

Item 7 – Dewsbury Town Board – 16th September 2020

Engagement for Town Investment Plan

Introduction

The extended guidance to help the preparation of the Town Investment Plan (TIP) requires that interventions are supported through the Towns Fund with the support of the community. Primarily through early and ongoing engagement and genuine partnership arrangements.

This is because plans made with the communities that they affect are most likely to be successful, lead to innovation and creativity, and result in less controversy. If communities feel heard and are invested in the success of the project(s), this should ultimately help develop a sense of pride and connectivity to place and community.

This is a key part of developing the TIP and towns need to demonstrate the buy-in they have secured with the community.

Engagement Methodology and Funding

Government are clear that they are not being prescriptive about how this process looks, however it should build on existing partnerships, consultation and mobilisation in the local community. To enable this to happen towns may choose to use the capacity funding, provided December 2019, to support community engagement.

Impact of Co-Vid 19

It is recognised that engagement with local communities is made more challenging due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Town Deal Boards are urged to be innovative in ensuring that a diverse range of stakeholders are consulted throughout the development of TIP's making the most of what digital technology can offer to reach diverse communities and groups while also considering face-to-face engagement when it is possible.

Key Outcomes

The level and quality of community engagement – what has been done so far and what is planned in the future - will be a key factor when assessing and agreeing the Towns Deals. Every TIP should also include a stakeholder engagement plan that demonstrates how the town will:

- Identify and involve the people/organisations who have an interest in the proposals and developments
- Identify and show how you will overcome any barriers to involvement
- Gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken
- Agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose, and demonstrate engagement throughout the project lifetime/Town Deal Fund

- Agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently
- Ensure necessary information is communicated between the participants and everyone is looped into the information needed to make informed decisions
- Work effectively with others who are already or could help with engagement for example the voluntary and community sector, social enterprises or relevant public sector bodies
- You may need to consider further developing the skills, knowledge and confidence of all participants
- How will you feed back the results of engagement to the wider community and agencies affected, and show the impact this engagement has had
- Monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and adjust as necessary

What has happened in the Past?

Initiatives such as the North Kirklees Strategic Development Framework in 2010 and more recently the Dewsbury Blueprint have had engagement and consultation exercises aligned to them. Information from those process are available to input into the TIP process.

The Governments own Mytown initiative is also underway and comments are being collected through that process.

To find more information on the Mytown initiative visit the .GOV website or click on the following tab here.

[Mytown Government Initiative](#)

Feedback is also being collected through individual projects. For example recent market research work on Dewsbury market.

Engagement Moving Forward

All the above are rich sources of information that will help fulfil the guidance outlined earlier, However, there is a need to be mindful of the current engagement requirements to successfully complete this TIP process.

Since the last meeting officers have been exploring potential courses of action to support the TIP process. This has largely centred on understanding what is in the market and understanding who is working on this type of activity elsewhere. We have also explored what might be on offer within the Council.

Officers have made contact with the 'Social' integrated Agency to map out a draft proposal to support the TIP proposal. The key objectives being to:

- Support the TIP process – and reflect the guidance from the Government
- Operate to reflect the restrictions that a Co-Vid world places upon us
- Engage as widely as possible

- Recognise the challenging timeframes for delivery

A draft proposal is attached as an example. This has an estimated fee of between £15k and £25K depending on detail

Purpose of this Report and Decision for Board

Purpose

The purpose of this item is to highlight what might be done as part of the engagement process which supports and underpins the TIP process. It also highlights what expertise is available to the Board to carry out this exercise.

Decision

- Board is requested to consider the proposal attached as a potential way forward on engagement
- To agree for Council officers to use its internal procurement processes to bring in a specialist consultancy to undertake the work
- For the work to be funded using the identified capacity funding granted in 2019.