

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 13 February 2023

**Report Title**

Update on the Towns and Villages Fund

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

Yes

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

**Report Author(s)**

Ben Mitchell, Projects, Initiatives and Improvement Officer  
ben.mitchell@rotherham.gov.uk

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

The Towns and Villages Fund is a £4m capital programme, aiming to improve the Borough's local town and village centres. The first six projects were approved by Cabinet in January 2022, and this report updates on those projects, as well as setting out the plan for delivering the next phases of the programme.

**Recommendations**

1. That Cabinet note the progress made on the first phase of the Towns and Villages Fund.
2. That Cabinet endorse the approach to the future phases of the programme, as detailed in this report.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 - Towns and Villages case studies  
Appendix 2 - Equality Initial Screening Assessment  
Appendix 3 - Carbon Impact Assessment

**Background Papers**

[Cabinet Report - 24 January 2022 - The Towns and Villages Fund](#)

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

No

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## Update on the Towns and Villages Fund

### 1. Background

1.1 Within the Council's 2021/22 budget setting process, a Capital allocation of £4 million was allocated to the Towns and Villages Fund.

1.2 Engagement took place throughout 2021 with stakeholders to develop the overall aim of the programme and provide a lens to the types of projects that could be completed. This was used as a guide when Schemes were being developed, ensuring that they were relevant to this fund. Based on this work, the overall aim of the Scheme is:

*To work with neighbourhoods across the Borough, to enhance their lived environment, through a variety of improvement projects, focused on town and village centres.*

1.3 Underneath this overarching aim, five objectives were agreed to indicate what this programme of work should deliver:

- Improve the lived environment of all residents.
- Enhance the visual appeal of town and village centres across the Borough.
- Inspire pride in our neighbourhoods.
- Co-produce projects with neighbourhoods to deliver change that is needed.
- Deliver on the priorities of wards and/ or wider masterplans.

1.4 Central to the aim and objectives of the programme is the Council's approach to neighbourhood working. This approach encourages Members to act as community champions, engaging with residents, businesses, and stakeholders to create projects which will have a positive impact within their communities. There is potential for ambitious, co-produced projects being delivered through this Scheme, embedding the principles of neighbourhood working into the design and delivery of improved and new public spaces. There is also an opportunity for Schemes to link with ward priorities as part of the ward plan process, and this should be considered as these continue to be developed through the municipal year.

1.5 Members were asked to submit Schemes for consideration in Autumn 2021, which were moderated against the aims and objectives of the funding. Each ward now has an indicative project to be completed through this programme.

1.6 A seven-stage process has been adopted, which gives a clear indication of the progress of each project, with target timeframes assigned to each stage. These are:

1. Ward Submission.
2. Concept Design.
3. Local consultation.
4. Detailed design.

5. Project approval.
6. Assemble delivery resource.
7. Delivery.

1.7 In January 2022, Cabinet approved Phase 1 of the Towns and Villages Fund, which included the first six projects to be developed and delivered.

## 2. Key Issues

2.1 Following the approval of Phase 1 in January 2022, work has progressed to design and deliver the first phase of the Towns and Villages Fund. The table below summarises progress to date:

Ward	Project	Stage	Delivery Start & Complete Estimate
<b>Brinsworth</b>	Creation of off-road parking next to Brinsworth Lane shops.	Concept Design	TBC
<b>Dalton and Thrybergh</b>	Improvement to the area outside Ridgeway Convenience Store at East Herringthorpe.	Complete	Completed January 2023
<b>Greasbrough</b>	Green link corridor between Greasbrough Park and Greasbrough Recreation Ground.	Complete	Completed June 2022
<b>Hellaby and Maltby West</b>	Off street parking at Laburnum Parade shops, utilising and improving existing green space.	Complete	Completed November 2022
<b>Hoober</b>	Improvement to area outside of Masefield Road shops, including highway and green space.	Delivery	November 2022 – February 2023
<b>Swinton Rockingham</b>	Refurbishment of Broadway shopping parade, improving accessibility and environment.	Delivery	November 2022 – February 2023

2.2 The project submitted in Brinsworth aims to improve parking provision outside of a central shopping street within the district centre. Currently, parked vehicles encroach onto the footpath and highway which creates a danger to pedestrians. This project would be beneficial to the neighbourhood but relies on land in private ownership to be designated as public highway to implement a Scheme. All landowners have now responded and have agreed to engage in the legal process to designate their land as public highway. This has allowed for a concept design to progress, whilst simultaneously completing the legal process.

2.3 The first project to be delivered by this funding was in Greasbrough. Major works adjacent to the site were being delivered through a contract the Council had with ESH Civils, and this arrangement was varied to deliver this project. Work started on site in April, with excavation, clearance and hard

works completed in the same month. The contractor then returned in June to complete the surfacing, softworks and furniture installation. Where practical, some works have been undertaken by internal delivery teams, such as soil and grass reinstatement, replacement of litter bins, and sign installation. Photographs of the completed Scheme can be found in Appendix 1.

- 2.4 The Scheme proposed at Hellaby and Maltby West focused on parking and environmental improvements to a busy local shopping parade at Laburnum Parade. Once planning permission had been granted, works started on site in August, creating twelve new parking bays and a seating area, resurfacing shop frontages and footpaths, and planting shrubs, bulbs and nine trees. CCTV was installed to ensure the site can be enjoyed by residents who wanted to feel safe using the area, as well as offering further protection to businesses. The Scheme was completed at the start of November and received positive feedback from residents and business owners in the area. Photographs of the completed Scheme can be found in Appendix 1.
- 2.5 Works on the project at Ridgeway, East Herringthorpe aim to create a new community garden for local groups, as well as giving a sense of purpose to a large green space outside a well-used convenience store which is in a poor state of repair. Delivery commenced on site at the end of September and completed in January 2023. Some complexities needed to be addressed whilst the Scheme was being delivered such as failing wall foundations and drainage issues, which extended the timeframe that teams were on site, as well as poor weather conditions in November and December. This Scheme has delivered a new seating area and community garden, resurfaced footpaths and access roads, repaired and replaced walls around the site, upgraded steps through the green space, and planted trees, shrubs and bulbs. CCTV has also been installed in the area to allow residents to enjoy the new facilities, as well as offering additional protection for the area. Photographs of the completed Scheme can be found in Appendix 1.
- 2.6 The main objective at the Scheme put forward in Swinton Rockingham was to create an improved shopping precinct that had a more appropriate design for the large number of food establishments that have recently opened. Delivery of the Scheme started in November 2022 and is scheduled to be completed in February 2023. When complete, the Scheme will have widened each shop frontage to allow for more versatile use, removed retaining walls and replaced with planted grass verges, resurfaced footpaths, shop frontages and roads within the site, and planted bulbs and trees. Ward Councillors have also used devolved ward budgets to install CCTV cameras across the precinct.
- 2.7 The shopping parade at Masfield Road, Hooper, benefits from a large shop frontage, wide access road, and plenty of green space. However, the current layout does not take advantage of this, so a key objective of this project was to create an interactive green space for the community to enjoy, linked to the local businesses. Works commenced on site in November and are scheduled to finish in February 2023. When the Scheme is finished, the shop frontages will have been resurfaced and laid with a resin finish, footpaths created through the green space, seating installed, wildflower turf laid, and ten trees

planted. CCTV will also be installed to provide coverage to the shops and new seating areas.

2.8 To date, £632,888 has been committed to the delivery of Phase 1, not including the project at Brinsworth, which is an average of £126,578 per project. Currently, £3.176m has been allocated to the delivery of twenty-two projects, so the average cost of projects within Phase 1 is within the target cost per project.

2.9 As delivery nears completion in Phase 1, work has begun on projects in Phase 2 of the programme. In January 2022, an indicative work programme identified nine projects that could be delivered in Phase 2. Enabling works have been carried out with each of these wards to better understand the scope and complexity of each project, which has led to the following six Schemes being confirmed.

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Delivery Start Estimate</b>
<b>Aughton and Swallownest</b>	Improvement to parade of shops on Rosegarth Avenue and surrounding areas.	Assemble delivery resource	Q4 – 2022/23
<b>Boston Castle</b>	Public realm enhancements on Wellgate.	Concept Design	Q1 – 2023/24
<b>Rawmarsh East</b>	Gateway improvements along Rawmarsh Hill and Broad Street, Parkgate.	Assemble delivery resource	Q4 – 2022/23
<b>Rawmarsh West</b>	Improvement to public square and associated shops on Stubbin Lane.	Detailed design	Q1 – 2023/24
<b>Rotherham West</b>	Public realm enhancement outside of Kimberworth Library and surrounding areas.	Assemble delivery resource	Q4 – 2022/23
<b>Wickersley North</b>	Highway and public realm improvements on Bawtry Road, Wickersley.	Detailed design	Q1 – 2023/24

2.10 Whilst the six Schemes above have been progressing, work has also taken place to produce a masterplan for Maltby High Street. This work is currently in draft, with the final version being used to inform the works to be delivered in this ward, in consultation with Ward Members and the relevant stakeholders.

2.11 It is envisaged that design work on Phase 3 will commence in Q4 2022/23 with Phase 4 commencing in Q2 2023/24. It should be noted that due to the timeframes being worked within, it is expected that projects will be developed

and delivered until the end of March 2024. Enabling works will be undertaken on these projects to better understand the scope and any potential complexities, to ensure that when resources are attached to these projects, works can progress as quickly as possible. These works have already begun on a number of projects listed in Phases 3 and 4. The following wards will be included in Phases 3 and 4:

1. Anston and Woodsetts.
2. Aston and Todwick.
3. Bramley and Ravenfield.
4. Keppel.
5. Kilnhurst and Swinton East.
6. Rother Vale.
7. Rotherham East.
8. Sitwell.
9. Thurcroft and Wickersley South.
10. Wales.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 The delivery model of the Towns and Villages Fund was agreed by Cabinet in January 2022. This allowed for the programme to be delivered in four distinct phases, following the same pathway from design to completion, and for the programme to be completed by March 2024.

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 Consultation and engagement activity is essential to the success of the programme. Each ward had the opportunity to co-produce their submission to the fund, which asked for evidence of community need as part of the submission.
- 4.2 As concept design work is completed, there is a period of six weeks built into the work programme to allow Ward Members, facilitated by the Neighbourhoods Team, to consult on the proposals. This is at an early stage in the design journey, to allow for feedback and ideas to be incorporated into the final Scheme.
- 4.3 Stakeholder consultation is also being undertaken to ensure that Schemes compliment other initiatives. To date, this has included Council services such as Transportation, Highways, Green Spaces, and Housing, as well as external partners such as BT and the Bus Partnership Team at South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority.

### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 As detailed in Section 2.1, all but one of the Phase 1 Schemes are due to complete in February 2023. The design work on Phase 2 projects is at an advanced stage, with the first three Schemes ready to be delivered. It is expected that the delivery of Phase 2 will run between Q4 2022/23 and Q1 2023/24.

- 5.2 Once design work has been completed on Phase 2 Schemes, resource will be attached to design Phase 3 Schemes. These will start delivery in Q2 2023/24 and be completed by Q3 2023/24. Whilst these Schemes are in progress, enabling works on Phase 4 Schemes will be taking place, to ensure design and delivery can be as efficient as possible.
- 5.3 Finally, Phase 4 Schemes will enter the design stage in Q2 2023/24, start delivery in Q3 2023/24 and run until the end of Q4 2023/24. To ensure that the programme is delivered as efficiently as possible, projects will follow the process set out in Section 1.6 on a rolling basis. As one project completes, another project will begin concept design. This will ensure a consistent work programme for the Landscape Design Team, and Highways Delivery Team, giving the best opportunity to design and deliver works in a timely manner.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 As an update report on those Schemes completed, there are no procurement implications. For those Schemes in design / development all procurement activity associated to deliver them must be undertaken in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) and the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.
- 6.2 The total £4m funding for the projects were agreed by Council for inclusion in the Capital Programme on 3rd March 2021. Projects completed so far fall within the allotted budget. Planned projects will be funded by the remaining allocation. Inflationary increases in materials and supplies are included in the project estimates.

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations within this report.
- 7.2 There are likely to be specific legal implications in respect of each of the individual projects within the Work Programme including property issues, contractual matters, procurement and Traffic Regulation Orders and these will be addressed at the appropriate time within the project delivery.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 There are no direct implications for children, young people or vulnerable adults arising from this report.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 An Initial Equality Screening Assessment has been carried out on this programme of work and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.
- 10.2 Town and village centres should be available to all residents, businesses and visitors of the borough. Improvements to these centres through the Towns and Villages Fund will have a positive impact on these centres and improve equal opportunity and access to the proposed centres. The projects that will be delivered include substantial public realm and pedestrian footway improvements, and to date, projects designed have incorporated tactile crossings, footpath resurfacing and disabled parking bays. These works will provide visually impaired and wheelchair users more equitable access to improved places.
- 10.3 Within the delivery process for each project, consultation will be carried out with communities through Ward Members and the Neighbourhoods Team. Equality and diversity will be a key theme within this consultation and ensure that the views of local communities are heard and included within subsequent designs. Additional requirements that are requested to meet specific needs of a group or individual during the delivery of works will also be accommodated to ensure that access is continuous throughout the delivery process.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 A Carbon Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached as Appendix 3.
- 11.2 It is envisaged that the impact of this programme of work will be localised. Where an impact on carbon emissions has been highlighted, relevant mitigations will be implemented to reduce, where possible, the Council's impact on the climate.
- 11.3 The largest impact identified will be emissions from construction and development, where heavy machinery is used to deliver material, and construct projects. To mitigate this as far as possible, local suppliers will be engaged where possible as part of the Council's Social Value Framework.
- 11.4 Climate change will also be referenced in the design of each Scheme, with priority given to pedestrian access, active travel, and public transport. This will ensure that users of local centres are encouraged to walk, cycle or take public transport as an alternative to driving.
- 11.5 The work programme also includes Schemes that will increase the amount of urban green space in the borough, whilst tree planting will be assessed in every project and included as a priority if achievable. Within the first phase of the programme, 34 trees have been designed into Schemes.
- 11.6 Where parking provision is being proposed in a project, the Council will consider options for electric vehicle charging points to be installed. As part of the stakeholder engagement work carried out for each project, the Council's

Energy Team will be consulted to see whether it is viable to install charging points at the location identified.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

- 12.1 Partners and key stakeholders will be directly involved in the project planning process, through local consultation and engagement. Where a project is in close proximity to private land ownership, businesses, or community groups, these stakeholders will be included within the design process and kept informed of progress. The Scheme has been designed to align with the approach to Neighbourhood working and engagement with Ward Councillors.
- 12.2 It is expected that Ward Councillors, as community leaders, alongside the Neighbourhoods Service, will be able to assist in identifying stakeholders and partners for individual projects, which will be in addition to consultation and engagement work which will be planned for each project.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 Programme monitoring takes place through the Projects, Initiatives and Improvement Officer within Regeneration and Environment, which includes project management documentation and formal budget monitoring.
- 13.2 Individual projects will have a variety of internal and external stakeholders, and where necessary, individual project teams will be brought together, which will sit underneath an overall 'strategic group', who will be responsible for tracking progress of the programme.
- 13.3 To date, three significant risks have been highlighted which are:
1. Uncertainty of costs and availability of materials within the current construction market
  2. Capacity to deliver the programme within the timeframes agreed
  3. Complexity of land ownership issues for individual projects (as evidenced in Brinsworth).

These risks will be tracked through a programme risk register alongside actions and mitigations to reduce these risks, which will be regularly reviewed and reported to the strategic group.

## **14. Accountable Officers**

Ben Mitchell, Projects, Initiatives, and Improvement Officer  
Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	30/01/23

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	26/01/23
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phillip Horsfield	26/01/23

*Report Author: Ben Mitchell, Projects, Initiatives and Improvement Officer  
ben.mitchell@rotherham.gov.uk*  
This report is published on the Council's [website](#).