

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 10 DECEMBER 2020

**Question to Cllr Philip White
Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills**

By Cllr Hewitt

Question

Cannock Chase residents, along with others in Staffordshire want their towns to flourish.

How will the County Council Support Staffordshire Towns in accessing the Chancellors £4bn “Levelling Up Fund”?

Reply

Supporting our town centres and high streets to thrive is a priority for Staffordshire County Council. In our Economic Recovery Strategy, Staffordshire Means Back to Business, approved by Cabinet in June this year, we identified the need to support our town centres and high streets as a key component for responding, recovering and once again thriving as a County. We are absolutely committed to working with our partners across all Districts and Boroughs to access the funding required to enable all our towns to thrive.

The new £4 billion Levelling Up Fund will provide a comprehensive approach to driving prosperity, taking the unique circumstances of each local area into account. We recognise there is much to do to return our town centres to locations of great vibrancy. We supported our Boroughs and Districts in making comprehensive submissions to access Levelling Up funding. Staffordshire has subsequently been successful in being awarded places on the Town Deal and Future High Street Programmes, each promoting a potential £25M investment in a locality. Kidsgrove, Newcastle and Burton Upon Trent have been successful in securing places on the Town Deal Programme, whilst Stafford, Newcastle town centre and Tamworth have been successful in securing places on the Future High Streets Programme. We believe our partners are well placed to be awarded funds.

All of our towns and service centres are important to our communities, and therefore alongside the above we are working to deliver a comprehensive proposition to support the regeneration, renewal and prosperity of all our town and service centres which are so important to us all, regardless of whether they fall under central government initiatives. This will be shaped under the place brand, to deliver all the components of successful areas including opportunities for employment, homes, education, and open space.

To further aid this process, we will deploy our relevant expertise (particularly skills, infrastructure projects and regeneration) to support our Districts and Boroughs and to ensure they have the full strategic case as part of developing further Levelling Up propositions.

In summary, we are working to ensure as a County, with our respective Districts and Boroughs working with us, we have the strongest possible proposition for securing Levelling Up funding.