

Report to: Place Panel

Date: 14 October 2020

Subject: **Towns Fund**

Director(s): Alan Reiss, Director of Policy, Strategy and Communications

Author(s): Judith Furlonger, Head of Housing

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update Place Panel on the Towns Fund programme and progress to date with a presentation from the Cities and Local Growth Unit.

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 Government's 'levelling up' agenda. A prospectus was released in November detailing requirements for towns to consider in preparing for a Town Deal, with further guidance issued in June. Each selected town can bid for up to £25million.
- 2.2 The Towns Fund comes in the context of several other similar funding announcements including the Future High Streets Fund, High Street Heritage Action Zones (Leeds, Wakefield and Huddersfield have recently been selected to develop a project design phase) and the Cultural Development Fund¹.
- 2.3 Eight West Yorkshire towns have been selected to develop proposals:

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

¹ A breakdown of the towns across Leeds City Region selected for each fund and the maximum level of funding available is shown in Appendix A.

- 2.4 Each Local Authority has convened a Town Deal Board responsible for developing a Town Investment Plan for submission in October this year or in January 2021. Each Local Authority has received capacity funding and an initial allocation for spend by the end of the financial year. Projects submitted for initial spend range from small public realm improvements to larger scale acquisitions for regeneration. Town Investment Plans require a strong link between an agreed vision for each town and any proposed projects.
- 2.5 The programme is being led by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and consultants commissioned by the department to support development of Town Investment Plans. The first cohort of Investment Plans have been submitted and the Cities and Local Growth Unit are providing advice to help guide later cohort submissions.
- 2.6 Officers from Combined Authority and LEP attend and are represented on the Town Deal Boards to provide strategic overview across the region and support each local area's Plan development, for example by providing an evidence base to draw from and links to regional strategies and policies, including:
- The Strategic Economic Framework, including specific links to relevant policy areas such as transport, housing, clean growth, the digital framework and inclusive growth.
 - The City Region Infrastructure Map, which enables districts to use information on current and planned infrastructure investments across the region in shaping proposals.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

5. Staffing Implications

- 5.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

6. External Consultees

- 6.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Place Panel members are asked to note the report

8. Background Documents

None.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Leeds City Region Funding Breakdown