



## Sustainable Development Select Committee

### Levelling Up Fund Programme

**Date:** 12 September 2023

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** Lewisham Central

**Contributors:** LUF Lead Programme Manager

### Outline and recommendations

In January 2023, Lewisham Council successfully secured £19m from the Government's Levelling Up Fund to deliver interventions in Lewisham Town Centre that will revitalise the marketplace, create a flagship Culture and Business Hub, and connect the town with better, safer walking and cycling infrastructure. The delivery of this programme will transform economic and community activity, provide opportunities for local businesses, increase cultural activity, and stimulate the night-time economy. It will increase footfall and consumer spend, unlock private investment, create jobs, and give residents a place to be proud of. This report provides an update on the programme and sets out planned delivery milestones.

The recommendation for Sustainable Development Select Committee is:

- To note the progress made to date in establishing the LUF programme and ongoing delivery.

### Timeline of engagement and decision-making

Mayor and Cabinet: Bid Outline and Submission – 15 June 2022

Mayor and Cabinet: Procurement Approval – 26 July 2023 (Project 2)

Mayor and Cabinet: Progress Update and Procurement Approvals – Nov/Dec 2023

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. This report outlines progress made to date in the delivery of the Levelling Up Fund Programme in Lewisham town centre.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that Sustainable Development Select Committee:  
note the progress made to date in establishing the LUF programme and ongoing delivery.

## 3. Policy Context

- 3.1. The 2022-2026 Corporate Strategy priority “A strong local economy” includes the following commitments:
  - Invest in our high streets and create more pedestrianised spaces
  - Provide support for our independent businesses and protect and improve our local street markets
  - Actively work to attract jobs and businesses to Lewisham and create more spaces for pop up stores and markets
  - Continue to work with businesses across the borough, encouraging them to become London Living Wage employers
- 3.2. The Lewisham Town Centre Local Plan was adopted by the Council in 2014. It sets out nine objectives including ambitions for Lewisham to become a metropolitan town centre, increase commercial floorspace in the town centre, enhancing features such as the street market, supporting walking and cycling, improving safety and increasing leisure provision.
- 3.3. In March 2021 the Government set out its ambition to “Build Back Better” through the pillars of infrastructure, skills, innovation, “Levelling Up” across the UK, transition to net zero and a vision for a Global Britain. The Government considers Levelling Up to mean addressing inequalities between geographic areas, giving everyone the opportunity to flourish and raising living standards and wellbeing.
- 3.4. The We Are Lewisham cultural strategy 2023 - 2028 is our plan for keeping the spirit of We Are Lewisham alive and for building on Lewisham’s strong cultural foundations to create the conditions which allow the cultural and creative legacy of 2022 to thrive for years to come. The key priorities of the cultural strategy include:
  - Creative communities - everyone will have access to the positive benefits of engaging with cultural and creative activities.
  - Creative places - cultural and creative places will meet the changing needs of Lewisham’s communities and creatives
  - Creative enterprise - the conditions will be right for the cultural and creative industries to thrive and be more accessible to a broader range of communities in Lewisham.
  - Creative connections - creative ways of connecting public sector organisations and communities tested during our year as London Borough of Culture will become part of the way we work together.

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## 4. Background

- 4.1. In July 2022 Lewisham Council submitted a bid to the Government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF) for improvements in Lewisham town centre. The outline bid proposal was approved by Mayor and Cabinet in June 2022.
- 4.2. In January 2023, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced that Lewisham Council had successfully secured £19m to revitalise Lewisham Town Centre. The funding will be combined with £5m of match funding from the council.
- 4.3. The LUF funding will be used to revitalise Lewisham street market, create a new Cultural and Business Hub in Lewisham Library, improve the pedestrian and cycle connectivity throughout the high street.

### Lewisham street market

- 4.4. The street market plays a vital role to the Lewisham's local economy, providing jobs and supporting a loyal customer base, with the market being particularly well-used by lower income residents and older people. Despite the market's current success, it is in need of investment. A number of issues threaten its long-term future such as an out-dated appearance, food waste around market stalls and a lack of night time economy.
- 4.5. The fund will support the rejuvenation of the market with improved stalls, better waste management infrastructure, improvements to the pavement and railings, new lighting and electricity, and installation of a canopy along the high street.
- 4.6. The investment in infrastructure will be paired with initiatives that complement the market's offer and expand the diversity of groups who use the market, without losing or alienating existing customers, including an evening market, "pop up" trading opportunities and space to support food and drink, cultural and seasonal events.
- 4.7. These changes will attract more visitors to the market and town centre, extend hours of economic activity in the town centre into the evening and night time, enhance local pride, improve the environmental impact of the market and improve safety.

### Cultural and Business Hub

- 4.8. The current Lewisham Library located at the end of the high street is an important community asset. However, it is in poor condition, has limited accessibility and the space is underutilised. At the same time, there is a lack of flexible and accessible business spaces in the area, with demand significantly outstripping the capacity. There is also a limited cultural offer in the town centre to attract and retain visitors.
- 4.9. One of the key challenges for the library is to adapt to changing needs and expectations of service users. There is a potential for the library to become the magnet that offers culture, business support, local history and a food/drink offer.
- 4.10. The project focuses on the renovation of the building to create a centrally-located multi-purpose culture and business hub, which can include:
  - More accessible space for library services
  - Publicly available workspace
  - Flexible community and cultural space which could be used to host events, performances and exhibitions

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- A food and drink offer such as café, bar, restaurant and/or event catering.
- 4.11. The new hub could be used to support a variety of services including business advice and support services (e.g. BIPC Local, Ready to Supply, business growth programmes etc), a rich cultural programme; activities for children and young people, and employment support and training.

### Reimagined and connected High Street

- 4.12. There are a wide range of issues facing Lewisham High Street. These include the high volume of buses and vehicles that has a significant impact on the safety and attractiveness of the environment; difficult navigation between the key points (train station, market, shopping centre, high street); limited greenery; and limited cycling infrastructure. The public realm around the high street is not pedestrian friendly and doesn't create a positive experience, which means people are less inclined to spend time or shop there.
- 4.13. The key objective of this project is to create an enhanced public realm that supports positive experiences when visiting the town centre and increases the safety of residents, visitors and businesses. The planned interventions are:
- Improvement of access routes to and from High Street (wayfinding and signage, redesign of junctions and pedestrian crossings, pavement improvements)
  - Development of mobility hubs to encourage people to use cycling, walking and electric cars
  - Improvements to cycling infrastructure and new cycling lanes (subject to TfL approval)
  - Public realm enhancements and greenery, which will improve the attractiveness of the high street as well as increase biodiversity. Enhanced greening will include planting of trees, as well as surface level planting and installation of green pocket spaces.
  - Restoration of the historic clock tower
  - Safety features such as improved lighting and CCTV.

## **5. Project progress update**

Project 1: Revitalisation of Lewisham Market and reimagined and connected high street

- 5.1. A significant amount of survey work has been carried out to ascertain the condition of the paving and the underground conditions to confirm a. how much paving requires replacing and b. the implications for the design of the market plain based on foundations and services/utilities that sit below surface level. In addition, costs from the original bid have been under review by a quantity surveyor given that the bid was submitted over a year ago, and rising inflation has caused significant increases particular to construction and material costs, as well as programme duration.
- 5.2. The design and construction programme have been further developed to inform the overall programme duration. We are expecting RIBA stage 3 design development for the high street to be completed in mid-September 2023. RIBA stage 4 (the point at which construction drawings are issued) is expected to be completed by December 2023/January 2024. More accurate programming and phasing work can start at the end of RIBA 3 and adjusted where necessary on issue of RIBA 4. Construction of the market area, subject to a successful planning application, is projected to commence mid 2025 and will complete in March 2026 which aligns with the current predicted completion of

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the Culture and Business Hub. This will also be dependent on a successful tender process for the design and construction for the market canopy.

- 5.3. Studio Weave have been appointed as the architecture team for the market canopy structure design. The project team have briefed Studio Weave and are working closely with them as they start delivery. Initial planning pre-application meetings have taken place to outline the rationale for the canopy in the market area. Subsequent pre-app planning meetings are programmed to take place over the coming months with a planning application projected to be submitted in November, subject to positive discussion during the planning pre-application.
- 5.4. The development of the market service yard (Burton's yard) is progressing to RIBA stage 4 (the point at which construction drawings are issued) following meetings with the market operations teams.

#### Project 2: New Culture and Business hub

- 5.5. Detailed structural feasibility surveys have been carried out since the bid was submitted, that have provided new insights into the current state of the building and what works will be required. Further intrusive surveys are expected to be carried out, alongside a quantity surveyor cost review.
- 5.6. Architecture 00 have been appointed as the lead consultant through a two-stage procurement via the London Portal. An inception meeting was held on 15 August to introduce all members of the multi-disciplinary design team and agree immediate priorities, including the production of a plan for our public-facing engagement activities.
- 5.7. Early market engagement is also underway with potential operators of the hospitality spaces within the hub, and possibly the business workspace. This includes site visits to better understand their design requirements and operating models, and to identify best practice in their service offerings.
- 5.8. Lewisham Library will close to the public on Saturday 16 September 2023. Plans for re-provision include signposting to neighbouring libraries, a click and collect service operating from the Glass Mill Leisure Centre and pop up events in the town centre. The archives and local history service will be temporarily relocated to the first floor of Catford Library and the home library service will carry on as usual. Key messaging around the closure of the library and interim plans has and will continue to feature heavily in the communications plan – making use of council social media channels, the council website, as well as outdoor communications and engagement in the town centre.
- 5.9. Guardians will take up residence in the Lewisham Library building for approximately a year between closure and construction, to better ensure its security.

## 6. Programme

#### Project 1: Revitalisation of Lewisham Market and reimagined and connected high street

Milestone	Date
Burton's Yard RIBA stage 4 drawings	Sept 2023
High Street RIBA stage 3 drawings	Sept 2023
Clock tower conditions survey	Sept – Oct 2023

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Tender exercise for clock tower works	Nov – Dec 2023
Clock tower works	Early 2024
High Street RIBA stage 4	Jan 2024
High Street construction	March 2024 – March 2026
Street lighting columns (installation)	Jan – March 2024
Project completion	March 2026

#### Project 2: New Culture and Business hub

Milestone	Date
Lewisham Library building closes to the public	16/09/23
Stakeholder Engagement Plan produced	19/09/23
RIBA Workstage 1 sign-off	25/09/23 to 29/09/23
Options development	02/10/23 to 27/10/23
Concept design	23/10/23 to 10/11/23
RIBA Workstage 2 cost plan	30/10/23 to 10/11/23
RIBA Workstage 2 sign-off	13/11/23 to 17/11/23
Planning pre-application discussions	06/11/23 to 15/12/23
Equalities Impact Assessment sign-off	11/12/23 to 15/12/23
Developed design	20/11/23 to 26/01/24
RIBA Workstage 3 cost plan	15/01/24 to 26/01/24
Submit planning application	29/01/24 to 09/02/24
RIBA Workstage 3 sign-off	05/02/24 to 09/02/24
Technical design	19/02/24 to 29/03/24

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RIBA Workstage 4 cost check	01/04/24 to 12/04/24
Main Contractor tender process	15/04/24 to 16/08/24
Construction on-site	30/09/24 to 29/08/25
Construction contingency	01/09/25 to 26/12/25
Inspections and snagging	29/12/25 to 09/01/26
Practical completion	19/01/26 to 23/01/26
Operator move-in	26/01/26 to 20/02/26
Culture and Business Hub opens	March 2026

## 7. Communications and engagement

- 7.1. The project and programme leads have been working closely with the communications team to sequence key messages internally and externally. A phased communications plan has been developed to link key messages with major milestones within the programme. The key phases of the plan are:
- Phase 1: Launch and awareness raising: June-December 2023
  - Phase 2: Design engagement (RIBA Stage 4 Detailed design): January-June 2024
  - Phase 3: Delivery (RIBA Stage 5 Construction): July 2024-December 2025
  - Phase 4: Completion (RIBA Stage 6 handover): March 2026
- 7.2. The team are also working on localised branding and identity for the programme, using insight that we have been able to gather through engagement sessions delivered through the Lewisham Town Centre Partnership.
- 7.3. A Communications and Engagement Officer has been recruited who will implement the communications plan and strategy across the programme, including engaging with key groups, local stakeholders and coordinate across both projects to ensure consistent messaging throughout.
- 7.4. A dedicated Levelling Up webpage has been created which will house the latest information and a list of FAQs, which will be signposted to through all communications. The programme has also been featured in the summer edition of Lewisham Life, and will be followed up with posters and postcards that will be distributed to approx.15,000 households who live close to the library.

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## **8. Risks**

- 8.1. A number of key risks have been identified in the inception of the programme and as deliver has begun. Risk registers are being kept for each of the projects and at programme level and each risk is continued to be monitored.
- 8.2. The LUF announcement was anticipated in the Autumn 2022, but was received at the end of January 2023 followed by the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agreement and inception meeting taking place in March 2023, which has had an impact on the original delivery plans set out in the bid.
- 8.3. DLUHC have agreed changes can be made up to 30% to project outcomes and outputs and spend between financial years without recourse to the department. We are also awaiting the opportunity to submit a Project Adjustment Request (PAR) that will allow us to submit a request to make changes to the timescales for delivery of the programme. Any requirements to amend the scope of the programme will be driven by cost pressures which are under ongoing review. There will be an opportunity to look at value engineering, before making any decisions to de- scope any elements of the programme.
- 8.4. Since the bid submission, over a year ago, there has been a rise in material and labour costs. More detailed surveys have also been carried out that would not have been done at bid stage, that have identified the need for additional works that would not have been originally budgeted for.
- 8.5. The project teams are working with quantity surveyors to review the original bid costs in details, in line with reviewing the delivery plan for each of the projects. Concurrently, the project teams are looking at additional match funding opportunities. If no further funding is successfully secured, the team will have to explore value engineering, and potentially even risk having to de scope some of the original plans. What will have to be ensured, is that any changes requested will need to achieve the outputs and outcomes as committed to DLUHC through the terms of the fund. These changes would have to be submitted to DLUHC for approval through the Project Adjustment Request process as above.

## **9. Financial implications**

- 9.1. The Levelling Up Fund Grant has conditions attached to it to for type of spend & also the timeframe of spend. These conditions will be monitored throughout the length of the projects, and if the conditions are not met then some of the grant may have to be returned. Any grant returned will mean a greater call on funding by the council.
- 9.2. There is a risk that the projects may overspend, as has been detailed in section 8. Any overspends will likely have to be funded through alternative sources of funding.
- 9.3. Robust monitoring of spend is required to ensure that the projects do not overspend.

## **10. Legal implications**

- 10.1. This is a report for noting and there are no specific legal implications at this time. Detailed legal implications will be provided for any Council decision required as the delivery of the project progresses.

## **11. Equalities implications**

- 11.1. Lewisham's Levelling Up Programme aims to have an overall positive equalities impact. Economic growth will enable the creation of more jobs within the town centre which could help address some of the existing inequalities in the local labour market. Changes to the street market could allow opportunities for new traders which can be targeted at

groups who are currently under-represented in the profile of existing traders (e.g. Black residents, women, young people). The cultural and business hub will increase access to cultural activities and business opportunities for local residents, and again could be targeted to promote or attract people with a variety of protected equalities characteristics.

- 11.2. A high level Equalities Analysis Assessment was carried out at bid level, but an in depth assessment will be carried out at project level for the high street/public realm and the Culture and Business Hub ensuring cohesion and consistency across both.
- 11.3. Throughout the delivery of the programme, appropriate milestones will be identified where we can engage directly with key groups throughout the design and testing phases.
- 11.4. We will work with the Lewisham Town Centre Partnership, and draw on existing relationships. As well as engaging directly with the Lewisham Disabled People's Commission.
- 11.5. Lewisham Disabled People's Commission Report, published in March 2023, sets out a number of recommendations that will be taken into consideration when delivering this programme. The report highlights a number of statistics and insights from engagement they have delivered for those who use, or don't use our town centres and high streets, and will inform some of the thinking particularly as we move into the design phases.
- 11.6. We will also ensure all communications and consultation documents are available in a range of formats, including easy-read.

## **12. Climate change and environmental implications**

- 12.1. The projects being delivered through the Levelling Up Fund will have a positive biodiversity impact through the enhancements and greener delivered through the high street. Enhanced greening will include planting of trees, as well as surface level planting and installation of green pocket spaces.
- 12.2. The programme will also have a positive environmental effect through, for example, improving the recycling rates of the street market and reducing food and other waste, and reducing the environmental impact of the library building by improving insulation and updating machinery and plant.

## **13. Crime and disorder implications**

- 13.1. Improvements to the public realm on the High Street will aim to reduce crime and improve actual and perceived safety. The programme will also improve economic prosperity for local residents, having a positive impact on reducing crime and disorder.

## **14. Health and wellbeing implications**

- 14.1. Improved economic prosperity for local residents is expected to have a positive impact on health and wellbeing.

## **15. Background papers**

[Lewisham Town Centre Local Plan Adoption](#) – 26 February 2014

[Lewisham High Street Headcount and Survey](#) – November 2021

[Mayor and Cabinet: Levelling Up Fund bid](#) – June 2022

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## 16. Glossary

Term	Definition
Levelling Up	This is a term used by the Government to describe policies which aim to improve standards of living and to increase economic potential in different areas of the country
Levelling Up Fund (LUF)	A fund launched by the Government which is seeking bids to improve transport, town centres and culture in the UK
Public Realm	The space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible, including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces (definition from the London Plan).
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

## 17. Report author(s) and contact

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## 18. Appendices

None

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