

Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Investment Plan

January 2021



Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	4
2. Contextual Analysis	6
Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal Investment Area.....	6
Newcastle-under-Lyme’s Assets and Strengths.....	9
Challenges facing the town	11
Key opportunities for the town	15
3. Strategy	19
Vision	19
Objectives and Cross Cutting Themes.....	20
Cross cutting themes	20
Priority areas for Town Deal Investment.....	22
Prioritising projects for the Newcastle Town Deal	22
Strategic Plan.....	23
Spatial strategy.....	30
Mapping of aligned and complementary strategies, programmes and investments	38
Engagement and Delivery	44
The Town Deal Board.....	44
Consultation and engagement – ongoing.....	45

Figures

Figure 1. Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal Boundary.....	7
Figure 2: Newcastle-under-Lyme’s key transport links	10
Figure 3. The Towns Fund Investment Programme Projects: A Spatial Overview	30

Tables

Table 1. Summary of priority projects within the Town Investment Plan	32
Table 2. Newcastle-under-Lyme TIP Alignment with National Policy	39
Table 3. Newcastle-under-Lyme TIP Alignment with Local Policy	40
Table 4. Stakeholder engagement plan.....	46

1. Executive Summary

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and the Town Deal Board are delighted to submit our Town Investment Plan for Newcastle-under-Lyme to Government.

The Plan outlines a strong vision and set of objectives focused on investing across the Town Deal area and primarily within Newcastle-under-Lyme Town centre. This Plan and all of its projects have been developed and endorsed by the Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal Board. It has been informed by a public call for project ideas. This was supplemented by extensive consultation with stakeholders and multi-agency working groups including Newcastle's local community and the private, public, and voluntary sectors to identify our investment priorities.

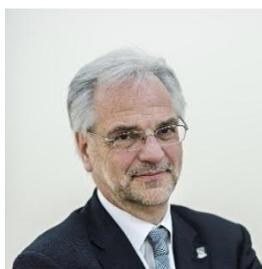
We are clear about the challenges facing the Newcastle Town Deal area. This Plan provides a co-ordinated programme of investment to address these challenges and maximise the significant opportunities that exist in Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre; its communities and those associated with Keele University.

Our Plan presents a comprehensive programme of investment that, combined with the recent award of Future High Streets Funding, is the first step in Newcastle-under-Lyme's transformation. It will revitalise Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre and invest in our communities. We are using this opportunity to enhance our digital and physical connectivity upon which we can then exploit the knowledge and innovation assets of Keele University to turn Newcastle-under-Lyme into a sustainable and prosperous town. Our Plan includes investment in:

- **Smart Newcastle Digital Connectivity Project** – Building on private sector investment to extend gigabit infrastructure into Newcastle-under-Lyme by funding a voucher scheme to promote digital connectivity.
- **Digital Society Centre** – a new centre focused on digital skills provision and grow-on space for businesses, building on the Smart Newcastle Digital Connectivity Project.
- **A comprehensive package of investment to improve connectivity and sustainability; and drive a low carbon economy in Newcastle-under-Lyme** via new:
 - Walking and cycle routes;
 - Improved facilities and services for bus passengers; and
 - Infrastructure to encourage electric vehicle usage.
- Investment in the disadvantaged communities of **Knutton** and **Chesterton**; and
- **Investment to transform key gateway sites.**
- **Astley Centre for Circus and Performing Arts** – a town centre performing arts and circus centre focused on attracting world leading performers, building on Newcastle's existing cultural offer and heritage to promote economic growth and skills development.

Our request for £25m of Town Deal investment will kick start a programme of investment totalling £135m providing transformational change across the Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal area. It will generate an estimated £69.25.3m a year in increased GVA; a £2.3m uplift in land values; and will enable the regeneration of our deprived communities. In addition, the Town Deal will build upon and maximise the impact of Future High Street Funding; revitalise Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre; address air quality issues and increase confidence in the economy and the area's communities.

On behalf of the Newcastle Town Deal Board, we endorse this plan to Government and ask you to support our long-term vision; aspirations and priorities by investing in Newcastle-under-Lyme to transform our town.



Trevor McMillan
Vice Chancellor
Keele University
Chair of the Town Deal Board



Cllr Stephen Sweeney
Deputy Leader of Newcastle-Under-Lyme Council
Vice Chair of the Town Deal Board



Newcastle-under-Lyme Town centre

2. Contextual Analysis

Newcastle-under-Lyme is the main settlement within the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council area, located in North Staffordshire and bordering Stoke-on-Trent to the East. The Borough has a population of 129,500, of which 64,696 are located within the Town Deal Investment Area¹.

Newcastle's role as the historic trading centre of northern Staffordshire extends for almost 850 years. The town's heritage is reflected in the built environment, which includes key assets such as the Guildhall and Lancaster Buildings and it is still home to an outdoor market which continues to be an integral part of the town centre. The area also has a strong coal mining heritage. The former Silverdale Colliery now provides a picturesque 83-hectare park. In addition, Newcastle-under-Lyme has a unique place in the world's cultural heritage as the birthplace of Philip Astley, widely recognised as the creator of the modern circus.

Today, Newcastle-under-Lyme is a welcoming and ambitious town, surrounded by attractive green and open spaces. The town has excellent road connectivity providing an opportunity for Newcastle-under-Lyme to cement itself as a significant centre for employment, learning and leisure. It has direct access to the North and rest of the West Midlands through the M6 motorway. It is well connected via the A road network being located on the A53, A527 while being directly linked to neighbouring Stoke-on-Trent via the A525 and A50. The A34/A52/A527 ring road encloses the historic core of the town centre. However, these roads can get heavily congested during peak traffic periods, severing the town centre from surrounding resident and business populations and creating air quality problems, with two air quality management areas falling within the Town Deal Investment Area.

Newcastle's connectivity; nascent sectoral strengths in growth areas including green energy, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology; cultural assets and strong educational institutions such as Keele University and Newcastle and Stafford College Group; leave it well-positioned to realise sustainable growth and prosperity in the future.

However, several challenges impact the town. The town centre suffered from high vacancy rates even before the COVID-19 pandemic, with the associated need to diversify town centre uses away from a dependency on retail. Furthermore, certain wards have continued to suffer from post-industrial decline and experience high levels of deprivation, low levels of investment and poor connectivity to the town centre and surrounding economic centres. The area's reliance on key employers presents challenges in terms of exposure to significant economic shocks within a small number of sectors.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal Investment Area

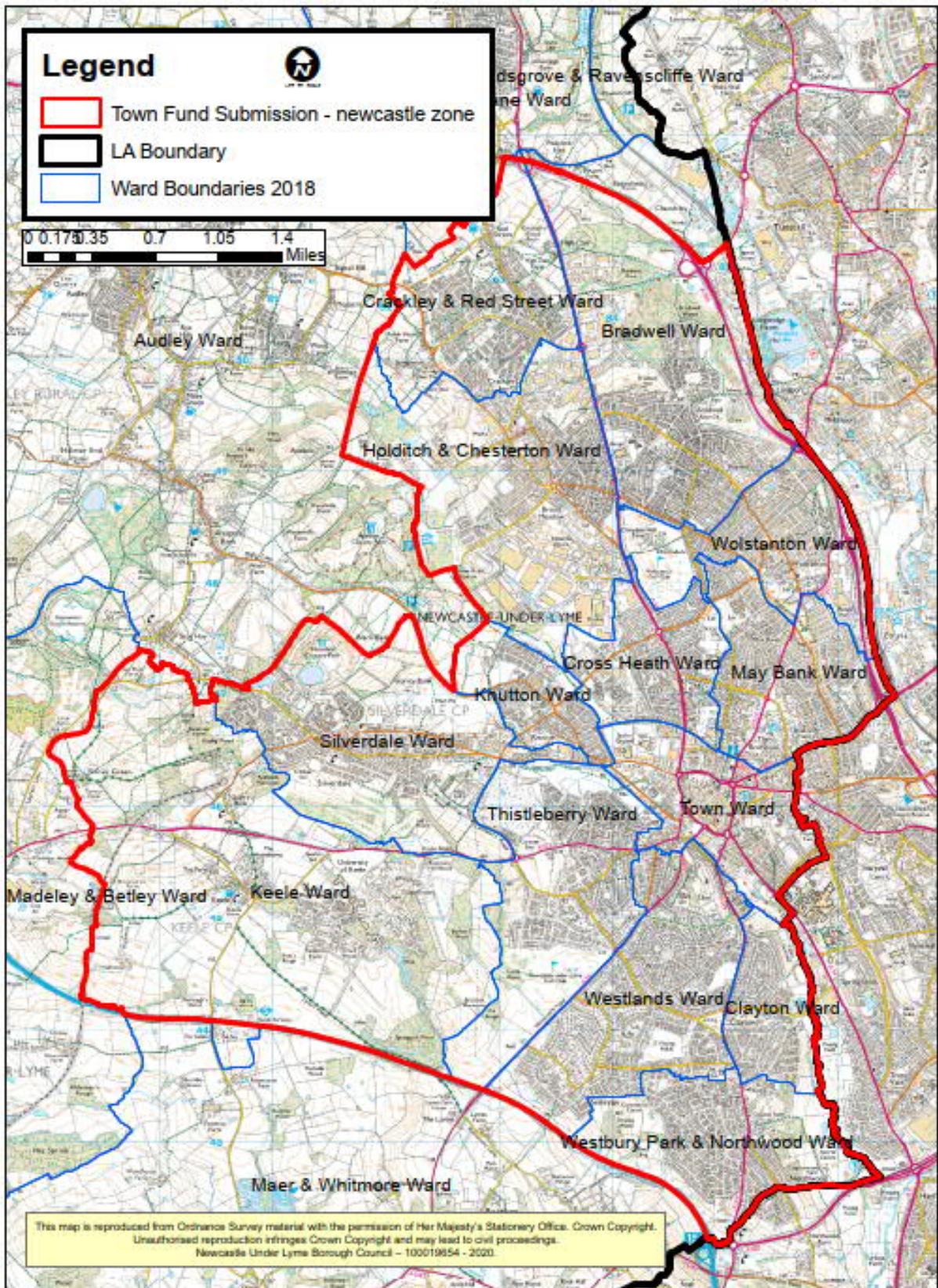
The Town Deal Investment Area consists of the town of Newcastle-under-Lyme, which is the Borough's main retail market and its key economic centre. It has strengths in the financial and business services sector, including employers such as Knights PLC and RBS. Newcastle and Stafford College, Aspire Housing and the Royal Stoke Hospital are also major employers in the town.

The Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal area adjoins the boundary of the Kidsgrove Town Deal area. Its western extent covers Silverdale and Knutton as well as the Keele ward, with Keele University, the country's largest campus university by area, included in the Town Deal. This recognises its key role as the area's research led university and its £0.2bn positive impact on the local economy through attracting students and promoting research, innovation and enterprise, with assets including the Keele Growth Corridor University Enterprise Zone and the Keele Science and Innovation Park². To the north of the town centre, the Town Deal area boundary closely follows the A500, to where it intersects with the A34 between Chesterton and Bradwell wards. The southern extent of the Town Deal Investment Area follows the M6 motorway to where it intersects with the A500 close to Seabridge and Clayton.

¹ NOMIS Population estimates - small area based by single year of age

² Economic impact assessment of Keele University, Regeneris

Figure 1. Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal Boundary





Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre

Newcastle-under-Lyme's Assets and Strengths

Urban Development

Newcastle-under-Lyme is the principal retail and leisure destination in the Borough. The historic town centre is enclosed by the ring road (Lower Street, Ryecroft and Barracks Road), with this area including the majority of town centre retail and leisure uses as well as the Public Sector Hub at Castle House. The High Street, Ironmarket and Castle Walk provide a well-maintained pedestrianised focus for the town centre, with the town's bus station in a central location on Hassel Street.

The town centre benefits from an active Business Improvement District. Established in 2015, the BID promotes Newcastle; works to develop a distinctive Newcastle experience; and fosters growth, development and investment. Significant private sector investment has been secured within the town centre over recent years with Travelodge, Sainsburys, Aldi, Lidl and the Marriott hotels now trading in the Town Deal area. The town centre's residential offer has been improved through several new student accommodation schemes and Belong Village, a retirement community providing 24-hour nursing and dementia care facilities. These have all improved and diversified the town centre. The town centre has also recently been awarded Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) monies, with interventions focused on the development of the Ryecroft area, a substantial derelict site in a prominent location adjacent to the ring road. The TIP will capitalise on the recent award of Future High Street Fund monies, further diversify land use and spread much needed investment across the town centre.

Newcastle-under-Lyme has an array of heritage assets linked to its role as a historic market town and trading centre, with listed buildings such as the Lancaster Building, Guildhall and Brampton House. Its heritage as a market town is retained to this day, with the market at the heart of Newcastle town centre. The town has developed a thriving and impressive cultural offer. The New Vic Theatre, one of the country's most successful independent producing theatres, is central to Newcastle-Under-Lyme's and the region's cultural life, engaging 150,000 people each year and delivering an award-winning community and education programme that alone reaches around 25,000 people of all ages per year³. This is complemented by other schemes and assets such as Brampton Museum, set in the beautiful Brampton Park, attracting 56,000 visitors annually and Keele University's vibrant arts programme, with events held throughout the year, including a full and varied music programme from the Keele Concert Society, public lectures, live poetry readings and art exhibitions. The town's Business Improvement District also contributes to the vibrant cultural offer by hosting events such as the Jazz & Blues Festival, LymeLight Festival and The Homecoming.

Skills & Enterprise Infrastructure

Newcastle is supported by a strong education sector with a range of high performing state and private schools covering Key Stages 1-4, including Blackfriars Academy, Churchfields Primary School, Hempstalls Primary School and May Bank Infants' School which have all received OFSTED Outstanding ratings. The town is also home to Newcastle and Stafford College – in the top 10% of colleges in England for learners aged 16-18 and number two in the whole of the UK for student satisfaction. The College has a £65m campus and £5.5m performing arts centre located in the heart of Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Keele University – housed on the largest campus in the country – is located in close proximity to the town centre and has almost 11,000 students. It possesses a leading medical school, which links to the University Hospitals of the North Midlands and undertakes cutting-edge research – 97% of which is deemed to be world-leading or of international importance. Keele University directly employs 1,750 FTEs while the university campus is also home to six Innovation Centres and supports the growth of companies on the Keele Science and Innovation Park. The park is a 70-acre site that hosts a cluster of medical, pharmaceutical and digital companies, supporting a further 820 FTEs⁴. Keele University is also leading on the sustainability agenda, being in the top 25 Universities in the world for sustainability, was one of the first universities to declare a 'climate emergency' and is seeking to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Activities linked to Keele University's research have seen Newcastle develop sectoral strengths in many innovative niches, including biotechnology; pharmaceuticals; digital technologies; green energy and biofuels. This has led to the recent recognition of the site as a University Enterprise Zone. The town has also developed sectoral strengths in logistics and distribution, linked to its strong connectivity; finance and professional services;

³ <http://www.newvictheatre.org.uk/>

⁴ <https://www.keele.ac.uk/discover/factsandfigures/>

and health and social care, which accounts for 14.8% of employment compared to West Midlands (12.9%) and England (12.4%)⁵.

Connectivity

Newcastle offers excellent connectivity by road. The town lies on the A34 and is well served by the wider major arterial network with access to and from the North and rest of the West Midlands. Several main roads connect to Newcastle, including the A500, A50, A53, A527, and the A52 which directly links the town to neighbouring Stoke-on-Trent. This connectivity has been highly influential in the development of its strength in the logistics and distribution sectors. Four airports – Manchester, East Midlands, Birmingham and Liverpool – lie within a 50-75-minute drive of the town. The Borough also has an extensive network of cycling routes. This will be further strengthened through the investment proposed via the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan which proposes a £3.245m allocation to Newcastle-under-Lyme, including improvements along the A52 Brunswick St and George St and Knutton Rd, Pool Dam, Keele Rd and Greenway in Newcastle⁶.

Figure 2: Newcastle-under-Lyme's key transport links



Newcastle town centre lies 3 miles from Stoke-on-Trent railway station, which sits on the West Coast Mainline with 34 trains an hour connecting Stoke to and from London Euston (1 hr 27 minutes) and Manchester (37 minutes). Stoke will become an 'integrated high-speed station' on the HS2 route where passengers can catch classic-compatible HS2 trains and access the high-speed network to the South. Moreover, Newcastle-under-Lyme is also located in relatively close proximity to Crewe which will continue to act as a key rail hub upon the arrival of HS2. This connectivity provides the potential to draw in skilled workers to Newcastle-under-Lyme and open up opportunities for its residents who can take advantage of the quality of life the borough provides.

Newcastle has good digital connectivity, with a higher broadband speed (57.8Mbps) than West Midlands (50.5Mbps) and the UK (48.7Mbps). Newcastle-under-Lyme also has a higher proportion of its residents with

⁵ ONS Business Register and Employment Survey 2019

⁶ <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Transport/transportplanning/documents/LCWIP-Final-Report-19-02-20.pdf>

superfast availability (98.1%) compared to West Midlands and the UK (94.8%)⁷. This strong connectivity is beneficial in supporting the activities of businesses and educational assets such as Newcastle and Stafford College and Keele University. Furthermore, with 71% of UK businesses planning to adopt more flexible and agile working practices post COVID-19⁸, building on this progress to enhance speed and reliability will be vital to support new investment. Despite good availability of superfast broadband, more needs to be done to encourage uptake. For instance, 63% of premises in Staffordshire with accessibility to superfast broadband funded by BDUK Phase 1 have adopted the new service, in line with the national average⁹.

Challenges facing the town

Urban Development

Newcastle suffers from high vacancy rates in the town centre, which stand at 19%, significantly higher than the national average and equates to 7,230sqm of vacant retail space¹⁰. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the move to online shopping and out of town retail in recent decades – such as Trentham Gardens Shopping Village – has drawn retail investment and footfall away from the town centre, while there is significant local competition from neighbouring centres such as Hanley. This has resulted in a dearth of recognised brands within the town centre, which has also struggled to foster a high-quality independent offer such as that in competing centres such as Alsager. Of particular concern in the town centre is the amount of long-term vacant premises and the number of large retail store closures over the last few years. Growth in the retail market is likely to be limited, with coming years likely to see some contraction of retail stock in underperforming areas and units being repurposed for other uses. This heightens the need to increase footfall and diversify land use and activity in the town centre, including a focus on growing the housing stock and residential population. The town centre currently has a very limited residential offer, with mixed success from apartment developments and limited residential development over shop fronts.

Many areas within the Town Deal area, such as Knutton, Cross Heath, Chesterton and Silverdale, are former coal mining communities, with Knutton, Chesterton and Cross Heath the focus of the previous Government's Housing Market Renewal (HMR) programme to stimulate the housing market, regenerate the area and improve the quality of life and environment to create more sustainable communities. However, the challenges associated with these areas has continued and is reflected in the most recent deprivation statistics¹¹. While Newcastle-under-Lyme as a Local Authority area ranks 150 out of 317 Local Authorities, some areas of Cross Heath and Knutton fall within the 10% most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) nationally, while further LSOAs within Holditch and Chesterton, Knutton and the Town ward fall within the 20% most deprived LSOAs. This compares to certain areas within the Westlands and Keele wards which fall within the least deprived areas of the country.

Employment and skills

Despite the strength of its education provision, Newcastle-under-Lyme has a higher proportion of people with no qualifications (26.3%) compared to England (22.5%). Newcastle-under-Lyme also has a lower proportion of the population with Level 4 qualifications (22.4%) compared with the national average (27.4%)¹². This links to the challenge the town has with retaining students in the town/local economy. 96% of Keele University graduates were in a job or further study six months following graduation¹³, however anecdotal evidence suggests few are retained in the local labour market, being attracted to larger cities upon graduation. Investing in the town centre; prioritising job growth; and investing in facilities such as the Digital Society Centre will all help to facilitate graduate retention.

A key challenge for Newcastle-under-Lyme relates to the rise of automation and artificial intelligence, which are expected to profoundly change the labour market and impact up to 30% of UK jobs by the early 2030s¹⁴. As noted by the DCMS¹⁵, digital skills are becoming near-universal requirements for employment, with specific digital skills reducing workers' risk of automation by a dramatic 59% and the move up the career ladder from low

⁷ <https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local>

⁸ <https://www.hrreview.co.uk/hr-news/strategy-news/business-leaders-to-permanently-adopt-flexible-working-post-covid-19/126004>

⁹ Source: ispreview.co.uk. Uptake data correct as of December 2019.

¹⁰ Source: Newcastle Town Investment Plan property market assessment. BE group

¹¹ MHCLG English Indices of Deprivation 2019

¹² NOMIS Annual Population Survey 2019

¹³ HESA Destination of Leavers Survey 2017

¹⁴ PwC Will robots really take our jobs?

¹⁵ DCMS No Longer Optional: Employer Demand for Digital Skills June 2019

to high-skill jobs coming with increased demand for digital skills. As such, it will be imperative to retain digital skills within the economy and train/upskill members of the workforce to adapt to these long-term trends.

These skills challenges are also evident in the productivity performance of Newcastle-under-Lyme. As of 2018 Newcastle-under-Lyme had a GVA per head of £16,588, significantly lower than West Midlands (£23,964) and England (£29,356) averages¹⁶. It has also seen a slower rate of growth, only growing by 11% in the last 5 years compared to West Midlands (19%) and England (17%). Lower rates of growth are also compounded by low levels of business expenditure in R&D and company innovation across the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP area which is ranked 24th out of 38 LEPs in terms expenditure in research and development¹⁷. It will be vital to increase the business investment in R&D; the number of highly skilled jobs and numbers of people with high-level skills in the economy to turn around the town and Borough's productivity performance.

Newcastle-under-Lyme benefits from a larger than average working age population (63.1% compared to 62.5% nationally)¹⁸. However, the potential workforce is skewed by the presence of a large student population – 11% of the working age population are students. While Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough has registered low levels of unemployment in recent years, there are pockets of long-term and generational unemployment within more deprived, former industrial communities. For instance, 60% of claimants within the Town and Knutton wards and 56.4% within Cross Heath had been claiming for over 12 months, compared with 33.2% nationally¹⁹. Covid-19 raises the risk of having a severe impact on the labour market, with 30% of the working age population furloughed or utilising the Self-Employment Income Support Schemes (SEISS) as of June 2020, representing 16,600 of a total 55,200 eligible employments. Furthermore, the claimant count had risen from 2.0% in June 2019 to 4.8% in June 2020²⁰. Ultimately, the full effect of COVID-19 on employment will not be felt until the furlough and SEISS schemes come to an end, with potential further increases in unemployment (as at June 20) indicated by announcements from local firms including:

- JCB announced plans to cut 950 jobs at its UK plants, in addition to 500 agency roles. The company has a logistics site at Chatterley Valley which could see job losses as a result of this announcement;
- Bentley in Crewe, which is set to cut 1,000 roles (25% of its workforce), many of which will reside in Newcastle-under-Lyme;
- Global technology solutions business Avnet announced plans to shut its UK warehouse at Lymedale Business Park which will put 50 jobs at risk; and
- Autoneum and Johnson Tiles are looking to reduce their workforce in the area, which is likely to impact Newcastle-under-Lyme residents due to the close ties between the two areas.

Covid-19 raises the prospect of scarring effects on the labour market, leading to the depreciation of skills and human capital, wage decline, inter-generational and long-term unemployment and underemployment. This will exacerbate the labour market challenges experiencing before the pandemic particularly in areas of deprivation such as Knutton, Silverdale and Chesterton. Furthermore, these impacts also extend to happiness, health, and job satisfaction, sometimes experienced years after economic shocks such as that associated with Covid-19²¹.

Connectivity

Whilst being strategically located on the road network Newcastle suffers from a number of connectivity challenges. There is no train station in the town or a defined multi-modal interchange. Buses predominantly operate on radial routes from the town centre with connectivity between public transport corridors and to outlying towns and villages more limited. Public transport – particularly by bus – is hampered by journey times, often double that of private cars. Poor timetabling, reliability and the cost of bus tickets, exacerbated by a contraction of commercial bus services also reduce connectivity and accessibility²². In the north of Staffordshire bus journeys reduced from 10.4 million in 2017/18 to 9.3 million in 2018/19, a 10% fall. This comes against the backdrop of a decline of 6.3 million journeys over the past decade, a fall of over 40%²³. Indeed, just 4.7% of the working age population in Newcastle travel to work by bus, which is considered to be low for a largely urban area²⁴, with the

¹⁶ ONS Sub regional productivity in the UK

¹⁷ Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-enterprise-partnerships-evidence-on-local-innovation-strengths>.

¹⁸ Source: Mid-year population estimates, ONS 2020.

¹⁹ ONS Jobseeker's Allowance by age and duration September 2020

²⁰ <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Business/Coronavirus-COVID-19-support-for-businesses/Economic-Bulletin-Issue-1-July-2020-final.pdf>

²¹ <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/cepeo/2020/07/02/the-coming-storm-the-long-term-harm-that-unemployment-causes/>

²² <https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/your-bus-service-being-cut-1731795>

²³ Travel Choices 2020

²⁴ https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/IMCE/Planning/Planning_Policy/Transport%20Technical%20Paper.pdf

majority of bus-based commuter journeys originating in Newcastle made within the Borough (39%) or to Stoke (33%)²⁵.

The public transport in North Staffordshire is wretchedly poor. Bus services have been removed or merged; most services end early evening. The services that remain are generally under used because folk cannot rely on them and fear being stranded, or services have been merged and take such an elongated route that to travel even a short distance takes a very long time. More public transport routes run more frequently, more reliably and later into the evening would certainly help develop the town as a social and retail centre'. #MyTown response, Newcastle-under-Lyme.

At peak times the A34 / A52 / A527 ring road experiences congestion, delays and variable journey times with eastern routes towards Stoke and the A500 being less reliable than those to the west of the town centre²⁶. The draft Newcastle Borough Integrated Transport Strategy references deteriorating journey time reliability on the A525, A34 and A527 Brampton Road. These issues could negatively impact on the growth aspirations of the town and the Keele growth corridor.

High levels of congestion and road traffic negatively impact air quality. There are two air quality management areas: Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre (covering the ring road A53, King Street, George Street and London Road to the boundary with the City of Stoke); and May Bank, Wolstanton and Porthill (covering the principal routes between these three locations). Sections of the A53 are subject to a ministerial direction to retrofit the 25-vehicle bus fleet operating along the A53 corridor to achieve compliance in NO₂ levels. The ministerial direction also requires Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council to jointly investigate EU exceedances of NO₂ and identify measures to bring forward compliance as soon as possible. The authorities are currently developing a North Staffordshire Local Air Quality Plan (NSLAQP) in response.

The ring road also acts as a barrier to active travel modes. There are currently only three locations on the ring road with at-grade crossing provision. Only one of these crossings is a toucan to connect the signed cycle route along West Brampton to a shared use footway / cycleway along the southern side of Ryecroft. Subways on Ryecroft, Barracks Road, Lower Street and at Grosvenor Roundabout provide the principal means of pedestrian access into the town centre. These subways provide stepped and ramped access each side of the highway and consequently occupy significant stretches of the roadside. They are unsuitable for cyclists and their layouts prohibit through visibility for users and consequently they can be perceived to be a safety / security concern. Furthermore, the maintenance liability is shared between the Borough Council and County Council but there is often limited, or no funding allocated for their upkeep.

Beyond the ring road, there is an extensive network of walking and cycling routes and greenways but accessibility to the town centre from the surrounding suburbs and Keele University is impacted by incomplete, uncoordinated and some difficult to navigate sections. Active Travel Fund monies have already been committed to upgrade the A52 / Shelton New Road cycle route through to Hanley and there is appetite to improve existing, well used infrastructure along the A525 to Keele to contribute towards a complete, coordinated walking / cycling corridor between Keele University, Newcastle Town Centre and Hanley. Town Deal Investment will therefore improve the areas cycling and walking infrastructure which will, in turn, provide opportunities to reduce congestion, improve air quality and deliver health and well-being outcomes in an area that experiences high levels of inactivity amongst its adult population²⁷.

²⁵ Census 2011 Method of Travel to Work Data

²⁶ Draft Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Integrated Transport Strategy 2015-2026

²⁷ 36. *% of adults in Newcastle-under-Lyme are classed as 'inactive' compared to 28.7% across England. Source: Public Health England (based on Active People Survey source data)



The Homecoming Festival, High Street, Newcastle -under-Lyme

Key opportunities for the town

There are a number of opportunities that can be capitalised on to bring further investment and activity to Newcastle-under-Lyme and realise the vision of being a vibrant and thriving market town .

Keele University

A key opportunity for the town is building on its connection to Keele University, a key asset for Newcastle, Staffordshire, and the West Midlands. The university has significant growth aspirations that includes the expansion of the Keele Science and Innovation Park and the proposals laid out in the New Keele Deal. The Deal is focused on delivering £70m of investment with partners to maximise the potential of the University. Investment will be targeted at utilising research and innovation to deliver high value jobs and support business growth; improve healthcare and support the transition to a low carbon economy. The Digital Society project requesting Town Deal funding is an integral part of delivering the Keele Deal's aspirations.

However, there is currently a physical disconnect between the town and the university campus, with no connected cycle infrastructure along the A525 which links the town centre and the university campus; high levels of congestion experienced during the morning and evening peak leading to poor air quality; and a need to improve the reliability and patronage of bus services to and from Newcastle town centre, some outlying villages and Keele University. Improved linkages between the town and the university campus, alongside necessary improvements to the quality of the offer in the town centre, would allow easier access across these two areas, driving greater footfall and economic activity in the town centre. It would, for instance, help to build on links between the Keele Medical School and North Staffordshire Hospital which are located on opposite sides of the town centre and encourage people travelling between the two locations to adopt active travel modes and dwell in the town centre.

The university's leading innovation activities offer potential real-world applications within the local environment which could make Newcastle an exemplar and carve a niche for the town against competing areas. The Keele University campus acts as a 'living laboratory' for ground-breaking projects such as the Smart Energy Network Demonstrator (SEND) and SIMULATE, a scheme developing, testing and demonstrating how a smart highway can be designed, maintained and integrated into roads. In this regard, Keele University has been awarded University Enterprise Zone status, placing it amongst only 25 such zones in the UK. Associated investment from Research England in the University Enterprise Zone is expected to leverage public and private sector funding to harness the emergence of the University as a national research and development facility for innovation and at-scale demonstration of smart digital technologies in the energy, transport and biomedical technology sectors. New investment will also pump prime the creation of a seventh Innovation Centre on the Keele University Science and Innovation Park, with a focus on commercialising research in artificial intelligence, machine learning and big data, as well as providing a focus for public sector data use across the country.

Newcastle Town Centre and FHSF

There are a number of existing initiatives that are in the pipeline which offer strategic added value within Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre. Newcastle-under-Lyme was awarded £11.048m of Future High Street Fund (FHSF) in December 2020 that will renew and reshape the town centre to drive growth, improve experience and ensure future sustainability. The Newcastle programme of investment focuses primarily on the Ryecroft area of the town centre, with interventions including:

- **Ryecroft:** Transforming a substantial derelict site in a prominent location adjacent to the ring road to unlock a mixed-use scheme of 75-90 contemporary senior living units; 2,200 sq. m of integrated offices, social/café facilities, meeting and teaching space. The site has additional capacity to deliver a further 42 residential units.
- **York Place:** Removing a 2,443 sq. m arcade, paving the way for two new residential blocks (57 units).
- **High Street:** Revitalising the market area to provide a contemporary setting for a revitalised market and wayfinding to connect key investment areas

This Town Deal bid presents the opportunity to complement FHSF investment to redevelop a larger amount of town centre brownfield land and vacant buildings and roll out investments in electric vehicle charging points across the Town Deal area.

Housing Growth

Newcastle-under-Lyme's five-year Housing Land Supply Statement (2019-2024) shows there has been a slight shortfall of 21 houses delivered against the numbers required in the Borough over the period of 2016-17 to 2018-19. The same document forecasts a requirement for 1,854 houses up to 2024. Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is currently working to produce a new Local Plan. This will set a new housing requirement which will take into consideration a full, up-to-date objective assessment of housing need for the Borough's administrative area, and constraints to development. Work on the new Local Plan is in its infancy with work on the Core Evidence Base due in early 2021 and an indicative timescale of Summer 2022 for submission to the Secretary of State²⁸.

The Town Deal investment area contains a significant amount of housing stock which is no longer fit-for-purpose, including at key town centre sites, while several areas, such as Cross Heath and Knutton, are subject to significant market failure as signified through their inclusion in the Housing Market Renewal Initiative. Moreover, the ageing population in Newcastle-under-Lyme – with the number of residents aged 65+ expected to increase by 14.7% over the next decade²⁹ – suggests future demand for older persons accommodation will increase over time. As such, there is scope for the regeneration and redevelopment of assets and residential areas to improve the breadth and quality of the residential offer and overall quality of life within Newcastle-under-Lyme.

The outskirts should then be developed to provide affordable housing, including houses and bungalows to encourage a range of ages, not just student accommodation. If there are more people living closer to town, then this should increase footfall and spending'. #MyTown response. Newcastle-under-Lyme

Connectivity

Newcastle-under-Lyme is located in close proximity to Crewe station which will continue to act as a key rail hub upon the arrival of HS2. This connectivity offers opportunities for Newcastle to draw in skilled workers to access opportunities in the town but also to open up opportunities in other geographies to its residents.

Locally, public transport access is predominantly provided by the bus network. The Borough is served by a good core network of inter-urban and local routes and benefits from a well-located bus station for town centre facilities. Frequent services operate between Keele, Newcastle and Hanley and provide onward connections to Burslem and Kidsgrove. Many residents in urban areas of the Borough now live within 350m of a bus stop with a half-hourly or better weekday service³⁰. All buses in Newcastle are RTPI enabled to report departure times and delays and current priorities relate to the roll out of RTPI screens at bus stops to display this information to improve bus user satisfaction. There are opportunities to improve bus links to Hanley and Stoke-on-Trent building on the recent award of Transforming Cities Funding by reducing bottlenecks to improve bus journey times to key locations.

Newcastle offers excellent highway connectivity due to its close proximity to the M6 and A500 trunk road and access to the A34 and A53 corridors which carry local and inter-urban traffic. The private car is the principle mode of choice for commuters representing 74% mode share³¹. However, since 2012, there has been a fivefold increase in quarterly Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) registrations with 1,140 new vehicles registered in the Borough over the past 12 months³² indicating a shift towards greener vehicles.

The Borough also has an extensive network of cycle paths. Staffordshire County Council is delivering active travel improvements within the ring road to better facilitate cycle movements including through pedestrianised areas. These routes will better connect the network of routes which emanate from the town centre. The draft Newcastle Borough Integrated Transport Strategy sets priorities for cycle improvements along the A34 between Cedar Road and Lower Milehouse Lane and along the Newcastle to Keele cycle route. Active Travel Fund (ATF) monies totalling £1.83m have been awarded to Staffordshire County Council to deliver four permanent segregated cycle schemes including one along the A52 Corridor and Stoke-on-Trent has been awarded £0.50m of ATF funding, some of which will be used to continue the cycle route upgrade along Shelton New Road to link to Hanley. This will be further strengthened through the investment proposed through the Local Cycling and Walking

²⁸ Source: Report to Cabinet, 13th January 2020. Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council - <https://modern.gov.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/documents/s34516/13.1.21%20Local%20Plan.pdf>

²⁹ ONS Population projections - local authority based by single year of age

³⁰ Draft Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Integrated Transport Strategy 2015-2026

³¹ Census 2011 Method of Travel to Work Data

³² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/all-vehicles-veh01#ultra-low-emissions-vehicles-ulevs>

Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) with £3.245m allocated to Newcastle-under-Lyme, covering priorities such as improvements along the A52 Brunswick St and George St and Knutton Rd, Pool Dam, Keele Rd and Greenway in Newcastle³³.

'Improve existing and develop new cycle paths'. #MyTown response, Newcastle-under-Lyme.

While the Borough has good digital connectivity overall, there is variability across wards. For instance, Keele and Silverdale and Parkside suffer from average download speeds of 31.0 and 23.6 Mb/s, considerably lower than the UK average of 46 mb/s. Moreover, Keele village also suffers from poor superfast or ultrafast broadband availability at 78.8% compared to 91.4% on average³⁴, at odds with the village's association with its leading, innovative university. This challenge presents a need to invest to improve connectivity across the whole Borough to provide residents with access to services and encourage business growth and productivity. One such intervention is underway in Stoke-on-Trent, with the City Council working with Swedish firm VX Fiber to build a 60-mile full fibre network across the city which will provide internet speeds 30 times faster than superfast broadband³⁵. The network will be owned by the City Council and installed in its existing private optical network ducting, presenting an opportunity for Newcastle-under-Lyme to build upon this intervention to boost the local economy and transform the digital landscape.

Culture

Investments in a town's cultural assets, as part of an integrated regeneration strategy, can rejuvenate places, lead to positive economic outcomes at a local level and attract tourists who will bolster local businesses. The creative economy can be a key element in driving Newcastle's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, with the creative industries accounting for 1 in 11 UK jobs and 1 in every 8 UK businesses (94% of which are micro businesses)³⁶. Furthermore, the proportion employed in the performing arts in Newcastle-under-Lyme is double the average across Great Britain³⁷. The New Vic Theatre, as one of the country's most successful independent producing theatres with an award-winning community and education programme, provides a strong foundation upon which to cement Newcastle's reputation in this space and draw in both domestic and international visitors. The New Vic Theatre is undertaking a full refurbishment of its theatre space, strengthening an already-enviable local cultural venue, which the TIP has the opportunity to complement by broadening the cultural offer.

Newcastle was the birthplace of Philip Astley in 1742, known as the 'father of the modern circus', and has successfully drawn on this heritage through initiatives such as a town centre trail that included both historical sites and brand-new art work, illustrating highlights from Astley's life, and events such as the Festival of Circus in 2018 as a part of Circus 250, a national celebration of the 250th anniversary of modern circus and AstleyFest. There are opportunities to build on the success of these initiatives driven by local stakeholders, including the Philip Astley Project CIC and New Vic Theatre, to cement Newcastle's reputation in this space and draw in both domestic and international visitors.

'Make Newcastle-under-Lyme a place people want to come from far afield to visit by providing more cultural attractions'. #MyTown response, Newcastle-under-Lyme.

'As a unique selling point for Newcastle-under-Lyme we need a town centre theme. Most appropriate is to play on the Philip Astley link and would suggest "Circus and Entertainment'. #MyTown response, Newcastle-under-Lyme.

'Newcastle-under-Lyme has history, with things like the circus etc and has an incredibly creative and innovative theatre in the New Vic. The town should be doing more with places like to Vic to draw people in and utilise the skills of the theatre. Get people excited about coming here'. #MyTown response, Newcastle-under-Lyme.

³³ <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Transport/transportplanning/documents/LCWIP-Final-Report-19-02-20.pdf>

³⁴ House of Commons Library Broadband coverage and speeds: local statistics, 2017

³⁵ <https://www.vx.se/projects/stoke-on-trent/>

³⁶ <https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/uk-creative-overview/facts-and-figures/employment-figures>

³⁷ ONS BRES 2019



Subway under Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre ring road

3. Strategy

This strategy has been developed to build on Newcastle-under-Lyme’s strengths, to address the challenges it faces and capture the opportunities identified in the previous section. It centres on the need to diversify town centre uses, address connectivity/permeability constraints facing the town centre, invest in disadvantaged communities and to capture growth opportunities. This context has informed the vision and objectives for the Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Investment Plan developed by the Town Deal Board.

Vision	
<p>“A vibrant, thriving market town where citizens of all ages have the opportunity to flourish. Newcastle and its university will act as an innovative, sustainable economic hub for Northern Staffordshire and a destination of choice for residents, students, graduates and businesses. It will have a bustling and well-connected town centre, offering a wide variety of independent retailers with a unique blend of residential, leisure and cultural development”</p>	
Objectives	Cross Cutting Themes
<p>To open up growth opportunities through enhanced physical and digital connectivity aligned with clean and sustainable economic development.</p>	<p>Clean and inclusive growth</p>
<p>To diversify and enhance the town centre experience by encouraging new uses to increase demand, footfall and boost the dwell time of residents and visitors.</p>	<p>Diversification and consolidation</p>
<p>To channel investment into regenerating communities, ensuring these areas are sustainable places to live and provide residents with the infrastructure needed to improve their quality of life.</p>	<p>Collaboration</p>

Vision

The Town Investment Plan’s vision is that, by 2030, Newcastle-under-Lyme will be:

“A vibrant, thriving market town where citizens of all ages have the opportunity to flourish. Newcastle and its university will act as an innovative, sustainable economic hub for Northern Staffordshire and a destination of choice for residents, students, graduates and businesses. It will have a bustling and well-connected town centre, offering a wide variety of independent retailers with a unique blend of residential, leisure and cultural development”

This vision reflects the importance of Newcastle’s heritage as a market town and its key, distinctive assets which drive productivity and growth in the area, particularly through Keele University and the town’s connectivity. The vision is also driven by feedback received throughout the stakeholder consultation process regarding what is important to Newcastle-under-Lyme’s residents, such as the town becoming more active and “bustling”, regaining its vibrancy and the need to improve the offer in the town centre by supporting high-quality independent businesses to thrive and expanding the leisure and cultural offer for all ages.

Objectives and Cross Cutting Themes

The vision for Newcastle-under-Lyme is underpinned by a set of three strategic objectives and cross-cutting themes.

Objective 1: To open up growth opportunities through enhanced physical and digital connectivity aligned with clean and sustainable economic development.

This objective focuses on unlocking growth opportunities across the Town Deal area by enabling residents, businesses and visitors to be better connected. It will build on private sector investment in digital infrastructure to deliver gigabit connectivity. Town Deal funding is requested to offer a voucher scheme to provide accelerated access to this network, thereby transforming digital connectivity for homes and businesses to support growth, investment and resilience.

Town Deal investment will also deliver a modern, reliable and sustainable transport network to all parts of the Town Deal area to facilitate sustainable growth and access to opportunities. This includes provision of pedestrian and cycling networks which improve the flow and movement across the town and encourage the shift to active travel modes to increase levels of physical activity. It also includes improvements to public transport infrastructure and services to encourage increased patronage and passenger satisfaction; and deliver low carbon and innovative transport solutions to address air quality issues in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Objective 2: To diversify and enhance the town centre experience by encouraging new uses to increase demand, footfall and boost the dwell time of residents and visitors.

This objective focuses on building resilience in Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre in response to structural shifts in the retail market and changing consumer expectations – factors which have both been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Diversifying Newcastle-under-Lyme's town centre offer away from retail to exploit opportunities for town centre living, learning facilities and maximising Newcastle-under-Lyme's cultural offer all provide opportunities to build a more resilient and thriving town centre.

Objective 3: To channel investment into regenerating communities, ensuring these areas are sustainable places to live and provide residents with the infrastructure needed to improve their quality of life.

It is imperative that opportunities in Newcastle-under-Lyme bring benefits to all. Ensuring investment increases the long-term sustainability of disadvantaged communities, such as Knutton and Chesterton, is a vital objective of the Town Investment Plan. It will ensure these communities build on their potential to become popular and sustainable places to live. Enabling housing delivery; regenerating the area; and improving the quality of life and environment are all crucial to delivering the vision for this Town Investment Plan.

Cross cutting themes

Three cross-cutting themes will be critical in the successful delivery of the vision across all objectives. These are:

- **Diversification and consolidation** – Improving the resilience of the town centre by bringing in new uses to encourage increased use of the town centre, which will act as a nucleus for services, commerce and cultural activity that supports Newcastle-under-Lyme's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Clean and inclusive growth** – Ensuring investments benefit the whole of Newcastle-under-Lyme and its residents, targeting places of need which will help to promote growth that is sustainable and equitable.
- **Collaboration** – Building on the pre-existing partnerships further developed between Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal Board members, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and local stakeholders in identifying, developing and delivering projects. The vision will not be delivered in isolation and requires ongoing collaboration between stakeholders to ensure opportunities in Newcastle-under-Lyme are effectively identified and maximised, applying the knowledge and expertise of partners.



Innovation Centre 6, Keele University

Priority areas for Town Deal Investment

This section of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Investment Plan outlines the approach taken to project prioritisation before presenting the strategic plan; short, medium- and long-term delivery priorities; and the project level logic flows. The Investment priorities, and their financial implications, within this plan have been approved by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's Section 151 Officer – Sarah Wilkes.

Prioritising projects for the Newcastle Town Deal

The Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal priorities have been identified via an extensive period of consultation and engagement. Both long held and new project ideas that emerged from this process were scored using a prioritisation process that was tested and agreed by the Town Deal Board. It scored long-listed projects based on a two-phase method using the following criteria:

- **Strategic fit** – Assessing a scheme's fit with the Town Deal objectives, namely:
 - Urban regeneration and land use;
 - Skills and enterprise infrastructure; and
 - Connectivity.
- Projects identified were also tested against economic development priorities within Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's Economic Development Strategy and the Stoke and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's (SSLEP) Local Industrial Strategy. Weighted scores were applied to each scheme based on their fit with both Town Deal and local policy priorities. The scoring was weighted towards the Town Deal intervention objectives whereas a project's fit with the local and SSLEP priorities was given an equal weighting meaning schemes with poor alignment to the Town Deal intervention framework were given a low priority.
- **Assurance** – Schemes were tested against the parameters of the Green Book, reflecting the revision made in late 2020, and typical approaches to business case appraisal. A proportional approach was taken to testing scheme assurance as most of the schemes identified are at an early stage of development. A full 'assurance process' (e.g. undertaking a detailed assessment of scheme BCRs and a full options assessment) was not considered appropriate at this stage. Instead, schemes were tested against the following criteria in line with the principles of the Green Book:
 - Economic case
 - Is the scheme potentially transformational in its impact?
 - Would the scheme provide a positive economic return?
 - Financial case:
 - Is the scheme's Town Deal funding request affordable?
 - Will the scheme leverage funding from non-Town Deal sources?
 - Commercial case:
 - Does the scheme demonstrate clear evidence of demand, need, or support?
 - Is the scheme viable and sustainable?
 - Management case:
 - Do the scheme's timescales fit with Town Deal funding?
 - Does the lead body have a track record of successfully delivering similar schemes?

The approach to prioritisation provided a scored and ranked list of projects. High priority projects were approved by the Town Deal Board for development work by dedicated project working groups. This resulted in some early projects being discounted due to uncertainties with, for instance, demand or short-term deliverability being identified. However, the prioritisation process also resulted in the identification of a sizeable project pipeline to take forward in the medium to long term.

Strategic Plan

The strategy to deliver the Town Investment Plan is based on a clear understanding of Newcastle's strengths, assets, challenges and opportunities. The ambition for the Town Investment Plan is to create the conditions for sustainable long-term economic growth and achieve the vision for Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Below we set out the rationale and need for intervention under each objective, with key priorities over the short, medium and long term and programmes which will enable this to be achieved. We believe the programmes of activity will kick start the transformation of Newcastle-under-Lyme's communities and its town centre and provide future opportunities to exploit the knowledge assets of Keele University to deliver a sustainable future for the town.

Objective 1: To open up growth opportunities through enhanced physical and digital connectivity aligned with clean and sustainable economic development.

Physical and digital connectivity will be crucial factors in driving sustainable economic growth in Newcastle. Investment will support the efficient movement of people and goods and drive productivity in key growth sectors which are increasingly reliant on digital infrastructure. However, a number of constraints are impacting Newcastle-under-Lyme's growth potential and the health and wellbeing of its residents.

The lack of sufficient capacity on the existing road network and heavy reliance on private cars as a primary mode of transport causes high levels of congestion and road traffic. This negatively impacts air quality, with two air quality management areas falling within the Town Deal Investment Area due to their exceedance of nitrous oxide levels. Thus, there is the need to encourage travel by more sustainable/active modes to improve air quality, journey times and productivity, and address relatively poor health outcomes and inactivity locally³⁸.

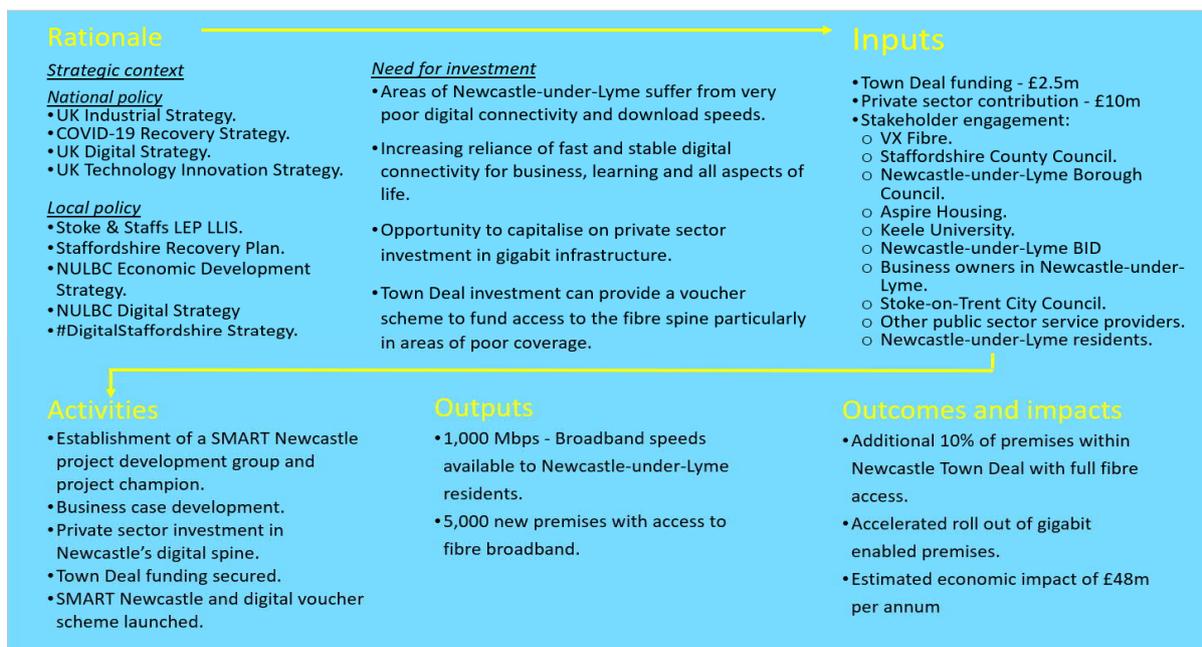
There is variability in the levels of digital connectivity available across the Town Deal investment area. In addition, there is a need to move towards delivering gigabit speeds directly to people's homes and businesses to underpin the use of smarter devices, pave the way for social benefits alongside jobs, and deliver economic growth. This presents an opportunity to invest in improving connectivity across the whole Borough to provide futureproofed infrastructure that facilitates business growth and productivity.

Priorities

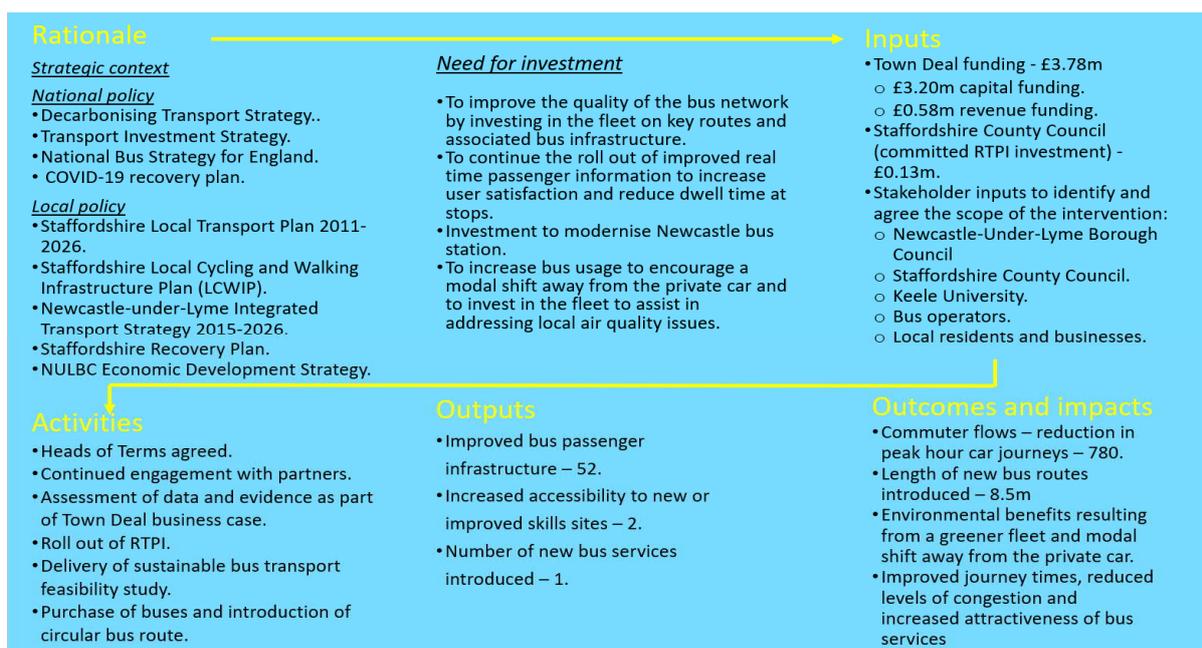
The key short-term priorities of the Town Investment Plan under this objective are outlined below. These interventions will support sustainable growth in the local economy, promoting sustainable/active modes of travel and access to reliable, high-speed digital infrastructure, giving Newcastle an advantage in attracting investment, facilitating better access to employment, education and wider services for its residents:

- **Smart Newcastle Digital Infrastructure** – A voucher scheme to provide access to gigabit connectivity funded through private sector investment. The project will increase digital connectivity and accelerate its roll out across the Town Deal area for homes and businesses, leveraging private sector investment in Newcastle-under-Lyme's digital infrastructure.

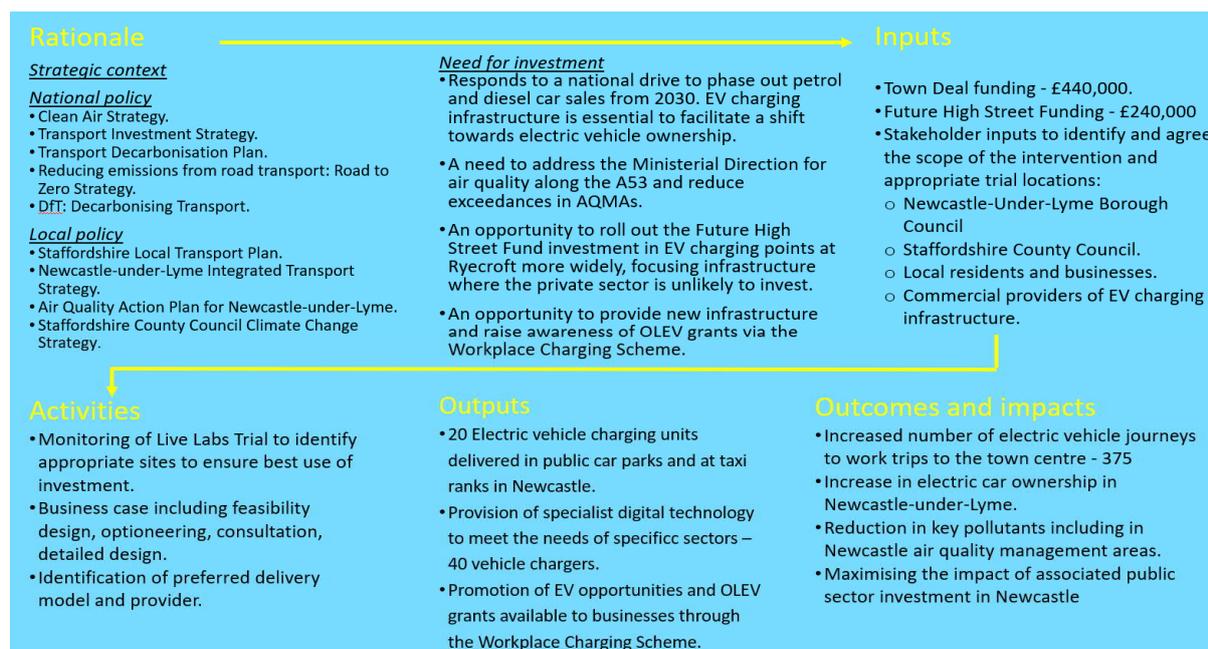
³⁸ Sport England Active Lives Survey 2019 notes that 27.6% of Newcastle-under-Lyme residents are active less than 30 minutes a week, compared with 24.6% nationally while life expectancy in Newcastle-under-Lyme Town ward is lower than national and regional averages.



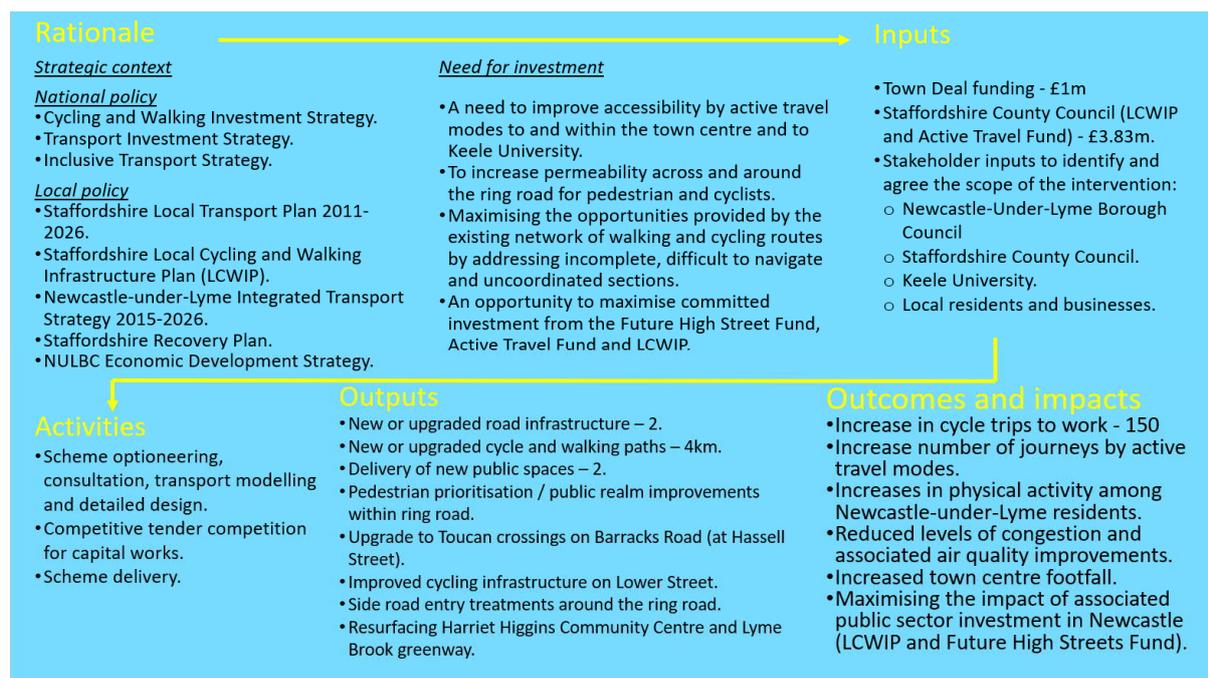
- **Sustainable public transport solutions** – A package of investment in bus infrastructure and services across Newcastle-under-Lyme to improve the quality of public transport infrastructure and passenger experience and air quality across Newcastle-under-Lyme.



- **Electric charging infrastructure** – Improved provision of publicly-accessible charging infrastructure across the Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal area, encouraging the transition to electric vehicles by investing in green infrastructure for use by taxis and private cars.



- Town Centre Permeability** – A package of walking and cycling measures, including upgraded pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities; segregated walking and cycling routes; and improved connectivity to the greenways to promote cycle accessibility across the wider network.



The following medium to long term aspirations are focused on improved physical and digital connectivity to support clean, sustainable growth in Newcastle-under-Lyme:

- LCWIP schemes;
- Wider LTP schemes; and
- Implement/trial SMART interventions within the transport network.

Objective 2: To diversify and enhance the town centre experience by encouraging new uses to increase demand, footfall and boost the dwell time of residents and visitors.

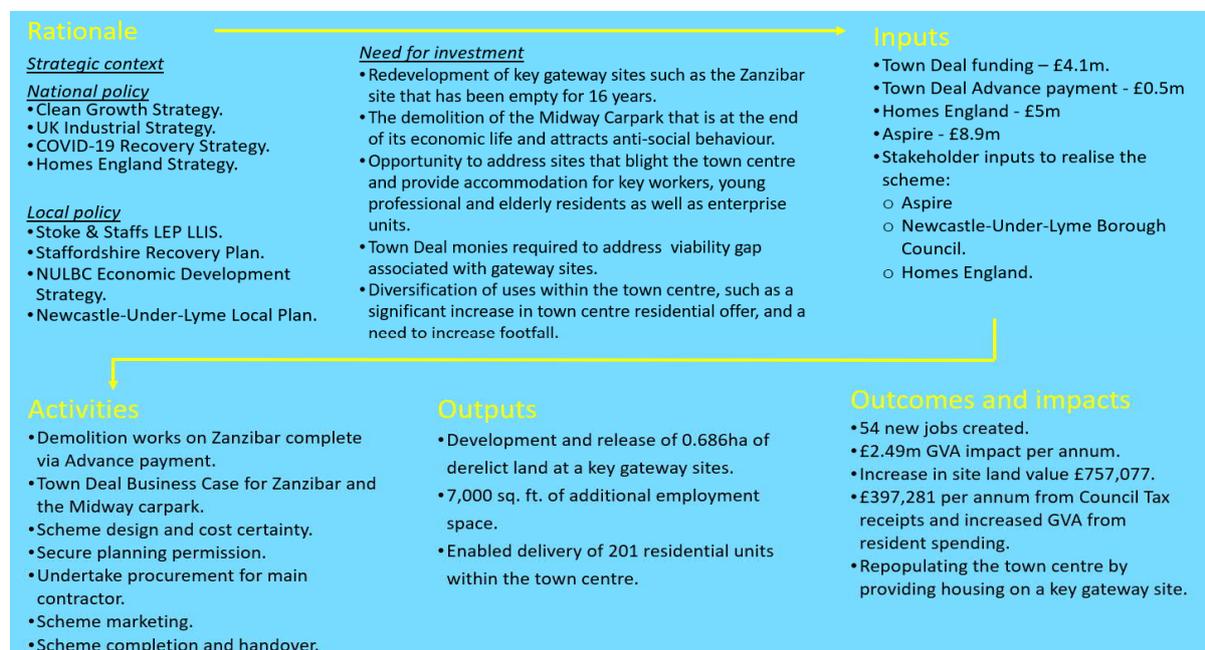
Rationale

Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre has been adversely affected by a wide range of pressures and challenges over recent years, including intense competition from online and out-of-centre retail as well as rapid change in the nature of physical formats. Vacancy levels in the town centre stand at 19%, well above the national average of 12.8%. Key sites and premises in prominent town centre locations remain vacant creating unattractive and unpleasant gateways and a town centre in urgent need of redevelopment. Like many town centres, Newcastle-under-Lyme needs to move away from the declining retail sector towards residential, leisure and educational uses to encourage a vibrant town centre. The consequence of these various pressures and challenges is that far fewer people are visiting and using the town centre than in the past, necessitating the diversification of uses away from retail to encourage footfall and ensure the long-term sustainability of the town centre economy.

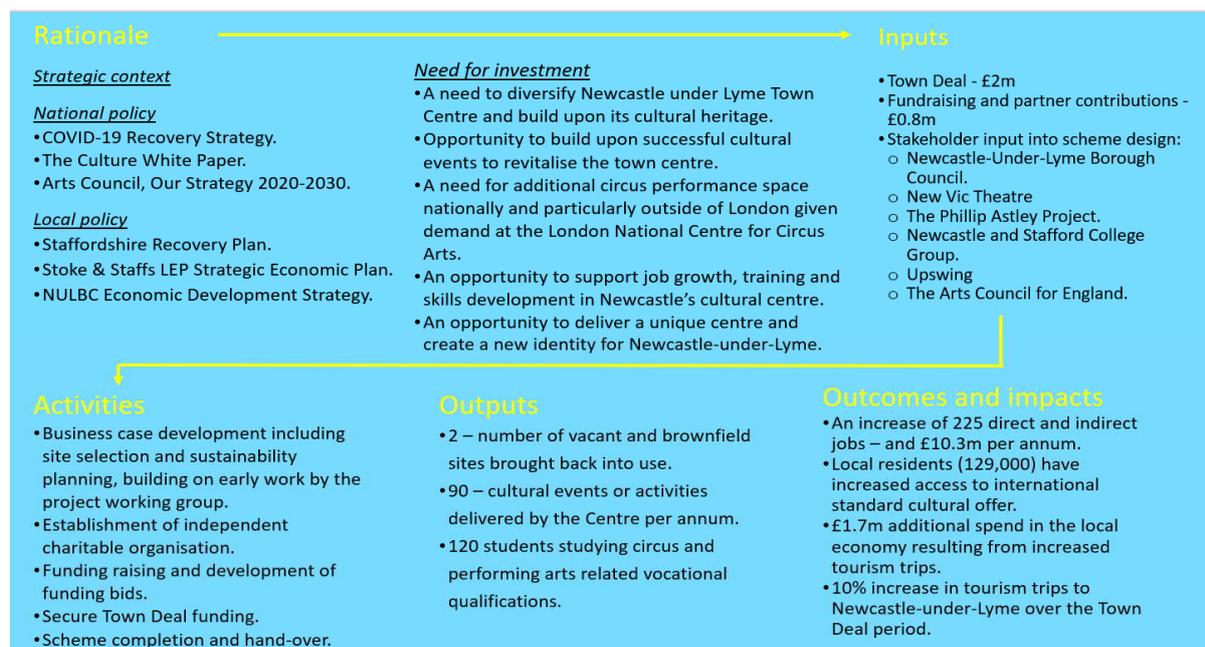
Priorities

The key short-term priorities of the Town Investment Plan under this objective are outlined below. They are designed to increase footfall and breathe new life into Newcastle town centre, building resilience and creating the conditions to unlock growth and future development. The short-term focus of the Town Investment Plan will deliver:

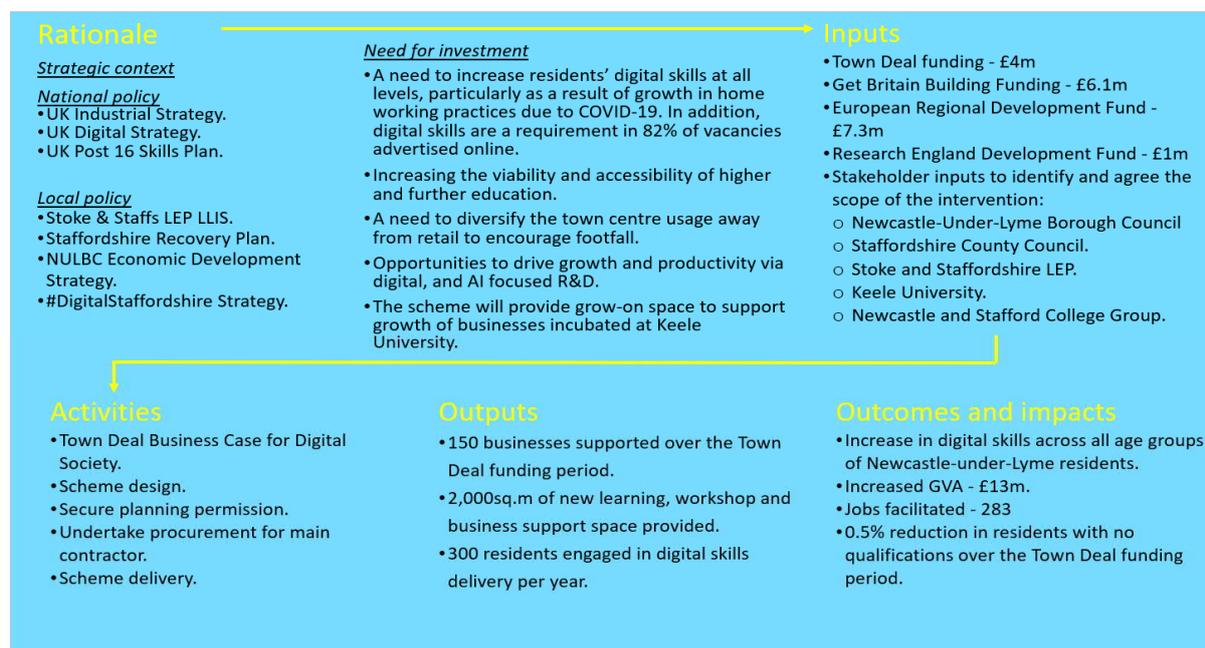
- **Investment in key gateway sites** – The re-occupation of key derelict gateway sites to provide housing will help to transform the Town Deal Investment area. Town Deal Investment will unlock development at the former Zanzibar nightclub site, which will be repurposed toward older persons’ accommodation with small industrial units for start-up businesses and ‘move-up’ accommodation for incubator/innovation focused businesses also delivered on site. It will also demolish the Midway multi storey carpark to make way for 126 homes for key workers and young professionals, as well as an element of extra care accommodation.



- **Astley Centre for Circus and Performing Arts** – The Centre for Circus will build on the town’s heritage and cultural assets to permanently establish Newcastle-under-Lyme as a world centre of circus, encapsulating content creation, supporting skills development and making a bold statement about culture-led regeneration within the town centre.



- **Digital Society Centre** – A hub located in the Town Deal area focusing on supporting businesses in areas such as data analytics, including the use of Big Data, machine learning, artificial intelligence and complex systems based on the 'Internet of Things'. The Digital Society Centre will also focus on providing skills support to address digital exclusion and address structural changes in the labour market necessitating digital skills development across all sectors.



The medium to longer term priorities are focused on opportunities to redevelop or repurpose vacant or underutilised town centre buildings and accommodate high-quality mixed-use developments. Priorities include:

- ASPIRE investment strategy for Newcastle-under-Lyme; and
- Mixed use developments to accommodate residential, commercial and light industrial uses in Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre.

Objective 3: To channel investment into regenerating communities, ensuring these areas are sustainable places to live and provide residents with the infrastructure needed to improve their quality of life.

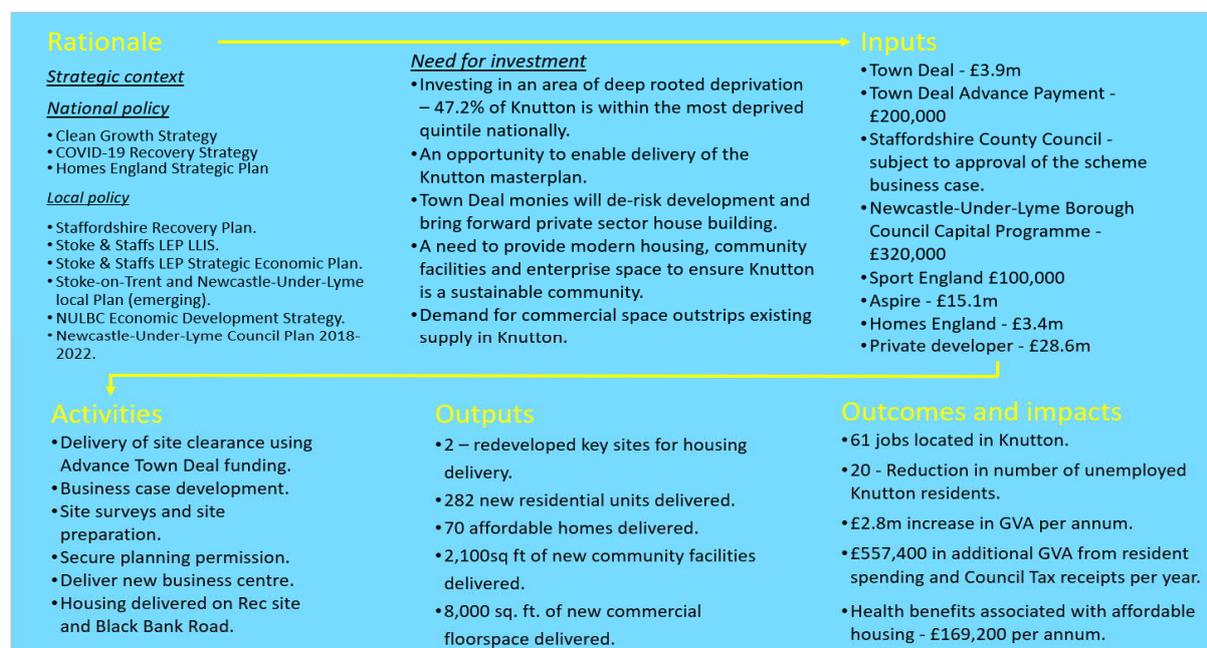
Rationale

The focus on regenerating communities reflects the fact that, while certain areas of the Town Deal Investment Area are thriving, many have struggled to adapt to economic change, in particular those former mining communities that were subject to the Housing Market Renewal Initiative such as Knutton, Cross Heath, Chesterton and Silverdale. These areas suffer from relatively high levels of deprivation, affecting health and wellbeing outcomes for children and adults within these areas. For instance, 47.2% of Knutton’s residents fall within the most deprived national quintile; there are no adults in employment in 9.3% of households with children, compared with 4.2% nationally; and male life expectancy at birth sits at 71.2 years compared with 79.6 years across England as a whole. Moreover, in Holditch and Chesterton, just 16.7% achieve grade 5 or above in English & Maths compared with 64.6% in England while 25.8% of children live in income deprived families compared with 17.1% nationally³⁹. However, these areas have the potential to become popular and sustainable places to live should the right level of investment be channelled into them to stimulate the housing market, regenerate the area and improve the quality of life and environment.

Priorities

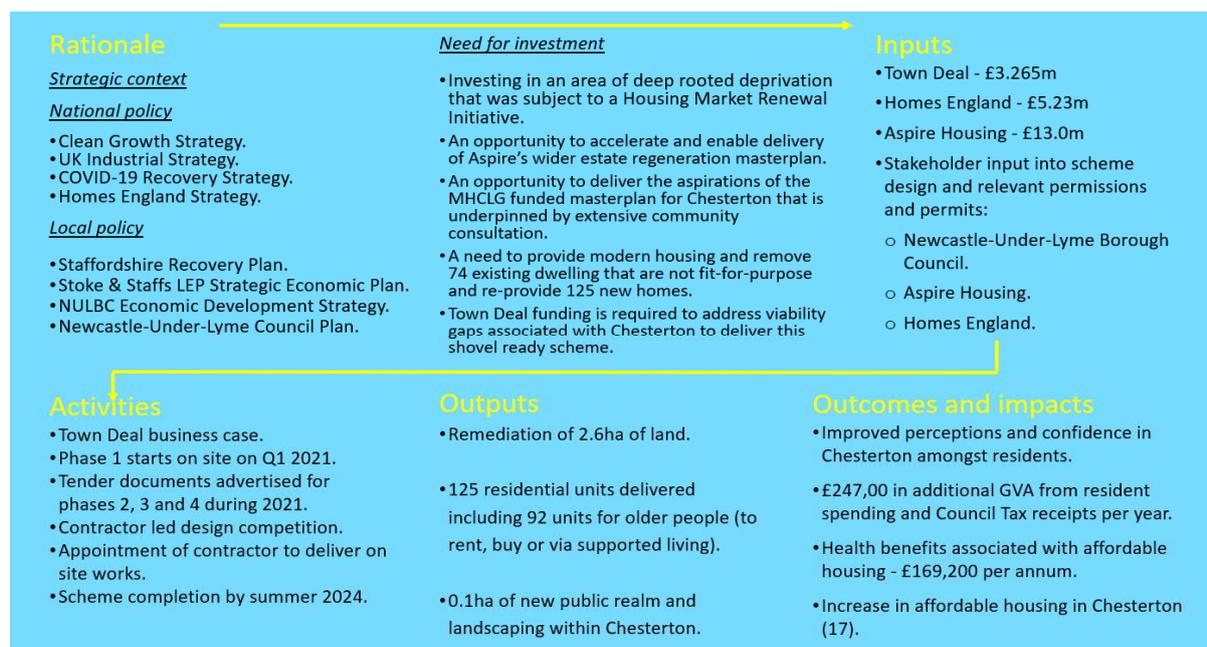
The key short-term priorities of the Town Investment Plan under this objective are outlined below. They are designed to channel much-needed investment towards regenerating communities, making them more sustainable places for people to live, providing residents with an improved quality of life and setting the foundation for further investment into these areas from the private sector. The short-term focus of the Town Investment Plan will deliver:

- **Putting the heart back into Knutton village** – a programme of investment to enable the development of key strategic housing sites within the Knutton masterplan, bringing forward 282 new houses, 25% of which would be socially rented; improved business accommodation through the replacement and repurposing of 2 wings (8,000sqft) of Knutton Business Centre and investing in modern community facilities to create a stronger village core through a new Village Hall, Village Green and play area.



- **Cross St Chesterton** – Investment to progress the delivery of the MHCLG-supported Cross St Chesterton Masterplan, enabling the demolition of 74 houses that are no longer fit for purpose to enable delivery of 125 high quality, mixed tenure housing options for the local community.

³⁹ Staffordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2019



The medium to longer term priorities are focused on opportunities channel investment more widely to regenerate communities that have lacked investment, in particular other former mining communities that were subject to the Housing Market Renewal Initiative. Priorities include:

- Aspire's Estate Regeneration Plan for Chesterton (further phases);
- Knutton Masterplan (further phases);
- Aspire Housing's wider housing provision strategy; and
- Masterplan development and delivery in other areas of relative disadvantage e.g. Silverdale and Cross Heath.

Spatial strategy

The Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Investment Plan has a strong spatial focus on channelling investment towards the town centre, regenerating communities and opening up growth opportunities in the University Growth Corridor. This is based on a number of key factors outlined within this section, namely:

- The need to diversify town centre uses, build on the town's cultural heritage and make the town centre accessible, linked to falling footfall, high vacancy rates and a heavy reliance on town centre retail;
- The need to address pockets of relatively high levels of deprivation and low levels of investment in housing markets, leading to some communities not having the same access to opportunity and quality of life as others;
- The need to unlock development and support clean growth to boost the resilience of long-term economic sustainability of Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Focusing on such priorities in Newcastle-under-Lyme will act to supercharge the regeneration and long-term economic sustainability of the Town Deal investment area, spreading prosperity across communities and driving the area's recovery from the impact of Covid-19.

The overview, presented below, provides the spatial context for the projects within the Town Deal Investment area.

Figure 3. The Towns Fund Investment Programme Projects: A Spatial Overview





Castle House, Newcastle-under-Lyme⁴⁰

Table 1. Summary of priority projects within the Town Investment Plan

Project	Description	Town Deal funding ask	Total project value
Objective 1: To open up growth opportunities through enhanced physical and digital connectivity aligned with clean and sustainable economic development.			
Smart Newcastle – Digital infrastructure	<p>This scheme builds upon private sector investment that is funding the roll out of high-speed gigabit digital infrastructure across Newcastle-under-Lyme. Town Deal monies will fund a Town Deal wide voucher scheme to fund access to the digital fibre network “spine” for end users– providing the means by which end users can connect to the network “spine” which will be provided through private sector investment. The scheme will address the variable speed and coverage of the digital network which is highly variable across the Town Deal area. Whilst there has been some success in improving this through investment via Government funding and mechanisms there is a need to go further to roll out more reliable and higher speed digital infrastructure to give Newcastle an advantage in attracting investment, facilitating better access to services, employment, education and wider services for its residents so that the Town is set up for longer term sustainable development.</p> <p>This scheme will complement the roll out of public town centre wi-fi funded by the Town Deal Advance Payment.</p>	£2.5m	£12.5m
Sustainable public transport solutions	<p>A package of investment in bus infrastructure and services across Newcastle-under-Lyme to improve the quality of the bus network and passenger experience, the fleet on key routes and associated infrastructure. The package is designed to increase bus usage and passenger service satisfaction; address bottlenecks to improve journey times and reliability; invest in fleet to provide low carbon buses that reduce emissions and therefore address air quality issues in Newcastle-under-Lyme; and future-proof the network.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green bus station – Newcastle-Under-Lyme: Green bus station, powered by solar energy, and including smart bus shelters and real time bus arrival / departure times displayed in key town centre locations and at bus stops. The proposals include upgrading all existing bus shelters at Newcastle bus station to become SMART and solar powered, so they provide improved real time passenger information (RTPI); USB charging points; and LED shelter lights, all of which are powered by a solar panel on the shelter roof. • Real time bus information – 2 two-sided RTPI totems displaying bus departure times and average walk times to the nearest bus stops served by each service at Keele University and Royal Stoke Hospital. This would complement 3 totems in Newcastle town centre and 2 at Keele University which already have funding secured. This would reduce wait time at stops, so passengers are able to spend more time within the town centre / University campus. The project would also ensure that all bus stops / shelters across the northern suburbs of Knutton, Chesterton and Silverdale are RTPI enabled to provide a fully coordinated network. • Investment in measures to maximise connectivity - This includes improved journey time reliability along the route 25 to Keele and the delivery of a new 30-minute frequency circular bus route to connect Knutton, Chesterton and Silverdale. 	<p>£3.78m of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £3.20 - capital • £0.58 - revenue 	£3.91m

⁴⁰ Source: Martyn Wright. Flickr

- **A feasibility study into greening the bus fleet on the A525 Keele corridor** – Delivered in partnership with Keele University and local operators. The study would consider the costs, benefits, risks and opportunities provided by this emerging technology, what a potential scheme might look like including the infrastructure requirements and associated costs as well as potential funding opportunities to deliver a hydrogen bus scheme.

Town Centre Permeability	<p>This project proposes a package of walking and cycling measures, including upgraded pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities, segregated walking / cycling routes in line with recently updated Government LTN 1/20 guidance and improved connectivity to the greenways to promote cycle accessibility across the wider network. The ask is for £1m to upgrade the existing at-grade crossing on Barracks Road (at Hassell Street) and improved cycling routes on Lower Street (north of Pool Dam). Outside of the ring road, the project would deliver resurfacing works, a new footbridge, segregated route upgrades and wayfinding signage. The project would contribute towards providing a complete, coordinated walking / cycling corridor between Keele University, Newcastle town centre and Hanley and improve town centre permeability.</p> <p>This scheme will build upon the increase in bicycle sales during 2020⁴¹ and investment in safe and secure routes into Newcastle town centre for cyclists and pedestrians funded by the Town Deal Advance Capital Funding.</p>	£1.0m	£4.83m
Electric charging infrastructure	<p>Town Deal investment is requested to improve the provision of publicly-accessible charging infrastructure across the Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal area. This investment will encourage the transition to electric vehicles by investing in green infrastructure for use by taxis and private cars in Newcastle-under-Lyme. It will therefore support the Government's decision to ban petrol and diesel cars in 2030; help address air quality issues on key transport corridors in Newcastle-under-Lyme and offer the potential to apply research undertaken at Keele University on vehicle to grid technologies to improve charging infrastructure across the Borough.</p> <p>EV charging points are already planned at the proposed redeveloped Rycroft multi-storey car park via Future High street Funding. This project would deliver similar infrastructure by funding a further 20 charging units (40 charging spaces) at other car park locations and taxi ranks in the town centre.</p>	£0.44m	£0.68m
Objective 2: To diversify and enhance the town centre experience by encouraging new uses to increase demand, footfall and boost the dwell time of residents and visitors.			
Digital Society Centre	<p>A new hub facility located in the Town Deal area that will provide flexible spaces for learning and SMEs. It will drive productivity and increase skill levels in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire, focused on areas of high growth and increasing need in day-to-day life in accessing and delivering public services. These include areas such as digital skills, data analytics and artificial intelligence. The Digital Society Centre will build upon the knowledge and assets of Keele University and Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group. In particular, it will complement proposals for a town centre-based Institute of Technology and the smart 'Living Lab' in Keele's new IC7 Innovation centre.</p>	£4.0m	£18.4m
Investment in town centre gateway sites	<p>The Zanzibar building is a former nightclub which has been vacant for approximately 16 years. The site has not come forward for development due to high up-front abnormal costs associated with historical canal and rail infrastructure under the site. The building offers 36,000 sq. ft of floorspace and is located in a prominent position on the A52 – a key route into Newcastle town centre. The building was recently purchased by Aspire Housing who have plans to redevelop</p>	£4.1m	£18.5m

⁴¹ A 63% year-on-year increase in bike sales between April and June 2020 has been recorded by the Bicycle Association's market data service.

the site⁴² to provide 75 older person's accommodation as well as 7,000 square foot of live/work units and small industrial units for start-up businesses and 'move-up' accommodation for incubator/innovation focused businesses.

Investment at this key gateway site will build upon the Advance Town Deal scheme to acquire and demolish the former Zanzibar nightclub. It will also unlock an additional £13.9m of funding in the Zanzibar site.

Town Deal investment will also fund the demolition of the Midway multi storey carpark to make way for the development of 126 new homes comprising a mix of homes for key workers and young professionals and extra care accommodation. Town Deal funding will therefore unlock this site for development, creating a more appropriate use for a site so close to the retail core will complement the emerging residential quarter of Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Astley Centre for Circus and Performing Arts	Newcastle-under-Lyme's unique contribution to world culture is as the birthplace of the man who invented the modern circus, Philip Astley. Astley's has been celebrated by the successful delivery of town centre events as the Festival of Circus; AstleyFest – a celebration of the 250 th anniversary of modern circus; and the annual 'Homecoming' – a circus inspired event hosted in Newcastle Town Centre. The Astley Centre will build on these successful events and the presence of the New Vic Theatre to develop a dedicated Centre for Circus in the town centre. The Centre will embrace content creation as well as training and skills development; education and participation; history, research and pedagogy ('circademia'); and tourism and heritage. The Centre for Circus will feature workspace, fully equipped studios, education space, accommodation all housed in a repurposed building, plus a dedicated and fully equipped site to pitch Big Tops. This project presents the opportunity to permanently establish Newcastle-under-Lyme as a world centre of circus, thereby making a bold statement about culture-led regeneration, offering a focal point for the county's tourism strategy and adding to Newcastle's offer as a thriving place for people to live and work.	£2.0m	£2.8m
--	---	-------	-------

Objective 3: To channel investment into regenerating communities, ensuring these areas are sustainable places to live and provide residents with the infrastructure needed to improve their quality of life.

Putting the Heart back into Knutton	Knutton is a small village situated circa 1 mile north-west of Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre. As a former mining community, it was subject to Housing Market Renewal Initiative to stimulate the housing market, regenerate the area and improve the quality of life and environment. A subsequent One Public Estate (OPE) funded masterplan has been drawn up which aims to 'Put the Heart Back into Knutton'. This project will enable delivery of early phases of the Masterplan to regenerate Knutton. Town Deal funding will enable housing delivery by addressing viability gaps to bring forward long term vacant sites for redevelopment (with the delivery of 240 new homes), improvements to business accommodation through the redevelopment of the Knutton business centre, social and community facilities through a new village hall and village green, and improvements to local traffic safety. These interventions would make Knutton a more desirable place for people to live and work in, and pump prime investment into the area.	£3.9m	£52.32m
-------------------------------------	---	-------	---------

Investment in Knutton will build upon the Advance Town Deal scheme to acquire and demolish property in the area to enable delivery of the masterplan.

Chesterton	Chesterton is a long-established mixed community to the north of Newcastle. As with Knutton, Chesterton was the focus of the Housing Market Renewal Initiative to regenerate the area. Chesterton has seen little investment in recent years and experiences low value in the property market. As such, the viability of	£3.27m	£21.5m
------------	--	--------	--------

⁴² Aspire is currently negotiating the acquisition of the adjacent building, 16 Brunswick Street, with the view to demolish the building and incorporate the land into the redevelopment to achieve the unit numbers mentioned.

development projects impacts the ability to enforce change to areas of deprivation without external subsidy. The project proposals are underpinned by a masterplan supported through the Government Estate Regeneration Fund.

Town Deal investment would result in much-needed investment within Chesterton to enable delivery of high quality, mixed tenure housing options for the local community while the project proposal also links to Aspire's wider estate regeneration plan for Chesterton to improve the existing housing stock through external and internal works programmes, presenting the opportunity to channel follow-on investment in this area.

Total

£24.99m

£135.44m



Former Zanzibar nightclub – situated on a key gateway site, Newcastle-under-Lyme⁴³

⁴³ Rept0n1x, Flickr

The Town Deal ask of £25m will unlock public and private sector investment to deliver a programme of investment totalling £135m. This stands to have a transformational impact on Newcastle and its residents and address years of underinvestment in the town that delivers a return on investment of £297m over five years.

Indicator	Output
Enabled delivery of residential units	608
GVA generated by additional spending in the Newcastle economy	£2.9m
GVA generated by job creation	£66.3m
Uplift in Land Values	£2.3m

Mapping of aligned and complementary strategies, programmes and investments

The programme of investment proposed in this Newcastle-under-Lyme TIP delivers against numerous UK Government policy priorities:

- The Newcastle-under-Lyme TIP is seeking significant investment in digital projects to provide modern and reliable connectivity and provides businesses and residents with the capabilities required in a modern economy. These interventions align with the numerous Government strategies such as the COVID Recovery Strategy; Clean Growth Strategy, Digital Strategy and Industrial Strategy.
- The focus of the transport measures within the Newcastle-under-Lyme TIP will support the delivery of Clean Growth, align with the Cutting Carbon White Paper and the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. They will reduce carbon emissions and encourage use of public, active travel modes and sustainable transport solutions by providing modern and accessible infrastructure that is vital to our future growth and prosperity, a key foundation of the UK's Industrial Strategy.
- Investing in Knutton and Chesterton, areas of relative disadvantage, as well as key gateway sites that face significant viability issues, aligns with the government's levelling up agenda and the delivery of Homes England's Strategy. Investment in both Knutton and Chesterton will support the much-needed regeneration of both areas that will deliver housing, employment space and community facilities in two of Newcastle-under-Lyme's most deprived boroughs.
- Town Deal investment in the town centre (Digital Society Centre, Astley Centre, improving town centre accessibility) will support the repurposing of the town centre and restore the economy, a key focus of the UK Government's Covid-19 Recovery Strategy.
- The Astley Centre will open up cultural activities to the local community, boost the local economy and particularly Newcastle-under-Lyme's cultural sector by building on Newcastle-under-Lyme's unique heritage which are key aspects of the Culture White Paper.

Table 2. Newcastle-under-Lyme TIP Alignment with National Policy

Intervention	Covid-19 Recovery Strategy	Clean Growth Strategy	Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy	Culture White Paper	Post 16 Skills Plan	A Green Future	UK Digital Strategy	UK Industrial Strategy	UK technology Innovation Strategy	Homes England Strategy
Objective 1: To open up growth opportunities through enhanced physical and digital connectivity aligned with clean and sustainable economic development.										
Smart Newcastle – Digital Infrastructure										
Sustainable public transport solutions										
Electric vehicle charging infrastructure										
Town centre permeability										
Objective – 2: To diversify and enhance the town centre experience by encouraging new uses to increase demand footfall and boost the dwell time of residents and visitors.										
Digital Society Centre										
Astley Centre										
Investment in key gateway sites										
Objective – 3: To channel investment into regenerating communities, ensuring these areas are sustainable places to live and provide residents with the infrastructure needed to improve their quality of life.										
Knutton Masterplan										
Chesterton Masterplan										

Table 3. Newcastle-under-Lyme TIP Alignment with Local Policy

Intervention	NuLLocal Plan	SCC Local Transport Plan	Staffs LCWIP	SSLEP Local Industrial Strategy	Staffs Recovery Plan	SSLEP Strategic Economic Plan	Digital Staffs	NuLBC Council Plan	NuLBC Economic Dev't Strategy	SSLEP Skills Strategy	NuLBC Air Quality Action Plan	SCC Climate Change Strategy
Objective 1: To open up growth opportunities through enhanced physical and digital connectivity aligned with clean and sustainable economic development.												
Smart Newcastle – Digital Infrastructure												
Sustainable public transport solutions												
Electric Vehicle charging												
Town centre permeability												
Objective – 2: To diversify and enhance the town centre experience by encouraging new uses to increase demand footfall and boost the dwell time of residents and visitors.												
Digital Society Centre												
Astley Centre												
Investment in key gateway sites												

Objective – 3: To channel investment into regenerating communities, ensuring these areas are sustainable places to live and provide residents with the infrastructure needed to improve their quality of life.



In addition to strategic alignment, the priority projects within the Newcastle-under-Lyme TIP complement and enhance a number of existing initiatives and programmes:

- The projects in this Town Deal Investment Plan compliment and take forward schemes funded by Newcastle-under-Lyme's Town Deal Advanced Capital funding. This includes:
 - Investment in key development sites complements Advance Town Deal funding invested to accelerate the demolition and site clearance on the former Zanzibar site and the purchase and demolition of Knutton Clinic. In addition, the proposal to invest in key development sites will de-risk development in Knutton and Chesterton and deliver vital phases of area masterplans developed with support from OPE and the Government Estate Regeneration Fund.
 - The Town Centre Permeability scheme will build on the Advance Town Deal funding invested in improvements to the town centre subway network and the progression of design work for the proposed grade crossings. This investment will compliment a wide range of existing projects and initiatives. Improving cycling and walking links will complement the delivery of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan investment and the schemes supported by the emergency Active Travel Fund released in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The Digital Society Centre will provide skills and business support opportunities related to the digital agenda and data analytics. This will complement Advance Town Deal funding invested in an employment and skills service in Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre. Town Deal funding will provide another referral route for the employment and skills service that will also assist high growth businesses; provide skills support for residents; and open up access to further and higher education. The Digital Society Centre will also complement Keele University's Enterprise Zone and the "New Keele Deal", which is a plan for £70 million of investment by Keele University, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and other partners to exploit the potential of Keele University's world-leading research and facilities. The New Keele Deal will tackle low productivity and grow a positive culture of innovation and research within the region to deliver a significant number of higher value jobs over the next 20 years.
- The improvements to the town centre have been developed to complement investment in the Ryecroft area of the town centre, which has recently secured Future High Streets Fund monies. Demolition of the Midway multi-storey carpark will complement the award of Future High Streets Fund by opening up this gateway site for housing. The Future High Streets Fund award will also provide electric vehicle charging points as part of enhanced town centre parking provision. Town Deal monies extend charging point provision across the Town Deal area, building on existing provision and research and development activity being led by Keele University.
- Investment in sustainable public transport solutions will complement recent Transforming Cities Funding (TCF) awarded to Stoke-on-Trent. TCF monies have been awarded for investment at Stoke-on-Trent railway station as well as plans to cut journey times and congestion. The award will complement the request for Town Deal funding as bus routes connecting Newcastle-under-Lyme and Keele University link to areas such as Hanley in Stoke-on-Trent. The award of Town Deal and TCF will provide a comprehensive package of transport improvements within both North Staffordshire Local Authorities.
- The Astley International Centre for Circus and Performing Arts will add to Newcastle's cultural assets and activity. These currently include the New Vic Theatre and the Keele Deal Culture – a landmark agreement between Keele University and local partners to realise the full potential of the area's cultural resources and assets to benefit the local area. It will therefore play an important role in maximising the potential of Newcastle-under-Lyme's cultural sector. The Astley Centre will also build upon the Appetite Programme⁴⁴ that aims to attract more people into Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme to experience and be inspired by the arts. The Programme was initially delivered in Stoke-on-Trent before being expanded into Newcastle in 2019 with support from Arts Council funding.

⁴⁴ <https://www.appetite.org.uk/>



High Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Source: Rept0n1x, Flickr

Engagement and Delivery

Local stakeholders have been at the heart of the development of the Newcastle-under-Lyme TIP and will continue to drive the second stage of agreeing a Town Deal, which will include completing a business case based on the selected content of Town Investment Plans with government.

The Town Deal Board

The Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal Board was first convened in January 2020. They have guided the development of the Town Investment Plan, acting as the vehicle through which the vision and strategy for the town has been defined. The Board is chaired by the Vice Chancellor of Keele University, and includes representatives from the private sector, local government, the Local Enterprise Partnership, the third sector, the local Member of Parliament and other local organisations including Newcastle College and the New Vic Theatre.

Consultation and engagement – plan development

Outside of monthly Board meetings, Board members have also been tasked to develop the priority projects that were agreed to be taken forward within the TIP, alongside project stakeholders. These working groups were based on the three objectives of the TIP and were instrumental in developing the project detail, providing advice rooted in the local experience and constructively challenging proposals.

A range of wider stakeholder engagement activities have been undertaken to inform the TIP and ensure it is owned by the local community:

- MHCLG's #MyTown campaign provided a platform for communities to outline how Town Deal funding could transform their town. Newcastle-under-Lyme received 104 responses which were analysed and used to shape the vision and interventions outlined within the TIP.
- A "Vision Survey" was developed and distributed to Board members to inform the development of the vision for Newcastle-under-Lyme, supplemented by #MyTown responses and conversations with individual stakeholders to ensure the vision was representative of the views of the broad Newcastle-under-Lyme community.
- Individual consultation sessions have been held both with Board members and members of the local community, to provide their views on Newcastle-under-Lyme's key strengths, the challenges facing the town, opportunities for improvement and associated priorities and what they want the town to look like by 2030. Consultees were drawn from a number of sectors and a variety of interests to ensure the TIP drew from a diverse range of opinions and priorities for the future success and long-term sustainability of Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- A "Call for Projects" survey was designed to allow residents, organisations and businesses to submit project or investment ideas that fit against three themes of the Town Deal Fund and could be included the Town Deal Investment Plans. This was distributed through various channels, including the social media profile of the local MP, community organisations such as VAST and Parish Councils, and resulted in 39 surveys being received.
- A commercial property market assessment was undertaken with feedback being sought from over 20 local property agents and prominent landowners.

Newcastle Under Lyme Town Deal Board membership

- Trevor McMillan (Chair) – Keele University and Stoke and Staffordshire LEP.
- Cllr Stephen Sweeney (Vice-chair) – Newcastle Under-Lyme BC.
- Aaron Bell – MP for Newcastle-Under-Lyme
- Cllr Phillip White – Staffordshire County Council
- Graham Bibby – Keele Parish Council
- Phil Butters – Keele University
- Carl Copestake – Knights PLC
- Thea Fern – Department for Work and Pensions
- Dan Gray – Aspire Group
- Lisa Healings – VAST
- Pete Herbert – PH Productions
- Robert Lawley – Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce
- Eddie Leligdowicz – Newcastle Business Improvement District
- Henryk Adamczuk – Silverdale Parish Council.
- Jane Tunnicliff – Newcastle & Stafford Colleges Group
- Nicky Twemlow – YMCA North Staffordshire
- Fiona Wallace – The New Vic Theatre
- Sharon Warren – Atmore Group

- The team preparing the TIP has presented at various local stakeholder group sessions to inform them of the work being undertaken such as the Newcastle Employment and Skills
- Project working groups were also established for key stakeholders to shape priority projects such as Sustainable Transport; Knutton; Newcastle Town Centre and Digital Connectivity. These groups built on previous engagement activity such as the extensive consultation undertaken to inform the Knutton and Chesterton masterplans; the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and Newcastle-under-Lyme's Future High Street Fund bid.

Consultation and engagement – ongoing

Consultation and engagement have been central to the development of this TIP. The involvement of local stakeholders will be vital to develop the projects within the TIP. The following processes will be adopted to maintain buy-in and successfully deliver projects that receive Town Deal funding:

- The Town Deal Board will continue to meet on regular basis to guide and provide oversight on all the projects that are shortlisted for Town Deal funding.
- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council will appoint a dedicated Project Manager and an Officer who will oversee the process.
- Working groups for priority projects have met regularly throughout the TIP development process. These groups will continue to meet during the business case and scheme development process.
- Drop-in and virtual consultation sessions will be held with residents, business and any interested stakeholders to collect feedback on high profile projects such as investment in communities such as Knutton and Chesterton.
- Regular updates on key projects will be highlighted in the local press, via a quarterly Town Deal newsletter, and the Town Deal pages of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council website.
- A stakeholder engagement plan is outlined below. This will be updated throughout the process of delivering the Town Deal projects.

Table 4. Stakeholder engagement plan

Stakeholder Groups	Project	Objective for Engagement	Type of Engagement	Frequency
Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal Board – including local MPs and elected members.	All Town Deal Projects awarded Heads of Terms by MHCLG.	To drive delivery; monitor progress; and make key decisions that direct the implementation of Newcastle's Town Investment Plan.	Online or face-to-face meetings.	Monthly
Newcastle-under-Lyme's residents, businesses and visitors.	All Town Deal Projects awarded Heads of Terms by MHCLG.	<p>Enable residents, businesses and visitors to input and provide feedback on project plans and scheme designs. It will also enable Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council to communicate the benefits Town Deal investment will deliver and provide updates on project delivery.</p> <p>To catalyse local people as advocates for their local area and its future prospects.</p>	<p>Public engagement via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drop-in consultation sessions including engagement held in public spaces (e.g. community drop in sessions in Knutton and Chesterton and engagement with communities to provide feedback on walking and cycling measures) via events and outreach work. - Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal website. - Press releases to local print media outlets. - Presence on social media platforms – Twitter and Facebook. - E-Newsletters – General and Business. - Information Leaflets / Brochures. <p>The format of any consultation activity will be dependent on COVID-19 restrictions. A more detailed community engagement plan will therefore be developed upon award of Heads of Terms and updated regularly to reflect any changes to COVID-19 guidance.</p>	As and when required
Landowners, agents and investors	All town centre projects, Smart Newcastle Digital Infrastructure.	Identify potential investment and development opportunities in Newcastle-under-Lyme; leverage private sector funding and maximise the potential of Town Deal funding.	<p>Engagement will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeted drop-in sessions. - Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal website. - Formally writing to businesses if required. - Individual meetings where required. - Formal partnerships or legal agreements. 	Quarterly including on-going engagement as and when required.
Key public sector stakeholders – Staffordshire LEP; Staffordshire County Council; Keele University; public transport providers; Aspire Housing; and Parish Councils within the Town Deal area.	Smart Newcastle; Digital Society; Town Centre permeability; sustainable transport solutions; investment in key sites and Astley Centre.	Informing scheme and business case development including shaping a project's technical requirements; reflecting service or facility user requirements; identifying appropriate links to complementary investments and securing match funding.	<p>Engagement will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular and ad-hoc email and written correspondence. - Formal face-to-face or online meetings as and when required. - Formal legal agreements to take forward scheme delivery. 	Ongoing.

<p>Project sponsors and user groups – Aspire; Keele University, Staffordshire County Council; Astley Centre working group.</p>	<p>Zanzibar, Knutton, Chesterton; town centre permeability; sustainable transport solution; Smart Newcastle; Digital Society and Astley Centre.</p>	<p>These groups will inform project delivery by advising on design options and providing specialist, technical expertise to inform project delivery (e.g. delivering capital works to promote cycling and walking). They will also provide a means by which community or user engagement can take place.</p>	<p>Engagement will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal engagement will take place via working groups that will be established to take forward any project awarded Heads of Terms. - Formal agreements to take forward scheme delivery. - Ad-hoc communication by email and telephone calls as required. 	<p>Monthly meetings</p>
--	---	--	---	-------------------------

Delivery Plan

The following table sets out the phased delivery of the Newcastle-under-Lyme TIP:

	Business case development including design and optioneering	Planning	Construction – start	Construction – complete
SMART Newcastle - Digital Infrastructure	April 2021-Feb 2022	Feb-April 2022	April 2022	Sept 2022
Digital Society	April 2021-Feb 2022	Feb-April 2022	April 2022	Sept 2022
Sustainable transport solutions	April 2021-Mar 2022	Mar-Jun 2022	Sept 2022	Dec 2025
Town centre permeability	April 2021-Feb 2022	Feb-April 2022	May 2022	Sept 2024
Electric vehicle charging infrastructure	April 2021- Feb 2022	April-Dec 2022	April 2023	Sept 2025
Investment in key gateway sites	April 2021- Feb 2022	Sept-Dec 2021 (Zanzibar) Jan-Jun 2022 (Midway)	Jul 2022 (Zanzibar & Midway)	Jun 2024 (Zanzibar) Dec 2022 (Midway)
Knutton Masterplan	April 2021- Feb 2022	Sept-Dec 2022	Feb 2023	Dec 2024
Chesterton Masterplan	April 2021- Sept 2021	Planning permission in place (shovel ready scheme)	Dec 2021	June 2024
Astley International Centre for Circus and Performing Arts	April 2021- Feb 2022	April-Sept 2022	Oct 2022	Sept 2023

The proposed Towns Fund investment programme is deliverable in its entirety by 2025/26. The Delivery Plan and its associated milestones has been drawn up by stakeholders with a significant track record of project delivery and oversight, including Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council; Staffordshire County Council; and representatives of the Centre for Circus Working Group (the New Vic Theatre and Upswing – a leading contemporary circus organisation). Wherever possible the milestones are based on existing development and study work. For instance, the Knutton scheme is considered to be shovel ready following extensive consultation, master planning and scheme development by WYG. Similar development work has taken place by Avison Young and Pozzoni to underpin proposed Town Deal investment at Chesterton.

Governance

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council will continue to act as the accountable body for the implementation of the Town investment Plan and delivery of projects awarded heads of terms. The Borough Council, as accountable body will be responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with the Heads of Terms Agreement with government and the Newcastle TIP Board;
- Ensure regular and effective Board meetings are held and that decisions are made in accordance with good governance principles;
- Ensure compliance at all times with Government's requirements for Town Deal business cases;
- Prepare, adhere to and monitor a delivery plan each of the Town Investment Plan priorities awarded;
- Lead of the delivery of Town Deal business cases (see below);
- Submitting periodic monitoring reports to Government and hold regular update meeting with representatives from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government; and
- Monitoring and accounting for the spend and any Town Deal funding award.

Assurance

Newcastle-under-Lyme will develop a Town Deal Assurance Framework, in line with Town Deal guidance, following submission of this TIP. The Framework will set out processes, systems and ways of working that will guide delivery of Town Deal project. It will clearly outline:

- The process adopted for business case development and approval;
- Programme management associated with Towns Fund allocations;
- Programme and project governance arrangements;
- Performance management process and agreed KPI's at a programme and project level;
- Change management processes;
- Processes for procuring and monitoring the delivery of external expertise commissioned to deliver services associated with the Newcastle Town Deal; and
- Plan for monitoring and evaluation of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Deal.

Business case development

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council will lead on the delivery of project level business cases once Heads of Terms have been agreed. The Town Deal Board will oversee the development of business cases and subsequent delivery of the TIP, ensuring compliance with the Heads of Terms Agreement with government.

The Board have been proactive in their involvement in this TIP via attendance at thematic project working groups. These groups have developed the ideas and detail that underpin the projects within this Investment Plan. This approach to working will continue during the business case stage. Officers at Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council will facilitate the Board level working groups and lead the production of robust and technically compliant business cases. During the business case development process, project owners will be required to report any progress, issues and delays to the Town Deal Board to ensure they are addressed in a timely manner, through the coordination of resources and engagement of additional stakeholders. Upon implementation of the projects, the Board will receive Progress Monitoring Reports and collation of information submitted by each project to record activity, achievement, financial draw down and outputs and to explain variation from expected profiles.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council will remain the Accountable Body for the implementation of the TIP. The Council will adopt a programme management approach to support the development of detailed business cases and subsequent delivery of the TIP, preparing and monitoring a comprehensive programme and delivery plan for the TIP priority projects; monitoring and evaluating project and overall programme progress and submitting periodic monitoring reports to the Towns Hub.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council appreciate the need for independent technical assurance of all Town Deal business cases. The Borough Council intends to use existing business case appraisal processes established by Stoke and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to procure independent assurance expertise to apply the Town Deal assurance framework. This will provide an efficient approach to procuring appraisal services using expertise that understand the economic development context within the sub region.

