
Agenda Item 4

Blackpool Town Deal Board 5th June 2020

Town Investment Plan: Initial Draft – Progress Update

1 Introduction

This Paper sets out progress in developing the Blackpool Town Investment Plan, based on the tasks set out in the *Blackpool Town Investment Plan – Proposed Work Plan* Paper agreed by the Town Deal Board at its third meeting on 1st May 2020.

The Government guidance on the Towns Fund has still not been published. However, we understand that it is to be provided in early June. Once this is available, the approach and content of the Investment Plan will need to be reviewed.

Blackpool's Town Investment Plan will be submitted in the first wave and it is anticipated that this will be by the end of July.

The approach underway to develop the Investment Plan comprises the following components:

- contextual review;
- stakeholder engagement;
- vision;
- investment programme – existing and proposed projects; and
- implementation arrangements.

This Paper sets out details of the progress made in relation to each of these elements. It also identifies projects that might be proposed as candidates for Towns Fund investment.

2. Contextual review

The contextual evidence base has been assembled showing socio-economic conditions and trends in Blackpool compared with the national average, region (North West), sub-region (Lancashire) and two comparable seaside areas (Torbay and Southend). A copy of the Technical Report is provided separately. The data is structured around each of the Investment Plan themes agreed by the Board – Place, Economy and Enterprise, Skills and Education, Communities and Health, and Infrastructure and Environment. This evidence is being used to develop logic models

for each theme, which show the theory of change, assumptions and evidence underlying the rationale for a project, programme or policy. The models do this by linking the contextual conditions, proposed inputs and activities with the intended outcomes (both short- and long-term).

3. Stakeholder engagement

Significant progress has also been made in relation to stakeholder engagement with, as set out in Agenda Item 3, consultancy support commissioned from Locality, with support from Commonplace.

4. Vision

The updated Blackpool Town Prospectus is shortly to be published and aligns with the proposed themes of the Investment Plan.

It includes the following Vision:

Blackpool will be a buzzing, attractive town that residents are proud of, where business is thriving and there are career opportunities for all. It is a 21st century year round leisure destination that appeals to everyone, from visiting conference delegates and high income tourists staying in the award-winning 5-star hotels, to a younger, hipper crowd in search of a weekend away full of partying, music and fashion festivals. Families will enjoy the rejuvenated promenade, markets and attractions. This is a green town which is carbon neutral and enjoying the cleanest air in the country. The town centre has been transformed with extensive covered walkways and an abundance of open, recreational space and all-weather activities. This has attracted new businesses and increased footfall. There are innovative family entertainment offerings, new and exciting independent retail shops as well as kids' activities, a cinema/music venue and fun food options. Sub-standard buildings have been replaced and Blackpool's further education has been expanded with a city centre campus. There are a number of flexible workspace centres for SMEs and graduate entrepreneurs, attracted by Blackpool's 'Silicon Sands' reputation built on its future thinking town-wide digital infrastructure, connected to the transatlantic loop from New York. There is high-quality, affordable accommodation, with well-resourced support centres for adult training, education and drug/alcohol rehabilitation, including specialist help for children coming out of the care system. Local schools are well resourced and flourishing, whilst crime levels have been reduced. Blackpool remains the mecca for all ballroom dancing fans, and a year-round dance school attracts new and repeat visitors young and old, as well as feeding into the healthy living ethos for the ageing population.

The Prospectus sets out the following headline outcomes by 2030:

- create and safeguard at least 10,000 jobs and grow the economy by £1 billion through turbocharging tourism, building on existing and emerging economic strengths and innovating;
- tackle the concentration of deprivation in the inner area (the worst in England) raising it out of the bottom decile and creating 3,000 new homes;
- achieve top quartile employment rates for 16-24 year olds compared to other Lancashire Local Authorities through a particular focus on health and well-being and work readiness; and
- establish the national perception of Blackpool as a ‘can do’ place with a buzz, attracting graduates, families and business visitors, recognised as an established and credible business investment location, with increased local pride.

5. Investment Programme

Detailed and very helpful discussions have been held with Board members. These considered whether there were any strategic schemes missing from the review of recent and current major projects (Appendix A), if there were other proposed future projects (Appendix B) that needed to be added and views on the priorities for the Town and its Investment Plan.

The review of recent and proposed projects and programmes has been updated and is being finalised. The latest versions of these are included at Appendix A and B.

The objective of the Towns Fund is to drive the economic regeneration of towns to deliver long-term economic and productivity growth through: urban regeneration, planning and land use; skills and enterprise infrastructure; and connectivity. To secure funding, projects will need to contribute to meeting this objective. They will also need to meet the Government’s requirements for a Business Case, which will include demonstrating their strategic fit, value for money and deliverability. It is anticipated that the majority of the funding will be for capital projects and that it will need to be spent within the next four years. On this basis and following the consultations and a review of the projects identified in Appendix B, but ahead of the Government’s guidance, it is recommended that the Board approve working up detailed proformas for the following projects:

- Blackpool Central - Courts relocation and wider infrastructure;
- Talbot Gateway Phase 4 – including the University Centre Blackpool/Multiversity;
- Southern Quarter/Revoe - Community Sports Village / Blackpool FC; and

- Enterprise Zone – including access improvements and linkages to the AquaComms Transatlantic Loop cable.

An example of a part completed pro-forma for the Blackpool Central Courts Relocation project is included at Appendix C. Other schemes, in particular any identified through the engagement process with local stakeholders, would then be added to this list as appropriate.

The proposed projects will all need to be reviewed and tested against the criteria set out in the Government guidance once this is available.

6. Implementation Arrangements

As previously noted, sections will be drafted summarising the following: details of Governance and Accountable Body arrangements; programme management arrangements; delivery plans for key projects; risk register; benefit realisation; and monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

AMION Consulting
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