

**CITY OF NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ECONOMIC
PROSPERITY COMMITTEE – 27 NOVEMBER 2018**

Subject:	The N2 Town Centre Programme		
Presenting authority / representative):	Report of Corporate Director Place, Nottinghamshire County Council		
Report author and contact details:	Nicola M ^c Coy-Brown, Growth and Economic Development, Nottinghamshire County Council, 0115 977 2580		
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Subject to call-in
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Value of decision:	Not applicable		<input type="checkbox"/> Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Capital
Authorities affected:	All, except Nottingham City	Date of consultation with relevant authorities: 13-15 November 2018	
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/constituent authorities):			
To offer the Committee an update on progress with the N2 Town Centre (N2TC) Programme and specifically, to consider options to support the further development of the Programme, given remaining available resources and to note the Government's announcement of a Future High Street Fund and to consider its potential for supporting further projects.			
Exempt information: None			
Recommendation(s):			
1 To note the progress made to date on the delivery of the N2 Town Centre Programme			
2 To seek approval to a further call for town centre projects to maximise the available remaining funding and to meet the outstanding job outputs			
3 To note the forthcoming Future High Street Fund and subject to a review of the criteria, to consider how best to maximise its impact within the City and County			

1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 This report is largely for information but seeks approval for a further call for projects given remaining resources and a shortfall in expected outputs. The government's announcement of a new fund potentially offers an opportunity to explore further partnership activity in support of our town centres.

2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 The "Unlocking Growth in N2 Town Centres" Programme is a formally approved £7.625m initiative, supported by the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Local Growth Fund (LGF). It is designed to deliver a set of physical / capital improvements within key town and local centres across the N2 EPC area, designed to stimulate economic growth. Each individual project is the subject of a full and independent business case assessment, taking the form of a submission which follows the D2N2 LEP's published Local Assurance Framework.
- 2.2 Nottinghamshire County Council acts as the accountable body for the programme and facilitates the process of bringing forward projects for consideration and ultimately determines approvals in liaison with the wider N2TC partners and the D2N2 LEP. At its meeting of 23rd October 2017, this Committee noted the background to the Programme and delegated the responsibility to approve individual projects to the County Council's Chief Officer and Section 151 Officer, subject to the partners' consideration (via a

now established Project Board meeting) with monitoring and overall progress being reported to future meetings of this Committee. The key items to report may be summarised as follows:

Project Progress

- 2.3 Nottinghamshire County Council has facilitated the approval of the Programme's overall Business Case and its governance arrangements and supported the applicants with further requirements including the template agreements and expectations regarding project progress.
- 2.4 Genecon, the appointed consultant is working closely with the Council and each of the individual project sponsors (in brackets below) to bring forward the respective initial projects in line with the due process. The partners have held their first Project Board meeting and the latest position may be summarised as follows:

Kirkby (Ashfield DC)	Awaiting full business case
Worksop (Bassetlaw DC)	Awaiting full business case, subject of revised design
Beeston (Broxtowe BC)	Full business case submitted, currently under assessment
Arnold (Gedling BC)	Pre-Compliance Agreement agreed, funding awarded, subject to full business case
Carlton Square (Gedling BC)	Awaiting full business case, subject of revised design
Mansfield Old Town Hall (Mansfield DC)	Award agreed
Newark Buttermarket (Newark & Sherwood DC)	Awaiting full business case

- 2.5 The programme has a reasonable degree of in-year flexibility and close liaison is being maintained with the D2N2 LEP and LGF accountable body, Derbyshire County Council to ensure the overall programme meets its targets and expectations. It will be noted that some projects are subject to revised designs or timetable slippages and this may result in a re-profiling of spend with the LEP within the wider programme timescale to March 2021.

Project Call

- 2.6 Assuming the above projects secure approval following a full business case and with the set indicative ceiling of LGF per project, there remains £625,000 unallocated. This was the subject of consideration with the partners at the Project Board and it is proposed that a fresh call for projects be made. This will follow the same approach adopted when pulling together the original longlist of projects, seeking a project or projects which create over 50 jobs, being a figure outstanding at the present time, assuming the existing projects meet their stated targets.
- 2.7 The Committee will recall that an allocation of £500,000 was made towards Nottinghamshire projects via the Business Rates pooling arrangements. Netting off the element previously agreed to support town centre-related Pre-Development projects, this leaves c.£310,000 and it is further proposed that this element be included within a call, bringing forward a total of £935,000 for capital town centre projects in Nottinghamshire.

Future High Streets Fund

- 2.8 On 29th October, the government published a Policy Paper which trailed a forthcoming Fund, the prospectus for which will be made available later this year. The policy paper signals the creation of a £675m national fund, of which £55m will be for heritage related support. The paper references the importance of strong local leadership in regenerating and reconfiguring town centres and proposes a new High Streets Task Force (launched early 2019) to offer support to local areas and co-fund initiatives.
- 2.9 Proposals will need to set out the overall vision and specific improvements / project(s) to contribute to the vision. The private sector will be integral in developing proposals, with submissions to be assessed supporting those where value for money, a clear business case (deliverability, strategic fit to objectives of the fund and ability to co-fund bids where appropriate) can be demonstrated. The Fund will contribute up to £25m to projects per local area.
- 2.10 The partners involved in the N2TC programme made a powerful case in securing support for this initiative and are well-versed in the issues and dynamics relating to town centres and high streets in the N2 area, including early conversation with the authors of the Grimsey review, facilitated via the partners and Nottingham Trent University and their involvement in the National Retail Research Knowledge Exchange Centre. On the publication of the prospectus, it is proposed that the N2 EPC and the N2TC programme partners consider how best to respond to the opportunities available. Depending on timing and criteria, it may be possible to draw additional resources into the N2TC programme and / or its individual projects. The above referenced call for projects will support both the N2TC programme but the longlisting of projects may also support a possible Future High Streets Fund submission.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Progress on the already approved N2TC programme is for noting. The Committee may decide not to make a call for projects but this will leave the programme vulnerable to an underspend and an inability to achieve its targets in the longer term. The forthcoming High Streets Fund looks to offer an opportunity to bring further resources to the N2 area and depending on the precise criteria, the experience and insight available across the partners through the N2TC programme should prove valuable in facilitating a credible submission.

4 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN THIS REPORT

- 4.1 The Future High Streets Fund Policy Paper is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-high-streets-fund/future-high-street-fund>
- 4.2 The Grimsey Review is available here: <http://www.vanishinghighstreet.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GrimseyReview2.pdf>