

COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR CARLISLE

Meeting date: 8 February 2022

From: Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure

CARLISLE TOWN DEAL BUSINESS CASES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 *As part of the Carlisle Town Deal Cumbria County Council has been developing business cases for two projects:*

- *Southern Gateway enhancements around English Street and Botchergate*
- *Digital Learning and Community Hub in Carlisle Library.*

1.2 *There is a requirement for these schemes to be submitted to Carlisle City Council as accountable body for appraisal and assurance assessment in advance of submission to Government in March 2022.*

1.3 *Business cases for these two schemes have now been prepared and Local Committee endorsement is sought for their submission to Carlisle City Council.*

2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

2.1 *The proposals under consideration support the ambitions of Community Strategy and Council Plan priorities.*

2.2 *Both are intended to support economic activity and inclusive growth by optimising the use of assets within Carlisle.*

2.3 *The Southern Gateway proposals enhance the area, providing transformative public realm in an area where there is significant investment. The enhanced public realm and investment in the area will deliver a step change in movement and sense of place at the heart of Carlisle City Centre. The development of a Digital Learning and Community Hub will create a new digital learning space in a refurbished Carlisle Library supported through mobile technologies that will support learning delivery in the wider community.*

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 *It is recommended that Local Committee support the submission of business cases for Carlisle Southern Gateway and Digital and Community Learning Hub to Carlisle City Council, to be considered by Carlisle Town Deal Board for submission by Carlisle City Council to Government*

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 In September 2019 the Government invited the development of proposals for Town Deal in Carlisle through which regeneration investment for the town would be secured.

4.2 Following Government Guidance, Carlisle City Council acting as Accountable Body, established a Town Deal Board through which proposals for the deal would be developed; with proposals and guiding strategy contained within a Town Investment Plan.

4.3 The strategy set out within the Town Investment Plan focused on developing the regional role of Carlisle, enhancing its perception and offer, supporting population growth and providing new opportunities for communities. The Plan, together with supporting evidence was submitted for the consideration of Government in October 2020.

4.4 Following submission, in March 2021 the Government identified that subject to business cases being developed and approved; £19.7 million of funding would be available to deliver 7 projects within the town:

- Start with the Park, St Cuthbert's Garden Village.
- Southern Gateway
- Project Tullie
- Lighting Up Carlisle
- Digital and Community Learning Hub
- Citadels Business Infrastructure
- Carlisle Market Hall.

4.5 The next key phase in this process surrounds the development of business cases, with a requirement for these to be developed, appraised and submitted by Carlisle City Council as accountable body to Government by March 2022. While Carlisle City Council are the accountable body for the town deal, the County Council has led the development of business cases for the Southern Gateway and Digital Learning and Community Hub.

4.6 Following submission of the Town Deal business cases to Government, schemes would be subject to further review before ultimate agreement to deliver the schemes would be secured. Following the confirmation of funding it would be anticipated that Cumbria County Council would enter a grant funding agreement to deliver the Southern Gateway and Digital and Community Learning Hub schemes.

Southern Gateway

- 4.7 Carlisle Station and the Citadels form the Southern Gateway for Carlisle city centre; here the coalescence of road, rail, bus services and impressive buildings offer a strong sense of arrival at what is the physical and practical gateway to the heart of Carlisle.
- 4.8 The importance of this area is strongly recognised within the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, with plans for major investment to upgrade to the Station focused on access, parking, passenger facilities and Court Square alongside ongoing work to develop a new University Campus within the Citadels. Supporting these, improvements to Devonshire Street and the reuse of the Central Plaza Hotel site are proposed as part of Carlisle's Future High Street Fund proposals
- 4.9 These improvements are significant and will have a real impact for Carlisle and transformative public realm and access improvements delivered through the Southern Gateway proposals will bind these opportunities and deliver a step change in movement and sense of place at the heart of Carlisle.
- 4.10 Components within this project include public realm and access enhancements to English Street and Botchergate, which will tie in and link to other schemes in the area on Court Square, Victoria Viaduct and Devonshire Street.
- 4.11 The proposal is to deliver the following interventions:

Location	Scheme Details
English Street	<p>Enhanced environment for pedestrians, improved crossing provision and widened footways.</p> <p>Improved cycle infrastructure (bi – directional cycleway).</p> <p>Improved pedestrian crossing provision at junctions.</p> <p>Improved bus waiting environment, supporting the bus interchange role in the area.</p>
Botchergate	<p>Targeted public realm enhancements at key locations.</p> <p>Improved pedestrian crossing provision.</p> <p>Improved bus waiting environment.</p> <p>Signal upgrade at Botchergate / Tait Street junction.</p>

- 4.12 Cumbria County Council is seeking £6.6m from the Town Deal funding to deliver this suite of interventions.

4.13 A summary of the Business Case, including visual examples of the scheme components are appended to this report at Appendix 1.

Digital and Community Learning Hub

4.14 The Carlisle Town Investment Plan identifies a number of challenges that the city is experiencing. These include;

- A low-skill, low-wage economy.
- A declining city centre, lacking vibrancy.
- Economic exclusion and deprivation.
- Digital exclusion.
- Covid19 impacts – particularly in terms of the retail and visitor economy.

4.15 The creation of a Digital Learning and Community Hub will help to reduce the impact of these challenges through the development of a new learning and community space located in the existing Library building in The Lanes Shopping Centre.

4.16 The new facility will be created through a refurbishment of the library, delivering a flexible, immersive and inspirational space that is supported by interactive digital technologies that meet the demands of current customers, learners and businesses. The Hub will be complemented by three key 'spokes' located in Upperby, Kingmoor and Pennine Way Community Centres which will benefit from the use of mobile digital technology to take learning out into wider Carlisle neighbourhoods and are then able to engage particularly with some of those more disadvantaged communities.

4.17 The Adult and Community Learning Team will operate from within the new Digital Learning and Community Hub, delivering a range of courses, primarily at Level 2 and below, including an expanded digitally-focussed offer. The use of mobile technologies will enable the Team to encourage take up of these courses in locations outside the main Hub, including an expansion of home and remote learning.

4.18 The Hub will also benefit from the location of the Business Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) which the County Council has secured funding to deliver. This new service will support small business, start-ups and budding entrepreneurs to seek information on how to develop their business ideas. The location of this service in the Hub will allow alignment of the digital learning offer with business support and help to broaden the traditional customer base of the library.

4.19 The estimated project costs are £2.7m with a request of £2.35m from the Town Deal. This includes £1.75m of capital funding and £0.6m of revenue support. £0.35m is being sought as match funding from the Planned Maintenance Budget and the ICT Renewal Fund. These requests for CCC support will be formally progressed following the establishment of final project costs after the design work has been completed and the construction tender finalised.

4.20 A summary of the Business Case has been appended to this report at Appendix 2.

5.0 OPTIONS

- 5.1 **Option 1:** Support submission of business cases to Carlisle Town Deal. This is the preferred option as it is necessary to secure investment in Carlisle City Centre and Carlisle Library.
- 5.2 **Option 2:** Do not support submission of business cases to the Carlisle Town Deal – This option has been discounted as the benefits associated with the projects would not be realised.

6.0 RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications for the Local Committee arising from this report.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Under Part 2D paragraph 5.1.2 Local Committee has the power to determine the Council's position in respect of any proposal or business plan submitted by any other body under the Town Fund. It is therefore proper decision for the Local Committee to choose either of the options set out in this report in respect of the business cases for Carlisle Southern Gateway and Digital and Community Learning Hub.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 These proposals represent important elements of the Carlisle Town Deal. To secure funding there is now a requirement for these to be submitted to into assessment, following which, and with the agreement of the Town Deal Board and Accountable Body, it should be possible to secure delivery funding.

Angela Jones
Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure

January 2022

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Business Case Summary – Southern Gateway**
Appendix 2 - Business Case Summary – Digital Learning and Community Hub

Electoral Divisions: Currock and Castle

Executive Decision

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Key Decision

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If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?			N/A
Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency?		No	
If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?			N/A
Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny? If so, give details below.		No	
Has an environmental or sustainability impact assessment been undertaken?		No	
Has an equality impact assessment been undertaken?		No	

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

No previous relevant decisions.

CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Not considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers

REPORT AUTHOR

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