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Report of: Director of Legal & Governance
Report to: Cabinet
Date of Decision: 16 December 2020
Subject: Stocksbridge Town Investment Plan

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
- Affects 2 or more Wards	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? Councillor Mazher Iqbal, Business & Investment		
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(Insert reference number)</i>		
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<i>"The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i>		

Purpose of Report: To seek delegated authority for the Director of Legal & Governance in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business and Investment, the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Governance and the Executive Director of Resources to submit the Stockbridge Town Investment Plan to secure up to £25M of Central Government Funding for the regeneration of Stocksbridge

Recommendations: To delegate authority to the Director of Legal & Governance in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business and Investment, the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Governance and the Executive Director of Resources to submit the Stockbridge Town Investment Plan to secure up to £25M of Central Government Funding for the regeneration of Stocksbridge

Background Papers:

None.

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: Damian Watkinson
	Legal: David Cutting
	Equalities: Annmarie Johnston
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	EMT member who approved submission: Laraine Manley
3	Cabinet Member consulted: Councillor Mazher Iqbal
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	Lead Officer Name: Gillian Duckworth
	Job Title: Director of Legal & Governance
Date: 8/12/20	

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 Background

1.1.1 On 6 September 2019 the government invited 100 places in England to develop proposals for a Town Deal, forming part of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund announced by the Prime Minister in July 2019. Stocksbridge was one of the towns, invited to bid.

1.1.2 The Towns Fund is seen by Government as a key element of their 'levelling up' agenda, focusing on some of the economic growth constraints that some towns face, harnessing local assets and engaging local businesses to drive the sustainable economic regeneration of towns to deliver long term economic and productivity growth through:

- i) **Urban regeneration:** Ensuring towns are thriving places for people to live and work, by: Increasing density in town centres; Strengthening local economic assets including local cultural assets; Site acquisition, preparation, remediation, and/or development; and Making full use of planning tools to bring strategic direction and change.
- ii) **Skills and enterprise infrastructure:** Driving private sector investment and small business development; and Ensuring towns have the space to support skills and small business development
- iii) **Connectivity:** Developing local transport schemes that complement regional and national networks; and Supporting the delivery of improved digital connectivity.

1.1.3 Each town invited to bid has been asked to pull together proposals for up to £25 million. This core funding will form a component of a Town Deal an agreement in principle between government, the Lead Council and the Town Deal Board, confirmed in a Heads of Terms document. It will set out a vision and strategy for the town, and what each party agrees to do to achieve this vision.

1.1.4 This document will be signed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on behalf of government; the chief executive or leader of the local authority and the chair of the Town Deal Board. Town Deals will cover a period of up to five years.

1.2 Proposal

1.2.1 There are two phases to securing the funding, with a decision gateway at the end of each. First, towns develop Town Investment Plans, which will be assessed by MHCLG. Towns will then develop agreed projects and business cases in detail, and government will assess that information before releasing funding for implementation.

1.2.2 The Council has already received £140k early this year to fund the

setting up of an appropriate governance structure and the preparation of the Town Investment Plan (TIP).

- 1.2.3 This cabinet report seeks approval to submit a Stockbridge Town Investment Plan (TIP) to secure up to £25M of Central Government's Towns Fund funding for the regeneration of Stocksbridge, and to work up the project business cases to secure funding for implementation. The proposals will be subject to sign off by the Stocksbridge Town Deal Board in January prior to the delegations authorised by this report being exercised.
- 1.2.4 The Stocksbridge Towns Fund Board has come together to develop the Town Investment Plan. The Board is made up of local business, community and public sector representatives who all wish to see real and sustainable change in Stocksbridge.
- 1.2.5 The Board has agreed a Vision and identified a series of strategic priorities for the Town Investment Plan. Underpinning the Vision is a shared commitment to:
- ensure all local people benefit from the plan;
 - leave a legacy for future generations;
 - deliver improvements in an environmentally sustainable way; and
 - place the health and wellbeing of the community at the heart of our plans
- 1.2.6 The overarching vision is *to make Stocksbridge strong, vibrant and fit for future generations and to ensure local people benefit from these changes through six strategic priorities:*
1. *To create a vibrant and attractive town*
 2. *To develop a strengthened and diversified economy*
 3. *To provide enhanced learning opportunities*
 4. *To be a more accessible town*
 5. *To provide first class sport, leisure, cultural and community facilities*
 6. *To deliver clean growth"*
- 1.2.7 Work has continued over the past months with various sub groups of the Town Deal Board (made up of local stakeholders) developing project proposals; undertaking public consultations (see a summary of the engagement work to date in Section 3 below) and initial appraisals of proposed projects to see how well they meet Governments requirements and local priorities.
- 1.2.8 A process for project prioritisation has been agreed with the Town Deal Board and each project will be assessed against the criteria in order to create a comprehensive Town Investment Plan.

- 1.2.9 The projects likely to achieve the highest scores and therefore form part of the TIP are:
- i) Regeneration of the High Street: The Board has developed a masterplan for the regeneration of the High Street with Phase 1 being redevelopment of the Council owned library site. This project offers an opportunity to provide a 21st Century library along with a range of other community based uses that will act as a catalyst for the future regeneration of the town centre
 - ii) Manchester Road traffic calming and public realm improvements: to create a pedestrian friendly welcoming environment and a link to Fox Valley Shopping area
 - iii) Investment in local transport links to support the current provision
 - iv) Investment in post 16 educational provision
 - v) Enhancement of the existing sporting facilities
 - vi) Enhancement of green routes and the visitor economy by creating pedestrian and cycle links to the nearby green spaces
- 1.2.10 A key criteria for accessing the funds was that the local authority has to act as the Accountable Body.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

- 2.1 The Government envisages a coherent evidence based submission and an approach which aims to ensure alignment across the key components of a strategy – often referred to as the “Golden Thread”. It should nevertheless address both the negative factors, such as market failure and impact of Covid, as well as exploit opportunities offered. It must link into other existing strategies – such as Local Plan or Regional Strategy.
- 2.2 We are committed to building a strong economy for Sheffield with thriving local neighbourhoods and communities across the city. The Towns Fund will support our commitments to tackle inequality in neighbourhoods across the city, working alongside local communities and businesses to regenerate our local centres and create new, sustainable jobs.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 The Stocksbridge Towns Fund public consultation ran from w/c 26th October with the online survey closing on Sunday 15th November. The purpose of the consultation was to establish the local community’s priorities for the town, to feed into the development of the Towns Fund Vision and help the Board to prioritise the projects to be included in the Town Investment Plan.
- 3.2 The consultation focussed on the broad intervention areas identified as eligible for Towns Fund monies: local transport; digital connectivity; regeneration, planning and land use (with building new homes split out

from this category); arts, sport and leisure; enhancing parks, green spaces and the environment; improved skills and education provision; and supporting business and enterprise.

- 3.3 Within each of these areas, local people were asked for their views on the relative importance of different potential interventions. People were not asked for their views on specific project ideas – further consultation is planned on the detail of specific projects once they have been more fully worked up and agreed with Government through the Heads of Terms agreement.
- 3.4 Local people were able to respond to the consultation through a paper questionnaire or online. Face to face consultations was not possible due to the imposition of Tier 3 Covid-19 restrictions at the start of the consultation period.
- 3.5 The paper survey ran in the local newspaper, Look Local, during the week commencing October 26th with an option to return responses to Dransfield House or the Look Local office. The local paper is delivered to all households in Stocksbridge.
- 3.6 The online survey was conducted on CitizenSpace via the Sheffield City Council website. The link to the online survey was on the Stocksbridge Towns Fund website and was shared through the many local community groups.
- 3.7 An initial review of effectiveness of consultations, identified relatively few responses from younger people (under 35s): as a result further efforts were made to encourage young people to engage with the consultation through local schools and community groups.
- 3.8 In total, 573 responses were received: 427 to the online survey and 146 paper returns. This represents 3% of the total ward population and is a good response to an open consultation which compares favourably with an average of 1%.
- 3.9 Respondents were distributed across the age groups. Although the number of responses from people aged under 35 increased in the final week of the consultation period, a focus for future consultation should be to engage more people from younger age groups.
- 3.10 More responses were received from women than men. Just under 1 in 10 of those who answered the question stated that they had a disability. Respondents were overwhelmingly of white ethnicity (98%). Nearly two-thirds of respondents were employed or self-employed, with a further 29% retired. Relatively few responses were received from students or the unemployed, or those who were out of the labour market for another reason.
- 3.11 Respondents to the survey tended to be well qualified. Over half held qualifications at degree level or above, with a further 23% holding Level

3 qualifications (equivalent to A-levels). Future consultation work should attempt to engage more local people with lower level qualifications, to ensure their views are heard.

- 3.12 Around 9 out of 10 of the respondents lived within the S36 postcode. Just over half said they regularly shopped in Stocksbridge and just under a third said they regularly visited friends and family in the town. Although 359 respondents to the survey were in work, only 119 of these (one-third) said they worked within Stocksbridge.
- 3.13 Respondents were asked about the results they wanted the Town Investment Plan to deliver.
- 3.14 The result which was identified as very important by the highest proportion of respondents was that the Plan should 'benefit all local people', identified as very important by 90% of respondents. This was followed by 'delivers improvements in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way' (84%); putting the community in control of local assets and related decision-making (78%); and creating high-paid, high-skilled jobs for local people (72%).

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

- 4.1.1 There are no significant positive or negative equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report. However accessing up to £25m of Central Government funding will benefit all the local people including the creation of new jobs. The local socio-economic and community cohesion impacts should be very positive.
- 4.1.2 Improvements to the local highways and associated public realm enhancements will provide opportunities to make the local pedestrian environment more friendly, especially for people with disabilities / in wheelchairs, the elderly and parents with young children.
- 4.1.3 Further equality impact assessments will be carried out during the preparation of the full business cases for individual projects to inform and guide final decisions.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 There are no immediate financial & commercial implications from the submission of the bid. However, Members should note that if the bid is successful, as accountable body for up to £25m, there will be significant responsibilities for SCC which will be dependent on the final agreed governance model with the Stocksbridge Town Deal Board. Therefore, any decision to accept an offer of funding will be subject to further cabinet approval and detailed analysis of all risks and implications for SCC.

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 If the TIP submission is successful, the MHCLG will grant funding to the Stocksbridge Town Deal Board via the City Council acting as Accountable Body by virtue of the power conferred to MHCLG by section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 which enables it to make awards of grant funding.
- 4.3.2 Any grants accepted by the City Council can only be received following the approval of the Director of Resources & Head of Strategic Finance (Art 6.2.1 & Art. C.2.1.5 'Grant Funding') and then managed by an Executive Director (or their delegate) under Article 6.2.2 of the Financial Procedure Rules.
- 4.3.3 The Localism Act 2011 s.1 provides local authorities with a "general power of competence" which enables them to do anything that an individual can do so long as the proposed action is not specifically prohibited. A purpose of the Act is to enable local authorities to work in innovative ways to develop services that meet local need. The proposed TIP programme can be delivered through the council using its general power of competence.

4.4 Other Implications

- 4.4.1 An initial £500k of "Accelerated Funding" was received early this year for improvements to the leisure centre. That has been subject to separate approvals and the Town Investment Plan aims to complement / build on the health and leisure element of the Plan

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Do nothing – we could choose not to bid for the funding by not submitting a Town Investment Plan or bid for a much reduced funding. There are no benefits under either option as it would simply mean a missed opportunity to regenerate one of City's neighbourhood suffering from decline of the High Street and job losses.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The deadline for the submission of the TIP is end of January 2021. Although the final agreed list of priority projects has not yet been agreed, it is apparent that there is an emerging consensus on the top priorities, reflecting both local residents aspirations as well as deliverability of the projects within the 4-5 year timescale.
- 6.2 There remain some issues regarding ownership and management of the "assets", including associated risks and how that is addressed. However

this and other similar technical and legal issues will be addressed at the detailed planning and design stage when Members will have an opportunity to guide and ultimately take the final decision before committing on the ground.

- 6.3 Fundamentally this is a once in a generation opportunity to address some key infrastructure problems faced by Stocksbridge with its unique geography and challenges, compounded by the pandemic.

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