

Report subject	Towns Fund
Meeting date	26 June 2020
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>BCP Council has been invited to develop a Town Deal, as part of an MHCLG £3.6 billion Towns Fund.</p> <p>A key requirement of the Towns Fund is to adopt a governance structure which engages stakeholders, oversees the development of the Town Investment Plan and determines how funding will be spent. Boscombe Strategic Towns Fund Board will meet every 4-8 weeks and, in accordance with the MHCLG guidance is made up of public and private sector partners and chaired by Jeff Mostyn (Chairman of AFC Bournemouth).</p> <p>The Towns Fund Board, will agree the Vision, Aims and Project Deliverables that will be included in the Town Investment Plan to be submitted to the MHCLG in October 2020.</p> <p>Work has commenced on community consultation and the production of a Master Plan for the central Boscombe area.</p> <p>Together with work now being undertaken by the Delivery Board and themed sub-groups, this will inform ambitious capital and revenue projects, which will be partly funded by the Towns Fund.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet approves the approach outlined in this report, enabling the Towns Fund Board to prepare a robust Town Investment Plan for Boscombe in a timely manner.</p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>The Towns Fund represents a considerable funding stream which can be used to unlock ambitious regeneration plans for this disadvantaged neighbourhood with considerable investment potential. The work will be funded by a grant already received by the MHCLG and enable a close working relationship to be continued between the public and private sector.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Lewis Allison: Cabinet Member for Communities
Corporate Director	Kate Ryan: Corporate Director for Environment and Communities
Report Authors	Kelly Ansell, Director of Communities Cat McMillan, Head of Community Engagement Martha Covell, Towns Fund Project Manager
Wards	Boscombe East & Pokesdown; Boscombe West; East Cliff & Springbourne;
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. On 6 September 2019, the Ministry of Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) invited 100 places to develop proposals for a Town Deal, as part of a £3.6 billion Towns Fund. BCP Council was invited to make a submission for our Bournemouth geography. As part of this invitation, a grant of £173,029 was provided to support the development of a Town Team Board and a Towns Investment Plan.
2. The Towns Fund is designed to support and build prosperous futures, improve connectivity, provide vital social and cultural infrastructure and boost growth – with communities having a say on how the money is spent. Selected towns are expected to work with the government to develop innovative regeneration plans.
3. Each identified place is able to bid for up to £25m of Towns Fund investment. The objective of the Fund is to drive the economic regeneration of towns to deliver long term economic and productivity growth through:
 - Urban regeneration, planning and land use: ensuring towns are thriving places for people to live and work, including by: increasing density in town centres; strengthening local economic assets including local cultural assets; site acquisition, remediation, preparation, regeneration; and making full use of planning tools to bring strategic direction and change.
 - Skills and enterprise infrastructure: driving private sector investment and ensuring towns have the space to support skills and small business development
 - Connectivity: developing local transport schemes that complement regional and national networks, as well as supporting the delivery of improved digital connectivity
4. The Bournemouth Towns Fund bid is to be submitted in October 2020.

Bournemouth Town Deal

5. BCP was invited to develop a bid for the Bournemouth Built-up Area Sub-division (BUASD), covering a significant population of circa 244,000. However, given the level of potential investment on offer and following an assessment of the nature and purpose of the fund, it was proposed to the MHCLG that a smaller geographical area would be the subject of the BCP bid in order that the benefit could be maximised.
6. Guidance from MHCLG indicated that proposals should build on existing plans and partnership involving community representatives as well as private sector partners.
7. The Boscombe area of Bournemouth is an area of extreme deprivation and has been the focus of the Boscombe Regeneration Partnership (BRP) since its establishment in 2009. The BRP is a wide-ranging collaborative partnership of statutory and non-statutory organisations, local resident representatives and voluntary sector organisations.
8. The BRP uses an evidence-based approach to identify, assess and prioritise priority areas of work to enable partners to work cohesively to ensure that we make best use of the resources at our disposal. We have studied the area of Boscombe significantly over the last decade and are in a position to fully understand the challenges and issues that the area faces, but without the necessary resources to affect significant change.
9. In addition, the recently adopted Neighbourhood Plan for Boscombe West and Boscombe East had been undertaken with extensive consultation with the local community and businesses and provided a solid foundation to build upon the work of the BRP.
10. The proposed area presented was that of the three neighbouring wards forming a collective priority neighbourhood for regeneration in the Bournemouth area; East Cliff & Springbourne ward, Boscombe West ward and the Boscombe East & Pokesdown ward as illustrated in figure 1 below.



Key:

Yellow boundary- Bournemouth Built-up area sub-division

Green Boundary- Towns Fund regeneration area

Red boundary – Boscombe and Pokesdown Neighbourhood Plan area

11. The factors considered in the rationale for the area identified is summarised as follows;

Need

- levels of deprivation in the proposed area are significant and long standing
- struggling retail sector
- health inequalities
- housing tenure imbalance – significant private rented sector and lack of family accommodation

Opportunity

- significant regeneration opportunities across multiple sites with Boscombe high street at the heart of a programme which will expand throughout the identified area
- art and culture
- heritage
- neighbourhood plan

Partnership and Community Foundations

- strong partnership foundations - the BRP is a wide-ranging collaborative partnership of statutory and non-statutory organisations, local resident representatives and voluntary sector organisations
- history of partnership working with the community in Boscombe through the close relationships that exist with Boscombe Forum, Pokesdown Community Forum, Boscombe & Pokesdown Neighbourhood Plan Forum, Boscombe & Pokesdown Community Benefit Society, Coastal BID, Dorset Race Equality Council, Citizens Advice and the Community Action Network.

Town Deal Board

12. A key requirement of the Towns Fund is to adopt a governance structure in order to engage stakeholders, oversee the development of the Town Investment Plan and determine how funding will be spent. A private sector chair is strongly recommended.
13. The Town Deal Board will;

- develop and agree evidence-based Town Investment Plan which in turn will determine the level of investment
 - develop a clear programme of interventions
 - coordinate resources and influence stakeholders
14. The Board is to be convened by the Council and governance and decision making structures are required to be made public. Boards can build on pre-existing governance standards and policies and align with those of the Council.
 15. In order to meet the requirements set out by the MHCLG for this Board, the Council was required to submit our governance structure and hold the first meeting of our Town Deal Board no later than the end of January 2020.
 16. Boscombe Regeneration Partnership Board was consulted in January 2020 on the proposal to extend the role of this Board to meet the requirements of the Town Deal Board and this was approved. The revised Terms of Reference are at appendix a. The Board is chaired by AFC Bournemouth Chairman, Jeff Mostyn and membership includes all relevant strategic partners to this programme.
 17. In addition, a Delivery Board chaired by the Director of Communities has been convened, with several workstreams reporting through this structure, set out in appendix b.

Work to Date

18. The appointment of Towns Fund Programme Manager, Martha Covell was made in March 2020.
19. The Town Deal Board has met twice since its inception. At the latest meeting on 27th April 2020, the following Vision for the programme was agreed; *By 2030 Boscombe-Bournemouth (the regeneration area) will be well connected, diverse, healthy and safe. Building on the areas arts and creative sector as well as our built seaside heritage, there will be more jobs in a wider variety of sectors. The community will have greater access to good quality jobs, training, recreational leisure activities and homes.*
20. Aims agreed;
 - To attract inward investment and deliver economic regeneration including new jobs and training opportunities focused on Christchurch Road (The High Street)
 - To deliver high quality zero carbon homes in a vibrant mixed use neighbourhood
 - To develop a beautiful, healthy and green place that enhances Boscombe's Victorian Heritage
 - To achieve better virtually and physically connected communities and foster active travel.
21. The projects and 'key deliverables' are organised into five workstreams;
 - Employment and Skills
 - Quality Place and Homes
 - A Creative, Cultural Community and Destination
 - Better Virtually and Physically Connected Community
 - Consultation and Branding

22. The fast-paced development and progression of this programme has been supported by the extensive foundation work completed over the years of the Boscombe Regeneration Partnership. Community engagement is of significant importance to the Towns Fund bid development and completion of the Town Investment Plan. The strength of these foundations supports the confidence of the community in this new re-scaled ambition and approach. In addition, the seniority of the Strategic Board members provides an escalated and more strategic focus, which is very positive.

Next Steps

23. Community consultation as follows:

- Vision and Aims – May 2020
- Questionnaire to local businesses - June 2020
- Draft Master Plan - July and August 2020

24. The themed groups will continue to develop and test their projects and key deliverables. It is essential that the projects are realistic and delivery partners are identified. Baseline information needs to be obtained and project outcomes and outputs devised. Projects must be costed so we have a detailed knowledge about the investment required from both the Towns Fund and the private sector. This includes working with landowners.

Summary of financial implications

25. MHCLG has allocated a grant of £173,000 to the council, which will fund the development of the Town Investment Plan and feasibility work required for our bid.

Summary of legal implications

26. None.

Summary of human resources implications

27. None.

Summary of sustainability impact

28. The environmental impact of plans developed as part of this programme will be assessed and reported through the Board structure.

Summary of public health implications

29. Public health and wellbeing are a key aspect of this programme and addressing health inequalities, providing improved community health facilities and improving wellbeing are at the heart of the vision and aims for the Towns Fund bid. Summary of equality implications

Summary of equality implications

30. An Equalities Screening Assessment has been undertaken on the proposed development of a Town Investment Plan for Boscombe. This highlighted a number of potential positive impacts associated with the project such as increased employment and improved housing conditions. However, as there are no detailed

plans yet which can be assessed a full EQIA needs to take place once these plans have been developed to assess any positive or negative equality impacts.

Summary of risk assessment

31. Due to the developmental nature of the project at this stage the main risks are associated with a lack of interest and engagement due to the coronavirus pandemic. There is a risk that we won't be successful in accessing the Towns Fund, however as the development costs are included in the development of the bid these are acceptable risks.

Background papers

- MHCLG Towns Fund Prospectus
- Bournemouth Town Deal Board Minutes

Appendices

- a) Bournemouth Towns Fund Board Terms of Reference
- b) Governance Structure