

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

## Introduction

The Council continues to operate in an extremely challenging and uncertain financial environment following a prolonged period of significant budget reductions since 2010 and on-going and increasing inflationary spending pressures. This uncertainty has been exacerbated by the ongoing impact of the COVID19 pandemic, a further one-year funding settlement for 2022/23, the delayed Fair Funding Review, funding uncertainties associated with the future of the business rates system, the future distribution methodology for New Homes Bonus, and uncertainty about the level of Government funding overall. This uncertainty will remain until the Government makes further announcements.

The Revenue element of this MTFS focusses on the General Fund only as a separate HRA MTFS was presented to and supported by Cabinet on 25 January 2022.

## Summary General Fund MTFS

Recognising the significant funding uncertainty described above, the table below sets out the prudent estimated financial challenge for the years 2022/23 to 2024/25. The sections below the table confirm the assumptions underpinning the estimated funding gaps in each year.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Estimated Expenditure</b>	15,456	13,267	13,311
<b>Estimated Income</b>	-15,456	-10,991	-11,024
<b>Estimated Cumulative Funding Gap</b>	0	2,276	2,287
<b>Estimated Annual Funding Gap</b>	0	2,276	11

The above estimated funding gaps from 2023/24 currently include the following annual inflation assumptions (which may change on further review):

- Pay inflation (2%)
- Superannuation back-funding (3.6%)
- Contract Inflation (2.4%)
- Utilities Inflation (5%)
- Insurance (2.0%)
- No allowance for any inflationary increase in District Council Tax increase from 2022/23
- No allowance for any growth in the Council Tax Base (Number of properties)
- No assumption has been made about the future Employers Superannuation Contribution Rate. This rate can change significantly. Each 1% change equates to £69k per year. The new rate will apply from April 2023.
- No inflation assumption in relation to Fees and Charges beyond 2022/23 is included.

The above estimated funding gaps also assume that there will be no future New Homes Bonus receipts (the outcome of the consultation is not yet known in terms of whether if and how this funding may be distributed into the future). It also assumes that the Lower Tier Services Grant and the one-off Services Grant announced for 2022/23 will also both cease with no replacement funding. The sections below provide a sensitivity analysis for each expenditure and funding component, where applicable.

## **Revenue Expenditure**

The table below shows the inflation assumptions used in formulating the estimated expenditure requirements for 2022/23 to 2024/25. The table also shows, based on 2023/24 budgeted inflation, how sensitive each of the assumptions are to a +/-1% variation of the assumed level of inflation:

<b>Spend Type</b>	<b>Inflation % Assumption per annum from 2023/24</b>	<b>Estimated Annual Inflation cost 2023/24</b>	<b>Impact of +/- 1% variation</b>
Pay Award	2.0%	£352k	+/- £176k
Superannuation Back-funding	3.6%	£44k	+/- £12k
Utilities & Fuel	5.0%	£59k	+/- £12k
Contracts	2.4%	£57k	+/- £24k
Insurance	2.0%	£5k	+/- £3k

The table clearly shows that the most 'sensitive' expenditure element is pay. The MTFS model assumes an annual pay award of 2%, however, given current and forecast levels of inflation this may prove to be understated. Future iterations of the MTFS will reflect any revised changes to this 2% assumption.

A 1% variation on the other spend types is significantly less impactful, however, the 5% inflation assumption may also prove to be understated. This again will be monitored and future iterations of the MTFS will reflect any revised changes to this 5% assumption. It should be noted that the energy budgets set for 2022/23 have been rebased to reflect the significant inflationary increases expected for 2022/23.

The Superannuation back-funding increase is based on the last Pensions Triennial Revaluation. The inflation assumptions for both superannuation back-funding and the Employers Contribution Rate will be updated on receipt of the next Triennial Revaluation which is expected at the end of March 2022.

## Revenue Funding

### Council Tax

Over the last 3 years the growth in the Council Tax base (number of Band D equivalent properties) has varied significantly; 0.45%, 0.11% and 0.94% respectively.

The table below shows what would be the annual impact on the Council Tax base from a freeze (no growth) to an increase of 1.25% combined with the District Council Tax inflation ranging from a freeze to a £5 annual increase.

Achieving a 1% growth in the base and a decision to implement an annual £5 inflationary increase would generate an additional £239k to help support the Budget from 2023/24. This Council Tax growth also has a compounding effect into future years.

The current estimated funding gaps assume no growth in property numbers and no annual inflationary uplift.

### Annual Council Tax Sensitivity - Inflation and Band D Equivalent Growth

		Council Tax Base Growth (Band D Equivalent Properties)					
		Freeze	0.25%	0.50%	0.75%	1.00%	1.25%
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Annual Council Tax Inflation Rate	Freeze	0	17	33	50	67	83
	1%	67	83	100	117	134	151
	2%	133	150	167	184	201	218
	£5	170	187	204	221	239	256

### Business Rates

The Council uses LG Futures for advice on levels of central Government funding. Their assessment of Business Rates income to the Council over the next 2 years based on the assumption that there will be a realignment with 'assessed need' is:

	<b>Lower Estimate</b>	<b>Central Estimate</b>	<b>Upper Estimate</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>2023/24</b>	3,471	3,615	3,706
<b>2024/25</b>	3,934	4,141	4,265

The 'central estimate' has been assumed in calculating the estimated funding gap for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

## **New Homes Bonus**

The Council's New Homes Bonus allocation for 2022/23 of £486k includes the final year of legacy payment £177k and £309k earned from properties in excess of the 0.4% growth threshold for receiving payment.

The Government consulted on the future of New Homes Bonus last year, however, the outcome from the consultation is not yet known. It is still unclear whether it will continue into the future and if so on what basis. The Consultation included questions about views on raising the 0.4% threshold before accessing payment. More recently there is speculation as to whether it will continue at all or be distributed via other means as part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

Because of this significant uncertainty at this stage, the MTFS assumption is that we will not receive this funding beyond 2022/23.

## **Other Grants**

**Lower Tier Services Grant** – this grant was originally paid as a one-off grant in 2021/22. It has been confirmed that Council's will receive this funding for 2022/23 but it is unclear whether this funding will continue beyond 2022/23 and if so, how it may be distributed. The amount received by the Council in 2021/22 was £198k. For 2022/23 the amount has been revised down to £178k.

Because of this significant uncertainty at this stage the MTFS assumption is that we will not receive this funding beyond 2022/23.

**Services Grant** – this grant is a new grant for 2022/23 and has been described as one-off. The amount for Ashfield District Council is £268k.

As the finding has been denoted as one-off, the MTFS assumption is that we will not receive this funding beyond 2022/23.

## Income from Investment Properties

The Council is heavily reliant on its income from Investment Properties. The gross income from these amounts to £4.714m in 2022/23. The Gross and Net income position is shown in the table below. The net income assumes interest on external borrowing will be incurred. The Council currently has a significant under-borrowed position which means that it is able to use its own finances rather than borrowing and incurring interest costs.

It is the gross income figure which is the more important figure in terms of considering the MTFS as this is the level of risk exposure to rent income.

To mitigate this risk the Council has a Commercial Property Investment Reserve which will have a value of £3.950m by the end of March 2023. This reserve is available to mitigate loss of rent income should a tenant's business fail or in the event of a period of vacant possession if lease break clauses are exercised.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Gross Income	£4,714	£4,816	£4,727
Net Income	£2,228	£2,306	£2,193

## Addressing the future estimated Financial Challenge

The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Cabinet meet regularly to identify and agree options to address the estimated financial challenge in the MTFS for 2023/24 and beyond to ensure the Council has a sustainable future.

Consideration is given to options for additional income generation, the identification of efficiencies (service reviews, procurement savings, asset rationalisation, alternate service delivery models, etc.) and potential savings through Invest to Save – in particular via the Council's Digital Transformation Programme.

Consideration is also given to the use of one-off reserves to smooth the delivery of savings to address the financial challenge over the next few years. The significant reduction in central funding assumed from 2023/24 relates to significant anticipated reductions in the level of Business Rates which will be available to the District Council. The Council has a Business Rates Equalisation Reserve which is estimated to be £3.774m by the end of March 2023. This funding is available to help smooth the loss of income from this source and contribute to addressing the funding gap in the short-term.

It is important to note that the identification of savings and additional income generation opportunities will be key going forward as without these, the Business Rates Equalisation Reserve of £3.774m will only sustain the Council for 2023/24 (£2.776m) and 4 months of 2024/25 (£998k), without a need to utilise any of the General Reserve balance.

## Capital Programme

A summary of the Council's Capital Programme (General Fund and HRA) for the period 2021/22 to 2025/26 is shown in the table below.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>General Fund Schemes</b>						
IT Schemes	144	95	60	60	60	419
Leisure Transformation Schemes	14,271	8,335	0	0	0	22,606
Green Home Grants	948	225	0	0	0	1,173
Future High Street Funded Schemes	4,995	3,423	363	0	0	8,781
Schemes less than £100k	206	25	0	0	0	231
Depot Roof	950	0	0	0	0	950
External health and safety works required for the Urban Road office	216	0	0	0	0	216
Hucknall Car Park - Titchfield Street	0	115	0	0	0	115
In District Regeneration	0	3,000	0	0	0	3,000
Improvement Grants 1996 Act Disabled Facility Grant	1,122	1,122	1,122	1,122	1,122	5,610
Kings Mill Reservoir Car Park Expansion	0	192	0	0	0	192
Kings Mill Reservoir (The King and Miller to Kingfisher)	435	0	0	0	0	435
Purchase of Vehicles	353	3,781	550	2,047	186	6,917
Towns Fund Projects	4,635	0	0	0	0	4,635
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>28,275</b>	<b>20,313</b>	<b>2,095</b>	<b>3,229</b>	<b>1,368</b>	<b>55,280</b>
<b>Area Scheme Parks and Recreation</b>						
Hucknall Area	327	0	0	0	0	327
Sutton Area	324	39	0	0	0	363
Kirkby Area	281	15	0	0	0	296
Rural Area	124	0	0	0	0	124
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1,056</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,110</b>
<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>						
Decent Home Schemes	3,775	11,706	11,344	12,789	12,256	51,871
Disabled Adaptations	423	874	372	360	410	2,439
IT Schemes	96	40	40	0	0	176
Green Home Grants	788	65	0	0	0	853
Affordable Housing Developments Sutton In Ashfield	1,199	142	0	0	0	1,341
Investment in Additional Council Dwellings in Hucknall	4	0	0	0	0	4
Investment in New or Existing Dwellings	1,367	1,200	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,567
Davies Avenue Housing Project - Frog Hopper Lane	0	2,288	0	0	0	2,288
Development of Unviable Garage Sites in Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Hucknall	0	50	2,000	50	0	2,100
Housing Vehicles	662	389	0	92	0	1,143
Hucknall Infill Sites	2,288	100	0	0	0	2,388
Major Repairs Temporary Accommodation	20	46	47	46	47	206

Maun View Sutton-in-Ashfield	100	3,176	50	0	0	3,326
Northern View, Sutton-in-Ashfield	0	1,943	1,640	0	0	3,583
Vehicle Tracking Scheme	20	0	0	0	0	20
Warwick Close, Kirkby-in-Ashfield	0	2,375	2,375	0	0	4,750
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>10,742</b>	<b>24,394</b>	<b>18,868</b>	<b>14,337</b>	<b>13,713</b>	<b>82,055</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>40,073</b>	<b>44,761</b>	<b>20,963</b>	<b>17,566</b>	<b>15,081</b>	<b>138,445</b>

Details of how each of the above schemes is being funded is set out in the table below:

	<b>Borrowing</b>	<b>S106</b>	<b>Grants</b>	<b>Capital Receipts</b>	<b>Reserves</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>General Fund Schemes</b>						
IT Schemes	419	0	0	0	0	419
Leisure Transformation Schemes	19,606	0	3,000	0	0	22,606
Green Home Grants	0	0	1,173	0	0	1,173
Future High Street Funded Schemes	2,401	0	6,380	0	0	8,781
Schemes less than £100k	68	47	86	0	30	231
Depot Roof	0	0	0	950	0	950
External health and safety works required for the Urban Road office	216	0	0	0	0	216
Hucknall Car Park - Titchfield Street	22	93	0	0	0	115
In District Regeneration	2,000	0	0	500	500	3,000
Improvement Grants 1996 Act Disabled Facility Grant	0	0	5,610	0	0	5,610
Kings Mill Reservoir Car Park Expansion	176	0	16	0	0	192
Kings Mill Reservoir (The King and Miller to Kingfisher)	62	0	283	0	90	435
Purchase of Vehicles	6,890	0	0	27	0	6,917
Towns Fund Projects	1,266	0	3,369	0	0	4,635
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>33,126</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>19,917</b>	<b>1,477</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>55,280</b>
<b>Area Scheme Parks and Recreation</b>						
Hucknall Area	78	18	231	0	0	327
Sutton Area	107	188	68	0	0	363
Kirkby Area	2	285	0	9	0	296
Rural Area	0	60	4	60	0	124
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,110</b>
<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>						
Decent Home Schemes	0	0	0	5,280	46,591	51,871
Disabled Adaptations	0	0	0	0	2,439	2,439
IT Schemes	0	0	0	0	176	176
Green Home Grants	0	0	430	0	423	853
Affordable Housing Developments Sutton In Ashfield	0	0	360	0	981	1,341
Investment in Additional Council Dwellings in Hucknall	0	0	0	1	3	4

Investment in New or Existing Dwellings	0	0	0	2,227	3,340	5,567
Davies Avenue Housing Project - Frog Hopper Lane	0	0	0	0	2,288	2,288
Development of Unviable Garage Sites in Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Hucknall	0	0	610	0	1,490	2,100
Housing Vehicles	0	0	0	0	1,143	1,143
Hucknall Infill Sites	0	0	540	0	1,848	2,388
Major Repairs Temporary Accommodation	0	0	0	0	206	206
Maun View Sutton-in-Ashfield	0	200	680	0	2,446	3,326
Northern View, Sutton-in-Ashfield	0	0	1,000	0	2,583	3,583
Vehicle Tracking Scheme	0	0	0	0	20	20
Warwick Close, Kirkby-in-Ashfield	0	0	1,460	0	3,290	4,750
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>5,080</b>	<b>7,508</b>	<b>69,267</b>	<b>82,055</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>33,313</b>	<b>891</b>	<b>25,300</b>	<b>9,054</b>	<b>69,887</b>	<b>138,445</b>

The above programme includes the Future High Streets schemes as all four of these schemes have commenced, but as yet does not include the Towns Fund schemes, other than the upfront 5% payment of Towns Fund from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) which is reflected in the above programme. As Business cases are approved by BEIS the planned spend profiles will be added to the programme in the relevant financial years.

Below are the proposed ambitious and regenerative schemes (Towns Fund, Future High Streets Fund and Leisure Transformation Programme) included or to be included in the Capital Programme over the next 5 years.

## HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

### North Kirkby Gateway (Towns Fund)

The primary purpose of this scheme is to consolidate health provision in the 'North Kirkby Gateway' area developing a Health Hub. The project will include development of a block of flats and will create a new plaza café/restaurant. The new health hub will accommodate the general practices currently located around the north and east sides of the plaza. By vacating these sites further development opportunities will be created. The Health Hub building will also accommodate the Portland Pathways project, a local skills and employability initiative, working with employers to support people with learning difficulties and disabilities to access employment. In addition, there will be a new café/restaurant built on the Plaza.



### Kirkby Sports Hub (Towns Fund)

The project will provide enhanced provision at Kingsway Park in Kirkby with the creation of a Sports Hub, with the following new facilities provided: New changing rooms to replace the existing facility; New bowls pavilion to replace the existing facility; Improvements to grass pitch areas to create five additional adult and mini football pitches; Upgrading of floodlighting on the synthetic pitch and adjacent grass pitch. Early feasibility work will identify whether the existing cafe building should also be replaced.

### Sutton Lawn Sports Hub (Towns Fund)

This project will develop a multi-sports hub at Sutton Lawn, with a focus on football. The Lawn is the main park for the area, located on the edge of the town centre, with existing facilities for football, tennis and bowls.

Site improvements to be delivered include: New sports pavilion to replace existing provision; additional full size 3G (synthetic pitch) and refurbishment of existing full size 3G, including replacement LED floodlighting; additional grass pitches - removal of old all-weather/ shale pitch surface and creation of area for grass mini-pitches; drainage

improvements to existing U13/14 11v11 and 9v9 grass pitches; Upgrading of access road, additional car park with grass reinforced grid system for 105 cars and the upgrading of the tennis facilities.

The site is managed by Sutton Community Academy, part of the Academy Transformation Trust for Further Education (ATTFE) and is used by the academy during school hours, with community use in the evenings and at weekends.

Sutton Lawn is the only site in the area large enough to accommodate a sports hub which can meet the demand for higher quality facilities and greater usage. Currently football facilities are provided at seven sites across Sutton, many of the changing rooms and pitches are in poor condition. A central, accessible venue can provide better quality facilities with enhanced maintenance and reduced overall revenue costs for the local authority.

## **Cycling and walking routes (Towns Fund)**

To provide a comprehensive network of high-quality walking and cycling routes. Upgrading sections of existing routes, and the creation of new sections will support the development of the visitor economy and provide improved connections to key employment areas and public transport links.

The main routes being upgraded and/or created are: Hucknall-Kirkby-Sutton-Mansfield, Sutton - Derbyshire, Huthwaite - Sutton and Sutton- Sherwood Observatory. The route navigates through the town centres linking to Sherwood and Castlewood Business parks to the south and west and visitor attractions including Mill Waters at Kings Mill Reservoir, the Science Discovery Centre, Planetarium and Observatory, and Hardwick Hall to the east and north respectively picking up links to residential areas throughout. The funding will contribute towards detailed design, safety audits, statutory consents, resurfacing, new walking and cycling network construction, signage and line marking. In total 8.26 kilometres of upgrades, including new routes will be completed and general cycle improvements across a total of 11.94 kilometres of network.

## **Kings Mill Reservoir leisure development (Towns Fund)**

Provision of a new flagship leisure building and an outdoor adventure area. The building will accommodate opportunities for a night-time economy, events and meeting space alongside growth in water sports and recreational activities. The Towns Fund investment will contribute to the building which will provide commercial space on the first floor and space for outdoor sports facilities on the ground floor.

Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) Mill Adventure Base will invest £1m in new public outdoor adventure facilities including climbing, high ropes and trail activities. The outdoor facilities will also be improved by construction of a new beach area aiding access to the

water for boating and future proposals for open water swimming and inflatable courses. An additional parking area will also be provided to accommodate the increasing visitor numbers to the new facilities.

## **Hucknall Leisure Centre**

Exciting advances are happening at the Hucknall Leisure Centre swimming pool following the news in December that the £2.7million teaching pool was given the green light by Ashfield District Council planning department. Swimmers are now able to take advantage of the brand new wet-side changing village which features different-sized areas to accommodate multiple users, such as single and family-sized cubicles.

## **Kirkby Leisure Centre**

Work on the new Kirkby Leisure Centre is progressing rapidly with plans to open this summer. In December the concrete foundations for the 25m swimming pool and splash pad were laid, all internal partitions have been erected, including the walls for the impressive sports hall. The new £15.5m leisure centre will feature a gym, sports hall, indoor cycling studio, climbing wall, inclusive spaces as well as Kirkby's first ever swimming pool.



## **ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PLACE**

### **Low Street Property Purchase and Repurposing (Future High Streets Fund)**

The Low Street project is a Future High Streets Funded scheme which facilitates acquisition of vacant units and conversion for commercial and residential use.

To date, the Council has acquired 14 Low Street and 9-11 Low Street - both of which will be refurbished at ground level for commercial use (2 in each unit) and the upper floors converted to residential (14 Low Street will contain two flats whilst 9-11 Low Street will provide up to 4 flats - all of which will be 2 bedrooms).

### **Fox Street (Future High Streets Fund)**

A pop-up food market & car park will be provided which will; Enhance and improve the public realm; Increase footfall into the town centre by creating a direct pedestrian friendly route from the well-used ASDA car park to Portland Square; Regenerate a derelict area of land within the town centre's core; Bring the site back into public use by creating a flexible outdoor public space within the town centre which will provide a location for markets; additional parking capacity and a dedicated events space; enhancing existing site features and incorporating tree and shrub planting to create a modern, well designed public space using high quality materials.

### **Sutton Theatre (Future High Streets Fund)**

Sutton Community Academy is located in the heart of Sutton along High Pavement with immediate access to the main high streets of Sutton. The site is owned by Ashfield District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council with a long term lease to Sutton Community Academy.

The theatre facilities are outdated and no longer fit for purpose. The facility will be fully refurbished and reconfigured (including new build extension) to create a venue for theatre, cinema and live music.



## **Portland Square, Sutton (Towns Fund)**

Refurbishment of Portland Square to create high quality public realm to bring vitality and vibrancy to the town centre, providing a catalyst for future investment and development; supporting the night-time economy to develop and flourish; to support the surrounding commercial premises and reduce vacancy rates with increased tree and shrub planting.

## **Visitor digital offer (Towns Fund)**

A new Discover Ashfield website and Augmented Reality (AR) experience app will tell the great stories of the area; showcasing it as an attractive place to live, visit, study, work and do business. The website will focus on developing the visitor economy and promoting visitor attractions, as well as the business theme to promote the area for investment and provide information for businesses. It will also provide useful and engaging information for residents, further developing the 'Love where you Live' and 'Be Healthy, Be Happy' themes.

The AR experience app content will be focused on visitor attractions and will include mapping features to direct users to points of interest along a trail.

## **Science Discovery Centre and Planetarium (Towns Fund)**

To provide a unique landmark visitor attraction through the creation of a planetarium and education centre which will utilise a half-submerged, brick built Victorian underground reservoir.

An immersive visitor experience will be created within the planetarium dome allowing visitors to experience the wonders of the Universe as well as special events featuring film shows, live music with light shows and imagery transmitted from the nearby observatory. The planetarium will be 10m in diameter and seat approximately 60 people. It will be the same size as the planetariums at the Centre for Life in Newcastle Upon Tyne and Thinktank, Birmingham.



A Unique Selling Point (USP) of the centre is that it will be integrated with the existing Sherwood Observatory which houses one of the largest publicly accessible telescopes in the UK and will form part of the overall visitor experience.

The new centre will deliver inclusive and innovative community and educational programming with a focus on promoting astronomy to visitors of all ages as a vehicle for engaging people in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) related subjects. The centre will bring science to life - in fun, entertaining and informative ways and support the skills and knowledge essential for future employment.

The new facility will be located adjacent to the existing on-site observatory and will provide:

- Planetarium, café and entrance foyer, with an education centre located in the former underground reservoir. The education centre will have capacity for at least 60 visitors.
- A multi-functional exhibition space and meeting rooms that can be hired for a variety of uses.
- The car park will be extended to meet the additional demand.
- A range of pathways to education for residents with an emphasis on young people through schools and wider inclusive community programming.

## **Maker Space and Business Hub (Future High Streets Fund)**

Conversion of the ground floor to create a Maker Space as well as an area for educational use, with a business hub on the first floor. The Maker Space is a community workshop facility with equipment for members to use, learn new skills, invent, and build, providing tools and equipment for woodworking, metalwork, textiles and digital. The business hub will



provide small units for new and existing small and medium enterprises with communal kitchen facilities, meeting space and breakout areas. Service charges for the business hub and education space will fund ongoing maintenance costs. and breakout areas. Service charges for the business hub and education space will fund ongoing maintenance costs.

## **Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre (ADMC) (Towns Fund)**

The vision is to create a nationally and potentially internationally recognised centre, modelled largely on the UK's existing Catapult Centres. The concept has the support of Innovate UK, D2N2 LEP, Make UK and the MTC. The public sector partners are Ashfield District Council, Vision West Notts College and Nottingham Trent University

The ADCM will be a purpose built, multifunctional centre, with space allocated for:

- research and development
- new product development and testing
- education and skills development
- technology showcasing
- networking, collaboration and event hosting.

It will encompass researchers, engineers and technical specialists, both directly employed and from a range of partners and stakeholders.

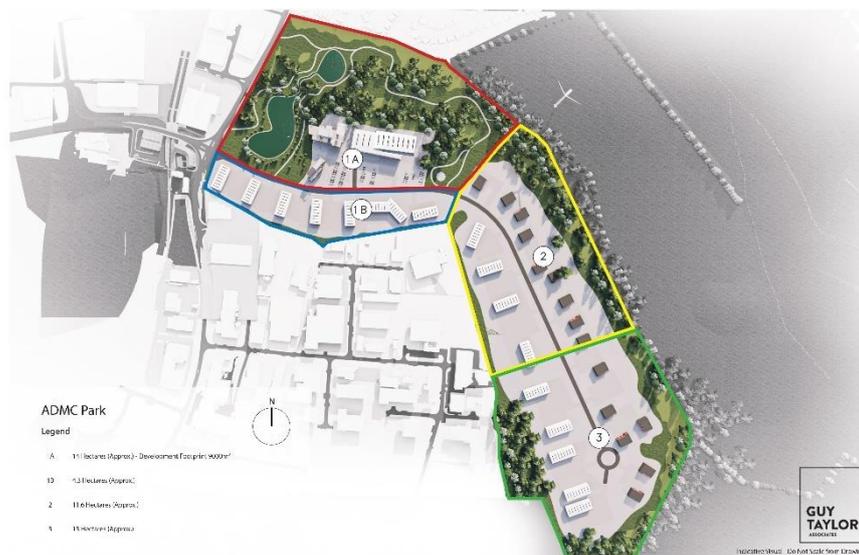
The centre will be designed to address the existing and future challenges faced by both Large Enterprises (LEs) and Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

To support the adoption, integration and expansion of new automated technologies amongst local and regional businesses of all sizes and at all stages of development in order to improve productivity and competitiveness.

Engagement with the ADCM will be based on a mix of business models from memberships to pay as you go commercial terms. Through a configurable approach, we aim to attract companies of all sizes, from start-ups to established multi-nationals to use the centre.

As well as the centre itself, the wider plan includes development of the surrounding area for commercial enterprise, based on a technology park model.

Alongside Vision West Notts. College and University partners the ADMC will allow employers to meet the increasing needs of talent and upskilling to match the advances in innovation and technology. We anticipate the centre will have its own automation hardware, based on a combination of widely used 'standard' equipment, for the development of core skills, as well as specialist equipment that can be made available for short to medium terms.



## Ashfield Construction Centre and Satellite (Towns Fund)

The project will create a regional skills hub for construction and engineering to deliver Entry, and Level 1 courses to young people aged 16 - 18 (24 with an Education Health and Care plan EHC), with provision for adult learners, apprenticeships, and community courses. The project will create a unique partnership between a mainstream provider and providers for NEET/disadvantaged young people, building on the success of Sutton Academy and Inspire in engaging with more disadvantaged learners.

The ambition is to take a leading role in providing outstanding education and training within the Construction, Building Services and Engineering sectors and to lead the way in raising standards within industry. The centre will provide courses in all construction professions such as bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, plastering, electrical installation and plumbing, as well as functional skills/GCSEs in English, maths and ICT. Expansion of the curriculum will focus on sustainable construction and more specialist areas, including automation and robotics and advanced manufacturing, Construction & Design Management, Building Information Modelling, concreting, formwork and steel fixing.

The workshop areas will enable a multi-skills curriculum that is engaging and tailored to learners with lower levels of prior attainment and those less certain of their career pathway.

The main centre will be supported by satellite provision at Portland College, providing fully accessible entry to construction for learners with an EHC plan. Re-purposing of an existing building will cater for additional needs including positive behaviour support, with access to a

multi-disciplinary therapy team. Intensive work on education, independence and employability will provide the foundations to progression to the main centre.

## **Ashfield Civil Engineering Centre (Towns Fund)**

The development of a new centre for Vision West Notts. College will allow for the provision of a new curriculum area, increasing progression and job opportunities. The vision is to create as close as possible to a working site which will provide real work experience for young people, better preparing them for work in these industries.

The new curriculum area will focus on trades related to civil engineering, transport and environmental engineering, with a focus on courses from Level 3 to Level 7 which will support the Government's National Skills Strategy priority of developing skills to Level 3 and above.

## **Enterprising Ashfield (Towns Fund - Revenue Scheme)**

Although this is a Towns Fund Revenue Scheme it is included here to ensure all Towns Fund projects are demonstrated.

Enterprising Ashfield (EA) will deliver a comprehensive Start-up to Scale-up business support programme from venues in Kirkby and Sutton. EA will be delivered by Nottingham Trent University, based upon its track record of supporting enterprise and innovation. Through continuous consultation and co-design with employers, EA will create a dynamic and responsive programme building direct access to university research, expertise and facilities, and provide support for high level skills and graduate talent. It will create new enterprises, deliver growth and increase productivity for existing businesses. It will be a bespoke programme for Ashfield based upon local business need.

Headstart – a structured business idea evaluation programme will equip young entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge to establish, sustain and grow their own business. The programme also supports skilled and experienced technical workers, made redundant due to the pandemic, to establish businesses by developing and enhancing their business skills. Businesses will have access to specialist coaches and mentors and to seed-corn financial support.

Support for Growth – strategic leadership and management capabilities will be enhanced through expert workshops and facilitated peer-to-peer learning. Access to academic expertise, research and world-class facilities will assist SME's to develop innovative new products, processes and services to access new markets. The programme will enable businesses to increase their growth potential, grow new markets, and enhance job creation opportunities.

High Level Skills – working with businesses to identify future skills needs with a strong focus on digital skills. Individuals will develop new skills and career potential through a range of training and upskilling opportunities, including flexibly delivered short courses and degree apprenticeships. Co-designed high-level skills programmes, will be linked to strategic growth and innovation supported in other work packages.

Graduate talent – support for graduate recruitment and to provide part-funded graduate placement opportunities, provide companies with new university knowledge, technological know-how and new ideas to support innovation. Businesses will also be helped to improve their performance in staff attraction, recruitment and retention.

## **Library Innovation Centres (Towns Fund)**

To create digital hubs at Kirkby and Sutton libraries, with a business hub created at Sutton Library, linking to the Enterprising Ashfield programme. Services will enhance the employability, financial wellbeing and life skills of local residents.

The project will provide accessible facilities and training courses for foundation digital skills, support those without access and people to move to more advanced provision.

The main provision will be at the larger library in Sutton, where the refurbishment and technical upgrade of a disused 140 seat lecture theatre, and creation of meeting / breakout spaces will facilitate:

- Digital access and access to technology, including Code Club
- Adult and family learning and skills programmes (informal and accredited learning)
- Small business conferences / seminars
- Business and job seeker work bases / incubator hubs
- Job seeker / employability hub / information advice and guidance services
- Community activity – Inspire ‘community makers’ coffee & chat
- Community access to digital equipment, for example VR/AR, simulation, video production and mini – recording studio.

At the satellite centre in Kirkby, refurbishment and reorganisation will create space for a skills hub and a flexible, digitally enabled learning space. Provision of a range of digital equipment will support:

- Access to a range of entry level and non-standard equipment
- Digital skills programmes – taught and self-directed
- Adult and family learning programmes, including digital skills

## **CLEANER AND GREENER**

### **West Kirkby Gateway & public transport hub (Towns Fund)**

The project will regenerate the area around Kirkby Railway Station which creates the gateway to the town centre. The project will deliver station improvements to complement future Network Rail investment.

Improvements to the station will include increasing parking capacity by 65% including incorporating electric charging stations. A new small commercial unit which can accommodate a café type offer and support future options for network operators staffed facilities at the station will be developed alongside an integrated bus pull-in area.

### **Green Ashfield (Towns Fund)**

The purpose of the project is to generate significant carbon reductions by providing sustainable energy solutions for existing Council owned buildings. It will also provide a demonstrator project to encourage other public sector organisations and businesses to invest in green technology. The scheme will initially focus on the installation of Solar Photovoltaics (SPV) onto roofs. This approach will be reviewed as the project and technology evolve over the five-year period and other options become available.

## **HOMES AND HOUSING**

### **High Street Property Fund (Towns Fund)**

This project involves the purchase, repurposing and refurbishment of high street properties. It will focus on areas in greatest need of intervention, for example Outram Street and the high streets in Huthwaite and Stanton Hill in Sutton, Kirkby high street and Annesley in Kirkby.

A sustainable scheme will be created with a housing company set up to manage a portfolio of properties to buy, sell and rent. The income from the rental and re-sale of properties will then be invested to buy more properties, creating a sustainable cycle of investment. Each property will be reviewed to determine the most appropriate use and will usually be converted for residential use. The most suitable options for minimising the energy consumption of the properties (reducing carbon) will be applied on a property by property basis. The potential for commercial uses will be considered where there is established demand which would support the local high street.

This project includes the units where Moor Market has been created on Lowmoor Road where the first floor is being converted for residential use.

## **Portland Street Sustainable Housing (Towns Fund)**

The site bordering Portland Street in Kirkby, on the edge of the town centre comprises vacant commercial properties, and a mix of dilapidated retail with a small number of residential properties covering an area of 1.4 hectares. Land and property will be purchased for land assembly for a sustainable affordable housing development in the vicinity of the North Kirkby Gateway. Intervention is required as the land assembly involves several different landowners and a relatively small area of land, making it unattractive to developers.

A partnership project with Ashfield District Council and a private sector developer will bring forward a scheme for high quality, low carbon, affordable housing. The development has the potential to include a new road link to the adjoining Patco development site to improve traffic movement in the town centre. The Patco site is a 2.7 hectare vacant commercial site which is being brought forward for development by the landowner. Jointly the sites provide 4.1 hectares of land on the edge of the town centre, suitable for housing and commercial development. A link road through the two sites could provide some benefits to improve access to the development and reduce pressure on town centre routes.