

**4<sup>th</sup> October 2016****Agenda Item: 5****REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, PLACE****THE N2 TOWN CENTRE PROGRAMME****Purpose of the Report**

1. To offer further details of the “Unlocking Growth in N2 Town Centres” Programme, developed on behalf of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee and included within the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership’s Local Growth Fund submission to Government.

**Background**

2. At its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016, Policy Committee received an update on the work of both the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee (N2 EPC) and the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (D2N2 LEP). The update explained that the EPC was set up to reflect the requirements for a more formal arrangement in Nottinghamshire to support work with the D2N2 LEP. All the Leaders of local authorities in Nottinghamshire are members of the N2 EPC and all of the Chief Executives attend in an advisory capacity. The N2 EPC has responsibility for strategic issues related to growth and economic development in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, as well as considering strategic priorities such as employment and skills, infrastructure and place marketing.
3. This Committee has previously received reports on the process and associated progress with the D2N2 LEP submission to government of its Growth Deal, seeking Local Growth Fund (LGF) resources under its third round. At its meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016, the N2 EPC endorsed the Growth Deal and it was submitted to government on the 28<sup>th</sup> July.
4. The “Unlocking Growth in N2 Town Centres” Programme (N2TC Programme), developed jointly by the N2 EPC partners, is designed to bring forward a series of capital investments to improve the viability and economic performance of key town and service centres across the N2 EPC area. The N2TC Programme has long been deemed a priority for LGF investment by the N2 EPC and its inclusion within the submission has previously been welcomed by this Committee.
5. Should the N2TC Programme be supported, it is anticipated that the County Council act as the accountable body. Decisions related to the N2TC Programme will be made by the N2 EPC.

## The N2 Town Centre Programme

6. Appendix 1 to this report offers a brochure, designed to offer an overview of the “Unlocking Growth in N2 Town Centres” Programme, developed to support the LGF submission. In summary, the Programme will aim to address a number of inter-related town and service centre issues:
  - Changing shopping habits - due to a number of factors, town centres face reducing footfall, an increase in vacant units, low investment and a resulting poor perception of the environment.
  - Vacant Premises - vacant units spoil the experience of town centre users and existing premises might not meet the requirements of potential new occupants.
  - Balance of uses – the balance of uses within a town can be undermined by, for example, the predominance of a particular types of use or single retail offer. An uneven spread of services across a town centre leads to uneven footfall and can threaten business viability.
  - Planned Growth - town centres will need to adapt and accommodate high levels of planned employment and housing development in the wider area, as promoted by the private sector.
  - Accessibility - poor links into the town centres, parking issues, traffic circulation and congestion can result in a reluctance to visit.
  - Appearance - increasingly unattractive environments contribute to reductions in footfall into the town centres.
7. Each town / service centre’s needs are unique and the Programme has been designed to offer the required flexibility. Offering capital resources only, the N2TC Programme seeks (initially) £10M of LGF resources and has been developed on behalf of the N2 EPC by an officer group representing the district, city and county councils. To date, under the guidance of the N2 EPC, this group has:
  - Prepared the rationale for the project;
  - Drafted and finalised the submission to the LEP;
  - Responded to the assessment process undertaken by the LEP and secured a positive re-assessment, and;
  - Secured its inclusion within the LEP’s Growth Deal submission.
8. The process for securing a positive re-assessment was down in part to a call for potential early phase projects across the N2 EPC area, which collectively gave the Programme a better degree of substance as to where and what type of specific projects were likely to come forward and as a consequence, allowed for a more robust value for money and impact assessment to be made.
9. These projects were assessed by the team to offer an indicative list for early commencement within the Programme. They will all need to be the subject of a detailed assessment and depending upon the government’s approval and further discussion with the LEP, it is likely this will mirror the process adopted by the LEP for assessing individual projects, via its established Local

Assessment Framework. There is sufficient flexibility in the process to enable the swapping of projects in and out. Whilst the following list references specific projects, it is the case that they are at various stages of their development:

- Ada Lovelace House, Kirkby
- Beeston Square
- Bingham Town Centre
- Bulwell Market
- Clifton Retail Area
- Worksop Town Centre
- Fox Street, Sutton in Ashfield
- Kirkby Civic Square
- Mansfield Old Town Hall
- Radcliffe Village Core
- Sutton Indoor Market
- Tudor Square, West Bridgford

### **Further Developments**

10. The N2 EPC has allocated £500,000 from its Business Rates pool towards the N2TC Programme to support activities such as: feasibility studies, business case-making, part-funding capital costs and supporting the Programme's management.

### **Other Options Considered**

11. None. This report is for noting only.

### **Financial Implications**

12. There are no immediate revenue costs associated with the Programme; the bid to date has been developed through officer time.
13. Should the LGF capital resources be secured for the Programme, then the County Council will become the accountable body and management costs will be finalised. It is anticipated that this can be met via a combination of management fees included within the N2TC Programme submission and as referenced in the report, via the Business Rates Pool as agreed by the N2 EPC.
14. Should the Council wish to developed bids of its own and / or work collaboratively with any of the district councils, the capital implications will be the subject of separate reporting processes via the respective Committees as part of the budget process for 2017/18.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

15. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described within the body of the report.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

12. It is recommended that report is noted.

**Tim Gregory**  
**Corporate Director, Place**

For any enquiries about this report please contact:  
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**Constitutional Comments [SG 20160916]**

Because this report is for noting only no Constitutional Comments are required.

**Financial Comments [SES 16/09/16]**

The financial implications are set out in the report.

**Background Papers and Published Documents**

- [Growth Deal Submission](#), report to the City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee – 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016
- [City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee and D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership](#), report to Policy Committee – 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All