

**Sandwell Towns Fund Superboard
Towns Fund Programme Update Report**

22 July 2021

Subject:	Towns Fund Programme Update
Presenter:	Rebecca Jenkins - Sandwell Towns Fund Programme Manager
Contact:	rebecca_jenkins@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Superboard notes the Programme Update report and potential project changes.

2 Purpose of the report

- 2.1 To outline the progress of Sandwell's Towns Fund Programme.
- 2.2 To provide information and an update on potential project change requests.

3. Background and Main Considerations

- 3.1 The Towns Fund Programme is split into 3 key Phases.

Phase 1 - The first phase involved the development of the Town Investment Plans and concludes with signing Heads of Terms for a Town Deal with Government.

Phase 2 – The second phase involves developing the Full Business Case for each of the projects.

Phase 3 – The third phase involves the release of funding and project delivery.

- 3.2 Following the agreement of a Town Deal for Rowley Regis, Smethwick and West Bromwich, Phase 2 of the Towns Fund Programme has commenced.
- 3.3 Phase 2 involves detailed work to finalise arrangements for each of the projects including demonstrating the feasibility, viability and value for money of the projects and finalising design details and delivery arrangements.
- 3.4 There is a maximum of 12 months from signing the Heads of Terms with Government to the completion of Phase 2.
- 3.5 MHCLG requires the following submissions with deadlines as follows:
- Project Confirmation Table (1 per project) & Draft Monitoring and Evaluation Plan – By 24 May 2021
 - Project Summary Document – By 24 March 2022 (following Full Business Case appraisal and approval)

Progress against Plans

- 3.6 The key milestones for each project during Phase 2 are as follows: -
- Project Confirmation Table submitted
 - Project-level proposals for consultation and engagement agreed
 - Project input discussions with Local Boards and Superboard
 - Finalisation of Full Business Case
 - Full Business Case appraised by SMBC
 - Full Business Case approval by SMBC Cabinet (following recommendation from Superboard)
 - Submission of Summary Document to MHCLG
- 3.7 Project Confirmation Tables and Draft Monitoring and Evaluation Plans were submitted to MHCLG following Superboard's consideration on 17 May. To date, we have not received any notification/ clarification questions in relation to the information submitted. Superboard will be updated when this is received.
- 3.8 To co-ordinate the project development and appraisal process across the 17 Towns Fund projects, Sandwell's Towns Fund projects are organised into 3 tranches. This will enable projects to proceed to Phase 3 (delivery) when they are ready.
- 3.9 The projects are due for Full Business Case sign-off from Superboard as follows:
- Tranche 1 – July 2021
 - Tranche 2 – September 2021
 - Tranche 3 – November 2021

- 3.10 Since the last report to Superboard, two projects have been moved into a later tranche. The Ron Davis Centre project has been moved to tranche 2 timelines as the outcomes from a feasibility study are pending to confirm costings for the Full Business Case. The Albion Family in the Park project has been moved into tranche 3 to allow time for a Heritage Impact Assessment to be conducted.
- 3.11 The first two Full Business Cases are due to be considered by Superboard on 22 July 2021.
- 3.12 To provide additional capacity around business case development, SMBC is due to award a commission for consultancy support.

Project Changes

- 3.13 Any project changes within the Towns Fund need to be formally submitted to MHCLG as a change request, following discussion with our allocated Towns Fund Area Lead.
- 3.14 Since the last report to Superboard, the following changes to projects are under consideration.
- **Sandwell Mechanical and Engineering Centre – proposed change request**
To change the project location from Phoenix Street to the former Shaftesbury House site. This change is proposed for consideration by Superboard on 22 July 2021 following review by the West Bromwich Local Board.
 - **Grove Lane Project options – potential change request**
Options are being explored in relation to an adjacent site which may offer additional benefits and fewer delivery risks. This will be explored by Smethwick Local Board.
 - **Albion Family in the Park – potential change request**
Options are being explored in relation to the project location due to issues in project alignment with the heritage focus of West Smethwick Park. Options are being considered by the Smethwick Local Board including alternative locations for the project within Smethwick.