
Report to: Place Panel

Date: 30 January 2020

Subject: **Towns Fund Update**

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1. Purpose of this report

1.1 To update the Place Panel on the Towns Fund and progress to date.

2. Information

- 2.1 On 6 September 2019, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government announced a £3.6 billion Towns Fund as part of the Prime Minister's commitment to 'level-up our regions'. The Towns Fund prospectus was subsequently released on 1 November detailing 'phase one' requirements for towns to consider in preparing for a Town Deal. Each selected town can bid for up to £25 million.
- 2.2 The Towns Fund announcement comes in the context of several other similar funding announcements including the Future High Streets Fund, High Street Heritage Action Zones and the Cultural Development Fund. Collectively, these funds add up to substantial investment in the City Regions towns presenting a huge opportunity to instigate major transformation and attract wider private investment across the region through strengthening our towns. A breakdown of the towns selected across Leeds City Region for each fund and the maximum level of funding available is shown in appendix A.
- 2.3 For the Towns Fund, nine towns across Leeds City Region have been selected to develop proposals;

Lead Council	Town
Barnsley Council	Goldthorpe
Bradford Council	Keighley
	Shipley
Calderdale Council	Todmorden
	Brighouse
Kirklees Council	Dewsbury
Leeds City Council	Morley
Wakefield Council	Castleford
	Wakefield

2.4 Each Local Authority has been tasked with convening a Town Deal Board by the end of January 2020, responsible for developing a Town Investment Plan by summer 2020. Each Local Authority has submitted a 'Town Deal Readiness Checklist' as required by MHCLG to enable the Government to gauge how quickly towns in their area will be able to prepare for a Town Deal.

2.5 The Combined Authority has offered support to Local Authorities in the development of Town Deal proposals and is currently discussing this in more detail with Directors of Development, focusing on areas the CA can add strategic value for districts. Initially this has included providing a strategic overview across the region and supporting each local area's investment plan development. The Combined Authority has collated a briefing note to share with districts detailing strategic links to City Region policy areas, including;

- Links to the Strategic Economic Plan and emerging Local Industrial Strategy (the readiness checklist asks how plans will align with Local Industrial Strategies)
- An overview of other relevant policy areas (for example, transport, housing, clean growth, digital framework and inclusive growth)
- A link to the City Region's infrastructure map, allowing districts to use information on current and planned infrastructure investments across the region in shaping proposals.

2.6 The Towns Fund prospectus indicates that Combined Authorities and LEPs have a place on Town Deal Boards. The Combined Authority is actively supporting the Town Deal Boards and is engaging with districts to share best practice to ensure a consistent approach to strategic input into business case development. Combined Authority officers have been invited to join a number of town deal boards and are supporting these across the region.

3. Clean Growth Implications

3.1 To be determined as Town Investment Plans develop

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

6. Staffing Implications

6.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

7. External Consultees

7.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Place Panel members are asked to note the report

9. Background Documents

None.

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Funding Breakdown