

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**2nd November 2022**

Report Title:	A TOWN DEAL FOR BIRKENHEAD – PROGRAMME UPDATE
Report of:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

In January 2021 Wirral Council submitted a Town Investment Plan for Birkenhead as part of a bid submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' (DLUHC) Town Deal Programme. In July 2021 the plan and projects within it was approved by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, ('DLUHC'), subject to a number of conditions being met, and the Council was invited to enter into a Town Deal for Birkenhead, up to a value of £25 million.

The grant of £25 million is being utilised to deliver the Town Investment Plan, which will support the delivery of growth and regeneration of Birkenhead. Whilst the objective of Town Deal is to contribute towards the ambitions for a thriving and inclusive economy, creating jobs and opportunities for all, there are also significant health and wellbeing outcomes as a result of the projects being delivered.

The Wirral Plan 2021 - 2026 covers the following five themes:

- Safe & Pleasant Communities;
- Brighter Futures;
- Active and Healthy Lives;
- Sustainable Environment; and
- Inclusive Economy

The Town Deal projects, and the wider regeneration programme, delivers against all of the above themes. Town centre regeneration is a long-standing priority for the Council.

The subject matter has implications for the Birkenhead and Tranmere, and Seacombe wards.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to note the report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of the Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board and provides an update on the Town Deal programme, and also the Joy project, for members of the Health & Wellbeing Board.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options were considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In November 2019, DLUHC launched its Towns Fund programme with the ambition of creating jobs and building stronger and more resilient local economies and communities. Birkenhead was nominated as one of 101 towns in the country to potentially benefit from grant funding and to develop a Town Deal.
- 3.2 In January 2020, the Birkenhead Town Deal Board was established. The Board is locally led and made up of Members of Parliament and locally elected members, Merseyside Police, the Director of Public Health, and representatives from business, education, community and voluntary sectors. The Board oversees the Town Deal programme for Birkenhead, is accountable for delivery and is advisory to the Council which is the lead authority on the Town Deal Programme. Chaired by Leigh-Anne Stradeski, Chief Executive of Eureka!, the Board developed and agreed a vision for Birkenhead, interventions required that would help the regeneration of Birkenhead, and the projects for inclusion in the Town Investment Plan (TIP). Extensive consultation was undertaken, and the Board was supported by Task and Finish focus groups in developing projects and evaluating benefit.
- 3.3 The TIP for Birkenhead set out a clear programme of evidence-based intervention, informed by existing local strategies and aligned with the objectives of the Towns Fund. It was approved by the Council's Economy, Regeneration & Development Committee on 26th January 2021 and then submitted to government. In June 2021 the government announced a Town Deal award of £25m for Birkenhead, subject to the signing of Heads of Terms and certain conditions being met, that being, the approval of Treasury Compliant businesses cases for the projects. Business cases have been completed and 9 of the 14 projects have now been approved by DLUHC. The outcome of the remaining 4 projects is expected imminently.
- 3.4 **The Projects**
At its meeting on 10th September 2021 the Town Deal Board agreed the allocation of Town Deal funding to deliver the following projects:

Project	Project Lead
Transport Visitor Attraction A new heritage attraction in Birkenhead, exhibiting National Museums Liverpool's nationally significant transport collection. A new purpose-built energy efficient and sustainable	National Museums Liverpool/Wirral Council

<p>facility within Dock Branch Park, this collection store will be open to the public who can enjoy artefacts from the region's important transport history.</p>	
<p>The Waterfront Animation & Connectivity</p> <p>A suite of transformational projects that will improve three anchor waterfront heritage assets and their surrounding landscape and the public realm, connectivity and wayfinding between the town centre and the waterfront.</p> <p>It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public realm at Hamilton Square and Hamilton Square Station, including public art and lighting; • Landscaping at Eureka! as part of the Seacombe corridor; • Woodside Ferry Village visitor experience; and • The Priory visitor experience 	<p>Wirral Council</p> <p>Eureka! Science & Discovery</p> <p>Woodside Area CIC</p>
<p>Education Engagement Network</p> <p>A new hub and spoke network of service delivery bringing together education, advice, guidance, and specialist services across different partner venues include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tomorrow's Women Wirral; • Wirral Change; • Forum Housing; • Merseyside Probation Service; • Spider Project; and • Wirral Council 	<p>Wirral Met College</p>
<p>Egerton House</p> <p>Re-purposing part of Egerton House to make it suitable for the incubation and growth of small and medium businesses in the Business, Financial and Professional Services sector, and the growing Digital sector in Birkenhead</p>	<p>Wirral Chamber of Commerce</p>
<p>Joy (Wellbeing and Opportunity Centre)</p> <p>Located at the Treasury Annexe Building Joy will provide a vibrant and accessible environment</p>	<p>Open Door Charity/Wirral Community Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust</p>

where a fully integrated network of organisations have spaces for the community to access services which will improve their health, wellbeing and life chances.	
<p>Startyard</p> <p>An affordable co-working space that provides a dynamic environment suitable for businesses in the creative and digital sector. It is collaborative hub for creatives, start-ups, craft-based workshops, artists and budding entrepreneurs. The funding will deliver phase 2.</p>	Microzine Creative
<p>Future Yard Music Skills Venue</p> <p>Delivery of second and third phase of the project creating an additional space for music sector specific projects and skills development infrastructure.</p>	Future Yard CIC
<p>Argyle Street Creative Hub</p> <p>A new 'maker space' on Argyle Street using a currently vacant building. Providing a creative and cultural hub for businesses and entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors, the Hub will further help to establish the creative sector in this area of Birkenhead.</p>	Make CIC
<p>Sustainability Central</p> <p>Refurbishment and retrofit of the derelict North West Ship Repairers building to provide a physical hub for a number of leading organisations in the low-carbon sector within Birkenhead.</p> <p>It will cluster partners, community groups, industry, R&D, events, and education in a scalable prominent hub that embeds 'best practice' as part of a wider joined-up network.</p>	Peel L&P

3.5 Delivery timescale

Town Deal funds must be spent, and the projects delivered by March 2026. Where projects have been approved by DLUHC and Grant Funding Agreements have been entered into, delivery has now commenced on site. The Council will continue to enter into Grant Funding Agreements with the project lead organisations and it is anticipated that these will be completed by December 2022.

3.6 Health & Wellbeing outcomes

The Town Deal projects are varied in scope and provide a range of outputs. Whilst the objective of Town Deal is to contribute towards the ambitions for a thriving and inclusive economy, creating jobs and opportunities for all, there are significant health

and wellbeing outcomes as a result of the projects being delivered. Examples of such benefits are set out below.

3.7 New and enhanced public realm, green spaces and active travel routes

- Provide opportunity for outdoor activities and active lifestyles, increasing social interaction and exchange. For example, enhancements to the public realm at Woodside will provide an improved leisure offer for residents and maximise Wirral's unique waterfront asset. Future phases of the Waterfront programme that form part of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework include housing and commercial development which will also provide more opportunity locally.
- Provides access to improved biodiversity and provide healthy conditions for good physical and mental well-being. For example, the garden at Treasury Annexe building, currently delivered by Make CIC but which will form part of the future Joy project, will provide opportunity for small space community gardening, vegetable growing and bee keeping.
- Provides accessible environments and green spaces enabling equality for access to health and wellbeing benefits.

3.8 Skills infrastructure

- Low aspirations amongst Birkenhead's most disadvantaged communities leads to low expectation of the education, training and job opportunities available locally. The Town Deal skills projects address the issue of poor mental health, particularly in young people, where many feel the traditional education routes to employment are too academically focussed. The skills outputs will focus on wider wellbeing development, such as resilience and self-confidence, that are crucial to achieving positive life outcomes.
- Being in employment contributes to positive health and wellbeing. However, spending longer in low-quality work is associated with worse health outcomes. Skills development and the varied workspace offer provide a wider range of opportunities.
- Bespoke training in specific growth areas such as music and the arts can provide tailored career pathway to local residents. For example, Future Yard's Soundcheck and Propeller programmes provide live music industry training, and the Education Engagement Network provide support and digital upskilling outside of the more traditional educational routes.
- The benefits of lifelong learning in terms of maintaining wellness have found to be, boosting self-esteem and creating a sense of purpose.

3.9 Flexible workspaces across a range of sectors

- Co-working, collaboration and incubation spaces provide support to small businesses. For example Make CIC's new maker space will provide support for creative entrepreneurs who are perhaps currently working independently at home and wish to take the next step of business development in a supportive and collaborative 'workshop' environment.
- Flexible terms give businesses the option to trial new things. Startyard offer flexible term of tenure and easy in/out options to rent space that help small business start-ups by reducing risk.

- A varied work and training offer, particularly in areas of growth such as creative sector and low carbon sector, provides a wide range of opportunities and increase career choices.

3.10 New and improved creative and cultural facilities

Support for the cultural and creative sector is a key theme of the Town Investment Plan.

- A visit to a museum or cultural facility is considered to be an opportunity to take stock, reflect and practice mindfulness, and such facilities have been found to have significant beneficial impact on mental wellbeing. The Transport Shed will provide an opportunity for visitors to engage with the past, providing social interaction and sharing of stories, in an environment that will bring about positive emotion. Learning opportunities will also provide the chance to develop new skills.
- Creative interventions can provide positive distractions from clinical environments. The Joy project will embed culture and creativity in mental health provision. Joy will not feel like a traditional health centre, but will bring together health, arts and culture sectors.

3.11 Joy Project Update (Health & Wellbeing Hub)

Within the Town Deal programme one project in particular has a defined focus on health and wellbeing with associated outputs. This update is provided by project lead Open Door Charity. Since the last update to Health & Wellbeing Board on 23rd March 2022 a costed, innovative, accessible and community-focused design has been developed for the Joy Project through extensive engagement with hundreds of people and teams across Wirral. Town Deal funding has been secured for the project. The attached Appendix A to this report describes how the engagement was undertaken and has directly influenced the design.

3.12 As the building is currently occupied the timeline for the build has been adjusted:

- The planning application will be submitted imminently.
- Occupation of the building is anticipated to be Summer 2024. During 2023 the focus will be a year of 'It's a Joy Thing...' where piloting, testing, learning, service design, engagement and building further momentum for the project will take place.
- The Design Team will be recommissioned in late 2023 to move through the later design and build stages for the project.
- Tenders for construction will take place in late 2023 so contractors are able to start early 2024.
- Involvement with NHS partners is ongoing as the project develops. Service Level Agreements and working arrangements will be put in place and once the final offer of Joy project is agreed. Wirral Community Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust is supporting project development and is keen to maintain momentum and health teams' input through engagement in the Joy offer, service model and design.

3.13 As match funding is required to deliver the project fund-raising is taking place. Grant applications are currently lodged with:

- Wolfson (£65k) – in stage 2 of application process
- Garfield Weston (£100k) - in stage 2 of application process
- Sumerian (£200k)

3.14 Funding from the Liverpool City Region growth company has been secured for consultancy support to create a bespoke adult education college within Joy. Liiift! are

commissioned to run this, as they currently do with Tranmere Rovers and a number of other rugby / sports clubs.

3.15 Further updates will be brought to the Health & Wellbeing Board as the project progresses.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Where projects have been approved by DLUHC the first tranche of funding has already been received.

4.2 There are no financial decisions required as a result of this update report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this update report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no resource implications as a result of this update report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 There are no relevant risks that require highlighting as a result of this update report.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 There has been significant interest from stakeholders and the community in the Town Deal programme. To ensure that stakeholders and the local community are fully engaged in the process a robust stakeholder engagement plan has been implemented and has included activity such as:

- An online survey on the Council's 'Have Your Say' website
- Digital engagement across social media platforms
- Engagement through the Town Deal Board and thematic task and finish groups
- Press Releases and radio

8.2 Further engagement on particular aspects of the TIP has been included in the subsequent consultations for the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and also on Dock Branch Park.

8.3 Though this engagement activity the Council has established strong relationships with a number of community groups in Birkenhead. The Council is continuing to engage with stakeholders and the local community groups as projects develop, as well as identifying creative methods to ensure engagement with those that may be digitally excluded or hard to reach.

8.4 The Council continues to work closely with the Town Deal Board to ensure its involvement in steering the programme forward and decision making where appropriate.

8.5 As their projects develop, project leads continue to undertake their own consultation and engagement with key stakeholders and future users.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 The potential impact of a Town Deal for Birkenhead has been reviewed with regard to equality and links to the existing EIA conducted for Wirral's Growth Plan and no amendments have been made. Therefore, the original EIA is still valid. A separate EIA for each of the project has also been undertaken.

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2014-0>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 DLUHC in its guidance on Towns Fund sets out that proposals must be guided by sustainability – economic, environmental, and social. The Government has committed to a legally binding target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050; clean growth represents a huge opportunity for the UK economy and is a core principle of the Towns Fund. The current situation creates an opportunity to speed up the process of restructuring our industry, commerce and communities towards a greener future.
- 10.2 As the projects will further support the Government's ambitions for clean growth. Proposals will include, as appropriate, energy efficient buildings within new developments; infrastructure improvements to reduce car dominance and create a safer environment for road users and pedestrians, and environmental and climate considerations within the Council's Social Value strategy to be used within the procurement of future contractors. Proposals are expected to reduce emissions of Greenhouse Gases.
- 10.3 The Council's existing commitment ensures that redevelopment opportunities in and around Wirral Waters and Birkenhead take account of the climate crisis and is identified as part of work on the Cool (2014-19) strategy. This is reflected in the Cool 2 strategy endorsed by Council which seeks to make the area 'Sustainability Central' - an exemplar of the transition to a 'zero carbon' 'climate ready' place. Securing Town Deal funding provides the opportunity to make progress against this ambition.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Community Wealth Building reorganises local economies to be fairer and stops wealth flowing out of communities. Striving for a prosperous and inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations, the Council's aims to create an economy that benefits all of our residents and one which keeps money within Wirral. The Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy is a key part of how this is achieved and makes a major contribution to improving the economic, social and health outcomes of the borough.
- 11.2 The projects within the Town Deal programme for Birkenhead will revitalise the town ensuring that more wealth is invested and stays within our Borough. Several of the projects are being developed by local community interest companies which will help build a more resilient local community and support community organisations. Future

procurement exercises will build the wealth of our local communities where we will strive to maximise social value activity through creation of local employment/ training opportunities and local labour/spend to maximise the Wirral pound.

- 11.3 A further requirement of the Town Deal programme which also aligns with both the Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy and 'Cool 2' Strategy is that projects are green and sustainable, ensuring that our environment is protected.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: 'Shaping Change with Joy' Open Door Charity, July 2022

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Economy Regeneration & Development Committee – Birkenhead Town Deal funding request	26th January 2021
Director of Regeneration & Place - Delegated key decision report – Town Deal Accelerated Grant	4th November 2020
Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee 'Town Deal - Acceptance of Grant'	22nd November 2021
ODN 'A Town Deal for Birkenhead – Approval of Full Business Case' (Tranche 1)	7th April 2022
ODN 'A Town Deal for Birkenhead – Approval of Full Business Case' (Tranche 2)	6 th July 2022