



## EXECUTIVE 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Corby Town Fund – Sixth Form College Summary Business Case Document</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	George Candler, Executive Director of Place and Economy
<b>Lead Member</b>	Cllr David Brackenbury, Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration

<b>Key Decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Are there public sector equality duty implications?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972</b>	

### List of Appendices

None

#### 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1. To approve the submission of a Business Case Summary Document for the Sixth Form College, one of the four projects of the Corby Town Fund to the Department of Levelling Up, Communities and Housing (DLUHC). If approved by North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) and subsequently approved by DLUHC, the £9.5m of allocated funds for this project will be available for drawdown and the project can commence.

#### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1. Corby Borough Council applied for funding to the government's Towns Fund. This application was accepted by DLUHC and in June 2021, the Executive considered and agreed the Heads of Terms for the Corby Town Fund, which were then submitted to DLUHC.

The funding bid accepted in principle was to the value of £19.9m for four projects detailed within Corby's Town Investment Plan (TIP) allocated as below:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Allocation (m)</b>
Sixth Form College	£9.50
Corby Town to Station link road	£8.59
Market Walk East multi-use building	£1.50
Smart and Connected Corby	£0.31

- 2.2. Acceptance of the project by DLUHC means that NNC is now required to develop individual business cases for each of the four projects. Each of the business cases must follow the guidelines set by government through "The Green Book 2020"<sup>[1]</sup>.
- 2.3. The Sixth Form College project is being expedited due to the advanced stage of this project and due to the planned intake of students to take place at the start of the 2023/24 academic year. Acceptance of the Business Case Summary Document by DLUHC will unlock the £9.5m funds allocated for this project.

[1] The Green Book: appraisal and evaluation in central government - HM Treasury guidance on how to appraise and evaluate policies, projects, and programmes - [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/938046/The\\_Green\\_Book\\_2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/938046/The_Green_Book_2020.pdf)

### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1. It is recommended that the Executive:
- a) Approve the submission of a Business Case Summary Document for the Sixth Form College Corby Town Investment Plan project to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities;
  - b) Delegate to the Executive Director of Finance, in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Economy, authority to prepare and submit the Summary Business Case for the Sixth Form Corby Town Fund project to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities;
  - c) Approve the drawdown of funding for the Sixth Form College project once released by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities;
- 3.2. Reasons for Recommendations –
- The submitted Business Case Summary Document, if approved by DLUHC will unlock the funding for this project to the sum of £9.5m.

- Once funds are received, this project can commence. It is estimated this build will take 10/12 months to complete, opening in the Summer of 2023 for the 2023/24 academic intake.

3.3 Alternative Options Considered - The only alternative options would be to not submit the Business Case Summary Document and therefore not to drawdown the remaining funding of £9.5m (less the 5%, approx. £475k already received from DLUHC) which would mean that the Sixth Form College could not be delivered. As this project is a deliverable project which benefits Corby and the surrounding area by providing a high-quality education resource this is not a viable option

#### **4. Report Background**

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4.1. In September 2019, DLUHC (formally MHCLG) announced 101 towns who were eligible to bid for up to £25m each through the Towns Fund. The objective of the Towns Fund is to drive the economic regeneration of towns for long-term economic and productivity growth. This was approved by Corby Borough Council's (CBC) One Corby Policy Committee in December 2019 (stage 1) and January 2021 (stage 2) to:

- 1) Establish a Town Investment Plan for Corby - by the formation of the Town Deal Board and to produce a Town Investment Plan (TIP).
- 2) Use the TIP to bid for Town Deal funding – bid for £25m for the four projects selected by the Town Deal Board.

4.2. On 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021, government confirmed that the Corby Town Deal had been successful in securing £19.9m for the four projects detailed in the TIP.

4.3. Executive, on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021, agreed to delegate authority to the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Executive Director of Place and Economy, to approve and sign Heads of Terms in connection with Corby's Town Fund from DLUHC. Following this, the Heads of Term were reviewed by the Leader and Portfolio holder for Growth and Regeneration and signed by the Chair of the Town Deal Board and North Northamptonshire Council's (NNC's) Section 151 Officer.

4.4. Following the submission of the signed Heads of Terms on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to DLUHC an Options Appraisal paper was taken to the Town Deal Board on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2021 to approve the relocation, phasing and scaling back of the projects to bridge the £5.1m funding gap between the bid amount of £25m and the awarded fund amount of £19.9m.

4.5. DLUHC confirmed that it would automatically release a payment of 5% of the approved £19.9m funding, which is £995,000, to allow the development of the business cases and the initial progression of these projects.

- 4.6. In November 2021, a paper was taken to Executive to approve the early release of this fund (£995,000) award to the Capital Programme to fund the design work, feasibility studies and business case development.
- 4.7. This Sixth Form College project is being expedited due to the progress made on the project. It is anticipated the completion of the Sixth Form College by Bedford College Group will occur in the Summer of 2023, with an intake of students planned for September 2023.
- 4.8. Bedford College Group have submitted their business case to the council, and this has been reviewed by officers who are specialists in their fields. Therefore, it is proposed that the submission of the Business Case Summary Document by the Council is brought forward from June 2022, which was the original deadline and submitted as soon as possible. This will, once approved by DLUHC, unlock the balance of the £9.5m funds allocated by DLUHC for this project. The DLUHC approval processes will take approximately 2 months.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1. Throughout the development of the Town Fund various options have been considered which have been in line with the governments 'Green Book' guidelines and NNC's constitution. It is proposed to submit the Business Case Summary Document to DLUHC as soon as complete. This business case delivers the scheme identified in the Corby Town Fund bid.
- 5.2. The only alternative option would be to not submit the Business Case Summary to DLUHC which would mean that the Sixth Form College could not be delivered. As this project is a deliverable project which benefits Corby and the surrounding area by providing a high-quality education resource this is not a viable option.

## **6. Next Steps**

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- 6.1. The next stage of the process is for the Council to submit the Business Case Summary document. DLUHC require this document to be signed by the Council's Section 151 Officer, therefore it is proposed that authority to sign the submission be delegated to the Council's Section 151 Officer (that is the Executive Director of Finance) in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economy. The Summary Business Case document will also be submitted to the Town Deal Board's Chair for comment.
- 6.2. If Executive approval is granted for the Summary Business Case document to be submitted to DLUHC, this will be done as quickly as possible. This document will then be reviewed by DLUHC. Once the review is complete and the summary business case approved, the Council will be able to draw down the balance of the funds.

- 6.3. It is anticipated that the build could commence shortly after DLUHC approval is given provided planning permission is granted - pre-application discussions have begun. The sixth form college has been projected by the college to be completed in the summer of 2023 for intake of students at the start of the academic year in September 2023.

## **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation**

- 7.1.1. This funding was awarded to the Council on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021 by government. Corby TIP proposed a range of projects as part of its submission to government. This included the Sixth Form College, which was allocated £9.5m. The Bedford College Group match funding is £10.1m, this is the estimated cost for staff and running costs etc. of this sixth form college over 5 years.
- 7.1.2. The investment, if approved by DLUHC, into a new Sixth Form College would be transformational in terms of supporting the wider regeneration of this building within the town centre. It would also drive additional footfall into the area with several hundred students attending the new facility and in so doing supporting the wider local economy. A business case has also been presented to the Strategic Capital Board to request the project to be included within the Capital Programme for 2022/23 and will be presented to Executive Committee in April, once approval for the submission of the business case to DLUHC is received, as outlined in this report.

### **7.2. Legal and Governance**

- 7.2.1. The Council will enter into a grant agreement with the Bedford College Group to contractually oblige it to deliver this project in Corby's town centre. The legal team will put in place this agreement between both parties prior to the awarded fund being transferred to the Bedford College Group. This will mitigate any risks to the Council.
- 7.2.2. A working group has been assembled within the Council which contains various subject matter experts to advise and review the Business Case and the Summary Business Case document to ensure all documents are robust and give assurances of the content contained within.

### **7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans**

- 7.3.1. The Corby Town Deal and in particular, the Sixth Form College project which help deliver our vision for North Northamptonshire "A place where everyone has the best opportunities and quality of life."
- 7.3.2. This scheme will contribute to several NNC's key commitments:

- We will care for our young people, providing them with a high-quality education and opportunities to help them flourish – by providing a Sixth Form College in Corby town centre, an excellent facility for students in Corby and the surrounding area.
- Safe and thriving places: We will enable a thriving and successful economy that shapes great places to live, learn, work and visit – As the college is based in Corby town centre this will provide additional footfall to help the businesses in this area.
- Green, sustainable environment: We will take a lead on improving the green environment, making the area more sustainable for generations to come – The redevelopment of the building will include sustainable technologies and will allow the college to showcase these.

7.3.3. The Corby Town Fund projects also bring forward the principles identified in the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Part 2 Corby Local Plan formally adopted at North Northamptonshire's Full Council Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Both plans are underpinned by extensive consultation and a robust evidence base, which has further helped to inform and shape the preparation of the TIP and the projects within.

#### 7.4. **Risk**

7.4.1. There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report save for the risk of missing out on funding as a consequence of missing DLUHC timescales

7.4.2. The risks regarding the delivery of this projects are considered as part of the project management process and are recorded and monitored in the Risk Register. These are regularly reviewed and discussed at the Corby Town Deal Working Group.

#### 7.5. **Consultation**

7.5.1. The Town Fund involved a range of engagement with Corby residents through several platforms. Engagement has been ongoing with various stakeholders through the Town Deal Board Members and ongoing discussions with other partners.

7.5.2. Engagement will continue throughout this project with residents and businesses in the Corby area, the college have also planned workshops/engagement with students within their campuses.

7.5.3. Statutory consultation will be carried out in accordance with planning guidelines.

## **7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel**

7.6.1. This scheme has not been considered by any of the Executive Advisory Panel's although the wider project will be taken to the Climate Change, Environment and Growth EAP at a later date in 2022.

## **7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny**

7.7.1. As the project and work progresses there will be opportunities for scrutiny to look at and scrutinise this important regeneration project for Corby.

## **7.8. Equality Implications**

7.8.1. There are no specific equality implications relating to this business case, however equalities are something that the college are ensuring is dealt with as part of their scheme and once funding is secured the scheme will be progressed to the next level to provide a facility accessible for all.

## **7.9. Climate Impact**

7.9.1 This project will seek to minimise climate/environmental impact and will strive to change the carbon footprint of this building.

7.9.2 Chisholm House will be re-purposed. The sixth form centre will occupy the upper two floors of this property, the majority of which has been vacant and in bare shell condition for many years. It will be renovated aiming to be a carbon negative standard using the very latest innovative technologies which are ground-breaking and will deliver a modern fit for purpose building in the heart of the town centre.

## **7.10. Community Impact**

7.10.1. This intervention will potentially drive the sustainable economic regeneration of the area for long-term economic growth which meets local need, has local support, and aligns with the criteria set out in the Town Fund guidance.

## **7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact**

7.11.1. There are no specific crime and disorder implications relating to this business case. The Bedford College Group will need to submit a planning application for the Sixth Form College part of which will be the consultation with statutory bodies including the police to ensure that any crime and disorder issues are addressed.

7.11.2. The Bedford College Group will work with the town centre owners to ensure the safety of their students with the assistance of the town centres security team.

## **8. Background Papers**

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- 8.1. Towns Fund Prospectus  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/townsfund-prospectus>
- 8.2. Towns Fund Further Guidance  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towns-fund-further-guidance>
- 8.3. Executive report – Corby Town Fund 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021  
<https://northnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=537&Ver=4>
- 8.4. Executive Report – Corby Town Investment Plan Programme of projects 18 November 2021  
<https://northnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=326&Ver=4>