safety and Emergency Resilience Issues**

- 14.1 There are no immediate implications arising directly from this report.

15. **Compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights**

- 15.1 The proposal is fully compliant with the European Convention on Human Rights.

16. **Promoting Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion**

- 16.1 Urban centre regeneration will ensure that the needs of all groups are fully incorporated. The programme will consider equality, diversity and social inclusion impact as an individual project level.

17. **List of Appendices**

Appendix A - Financial implications

18. **Background Papers**

Phase one Scheme Update and Shop Front Grant Scheme Evaluation will be submitted with the report to follow in March 2021.

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