

City Deal and Growth Deal Programme Board

Business Case Proforma

1. Project title and proposing organisation(s)

Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre sustainable transport project, Staffordshire County Council.

2. Decision date

November 2017 – final LEP approval for release of 2017/18 Growth Deal 3 funding.

3. Decision summary: Recommendation etc.

a) The LEP Executive Group is requested to consider the summary of the business case for the package.

b) It is recommended that £0.46 million of Growth Deal 3 funding is provided for spend in 2017/18 on the Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre sustainable transport project.

4. Is the decision exempt from being publically reported by the LEP (if so please specify the reasons why)

No

5. Options appraisal

The chosen schemes within the package are those that closely relate to town centre regeneration proposals and provide the greatest opportunity to encourage travel by sustainable transport to existing and future jobs. They are considered to be deliverable within the required timescale and resources, with feasibility, initial designs and consultations already completed. The schemes within the package for 2017/18 are summarised in Table 1:

Table 1: Project Package 2017/18

Scheme	Objective
Newcastle Town Centre Sustainable Access	Delivery of town centre junction improvements at Merrial Steet / High Street will improve the pedestrian experience within the town centre, making it more attractive to businesses and customers.
Sustrans Newcastle Town Centre Wayfinding Project	The project includes identification of preferred routes; list of signing that is proposed for removal; map and list of recommended new signage; details regarding location, type and content of signage recommended. The project will be delivered over a phased programme dependent on cost and availability of resources. The scheme will improve connectivity to the town by walking and cycling and reducing car travel for short journeys will contribute towards improving local air quality in the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

Newcastle town centre car park signing review	A review was started in 2016/17 at the request of the Business Improvement District (BID). The project includes a review of signage and identification of improvements to be delivered over a phased programme dependent on cost and availability of resources. Many businesses within BID hold the view that road infrastructure, signage and parking all present challenges to visitors in cars and on foot to the town, hindering economic growth. The proposed solution will also consider proposed re-routing that will help to reduce congestion in the AQMA.
Cycle routes to the town centre	Completion of cycle routes to the town centre, providing valuable sustainable transport links. This includes routes to the north of the town centre and to the college.

5.1. Strategic case

The package supports all five SEP priorities:

Competitive Urban Centres: enables sustainable growth of the town centre and enhances housing and employment growth opportunities

Core City: supports economic growth of the urban conurbation

Connected County: enhances connectivity to the town centres, and housing and employment sites

Skilled Workforce: encourages the local and future workforce to increase physical activity through walking and cycling. Evidence shows that there is a measurable difference in productivity levels between staff with higher and lower levels of physical activity. It also improves access between deprived areas and urban centre, especially for those without use of a private car

Sector Growth: a more attractive and accessible environment will support growth in the business / professional service and retail sectors

Investing in sustainable transport measures will help to maximise the potential to increase productivity and enabling Newcastle-under-Lyme to play its role in increasing and re-balancing Staffordshire's productivity levels.

5.2. Economic case

The Town Centre Vision includes attracting new private sector investment, encouraging new residential development and investing in the public realm. These are all critical to making the 'step change' that the town centre needs to compete. This package will help support the local economy and remove barriers to growth.

The proposed Ryecroft development is a private sector investment within the town centre. It is expected to create 470 new town centre residential units, mainly for Keele University's student population, together with 65,000 sq. ft. of retail units resulting in 350 new jobs.

The Civic Hub (Castle House), also in the town centre, will be the new home for the Borough Council; a selection of County Council departments and Staffordshire Police, totalling 539 staff and bringing 100 jobs into the town centre. Cycle parking and changing facilities will be provided at Castle House, but no dedicated car parking. The Travel Survey for the Borough Council highlights a high level of commuting by car (85%), with 45.6% of these car drivers travelling five miles or less.

The Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) was set up as an independent company by the Town Centre Partnership Group in 2015. It includes around 700 businesses employing 7,700 people including office, retail, leisure, and education. The BID includes Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Newcastle College, which is one of the UK's leading colleges that has 616 staff and 8,316 learners (4,990 FTE). BID objectives that are relevant to this project include:

- Signage scheme to make full use of the town and its facilities
- Work closely with the Council and other car park operators to improve the parking experience
- Promote better links between the town and college and University students

The package builds upon recently delivered improvements and other sustainable transport interventions that have demonstrated value for money. It is expected to achieve outcomes including new cycle users and walkers; a reduction in short journeys by car, providing health and environmental benefits.

Comparable schemes are being delivered nationally and evidence is available that these types of initiatives can successfully help to encourage modal shift to sustainable travel. Sustainable travel initiatives have been completed over the last 15/20 years using Integrated Transport block supported by strong government policy that is committed to encourage sustainable travel and reducing the need to travel.

A business case was completed in 2016 for a similar package of measures for Newcastle through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) bidding process. The bid forecast the following outcomes:

- A reduction in car commuters of 449 per day in areas with traffic delay
- An increase in cycling from 0.6% to 8.5% and walking from 7.8% to 13.2%
- 269 new cycle users per day and 133 new walkers per day
- Health benefits accumulated over five years for new adult cyclists is £904,000 (HEAT analysis)
- Health benefits accumulated over five years for new adult walkers is £491,000 (HEAT analysis)

5.3. Commercial case

No lengthy procurement process is required to deliver the schemes. The project will be delivered using the County Council's Infrastructure+ public/private partnership with Amey. This represents a modern approach to procurement that will provide value for money and allow early contractor involvement.

5.4. Financial case

Scheme costs have been estimated by the contractors taking into account preparatory costs and forecast risks.

5.5. Management case

The County Council has an excellent track record in delivering the types of schemes in this package through Integrated Transport capital block allocation. There is confidence that the schemes can be delivered in the timescale as there are

no major risks involved, for example land acquisition and complex procurement processes.

5.6. Resource and VFM analysis

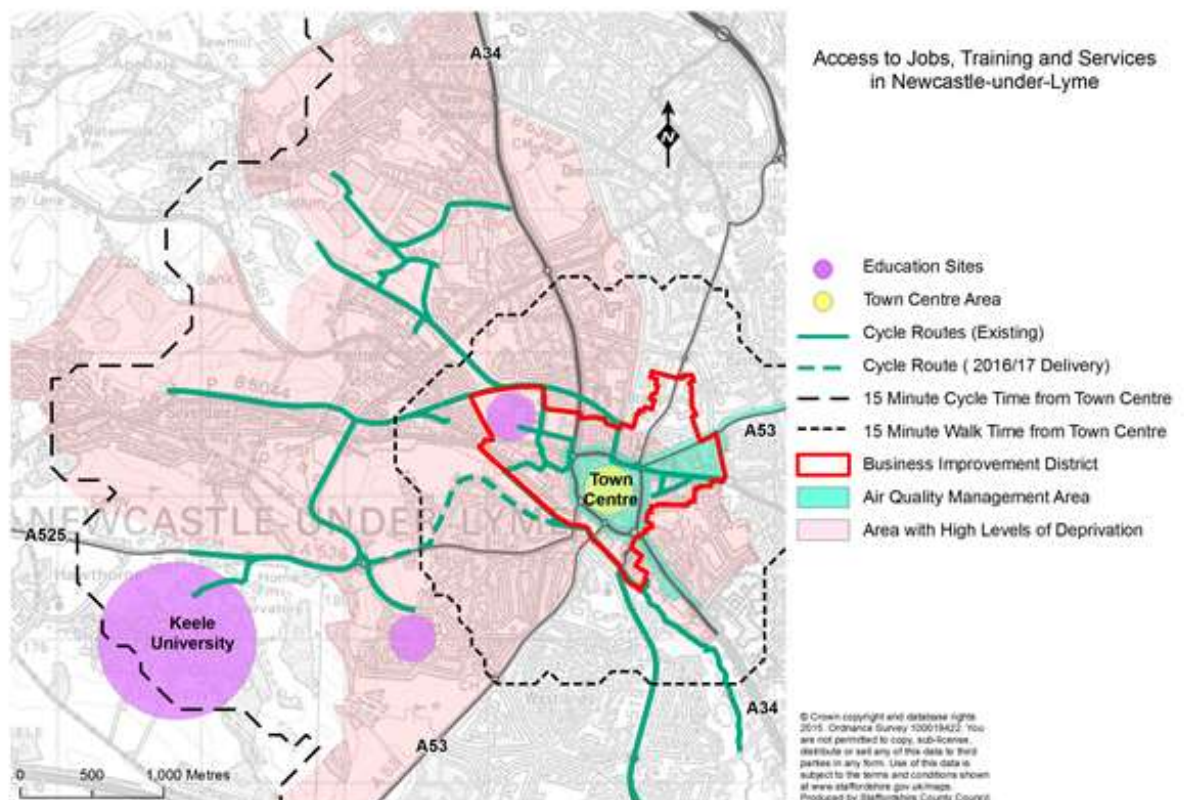
See Economic Case in Section 5.2.

6. Consultation process

The project is being taken forward in partnership with the Borough Council and BID. Staffordshire County Council will ensure that key stakeholders are involved in managing the project and are fully engaged at all stages of the process. Early consultation has already taken place with partners and local councillors and this will continue throughout the delivery of the project. All partners share the same commitment to growing Newcastle in line with the LEP's goals.

Many businesses within BID hold the view that the road infrastructure, signage and parking all present challenges to visitors in cars and on foot to the town, with the ring road presenting a physical but artificial limit to the definition of the town. Larger businesses in the area outside the ring road all stated that some people would walk between their own site and the centre of the town but that this was not an easy or inviting experience and should be made easier. Six out of the top ten issues relate to parking, access and signage. 85% consider footpath lighting levels to be an issue; 74% consider visitor signage / information to be an issue and 26% consider cycle provision an issue.

7. Location of proposal



8. Risk analysis

There is confidence that the package can be delivered in the timescale as there are no major risks involved, for example land acquisition and complex procurement processes.

The risks will be owned and managed in line with the County Council's Corporate Risk Management Policy. A range of measures will be adopted to mitigate risk, for example, working closely with relevant partners and, if necessary, redirecting resources to schemes within the package. The project will be managed by maintaining a comprehensive record of scheme costs and benchmarking the programme against previous sustainable transport programmes, to maintain control of costs, hence maximising value for money.

9. Legal analysis

No legal agreements are required to deliver the project. The project is compliant with the County Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

10. Delivery

No planning permission, legal consents or land acquisition are required.

It is expected that benefits will be realised within the year of delivery by all partners involved in the project. Generally, evidence demonstrates that behavioural change that is expected to be established will have a lasting impact beyond the funding period. Before and after monitoring data will be collected to confirm benefit realisation:

- Regular assessment of DfT GPS Trafficmaster Data
- Overall changes in the level of walking and cycling through counts and targeted surveys, as necessary
- Behavioural change recorded at employment locations
- Annual assessment of accident data
- Customer experience and feedback

11. Timetable

Table 2 summarises the delivery timescales for the project.

Table 2: Delivery Timetable

Scheme	Timescale
Newcastle Town Centre Sustainable Access	Completion 2017/18
Sustrans Newcastle Town Centre Wayfinding Project	GD3 will fund the first phase of the project. The full project is expected to be delivered by 2020/21, as resources permit
Newcastle town centre car park signing review	GD3 will fund the first phase of the project. The full project is expected to be delivered by 2020/21, as resources permit
Cycle routes to Newcastle town centre	Completion 2017/18

The key milestones in every project will include consultation on options, design of preferred option and construction.

12. Author

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13. Decision details

For official use only – details of date considered by SSLEP Executive Group and any additional information for decision record.