



TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN

SMETHWICK SUMMARY

OCTOBER 2020



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FOREWORD

1. FOREWORD

The Towns Fund represents a pivotal moment for Smethwick. Smethwick is one of the UK's youngest and most diverse towns, with a once-in-a-generation opportunity for long-term inclusive growth. In 2022, the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital will open in Smethwick at the same time as the town hosts the swimming competitions for the Commonwealth Games in the new Aquatics Centre. Both will bring new investment, jobs, training opportunities and visitors to the town; the Town Investment Plan (TIP) for Smethwick will ensure these investments fulfil their promise and provide lasting benefits for Smethwick's residents and businesses. As a borough we are putting forward three towns, each with their own ambitious investments focused on generating substantial, inclusive economic growth. This is an opportunity to improve economic outcomes across Sandwell, bidding for a total of £75m, to transform the trajectory of the 8th most deprived borough in the country into a forward-thinking, vibrant economy that works for local residents and business.

This Town Investment Plan will inject £25 million into six projects which will lay the foundations for long-term prosperity. By investing in the people of Smethwick and its places, we will tackle the persistent problems which limit Smethwick residents, ensuring that 2022 is a pivotal year for our town.

At the heart of our plan is the Inclusive Economy Deal, published earlier this year by Sandwell Council. An inclusive economy is one where a wide range of people contribute to and benefit from rising prosperity. As new opportunities arise, like the Towns Fund, we must ensure investments directly benefit local people and build community wealth. This has been influential in the TIP prioritisation process, with inclusive economy benefits embedded across each of our projects, driving forward our Smethwick vision and delivery plan.

COVID-19 now presents us with another challenge, generating widespread unemployment while threatening to curtail the economic progress of recent years. Our TIP looks to bounce back from COVID-19 by restarting our economy and setting out a path of long-term, sustainable regeneration, helping fulfil our inclusive economy goals and better connect local people and local businesses with new opportunities in Smethwick.

This is the foundation and context for our TIP, catalysing regeneration, unlocking new sites for development, and transforming our town. It provides a new opportunity to level up Smethwick, to build on the successes in housing, infrastructure, retail, and education, to complement existing investments and help drive long term sustainable economic growth in the economic centre of Sandwell.



Alan Taylor
Chair of Smethwick Local
Board



Jude Thompson
Chair of Town Deal Board
(Sandwell Superboard)



Councillor Maria Crompton
Deputy Leader, Sandwell
Council

INTRODUCTION

2. INTRODUCTION

In 2030, Sandwell is a thriving, optimistic and resilient community.

It's where we call home and where we're proud to belong - where we choose to bring up our families, where we feel safe and cared for, enjoying good health, rewarding work, feeling connected and valued in our neighbourhoods and communities, confident in the future, and benefiting fully from a revitalised West Midlands.

Sandwell Vision 2030

Smethwick is Sandwell's most distinctive town and this Towns Fund bid for £25m is complemented by the bids for West Bromwich and Rowley Regis. Together they represent a £75m opportunity for Sandwell – a key pillar of helping us realise our Vision for 2030.

The investments set out in our Smethwick TIP ensure that we can deliver expansive urban regeneration and in doing so, inclusive economy benefits for our residents. We know that skills and deprivation are significant challenges across Smethwick, especially for our young people, therefore we present a series of exciting proposals that will provide residents with the skills they

need to advance their careers, benefit the town, and contribute to the renaissance of our whole region.

The three Sandwell TIPs together will focus on people and places, creating a step change in our skill levels, connecting more residents to jobs, and investing in our places – creating safe and welcoming town centres with a modern mix of housing, retail and employment. They will build on some of our best assets, the historic town centres, our wealth of natural and blue infrastructure, such as the Sandwell Valley Country Park and canals, and the existing retail and leisure offer.

In West Bromwich we are investing in two of the main shopping centres to shrink redundant retail space to provide new homes and new users within the Town Centre, and invest in our two markets to ensure that West Bromwich remains the destination of choice for shoppers from the town and across the Black Country.

In Rowley Regis we are breaking down barriers between communities and estates through strengthening connections to local transport hubs, creating stronger local town centres and green spaces for Blackheath, Cradley Heath and Oldbury, and bringing a localised skills offer to Rowley Regis.

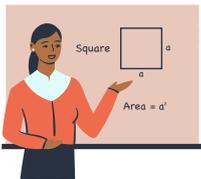


Smethwick Town Investment Plan: Our TIP Projects

The Town Investment Plan: Seizing Our Once-in-a-Generation Opportunity

					
Midland Met Learning Campus	Grove Lane Regeneration	Rolfe Street Regeneration	Ron Davis Centre	Albion Family in the Park	Connectivity Improvements

Our Outputs

			
£25m Towns Fund Investment	2.2ha Remediated Brownfield Land	225 New Homes	2,300 + New Training Places

TOWN VISION

3. TOWN VISION

The vision for Smethwick

The TIP is our opportunity to develop a vision, priorities and projects to address the local challenges and opportunities in Smethwick. These projects will unblock obstacles to growth in Smethwick, unlocking private sector investment, building out from the development of the hospital to invest in place and people through physical regeneration, connectivity and skills provision.

Town Vision

Our Smethwick vision is to realise the opportunity of 2022 in Smethwick by connecting our residents to skills and training facilities and by improving our environment with major urban regeneration and connectivity upgrades.

Smethwick's young, diverse and growing population is our most valuable economic asset, and helping the people who grow up here live fulfilling and rich lives here will transform the town for the better.

The Vision 2030, Corporate Plan, and Inclusive Economy Deal provide the ambition and strategy for Sandwell's priorities and projects. By 2030, through our Town Investment Plan, our Vision 2030, and delivery of our pipeline projects, Smethwick will have: -

- A higher skilled workforce, creating a new talent pool for the health sector and beyond to hire and fulfil skills requirements
- Ensured that the MMUH and the Aquatics Centre provide long term, local sustainable opportunities for local people
- Built new, quality homes in Smethwick on brownfield land
- Improved the public realm and buildings in Smethwick
- Increased the opportunities for residents to find fulfilling work in Smethwick through skills training
- Raised the quality of life and the accessibility of Smethwick's neighbourhoods through walking and cycling infrastructure, making it easier and safer to get around the town



Smethwick's Needs

Smethwick's Economic Assets

<p>Sandwell's youngest and fastest growing population</p>	<p>A distinctive and diverse town with many independent businesses</p>	<p>More jobs in professional and technical sectors</p>
<p>A strong manufacturing sector</p>	<p>Major investment in the hospital and aquatics centre</p>	

Smethwick's Economic Challenges

<p>High levels of deprivation & low life expectancies</p>	<p>Low wages & low employment</p>	<p>Difficult & costly regeneration sites</p>
<p>No recognisable town centre</p>	<p>Limited internal connectivity</p>	<p>Hit hard by COVID-19</p>

OUR PRIORITIES

4. OUR PRIORITIES

Towns Fund Priorities for Smethwick

Building on the evidence and engagement process, the Town and Superboards developed a town vision and priorities. These priorities are a product of considerable engagement with the Town Board, identifying how our TIP can have the greatest impact over the next five years and how the £25m investment can help unlock future regeneration schemes.



1. Maximise local impact of major investments in the hospital and Aquatics Centre. Smethwick's two transformational developments are major investments in the town and can provide new opportunities for training, skilled work, recreation, and improved health. The Towns Fund will put in place the projects which can ensure their benefits fulfil this potential, providing access to residents and regenerating our neighbourhoods.



2. Deliver more housing. We are regenerating our strategic brownfield sites for housing, helping to meet our acute local shortages and providing the homes local people need to fulfil their potential and thrive in Smethwick. We will create attractive, high-quality urban environments that help raise aspiration and retain high-skilled workers and generate investments. This will reduce the need for green belt development and will help to ensure efficient use of resources.



3. Regenerate and upgrade local assets. We will transform our gateway areas and major thoroughfares into attractive and well-maintained public realms, improving the appearance of the town and encouraging active travel. We will connect new assets to walking and cycling routes and the canal, improving the links between our neighbourhoods and encouraging footfall to our businesses in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.



4. Support good quality jobs. We will address the limitations on Smethwick's economy by helping more residents into well-paid, fulfilling work in the local area. By putting in place new skills facilities tied to major employers, and expanding provision of the targeted education and skills support which has been so successful here, we will unlock the human capital of Smethwick residents.



OUR PROJECTS

5. OUR PROJECTS

Our total ask of the Towns Fund is £24.97m

Project Location

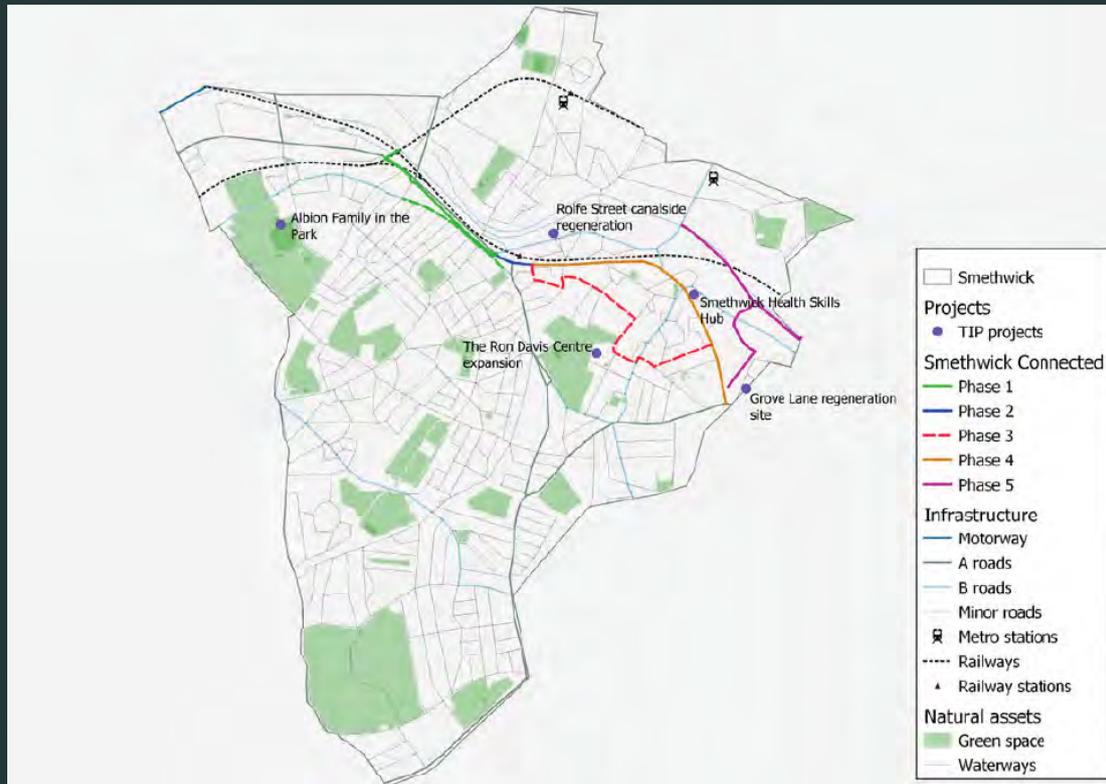


Fig 1. Project Map Overview



OUR PROJECTS

Project Details



Albion Family in the Park

Town Priority 1, 3, 4

Funding will enable the creation of a new sports and community education facility specialising in alternative provision for disadvantaged, disabled, and BAME students in Smethwick. Run by the Albion Foundation, a registered charity working in partnership with West Bromwich Albion Football Club working to deliver excellent alternative education focused on behaviour change and active lifestyles, this will be a youth-focused skills, education and recreational hub pioneering new ways to engage with Smethwick's youthful population.

Outputs

- 1 new community asset
- 742 sqm of new education space
- 1 new public space
- Increase in the breadth of local skills facilities

Outcomes

- 220,000 visitors to arts, cultural and heritage venues
- 200 new learners assisted
- 60% of learners being 'job ready'





Ron Davis Centre

Town Priority 3, 4

Funding will assist the Ron Davis Centre to expand the skills and training for Smethwick residents in a multipurpose education and skills facility in the heart of Smethwick. Run by Sandwell Adult Family Learning, the centre provides a rich and varied range of learning activities for residents, including adult learning, family learning, active targeting of careers advice to at risk groups, and support for apprenticeships, traineeships, work experience and internships. Investment will build three new classrooms, expanding the quality and quantity of the courses for Smethwick residents.

Outputs

- 3 new community assets
- 3 new education space
- Increase in the breadth of the local skills offer that responds to local skills needs
- Increased benefit for the public education over the long term

Outcomes

- 1,100 new learners assisted over academic years 2023-2025
- 16% of learners being job ready
- 32.6% of learners gaining relevant experience



OUR PROJECTS



Midland Met Learning Campus

Town Priority 1, 4

This proposal is for a major new skills resource next to the hospital development, providing training in healthcare and healthcare related positions from entry level to level 7 skills. This is a collaborative proposal between Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, Aston University, Sandwell College and the University of Wolverhampton. By concentrating health education around a major anchor institution, a new FE / HE university campus will be created in Sandwell. It will bring together the Learning Works (see case study in the Context section), a Nursing and Midwifery School, development of an Advanced Clinical Practitioner programme, a satellite School of Pharmacy and a Regional Centre of Excellence for Health Professions.

Outputs

- 6,000 sqm of new education space

Outcomes

- 1,280 new learners assisted





Grove Lane Regeneration

Town Priority 1, 2, 3

The Grove Lane development site is at the centre of Smethwick, a large-scale mixed-use and housing development on the industrial site directly adjacent to the hospital. We will invest in the acquisition and remediation of selected sites within the Grove Lane area to accelerate regeneration for housing delivery, the first phase of a comprehensive major regeneration project to deliver in excess of 800 new homes and associated infrastructure.

A co-ordinated and collaborative approach working with WMCA and other partner agencies, stakeholders and the private sector will enable the project to be delivered over time. The initial investment from the Towns Fund will create the opportunity for a first phase of development to commence in the Towns Fund timescales.

Outputs

- 100 residential units
- 1.2ha land remediated

Outcomes

- Improved perceptions of place by residents
- Land values raised



OUR PROJECTS



Rolfe Street Canalside Regeneration

Town Priority 1, 2, 3

Funding will assist the regeneration of the Smethwick Enterprise Centre site at Rolfe Street, a council-owned business facility falling into disrepair. We will relocate the tenant businesses and demolish the site, freeing up the land for a stand-alone development-ready site, which will provide much needed housing to support the wider regeneration of the Town and link to the opportunities around the Hospital.

Outputs

- 125 residential units
- 1ha land remediated
- 40 construction jobs

Outcomes

- Improved perceptions of place by residents
- Land values raised





Smethwick Connected: Active Travel Corridor Improvements

Town Priority 1, 3

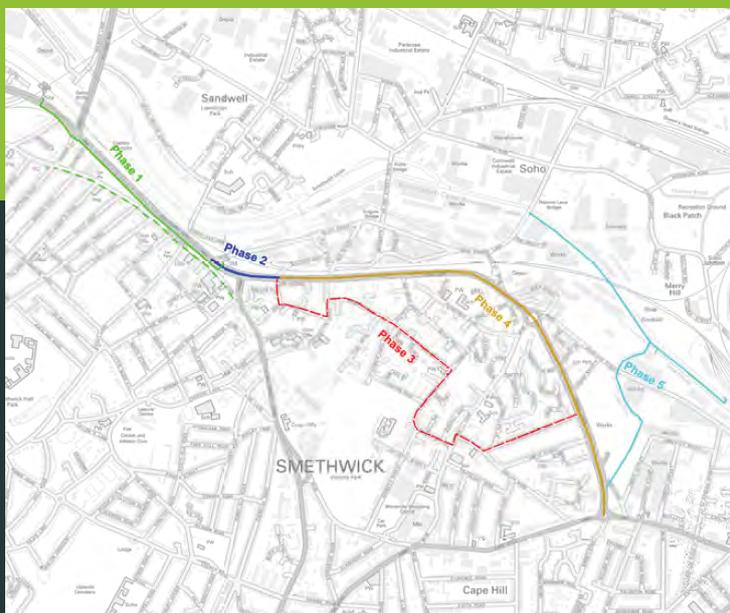
The proposal is for the creation of an extensive network of walking and cycling routes connecting two railway stations to the town centre and further on to the hospital, providing safe, accessible access for workers, visitors and future students at the Midland Met Learning Campus. The scheme will improve access and connectivity within Smethwick by delivering cycling and walking infrastructure improvements and improving safety. This includes a cycle path along A457 Tollhouse Way to Smethwick Galton Bridge station with improved crossing points and footway enhancements along the high street, including pedestrian footway improvements to the entrance of all side roads.

Outputs

- 4 new and upgraded cycle or walking paths
- Delivery of new public spaces

Outcomes

- 50% of average cycling trips and 50% of average walking trips in the area will use the new infrastructure
- Increase the number of daily cycling trips from 76 to 118
- Walking interventions will increase the number of trips from 150 per day to 2,200 per day



OUR PROJECTS

Accelerated Funding Projects

Alongside our TIP, Smethwick has been successful in proposals for £750,000 of accelerated funding to support immediate investment into the town. This funding will provide stimulus to the TIP investments.

The Tollhouse Way Cycle and Walking scheme will deliver a cycle path along A457 Tollhouse Way to Smethwick Galton Bridge station with improved crossing points and footway enhancements along the high street, including pedestrian footway improvements to the entrance of all side roads.

This is an important part in kickstarting the connectivity improvements in Smethwick. It is the first phase of a larger scheme which will cut across Smethwick and be advanced as part of the main TIP.

Pipeline Projects

A masterplan for the Grove Lane area is currently in development, establishing a comprehensive plan for the regeneration area. The TIP will complement this masterplan.

The TIP projects are the first phase of a longer pipeline of projects which will stimulate the regeneration of the town. This project pipeline of future investments will be taken forward via alternative funding sources over the next decade.

This project pipeline will continue to grow as we seek funding for our many projects and places. This currently includes: -

- Investment in mixed use and heritage assets, including Chance Glassworks, Soho Foundry, and Bearwood Community Hub, providing state-of-the-art employment space in iconic buildings, flexible working space and community facilities, and new visitor attractions
- Investment in parks and open spaces, improving the green spaces in our neighbourhoods
- Investment in connectivity, including Cape Arm Canal Bridge and Towpath Works and Bearwood Active Travel, increasing active travel, making walking and cycling throughout our neighbourhoods safer
- Working in partnership with developers to bring forward redevelopment of redundant or underused sites such as Tollgate Precinct and Windmills Shopping Centre



ENGAGEMENT

6. ENGAGEMENT

Our Town Investment Plan builds on the engagement carried out with businesses, community organisations and residents across Smethwick for the Plan, as well as from previous engagement conducted during development of Vision 2030, the Inclusive Economy Deal, and through local community surveys and interviews.

The Local Board and Superboard have been vital in shaping the vision, priorities and projects. The Superboard is chaired by the Chair of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, and Local MPs, the Leader of the Council, businesses and other stakeholders are all members.

The Local Board has been meeting monthly and forms a focal point of our engagement process. Chaired by the Chair of Sandwell Business Ambassadors, this has provided a business voice and oversight to the process.

In addition, we undertook specific consultation with young people around the Towns Fund priorities and projects and undertook two surveys, and workshops with stakeholders



NEXT STEPS

7. NEXT STEPS

The Town Investment Plan is currently with Government for their consideration of the proposals.

We will expect a response from them early in the new year with regards which projects they are willing to fund and how much the funding offer will be. Once agreed, we will continue to develop the projects further and develop full business cases that will enable the projects to be progressed to delivery stage.

