

## **CABINET – 9TH FEBRUARY 2023**

### **Report of the Director of Commercial and Economic Development**

**Lead Member: Councillor Jonathan Morgan**

#### **Part A**

#### **AUTHORITY TO SPEND – TOWN DEAL PROJECTS**

##### **Purpose of Report**

The report seeks authority and delegation to spend funding received by the Council from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) following the submission of two Council-led Town Deal projects: Lanes and Links / Living Loughborough.

##### **Recommendation**

That authority be delegated to the Director of Commercial and Economic Development, in consultation with the Section 151 officer, to authorise all the elements of capital spend as they arise relating to the Town Deal award to the Council for the two Council's projects.

##### **Reason**

To allow the projects to be realised at pace without undue delay or complication.

##### **Policy Justification and Previous Decisions**

There are no previous decisions or policy justification on the matter.

##### **Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny**

The decision will come into effect immediately (subject to Call-in).

##### **Report Implications**

The following implications have been identified for this report.

##### *Financial Implications*

There are no financial implications

## *Risk Management*

The risks associated with the decision Cabinet is asked to make and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Risk Management Actions Planned
Spend that does not form part of the Town Deal award for the mentioned projects will be approved.	Very Low (1)	Moderate (3)	Low (3)	The only spend elements that will be able to be authorised under delegated authority will be those outlined in the business case and forming part of the project. The Section 151 officer must agree that the sum to be spent qualifies. Each will be recorded by Delegated Decision and will be available for inspection.

*Equality and Diversity* - There are no Equality and Diversity implications

*Crime and Disorder* - There are no Crime and Disorder implications

*Sustainability* - There are no sustainability implications.

Key Decision: No

Background Papers: None

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## Part B

### Background

1. The Council has been awarded £16.9m in Town Deal funding from Central Government. Two of the projects in that bid submission are led by the Council – Lanes and Links and Living Loughborough.
2. In order to obtain this funding, the Council was required to submit two “Green Book” business cases. The Green Book is guidance issued by HM Treasury on how to appraise policies, programmes and projects. It also provides guidance on the design and use of monitoring and evaluation before, during and after implementation. These business cases were evaluated and verified independently prior to submission to Government.
3. Government was satisfied with the business cases and has released funding of £3m for these projects to be delivered.
4. The business cases will act as governance for the project. The detailed outputs in those business cases will be monitored and reported to Central Government by the Town Deal Programme Manager.

### Overview of the Lanes and Links project

5. The Lanes and Links project aims to better connect Loughborough's town centre and Queen's Park. It will bring improvements to Old Bleach Yard and Devonshire Lane which link the park to the town centre via Granby Street car park.
6. The project also includes plans to create the Hope Bell, a lasting memorial to all those in Charnwood who have lost their lives in the Covid-19 pandemic and a tribute to NHS and key workers. It will also be a beacon of hope for the future and a reminder of how communities came together to support each other in challenging times. It will be cast by Loughborough's world-famous Taylor and Co Bell Foundry – the last remaining bell foundry in the country.

### Overview of the Living Loughborough project

7. The Living Loughborough Project will aim to rejuvenate Loughborough town centre as it recovers from the pandemic. Supported by the Town Deal and led by the Council, this project will seek to make the town centre a more dynamic, pleasant, safe social hub where residents and visitors can choose to meet, eat, be entertained and shop.
8. The project will do this by:
  - creating an Urban Plaza with increased seating and dining areas

- using semi-permanent stalls to encourage pop-ups and street activity
- creating a multipurpose infrastructure to support markets, business, and community events
- installing an undercover performance space with improved sound, vision, and lighting
- promoting the town's cultural heritage, use of apps, trails and augmented reality
- improving lighting and CCTV to make the town centre centre
- contributing to clean growth by reducing the need for people to travel to other areas for entertainment and shopping.

#### Governance requirements

9. Despite the fact that the funding received for these projects is from an external source ( i.e. Central Government), the Council's financial rules and regulations apply in order for the Council to be able to spend capital on these projects.
10. The projects noted above have been added to the Council's Capital Plan that was approved by full Council on 23 January 2023.
11. The Council's Constitution requires that spend above £150k has Cabinet level approval, except in cases where Cabinet has delegated that authority.
12. The projects each have a fully developed Green Book business case, which sets out work aspects, costs, outcomes, benefits and project delivery timelines. However, the project timelines therein will not align well with the Committee timelines. This could lead to delays in execution if Cabinet approval is sought to spend on every element of the plan.
13. Likewise, the constituent elements of the projects are established with the budgets outlined and require no further approval.
14. Therefore, it is requested that Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Commercial and Economic Development, in consultation with the Section 151 officer, to authorise elements of spend relating to the Council's two Town Deal projects as they proceed.
15. Procurement Regulations and the Council's Contract Procurement Rules will be observed to ensure value for money is achieved.
16. If, for any reason, the budget allocated in the Capital Plan will be exceeded, normal governance routes (to Council via Cabinet) will be used to request an increase the capital allocation prior to spend.