

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting21st April 2022

1. Title of Item/Report

Thornaby Town Deal Update

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet was reminded that Thornaby had been identified as one of 101 towns to be included as part of the Government's Town Deal Programme in 2019. Members were presented with an update on progress made since the submission of Thornaby's Town Investment Plan in December 2020, which set out the key interventions proposed by Thornaby Town Deal Board. The update also outlined financial allocations per intervention for inclusion with Business Case documentation that would be submitted to Government and ultimately form the basis for delivery of interventions across Thornaby under the Town Deal programme.

In March 2021, the Government had set out Heads of Terms on a Town Deal for Thornaby based on the priorities identified in the TIP along with an allocation of £23.9m. To draw down the £23.9m allocation, the interventions identified in the TIP required further development and definition alongside input from the Town Deal Board, with HM Treasury Green Book compliant business cases to be produced for all interventions in advance of submission to Government in May 2022.

Since March 2021, work had been underway to refine and develop the interventions identified in the TIP. This had been undertaken through input from the Town Deal Board via regular meetings as well as workshops, involving Town Deal Board members and Council officers, engagement with Thornaby Community Partnership and specialist support from consultants, Jacobs.

In Thornaby Town Centre, work had focussed on the opportunities to address the impact of long-term vacant properties, namely Phoenix House and the Golden Eagle. In January 2022, after lengthy negotiations, the Council took control of Phoenix House, removing any ownership barriers to bringing forward redevelopment of the site. A valuation of the Golden Eagle has been undertaken and negotiations are underway but may prove difficult largely due to the leasehold structures and commercial expectations of interested parties. Securing this site would continue to be

a priority, however this may take some time to resolve.

Utilising specialist support from Jacobs and with input from stakeholders, several development scenarios have been modelled for both Phoenix House and the Golden Eagle sites. The initial focus had been on assessing suitability and viability for residential use along with opportunities for leisure uses in the form of a new swimming pool, internal reconfiguration and connection to the existing Pavilion leisure centre and opportunities to improve public realm and enhance parking.

The outcome of this work is that there are complex issues across both the Golden Eagle and Phoenix House sites in respect of site capacity and suitable residential products that can be accommodated, proximity to adjacent properties and market appetite for this location alongside viability challenges.

Given this work and the unclear picture around site assembly of the Golden Eagle, the Town Deal Board agreed that the recommended approach to the town centre sites should focus on the delivery of a new swimming pool on the Phoenix House site, alongside reconfiguration of the Pavilion whilst continuing to seek to gain control of the Golden Eagle, with a view to seeking a development partner to bring forward a suitable redevelopment scheme once the site is secured. This approach enables a phased redevelopment of sites in the town centre to be undertaken and ensures that if the Golden Eagle cannot be secured, a significant scale of redevelopment will still take place in Thornaby town centre.

Delivery of a new swimming pool in the town centre would see the closure of the existing Thornaby Pool, enabling the site to be brought forward for residential development. Closure would only take place upon completion of the new facility, ensuring continuity of pool provision in Thornaby. Furthermore, some internal works to the Pavilion leisure centre would be required to accommodate a physical connection with the new swimming pool and to ensure that the leisure centre continued to operate in a way that best utilises the available space from an operational and customer experience perspective. The business case estimated £13.4m total investment made up of £11.2m Towns Fund, £500,000 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and an assumed £1.7m from a Registered Housing Provider.

Re Skills development, the initial proposal in the TIP was that a training facility could be accommodated as part of a redevelopment scheme in the town centre. This was considered alongside a variety of opportunities to improve access to skills and training for Thornaby with input from the Town Deal Board, Council officers and the Education and Training Collective (ETC).

In mid-2021, the opportunity emerged to work alongside ETC to relocate the existing NETA training facility from its current location near Portrack Lane into a purpose built, modern facility as part of a redeveloped SRC site.

Overall student capacity at the current site is limited to circa 400 post-secondary education students and 5,000 adult education, engineering, and commercial course students. Even though NETA provide valued services and content to meet industry needs, there is a need to replace the aging and increasingly poor-quality buildings with new and expanded high-quality provision.

Currently, due to the limitation in size, it isn't possible to deliver the required upgrade and expansion at the existing facility. Furthermore the dated and energy inefficient status of the current facilities do not portray a modern learning environment to learners and stakeholders.

The proposal would see the Towns Fund monies of £4.7m supplement additional grants via DfE (applied for by SRC) and funding direct from SRC, to deliver a circa 6000m² modern, efficient, and fit for purpose training facility at a total cost of circa £18.9m.

Cabinet noted that North Thornaby faced a number of complex socio-economic challenges. Whilst the interventions proposed for North Thornaby do not fit neatly into the objectives established by Government for Towns Fund intervention, the inclusion of interventions in North Thornaby reflect the challenges the area faces and recognition of the desire of the Town Deal Board for the North Thornaby area to receive direct investment from the Towns Fund. Members will be aware that this area is a priority within the Fairer Stockton-on-Tees framework and interventions will be aligned to and support the delivery of the framework.

Interventions have been developed with input from the Town Deal Board, Council officers and key stakeholders including community groups and Registered Housing Providers through a series of meetings and workshops.

Proposed investment will focus on four key themes utilising £3.2m Towns Fund and an assumed £400,000 from Registered Housing Providers and the Football Foundation

- Improvements to Victoria Park and Community Centre
- Investment in 'Safer Streets' through in home security improvements, alley gates and CCTV
- Working with Registered Providers to deal with long term vacant

properties and bring them back into use

- Targeted improvements to residential energy efficiency – working with Registered Providers to enhance energy efficiency across properties in North Thornaby.

Finally, a series of routes connecting key points in Thornaby with existing cycle infrastructure were proposed. The intention was to provide a more joined up network of cycle routes running from Thornaby Station and SRC in the north, through the northern section of Thornaby, through Alison Trainer Park, the town centre, Trenchard Avenue and Thornaby Road connecting southwards with existing cycle infrastructure.

Investment in cycle infrastructure would reduce reliance on car travel, create opportunities to support healthier lifestyles and deliver greater connectivity between residential communities in Thornaby with key assets such as the town centre and train station.

The overall proposed expenditure of £6.8m included £4.8m Towns Fund and an estimated £2m from a combination of Local Transport Plan and City Region Sustainable Transport to support high-quality cycling infrastructure within the constraints of the routes identified.

Cabinet noted the proposed funding allocation by intervention and were reminded of the allocation of £5million in February 2021 to support and supplement co funding requirements where needed. It was proposed that at this stage, £500,000 of this previously approved sum be allocated to supplement investment in a new swimming pool and redevelopment works to Thornaby Pavilion.

Some elements of co-funding across interventions was dependent on third party support and or subject to additional funding bids. Furthermore, the volatility of construction prices, material and inflationary pressures may result in higher than anticipated costs across projects. On that basis, following submission of business case documentation and the outcome of third party co-funding requests, a further report would be brought to Cabinet to clarify the final financial make up of each intervention along with any subsequent request for the apportionment of monies from the previously approved £5million as required.

Individual business cases have been prepared for each intervention and will be submitted to Government by May 19th. The business case documents, reflecting the funding split allocation above, will be reviewed by Tees Valley Combined Authority Assurance Framework. This will provide a suitable level of independent review and scrutiny, as required under the Towns Fund guidance prior to final sign off, subject to agreed delegation from the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing along

with Director of Finance Development and Regeneration.

Members welcomed the proposals and the fantastic collaborative work of the Thornaby Town Deal Board.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Cabinet approve the interventions identified which have been endorsed by Thornaby Town Deal Board as set out in this report and approve allocation of Towns Fund resources to enable delivery as outlined at table 1.
2. Cabinet delegate approval of all Business Case documentation and submission to Government to Director of Director of Finance, Development & Regeneration in consultation with Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing.
3. Cabinet delegate responsibility to negotiate and agree the terms of all necessary agreements, transactions and contracts to enable the delivery along with any variations of interventions to be delivered under the Towns Fund programme to the Director of Finance, Development & Regeneration in consultation with Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing and Director of Corporate Services.
4. Cabinet approve allocation of £500,000 from the previously approved £5million allocation to support co-funding in Thornaby to supplement investment in the proposed leisure facility and redevelopment works to Thornaby Pavilion and the allocation of the remaining £4.5million will be subject to a future report.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The recommendations set out provide significant investment and enable further development and delivery of facilities and infrastructure as part of the Town Deal programme for Thornaby. The Thornaby Town Deal Board acts in an advisory capacity to the Council and there is a commitment between the members of the Board to collaborate to define the vision and strategy for the delivery of the Towns Fund. However the Towns Fund was granted to the Council, as Lead Authority, and the Council must take the final decisions relating to how the Towns Fund will be spent.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight - Friday 29th April 2022

Proper Officer
25 April 2022