

Newcastle under Lyme Town Deal

Board Update December 2022

General Update

Board members will recall a very busy period in late May and June where 8 of the 9 Newcastle Town Deal project business cases were finalised and agreed by Board prior to documents being submitted to DLUHC for approval. At the end of July 2022, the Council was pleased to be notified that the projects had been approved to proceed and in September 2022 the Council received the first payment of Newcastle Town Deal funds, sealing approval to deliver the projects. In the period since submission in July, the Council has continued to work with project subgroups and delivery partners to develop delivery arrangements and to develop a template Grant Funding Agreement for use with delivery partners. Further advice has also been sought on VAT and subsidy control issues to ensure that all projects are compliant, best value is achieved and the Town Deal continues to deliver.

Project updates are below.

Smart Digital Infrastructure

In line with the business case, the project subgroup has drafted a Feasibility Study Brief to commission support both on delivery options to achieve project outcomes and on the sustainability of the project once Town Deal funding has concluded. Suitable specialists to bid for this work have been sourced and the brief will be issued in January 2023.

Sustainable Transport Solutions

The first two elements to progress have been the creation of a new bus entrance at Keele University and the installation of Real Time Passenger Information Totems (RTPI) at Newcastle Bus Station and on Campus at Keele University. The bus entrance has obtained planning approval and procurement options are being reviewed. The aim is to appoint a contractor to construct the new bus entrance by September 2023. Planning permission has been obtained for installation of the RTPI totems at Keele Campus and it is in the process of being obtained for Newcastle Bus Station. The totems are on order and the Grant Funding Agreements are being finalised.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

Delivery of the EV charging points is to focus on car park locations in Newcastle town centre. The EV charging points will be installed in the new Castle Car Park which is to be built at Rycroft (subject to planning permission) starting in 2023 and scheduled to open in 2024.

Town Centre Cycle Permeability.

Plans for delivery of the town centre cycle permeability project are well advanced with work scheduled to start on site early in 2023. The Grant Funding Agreement for this project is being finalised.

Key Gateway Sites

Designs for the former Zanzibar nightclub site are well advanced. Properties surrounding the Zanzibar site are being consulted on the proposals, responses are due by 9 January 2023. The consultation website is: <https://www.avisonyoung.co.uk/planning-consultations/zanzibar> The aim is to apply for planning permission in early 2023.

Digital Society Centre

The Digital Society Centre will be in the heart of Newcastle town centre at 53 Ironmarket. The building has been acquired by Keele University and designs are progressing on this exciting development for the town centre which is due to open in 2024.

Knutton Village Masterplan

Plans for the key housing sites at High Street/ Acacia Avenue and the former community centre are well developed with the aim of planning permission being applied for in 2023. Design of the football changing facilities at the Wammy is progressing and the Council is working with Newcastle Town Football Club and the Football Foundation to attract funding in support of this development. Further consultation was held with the community in Knutton, as a result the project subgroup is considering whether the Ex-Servicemen's Club may be an option for delivery of community facilities. However, this will depend on the Club Committee being open to community use of revitalised facilities. Considerable work will be required before a final proposal for delivery of the community facilities is made.

Cross Street Chesterton

Aspire 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. Consequently, it has been necessary to re-commission Stantec to support re-assessment of the economic case calculations for this project.

Astley Centre for Circus

The business case for the Astley Centre for Circus was due to be presented to Board before Christmas, however whilst great progress has been made in identifying a building for the project and designing the layout further work is needed on the business plan for management and delivery of activity from the Centre. A time extension has therefore been necessary to ensure the business case is of a suitable quality for assessment by the board. The Council will be in touch in the New Year to re-arrange the Board meeting.

Programme Management

Following the departure of Richard Corfe in July, the Council has appointed Hal Higgins as Project Manager. Hal has a background in construction projects and is already bringing his extensive experience to bear on the Astley Centre for Circus and Knutton Village projects. The Regeneration Team has also been joined by Brian Meredith. Although new to the team, Brian has worked for the council for several years as part of the facilities management team. He brings a wealth of project management experience. Mark Laywood moved on from the Council at the end of November having completed his assignment to successfully get both Town Investment Plans approved and complete a project handover to Brian and Hal.

Thank you for your continued support of the Newcastle Town Deal, if you have any questions on this update, please contact elaine.burgess@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year