

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>29<sup>th</sup> June 2021</b>
<b>Heading:</b>	<b>TOWNS FUND</b>		
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>CLLR MATTHEW RELF, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLACE, PLANNING AND REGENERATION</b>		
<b>Ward/s:</b>	<b>KIRKBY AND SUTTON WARDS</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>NO</b>		
<b>Subject to Call-In:</b>	<b>YES</b>		

### **Purpose of Report**

The report provides further information about the success of the Towns Fund submission for Kirkby and Sutton which has secured a massive £62.6m of funding.

### **Recommendation(s)**

- To note the announcement that Ashfield has secured £62.6m from the Towns Fund for investment in Kirkby and Sutton**

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

To make Cabinet members aware that £62.6m funding has been secured from the Towns Fund as part of the Council's ambitious plans to regenerate the District. Together with funding secured from the Towns Fund Accelerator Fund and the Future High Streets Fund, over £70m has now been secured for Ashfield. Together with co-funding this will bring well over £100m of investment into the District over the next five years.

Following the tremendous success of these bids we will be focusing on accessing funding to support Hucknall, with a bid to the Levelling Up Fund due to be developed over the next few months.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

*For information only – not applicable.*

### **Detailed Information**

It was announced on 8<sup>th</sup> June that a massive £62.6 million has been secured for Ashfield as part of the government's Towns Fund for Kirkby and Sutton. This was the largest award in the latest round

of Towns Fund announcements and well exceeds the £25m per town which the government had provisionally allocated to each town. The government had advised that in exceptional circumstances, an allocation of more than £25 million would be considered, but would be limited to the most ambitious and credible investment plans, which would be subject to a higher level of scrutiny.

To secure more than £25m per town the investment plan was required to credibly target not only transformational impacts for the town but for the wider region or nationally.

The funding provides a once in a lifetime opportunity to make a real and long-lasting change in the area. The investment will bring benefits to the whole district including Hucknall and the rural area, as well as the wider East Midlands region. Several projects are of regional significance, including The ADMC (Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre), the new educational centres for construction and civil engineering and the planetarium and education centre at Sherwood Observatory.

The bid was developed with partners from the Discover Ashfield Board throughout 2020 and submitted in early 2021. Lee Anderson MP supported the bid in Parliament.

Together with funding secured from the Towns Fund Accelerator Fund and the recently announced Future High Streets Fund, over £70m has now been secured for Ashfield. Together with co-funding this will bring well over £100m of investment into the District over the next five years.

In Autumn 2019 Sutton and Kirkby were selected to receive Towns Fund investment of up to £25 million each. Since then, the Council and the Discover Ashfield Board have been working closely with stakeholders including business, education, health, transport, and local elected Members to develop the Kirkby and Sutton Town Investment Plan. Public consultation on the suggested projects a year ago received a huge number of responses that shaped which projects were moved forward.

The investment will deliver jobs and further education opportunities, long-term economic and productivity growth, new homes, improved transport infrastructure, reduced carbon and new cultural and visitor facilities.

The investment plan focuses on four key areas:

**Business and education:**

The centrepiece of the plan is an Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre to create a national centre of excellence focussed on promoting and providing access to the latest technologies and best practice in automated distribution.

Two new education centres will provide opportunities for qualifications in construction and civil engineering. At Kirkby and Sutton libraries there will be new innovation centres which will support residents with digital skills, helping them access digital services, learn new skills and adapt to new ways of working.

**Health and wellbeing:**

A new Kirkby Health Hub and Sports Hubs at Kingsway Park and Sutton Lawn will give residents greater access to healthier lifestyles and help improve local health outcomes.

**Boost visitor economy:**

A new Planetarium and Science Discovery Centre at Sherwood Observatory will help inspire a new generation of scientists and engineers across the region.

A new leisure facility at Kings Mill Reservoir will offer a range of new water sports attractions for visitors from across the region. A network of cycling and walking routes across the area will connect visitor attractions, homes and places of work.

### **Make Ashfield Greener:**

The gateway area around Kirkby train station will be developed to provide better access to the station and interchange to buses and the new cycle/walking network to promote use of more sustainable forms of transport, as well as a programme to fit existing buildings with solar and other green energy sources.

### **Next steps**

Heads of Terms have been issued by MHCLG which must be returned by 29<sup>th</sup> June. Within two months of the offer date of 8<sup>th</sup> June, confirmation is required by MHCLG as to which projects will be taken forward, together with more detailed information on the planned outputs and outcomes for each project.

Appointments for the project management team are being progressed via an Executive Decision Record and business cases will start to be produced for the projects.

Following the tremendous success of the Future High Streets and Towns Fund bids we will now be focusing on accessing funding to support Hucknall, with a bid to the Levelling Up Fund due to be developed over the next few months.

### **Projects in delivery**

Several projects are currently underway using the £1.5m from the Accelerated Towns Fund funding, including:

- New Kirkby indoor market – due to open in late July
- Off-road cycle path improvements between Sherwood Business Park and Kirkby
- New play area at Hornbeam Park, Kirkby
- Purchase of vacant properties on Low Street, Sutton
- Creation of a Centre of Excellence for disabled people in Sport and Theatre, at Portland College

Sutton also received £6.27m funding from the Future High Streets fund with the money being used to help regenerate areas of Sutton town centre. All of the following projects are now in delivery:

- Renovating Sutton Community Academy theatre to create a new cinema, live music and theatre space with café and bar all open to the public
- Refurbishing and re-purposing empty shop units on Low Street for a variety of new uses on the ground floor and residential apartments above
- Fox Street - developing the derelict land behind Lloyds Bank to provide better access between ASDA and Portland Square, additional car parking and a place for pop up events and food markets
- Maker Space and shared workspace that will offer access to tools and workspaces so that those lacking the space or funds at home will be able to make anything they like. There will be wood and metal working tools, sewing machines, 3D printers and laser cutters. The new facility will also provide a range of offices for businesses to rent.

## **Implications**

### **Corporate Plan:**

Economic Growth and Place - Capitalise on external funding opportunities, e.g.: Future High Streets and Towns fund, to improve our town centres

### **Legal:**

No legal implications in this report. Due to the timeframe authority for the signing of the Heads of Terms will be through an Executive Decision Record.

### **Finance:**

<b>Budget Area</b>	<b>Implication</b>
General Fund – Revenue Budget	
General Fund – Capital Programme	<p>In addition to the Government grant funding referred to in the body of the report the Council is providing capital co-funding to some of the schemes, largely through prudential borrowing, the cost of which will be met from revenue income from the various projects. The financial implications for the Council will continue to be evaluated as the business cases are developed. Once the business cases have been approved by MHCLG for the main Towns Fund bid they will be added to the Capital Programme.</p> <p>The FHSF schemes and Accelerated Towns Fund Schemes have been approved and included in the current capital programme.</p>
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	None
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	None

### **Risk:**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
The report is for information only, no risk identified	

### **Human Resources:**

No HR implications within the report.

### **Environmental/Sustainability**

*Not applicable.*

### **Equalities:**

*Not applicable.*

### **Other Implications:**

*Not applicable.*

**Reason(s) for Urgency**

*Not applicable.*

**Reason(s) for Exemption**

*Not applicable.*

**Background Papers**

*Not applicable.*

**Report Author and Contact Officer**

Sarah Daniel

Service Manager for Place and Wellbeing

[sarah.daniel@ashfield.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.daniel@ashfield.gov.uk)

01623 457249