

Newcastle Town Deal

Board Update

December 2023

We are pleased to report that the final Newcastle Town Deal project was approved for delivery by DLUHC in August 2023, so with the Astley Centre for Circus approved all projects have now been given the go ahead for delivery.

Planning permission has either been granted, or applications submitted for several project elements as set out below. Cost inflation remains a challenge in delivering construction projects, but both the Council and our delivery partners are working hard to accommodate this and achieve the aims of the Newcastle Town Investment Plan.

Individual project progress is summarised below in what has been a busy project delivery period. Thank you to all our project delivery partners and subgroup members that are enabling delivery of this challenging and varied delivery programme.

Smart Digital Infrastructure (NTD funding £2.285M)



In response to the rapidly changing digital infrastructure environment, the subgroup agreed that it would be beneficial to commission a specialist review to support delivery of this project. Following a competitive procurement process, Regional Network Solutions was appointed to undertake this. Over 26 stakeholder interviews took place in October 2023, including a range of local partners and commercial fibre providers. A report with proposals

for delivery is in draft form and will be discussed at a Board meeting that is scheduled for 21 December 2023.

Sustainable Transport Solutions (NTD funding £3.421M)

Following planning permission to install Real Time Passenger Information Totems (RTPI) at Newcastle Bus Station work has been undertaken to install the power feeds for these and a works licence has been granted for the installation of the totems. Staffordshire County Council has completed minor works in Merrial Street to lift the tree canopies that were overcrowding the bus shelters in this area. Costs have been established for the installation of RTPI in these bus shelters and a grant funding agreement is to be done for both Merrial Street and a further phase of RTPI which is proposed to be installed at bus stops around the Newcastle Town Deal area. Staffordshire County Council has established the bus stops which have the highest weekly use, and the proposed locations are based on this work:



| Stop Name | Stage Name | Total Passengers |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Queen Elizabeth Park | Newcastle | 482 |
| Cherry Tree PH | Newcastle | 448 |
| Sainsbury's | Newcastle | 406 |
| Library | Chesterton | 396 |
| The Parade | Silverdale | 346 |
| Shops | Knutton / Cross Heath | 276 |
| Home Farm Drive | Keele | 274 |
| Rotterdam Road | Poolfields | 237 |
| Sneyd Arms | Keele | 216 |
| Drayton Street | Pool Dam | 203 |
| Wain Avenue | Poolfields | 193 |

In other elements of this project, the team at Keele University are progressing plans for the new bus entrance with the aim of it being opened for the start of the 2024/25 academic year. Further development work is needed on proposals for the new circular bus route before it can be commissioned for operation.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points (NTD funding £400,000)

Construction of the new Castle Car Park where the EV charging points will be installed is delayed slightly due to a key supplier to Morgan Sindall going into administration. Construction will now start in January 2024 with the car park and new EV charging points opening in autumn 2024. Procurement of a partner for operation of the EV charging points will commence in December 2023 so that they are in place ready for opening of Castle Car Park.



Town Centre Permeability (NTD funding £950,000)

Phase 1 of this project at Gallowstree Roundabout was completed in early November and is now in use. Staffordshire County Council has already received a letter of thanks for improving the pedestrian and cyclist crossing facility at this location. Phase 2 of the project at Barracks Road is on schedule to start on site in 2024 over the summer holidays.



Key Gateway Sites (NTD funding £3.81M)



Aspire Housing has appointed Morgan Sindall as design and build contractor for the Zanzibar site, with the arrangement at Pre-Construction Services Agreement stage. The development is due to start on site in 2024 with a planned completion date in late 2025.

The Council has agreed to work with developer Capital and Centric to create plans and the development of a business case for the Midway Car Park site, with the intent to start on this project element later in 2024 when the new Castle Car Park has opened.

Early-stage survey work has been completed which will inform the development proposals that are put forward by Capital and Centric.

Astley Centre for Circus (NTD funding £1.81M)



Since confirmation that DLUHC had approved this project in August 2023 work has been completed at pace. Refurbishment of the Merrial Street building is well advanced in time for the fit-out contractor to start on site installing the display elements in week commencing 11 December 2023. Philip Astley Projects CIC are due to take control of the building before Christmas and are busy with their delivery plans. The Centre is due to open to the public in January 2024. That will complete phase 1 delivery of this project with phase 2 due to commence in 2025.

New Keele University facility in the town centre (Digital Society Centre) (NTD funding £3.51M)

The team at Keele University has been pushing on with delivery of Keele in Town, with publicity around the submission for planning permission receiving a positive response in the local press. ([Keele in Town - Keele University](#)). Planning permission was granted in September 2023 <http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/23/00635/FUL>. Following a competitive procurement process a demolition contractor has started the strip out of the building. Procurement of a fit-out contractor is well underway, and the successful contractor will start on site in early 2024. Further information sessions will be held with local businesses and residents in 2024 and Keele in Town is due to launch in October 2024.



Knutton Village Masterplan (NTD funding £3.534M)



The Project Adjustment Request that was submitted to DLUHC was approved in September 2023. This was to remove housing outputs from Town Deal to enable Homes England funding to be attracted for residential development at the High Street and former Community Centre sites. In September 2023 Aspire Housing submitted a planning application for residential development at the High Street site, this is due to be considered in early 2024. <http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/23/00771/FUL>

A planning application for the former community centre site is currently under development and is due to be submitted shortly.

Planning permission for the extension to the Enterprise Centre was granted in July 2023 <http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/23/00138/FUL>. A grant funding agreement with Staffordshire County Council was completed in November 2023. Work is due to start on site in March 2024.

In September 2023, the Borough Council authorised officers to develop plans for a village hall at High Street in Knutton to planning application stage. However it is vital that interest is attracted in forming a committee to run the village hall if this development is to progress.

The Council was successful in securing Football Foundation funding toward development of football changing rooms at the Wammy. Unfortunately, however the Council is in the position of having to re-tender for a contractor to build the changing rooms so there is a delay to the start on site until this is complete.

Cross Street Chesterton (NTD funding £2.955M)



Aspire Housing are continuing to deliver the earlier housing phases of this development. Town Deal funding was requested for the later phases of delivery however it has been necessary to review outputs attributable to each funding provider to ensure the correct outputs are being attributed to each funding source. The Council is still working with Aspire to finalise details for a Project Adjustment Request. A draft has been submitted to DLUHC for an initial review to inform what further work might need to be done to finalise this request.