**Dudley Town Deal Board**

**Project Prioritisation for the Town Investment Plan**

# **1 Introduction**

This report has been prepared to update the Town Deal Board on the outcome of the project prioritisation process carried out to demonstrate the full range of options explored for Towns Funding.

The following projects, which include a mix of public and private sector schemes were considered as part of the process. The prioritisation built on guidance provided by the Towns Hub – the body established by MHCLG to advise Towns on the development of their Investment Plans:

* Castle Hill Phase 2 – Castle and Zoo improvements
* Public Realm Improvements
* University Centre
* Portersfield
* Transport Interchange
* Old Post Office
* Churchill Shopping Centre

# **2 The Project Prioritisation Tool**

The Towns Hub developed the tool to help towns ensure that the projects put forward for further appraisal fit the Town’s Fund objectives and MHCLG’s requirements, however it has been stressed that use of the Tool is not mandatory.

The assessment is carried out in two stages:

* An initial sift – this pass/fail test seeks to identify whether projects meet the eligibility criteria (in terms of it being Capital Spend; within the Boundary; within the Towns Fund Budget; Aligned with the Vision; ability to meet at least one Towns Fund Intervention Themes’;
* Assessment stage - those projects that make it through the sifting stage are then brought forward to the assessment stage, where the projects can be scored against a set of Town specific criteria and HMT Green Book Appraisal Criteria.

**Local Criteria**

The local criteria used as part of the assessment process were selected given their relevance to the Town’s vision, objectives and strategy. They included:

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| Contribution to the Towns Fund objectives |
| Strategic Fit – e.g. Industrial Strategy (improving productivity); Levelling-up (inclusive growth) |
| Local Consultation |
| Improved skills and educational attainment |
| Potential to stimulate further investment and growth |
| Ability to contribute to creating a higher value-added economy |
| Improving connectivity and linkages between Castle Hill and the Town Centre |
| Contribution to raising the profile of the area and placemaking |
| Cross cutting themes - Covid-19 recovery; Green Growth |

**Treasury Green Book Criteria**

The second set of criteria used in the assessment process relate to HMT Green Book guidance to help Towns consider the proposed projects' potential performance when considered by MHCLG in their appraisal. Again these criteria are recommended only and can be tailored to reflect better the Towns' specific needs. They include:

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| Value for Money (likeliness to deliver social value in terms of costs, benefits and risks) |
| Affordability (financing and affordability given existing budgets) |
| Achievability (deliverability given organisational capability and skills) |
| Commercial viability and feasibility of procurement |
| Stakeholder support |

For each set of criteria projects were scored from 1 – 5, with 1 relating to no or minimal fit or contribution to meeting sub-criteria and 5 providing a substantial fit or contribution. The final score for each project is based on the average of the two sets of scores. No weighting has been applied to the specific criteria at **this stage.**

# **3. Assessment Results**

The overall results of the scoring process, which was carried out by AMION Consulting in conjunction with officers from Dudley Council and New Heritage Regeneration are included in the Table 1 below.

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| **Table 1: Dudley Project Prioritisation - summary of results** | | | | |
| **Project Name** | **Description** | **Overall assessment score** | **Towns Specific Criteria** | **HMT Green Book appraisal Criteria** |
| University Campus | Establishment of a new University Centre in Castle Hill on the site of the former Hippodrome - providing HE for new and existing students in the Town and facilities for the Community | **80%** | 89% | 72% |
| Dudley Placemaking | Public Realm improvements in and around the Castle Hill and Town Centre - including new public space, improved pedestrian/cycle routes, and enhanced signage | **70%** | 60% | 80% |
| Castle Hill Phase 2 | Improvements and investments to the castle, zoo and Castle Hill Woodland. New Vision document outlines eight key projects including: the castle; visitor and education facility; stores cavern mine; lodge; giraffe house; Tecton buildings; woodlands; and southern gateway. | **68%** | 76% | 60% |
| Dudley Interchange | Redevelopment of the bus interchange to create a world class multimodal facility to improve facilities, passenger information; satisfaction; segregation of passenger and vehicular movements; commercial opportunities and sustainability. | **66%** | 64% | 68% |
| Portersfield | This regeneration scheme, which has received £82 million private investment and WMCA funding, offers retail and residential opportunities in central Dudley and will create up to 500 jobs and 400 apartments. | **65%** | 62% | 68% |
| Churchill Shopping Centre redevelopment | Refurbishment of existing retail properties(largely the main mall) with a small number of residential units brought forward at 10 Castle Street and 41/42 Birmingham Road | **58%** | 51% | 64% |
| Old Post Office | Refurbishment of a Listed Building in the conservation area that has been vacant for over 15 years, for residential purposes. | **38%** | 31% | 44% |

# **4. Conclusions**

# Based on the results of the assessment process described above, the University Campus Project stands out as the most closely aligned with the vision for Town and the use of the Towns Funding to stimulate transformational change and longer term productivity growth. The project has the capacity to make a significant contribution to:

* Raising the profile of the Town – by transforming a major Gateway into the Town Centre and attracting new students and expenditure into the Town
* Increasing the vibrancy of the Town Centre and the night-time economy – which will in turn contribute to increased jobs within retail and food services
* Improving higher level skills within the workforce – which have the capacity to increase productivity and the competitiveness of the business base
* Attracting new businesses and enterprise into the Town – as a result of a suitably skilled labour force
* The delivery of services within the Town – particularly health and social care, given the focus provided through the HE curriculum