

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> July 2020</b>
<b>Heading:</b>	<b>TOWNS FUND ACCELERATED PROJECTS</b>		
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR MATTHEW RELF – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLACE, PLANNING AND REGENERATION</b>		
<b>Ward/s:</b>	<b>ALL KIRKBY AND SUTTON WARDS</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>		
<b>Subject to Call-In:</b>	<b>Yes</b>		

### **Purpose of Report**

To advise Members about a funding opportunity which has become available for Kirkby and Sutton and to seek delegated authority to develop and deliver a number of projects by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

### **Recommendation(s)**

1. To accept £750k for both Kirkby and Sutton from the Government's Towns Fund to deliver a number of capital projects this financial year
2. To agree delegated authority to the Leader, Portfolio Holder for Place, Planning and Regeneration and the Director of Place and Communities to:
  - a) Select the projects for each town
  - b) Commission specialist advisors for the development and delivery of the projects
  - c) Develop and deliver the projects.

### **Reasons for Recommendation(s)**

To facilitate investment into Kirkby and Sutton and to enable projects to be developed and delivered by the end of March 2021.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

Not to accept the funding – not recommended, this is an opportunity to invest in Kirkby and Sutton as soon as possible to support economic recovery from the impacts of Covid-19.

### **Detailed Information**

The Government recently announced that as part of the Towns Fund initiative it is bringing forward funding to this financial year, to support projects that will make an immediate impact in towns. Grants of £750,000 are being offered for both Sutton-in-Ashfield and Kirkby-in-Ashfield to fund capital projects.

The accelerated funding for Town Deal towns will primarily support the following types of project:

- Improvements to or new parks, green spaces and sustainable transport links
- Improvements to high streets and town centres, including repurposing empty properties
- Demolition or site remediation that improves the overall look and feel of a town.

The next step in releasing the funding is to confirm to Government which projects we want to fund, confirm that the spending is in line with the Towns Fund intervention framework, that the projects will achieve good value for money and that they can be delivered this financial year. The proposals will then be reviewed to ensure they satisfy the requirements, before the funding is then released.

The projects currently being considered for the accelerated towns funding are as follows:

### **Kirkby**

- Re-purposing of high street shops/ development of new premises for non-retail use
- Additional funding for a new park and play area
- Upgrading sections of walking and off-road cycle routes to support the visitor economy and improve routes to school and work
- Purchase of land for mixed use development, subject to eligibility for the funding.

### **Sutton**

- Purchase of vacant property and conversion for a business hub and incubation units for start-up/ micro businesses.

The early release of the accelerated towns funding does not affect the opportunity to apply for up to £25 million for each town through the main Towns Fund programme. We will be submitting the Investment Plan for this at the end of October.

### **Town Deal Board**

The Discover Ashfield Board is undertaking the role of the Town Deal Board which is a requirement of the fund. The role of the board is to develop and agree the Town Investment Plan and to coordinate resources and influence stakeholders. The next board meeting is 24<sup>th</sup> July where the proposals for the accelerated projects will be discussed.

### **Implications**

#### **Corporate Plan:**

The projects will support the following key initiatives: Economic Growth and Place - Town Centres, 1. Re-invigorate and re-purpose town centres by bringing empty buildings back into use, enhancing our town teams and diversifying the town centre economy 2. Make the most of external funding to improve our town centres.

#### **Legal:**

There are no legal issues identified in the report.

#### **Finance:**

<b>Budget Area</b>	<b>Implication</b>
General Fund – Revenue Budget	Any revenue costs incurred, for example specialist advice can be capitalised and funded from the £750k allocation.
General Fund – Capital Programme	See above

Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	Not applicable
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	Not applicable

**Risk:**

Risk	Mitigation
Not completing the projects within the required timeframe and budget	The projects will be managed and monitored to ensure that all milestones are achieved, thereby ensuring completion within the required timeframe. Cost estimates will be produced and reviewed at the end of each project stage to ensure that the project remains within budget.

**Human Resources:**

There are no HR issues identified in the report.

**Environmental/Sustainability**

There are no issues identified in the report.

**Equalities:**

There are no issues identified in the report.

**Other Implications:**

Not applicable.

**Reason(s) for Urgency**

The projects need to be developed and implemented as soon as possible due to the deadline for spend by the end of the financial year.

**Reason(s) for Exemption**

Not applicable.

**Background Papers**

Not applicable.

**Report Author and Contact Officer**

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