

Dewsbury Neighbourhood Board

Date: 1st May 2025

Title of report: Dewsbury Town Deal, Project Update

Purpose of report: To update the Dewsbury Neighbourhood Board on the current position of the Dewsbury projects outlined in the Town Investment Plan (TIP).

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Summary

Dewsbury was one of 101 places to be invited to develop proposals for a new generation of multi-million-pound Town Deals. The town was eligible for support from the £3.6 billion Towns Fund and was able to access £24.8m. A Town Investment Plan (TIP) was submitted in January 2021. This followed agreement from Cabinet. The Dewsbury Town Deal Board (DTDB) also endorsed the plan for submission.

On 8th June 2021 the Council received confirmation that the TIP had been accepted, and the Council was awarded £24.8m to deliver the plan; subject to signing of Heads of Terms (HoT).HoT were signed at the end of June 2021.

This report offers information on progress made to date and will highlight any key risks and opportunities on the seven TIP projects which have yet to reach completion, both the Creative Culture Project – Taking a Lead and Fibre Capability have completed and will not be included in this report. The seven projects this report will refer to include: -

- The Arcade
- Civic Spaces and Memorial Gardens
- Construction Skills Village
- Sustainable Transport Modes
- Dewsbury Market and Urban Realm – Former Town Park
- Daisy Hill Neighbourhood
- Building Grant Revival

2. Information to consider

The Arcade

- 2.1 The Arcade is currently in delivery; William Birch contractors commenced works in April 2024, over the last 11 months Birch have undertaken extensive works to the internal fabric of the building. Due to the nature of the works required the construction phase has experienced several unexpected complexities. Recent construction complications have included timber decay, with the most significant unforeseen issues being around the lack of foundations within some of the units, replacement of structural beams, timber repairs on all floors and replacement of ground floor unit concrete and flooring slabs. The discovery of the original lift mechanism has also caused delay for associated archaeological work.
- 2.2 Kirklees Council alongside The Arcade Group issued a press statement in March outlining these delays and a new revised completion date of the 8th of October. These updates were noted at the Arcade Group Members and Supporters meeting on the 25th of February. The Arcade Group have moved the opening date to Spring 2026.
- 2.3 One of the key risks associated with the Arcade project are the unexpected complexities as outlined in section 2.1, these complexities will have a detrimental effect on the overall budget for the project. It is possible that the project may exceed the current funding, therefore the Council are currently undertaking steps to understand this risk and potential budget pressure, and will report back to members in due course.
- 2.4 Despite the delays noted in 2.1, William Birch have made good progress with key achievements being made. Appendix A outlines the recent key achievements and planned progress for the project.

Civic Spaces and Memorial Gardens

- 2.5 The Civic project has seen progress with Phase 1 works having been completed to the Wakefield Old Road area. Works include the installation of new paving to pedestrian walkways and parking provision to the side entrance of the Town Hall.
- 2.6 Phase 2.1 construction works are underway on the Town Hall Apron which will see the removal of the existing paving and replacement with York Stone paving slabs. A total of 6 trees will be planted, 3 of which will be located outside the reception entrance to the town hall. Street furniture including benches and cycle storage will also be installed.
- 2.7 It is expected that Phase 2.1 will complete late June, however the project has been subject to some delays to the programme due to complexity of the ground conditions. Additional 2 weeks are required to allow construction team to dig the tree pits to the required depth.
- 2.8 Phase 2.2 will see works being undertaken to create central steps up to the memorial and will see the repaving of the memorial area with York Stone. The

pedestrianisation of the southern part of Town Hall Way will also be undertaken during this phase.

- 2.9 Phase 3 which will be the final stage to the project will see the creation of a curved seating space, additional tree planting and improvements to the existing flower beds to Longcauseway as well as the installation of lighting. This Phase will commence construction in Summer and is due to complete by the Autumn.
- 2.11 In order to ensure stakeholders are kept informed, Kirklees Council has issued a press release in March, papers such as the Dewsbury Reporter, Yorkshire Post and Yorkshire Live picked up the news story. It also featured in the Kirklees Together platform. The Councils communication team with approval from the Board's Communication Working Group have created an interpretation panel, which is currently sited in Market Place and offers information on the project.

Constructions Skills Village

- 2.12 Springfield site has seen a busy year with the course being fully subscribed and first year students progressing to complete construction course by July with many moving onto Level 2 in September. Kirklees College have a growing interest for new student intake for the level 1 course for the new academic year.
- 2.13 Kirklees College, Kirklees Council and Flannery Plant Hire launched the Skills Operator Hub in March at the Engineering Centre in Huddersfield. The Skills hub is a mobile unit that has two virtual reality plant machinery simulators which allows students to gain first hand in plant machine operation and houses classroom facilities for the Skills Bootcamps. The Skills Hub has been able to support the Skills Bootcamps which are short courses aimed 19+ learners and allows them to develop their skills in specific industries.
- 2.14 Springfield site campus is now being considered to house a Skills Operator Hub which would see the virtual reality plant machinery being housed either at Springfield College if the site is able to accommodate as there are a number of logistics that have to be factored in to this decision including capacity at the site as well as power and data sources that will be required to operate.
- 2.15 One of the key risks facing the project is the Chidswell Site which continues to be under judicial review. There is a risk that the project will not meet the Town Deal programme timeline, therefore other considerations are currently being explored by Kirklees College and Kirklees Council for an alternative location for the Skills Hub.

Building Grant Revival Scheme

- 2.16 The project currently has one live application in the Northgate area. The proposal is to develop the building to create two 2-bedroom residential apartments on the first and second floor, with a commercial offer on the ground floor.

- 2.17 To progress this application officers are currently awaiting on confirmation of project costs from the project manager and architect to ascertain the possible level of grant funding that could be awarded.
- 2.18 Key risk associated with this application relates to the grant and planning application approval process that still needs to be undertaken before construction can commence.
- 2.19 Following on from the extraordinary meeting held on the 26th of March where board approved the purchase of a strategic property in the town, Kirklees Council's legal team have been instructed to complete the purchase utilising funds from the Building Grant Revival Scheme.

Sustainable Transport Modes

- 2.20 Overall the project is nearing completion having been on site now since, December 2024. Contractors Hinko have completed works on the 11th of April but will need to return to site once the Field House scaffolding has been removed to finish the section from Grove Street to A638 Dewsbury Road.
- 2.21 In the interim as Hinko are still under contract until the 25th of April operatives are supporting the councils internal labour force with other relevant works.

Dewsbury Market and Market Public Realm (former Town Park)

- 2.22 As part of the cost analysis the Market and Public Realm scheme has been subject to a value engineering exercise which has now been completed.
- 2.23 Stage 3a design has now completed and is currently frozen to allow for architectural and structural specialist to undertake a full review of the design ahead of proceeding to Stage 3b. Stage 3b will determine the overall costs, risks and programme for the project and will allow the Council to proceed to agree a Capital Outlay Report (COR) which is required as part of the councils financial procedure rules. Appendix B outlines the current timeline for the project.
- 2.24 A key risk to the Market project is the Construction Cost estimates, Kirklees Council expect to undertake a Project Adjustment Request (PAR) with MHCLG to seek the reallocation of grants fund once the final scheme costs are known.
- 2.25 Hostile Vehicle Measures (HVM) have been approved by the Strategic Director which will now form part of the new market design.
- 2.26 Planning approval has now been approved with conditions. The planning decision notice ref 2021/48/93368/E can be found on the council's website - [Planning application details | Kirklees Council](#)

2.27 Stakeholder engagement with market traders and members of the public to take place with the creation of new trader and public information hubs which will be resourced through markets team and will be an opportunity for people to ask questions about the project. There will also be further one to one meeting with traders taking place during the summer period.

Daisy Hill Neighbourhood

2.28 Following the presentation given at Board on the 6th of February where members were notified of the plans to dispose of Neil Jordan House further works have been undertaken to market the building. Cushman and Wakefield have now developed the marketing material, and a sales board has been installed.

2.29 The terms of the sale include the council's intention for the property to be re developed in line with the Daisy Hill Neighbourhood programme and has an asking price of £385,000.

2.30 Field House roof works are now completed, and the building is watertight. The internal sections within the building are taking shape and electrics are now progressing.

Other Initiatives and opportunities for Dewsbury

2.31 **UK REiIF 2025** forum will be taking place from the 20th to the 22nd of May in Leeds and will be attended by real estate, property and infrastructure sectors. Kirklees Council Service Directors and Head of Service will be attending; this will be an opportunity to network and connect with public and private decision makers to highlight investment opportunities for Kirklees. [UKREiIF announces fringe event partners for 2025 event](#)

2.32 **The TransPennine Route** Upgrade is a major multi-billion-pound programme of railway improvements connecting passengers in the North between Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds and York. The programme will transform the main line offering more reliable, faster and greener trains. Works on the Dewsbury to Leeds section of the TRU have reached the halfway mark and will offer up to six fast services and two stopping every hour between Leeds and Manchester and will include Dewsbury Train Station. [Home - Transpennine Route Upgrade](#)

2.33 Further opportunities in relation to transport network includes the West Yorkshire Combined Authorities (WYCA) **Mass Transit** tram system connecting Leeds to Bradford with a potential link to Dewsbury.

2.34 WYCA'S £23m transformation of **Dewsbury Bus Station** in partnership with Kirklees Council has started with contractors Willmott Dixon starting the first phase of works on the 9th of March. Plans include an improved interior design, better accessibility for all bus users and upgraded public entrances and exists. [West Yorkshire Combined Authority](#)

3. Implications

3.1 Working with People

As part of the Dewsbury Blueprint the Council held town centre consultations and workshops in the town centre during the early part of 2020. This included a town centre presence via a blueprint shop. This work has fed into the preparation of the TIP. During November 2020 specific engagement across Dewsbury was undertaken as part of the TIP preparation. This work was carried out by a consultancy on behalf of the former Dewsbury Town Deal Board to align with Government guidance on the preparation of TIP's.

3.2 Working with Partners

Dewsbury Neighbourhood Board includes a wide of stakeholders from across the Dewsbury area including community, education, business, and development sectors as well as the Council and the local Member of Parliament.

3.3 Place Based Working

The Dewsbury Blueprint is based on the idea of working with local people and businesses to improve the town centre and this has been taken forward in the Dewsbury Town Investment Plan. The Strategic Development Framework approved by Cabinet on the 22nd January 2019 draws upon the earlier Strategic Development Framework produced in 2010. This was also a result of extensive public engagement and highlighted the importance local people place on having an attractive and vibrant town centre. The consultation carried out by the consultants 'Social' for the Dewsbury Town Deal in late 2020 provides further support to these conclusions.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has adopted a 'net zero' carbon emissions target for 2038. All projects delivered through the Town Investment Plan will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the right principles are applied to ensure they achieve or come as to this objective as possible. The whole TIP programme has been designed to support clean growth by:

- Encouraging active travel by investing in new cycle ways and footpaths along with new public spaces such as a new town park. These investments will encourage residents to make journeys by foot or bike and which will help to improve air quality.

- Creating a vibrant town centre with a revitalised Market, the Arcade, a new town park and a programme of arts and culture activities will encourage residents to choose to stay local for recreational activities.
- The planned upgrades of many of the historical buildings through projects such as the Arcade, the building revival scheme and Field House will improve the energy efficiency of the buildings and restore and recycle existing assets.
- The TIP is supporting local town centre housing, close to public transport and other amenities. This will be a key feature of sustainable living for the town and is promoted by the TIP.

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

The regeneration of Dewsbury, particularly the town centre, has always had a family friendly emphasis. The stakeholder engagement has reconfirmed this. The projects reflect the need encouraging families back into the town. Projects such as the Town Park, and the Market have a significant focus on improving outcomes for children.

3.6 Other (e.g Legal, Finance, Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)

The Council is the “Accountable Body “to MHCLG with responsibility for receiving and managing the grant funding and delivery of the projects. Management, governance and delivery of the TIP will be overseen by the Dewsbury Neighbourhood Board (DNB) and the Council will be responsible for the delivery of projects in conjunction with the DNB and other partners. Appendix C offers an overview of the Town Fund grant allocation as well as match funding and spend information to date for each of the TIP project.

The risks associated with each project are being monitored and managed, and Appendix D summarises the highest severity risks at present.

4 **Consultation/Engagement**

Feedback from the Dewsbury Blueprint consultation, and the engagement undertaken during 2024 as part of the Long-term Plan will be reviewed, and additional engagement will take place as part of developing the Regeneration Plan. As projects progress statutory consultation will take place as required.

5 **Options**

n/a

6. **Next Steps and timelines**

An overview of the key milestones is provided in Appendix B.

7. **Contact Officer**

Michelle Illingworth, Project Officer, Town Centres Regeneration

8 Background papers and History of Decisions

n/a

9 Appendices

Further information on the projects progress, milestones, finance and risks can be found in the following appendices accompanying this report: -

- **Appendix A** – Recent and planned progress including the current RAG status which acts as a scheme confidence based on funding position, ability to achieve planned/based target dates, resource availability, risk and severity issues.
- **Appendix B** – Key Milestones, including project start and completion date
- **Appendix C** – An overview of the Town Fund grant allocation/match funding and spend for each project
- **Appendix D** – High Severity Risks – Open Programme Awareness risk with a severity rating of 15 or above

10 Service Director responsible (If applicable)

Joanne Bartholomew, Service Director for Development