

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Asset Management**Economic Development and Regeneration Update****1. Purpose of Report**

To update Members on the progress of economic development and regeneration projects and to approve several decisions relating to car parking provision in Stapleford associated with the new Pencil Works.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to note the update on Economic Development and Regeneration work, including the final six months of the UKSPF programme, and to RESOLVE the following accordingly:

- 1. The positioning of an LED screen in The Square, Beeston on the roof of the former Argos building and the framework for conditions of use in be approved.**
- 2. The concept for the rapid delivery of phase 1 of the Bramcote Hills Park visitor facilities, which could be delivered through Stapleford Town Deal funding, be approved.**
- 3. To give in principle permission for the Council, as the accountable body for the Stapleford Town Deal, to progress lease and licence agreements with the Stapleford and Bramcote Conservative Club for the provision of an alternative car park for the Pencil Works Enterprise Hub.**
- 4. Subject to the above point, or a satisfactory alternative solution being achieved, to approve that the Victoria Street, Car Park be retained as a public car park instead of becoming a privately managed car park as part of the Pencil Works Enterprise Hub.**
- 5. A contingent liability for up to 50% of the costs of re-introducing public car parking be set from the 2027/28 budget.**

3. Detail

The Economic Development and Regeneration service is in a period of transition. This has seen the continued build out of externally funded capital projects, the conclusion of the last elements of UKSPF and the re-introduction of some core 'business as usual' work.

Core Work, including UKSPF

Further contributions have been made in response to consultations to release funding via the East Midlands Combined Counties Authority (EMCCA) Investment Board. This includes actions such as business support, the visitor economy and skills interventions.

The objective is to influence countywide funding initiatives and strategies that will support local businesses and residents. Some funding through LGF has been released to both the constituent councils and the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce, the latter as the result of a successful business support tender.

The team works closely monitoring industrial commercial and retail vacancies. In addition to tracking for performance management purposes, this information is used to help support businesses looking to invest or expand in Broxtowe.

Vacancies are also an important feature of the High Street Rental Auctions (HSRA) where Broxtowe has become the first council in the country to complete a refurbishment project and advertise a property at auction. With the two bidders both being out of scope, the auction will be re-run and preparations are being made. The restoration of the Old Rock/Chequers Inn, to a suitable letting standard will be completed during October.

The Council has used the HSRA process to take a proactive approach to understanding and addressing long-term vacancies, engaging with more than 17 property owners in Stapleford and 10 in Eastwood.

The Government has recently released approximately £10 million for this initiative, and the Council has assisted with the national consultation to inform the next steps. At least eight other councils have contacted the team for advice.

Eastwood remains a core area of work. CEDARS continues to steadily grow and from a standing start last summer, regular partner slots operate four days a week with 545 people receiving services by the end of Q2. The Ministry of Justice, the DWP and, most recently, the CAB are in the process of taking further space which should increase outputs further. Additional and occasional one day health screening events also take place from CEDARS.

Work on the significant Health Hub project at Walker Street continues, both in terms of project development and funding solutions. Officers responded to Raleigh entering administration, by working with EMCCA and the DWP to offer rapid redundancy support for the company's former employees. An expression of interest was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund to secure historic assets for the area.

The Council received permission to extend the 2025/26 UKSPF programme allocation to 30 September 2026. A report will be submitted to EMCCA recording the outputs and outcomes of nearly 40 projects with all funding defrayed.

All activities supported have been agreed with the support of the Members Advisory Panel, with modifications addressed by written procedures. More than £708,000 was directly invested through UKSPF in projects supporting Broxtowe's businesses, communities, residents and town centres.

A key component of the activity has been piloting lower cost initiatives that promote town centres, markets, self-employment, new business starts and opportunities for jobs and recruitment. This work provides a template for business-as-usual activity for the remainder of this financial year and 2027/28. One area which has been particularly successful was the business start-up workshop, with 32 participants attending with 15 awarded grant funding, most of which qualified for the start-up support grant of up to £850. There are currently no grants for business start-ups in the region and an allocation in the core budget will ensure this process is run at least one more time this financial year with the next workshop to be held in Beeston. UKSPF funded several other significant projects including the extension of the Citizens Advice Bureau Financial Resilience Programme.

Funding was also deployed to employment and skills projects, the Transform programme, provided 98 economically inactive residents with keyworker support, 15 of whom were supported into employment. It will be hard to replicate this activity without further funding. However, recent delivery includes additional partnership working with other authorities, supporting the Youth Voice Conference and two job fairs held in partnership with DWP, each attracting more than 120 attendees. This type of approach remains very cost effective and achievable moving forwards.

Some interesting work revolves around town centre trails. Three have been launched: One in Stapleford, The Pits to Pints Heritage trail in Eastwood (which achieved £1,000 in sponsorship) and a similar trail designed to attract more footfall in Kimberley. A night market for 'freshers' was held which was very successful as has an initiative to promote local businesses to freshers and incoming students. The Broxtowe stand attracted hundreds of visitors, 466 of whom completed a survey to understand what students want from the town.

Following the completion of improvement works to the Nottinghamshire Canal the final capital project is the erection of a large 3x2 metre screen ordered to go above the former Argos block on Beeston Square. The screen has attained planning permission and will predominantly be used to display public information, the work of the Council and support existing events. However, its presence lends itself to additional opportunities, subject to appropriate regulation and licenses. Members are asked to formally agree to the addition of the outdoor screen in The Square and for usage to be determined by the following framework:

- Council and public service information
- Broadcast of major sporting events and national ceremonies
- Partner agency information and messaging
- Support for events in Beeston and The Square
- Promotion of the town centre as a whole

- Occasional commercial use ancillary to the market and commercial square bookings
- Possible low-cost advertising for independent traders offering promotions.

It is expected that the first use will be over the Christmas period and a formal use policy could be developed through Policy Overview Working Group if preferable.

LRF Programme Updates

The Council's LRF programme still follows the plans and governance of the Stapleford Town Deal and Kimberley Means Business (KMB). Both schemes must be completed by March 2028 at the latest.

In the KMB activity, most of the active travel elements of the project have been suspended with funding diverted to other schemes. A small element of the project for a nature trail on the former railway line in the process of delivery through Via. The Bennerley Viaduct project is now completed. The ramp re-opened to the public in the spring, with the new Visitor Centre opening in July. Over a thousand people used the viaduct to observe the solar eclipse. Parking remains an issue as the Centre which has an APNR and mobile pay system, but generally visitors are still using the extended roadway for parking. A shared opportunity for the Council and the Friends of Bennerley Viaduct to raise additional income is being explored. The industrial units at Bennerley were completed on budget and ahead of schedule in May. Estates are working on securing tenants with the first contract signed for occupation in October 2026. With the Bennerley industrial units complete, work has been stepped up on the phase II Giltway units which are currently awaiting planning permission.

The refurbished Stag Ground Pavilion has been completed and is open. Bookings have been consistent since completion with World Cup events, business meetings and other hospitality such as wedding receptions generating income for the trust. The drainage, floodlights, and barrier infill works have also been completed at the Stag Ground field on time ahead of the new league season. The sports facilities at North Street are also finished within budget, providing a new hireable sports pitch for the town as well for the local primary school. Investment in the Kimberley Institute Cricket Club has been welcomed with the club winning its league.

In the town centre, this is the third use of the lights, and animations which has helped to generate footfall during the key period for the town centre. The Kimberley Hub is finally nearing build completion, which is due by December. The business grants programme is awaiting the physical completion of two schemes, but with £650,000 in grants invested in 62 projects across the town's businesses, this has created over £1 million in match funding and 29 new jobs. Overall, the project has now spent £13.7m. At this juncture no decisions are required for the Council as accountable body.

The Stapleford Town Deal Executive Board recently reviewed the programme which had at that time committed or spent £17.9m on works. As part of the review there is enough revenue budget to fund the Stapleford temporary posts in the team till March 2028. It has reviewed all projects and proposals which are not yet contractually committed. There is a desire to ensure as much of the original programme is accelerated and completed with the big projects remaining being the regeneration of Walter Parker VC Memorial Square and the new cricket pavilion. The analysis has revealed some limited opportunities to provide more benefit through additional activities, subject to Board approval and proof that they can be delivered by the deadline.

It was proposed that a facility within Bramcote Park would support families and be beneficial to all Stapleford residents. There was support for the project, providing it can be delivered within the time available. The team has started to work on a project and believe the opportunity is there to have a phased approach. This creates both opportunities for existing and new small businesses and delivers inside the timeline shown in the Edge Programme.

Appendix 1 is a sketch-up plan that delivers toilets and a canopy style construction capable of taking at least four drive on vending units. The facility would provide toilet facilities and opportunities for the public to use a free to all undercover picnic area. Some environmental benefits such as the sedum roof could be retained. Existing vendors would be able to make a competitive bid to retain their livelihoods without the impact a new café might bring. Several of the designs under consideration can provide temporary exhibition space. The biggest risks to the programme are the delivery of services and work has already started on this. A second phase might be the expansion/in-fill of the undercover area and the addition of a catering kitchen. A key objective of the scheme would be to stay revenue neutral to the Council.

Members are invited to adopt this project solution as an opportunity to fund and deliver the project within the terms and conditions of the Stapleford Town Deal LRF allocation.

Within the other parts of the programme in the design pipeline are two remaining significant projects. The Walter Parker VC Memorial Square project has progressed significantly since contract award to Project Centre. Concept designs and options have been developed, and key stakeholder engagement activities undertaken, with construction planning carefully coordinated around key town centre events and Christmas activities. Public Engagement is taking place from 28 September through to end of October. Work also progresses on the planning application for the new cricket pavilion adjacent to the newly laid pitch.

All the early phase projects are now physically and largely financially complete and continue to generate opportunities for residents and businesses: the Derby Road Car Park, the Library Learning Centre, cycling provision, Skate Park, young people's centre and Town Centre Business Recovery grant scheme. The young people's centre project was funded via an underspend on an earlier project and provided a new kitchen and food area.

All Wheels and Skate Park at Pasture Road Recreation Ground has experienced high levels of use since opening, with the Skate Nottingham's programme attracting 452 participants of which 45% were female ranging from age 7 to 47. Works to improve paths and accessibility within Pasture Road Recreation Ground are nearing completion and the windfall of a new changing facility for Trowell Football Club at Pit Lane has been created. The Albany School puffin crossing and associated footpath improvements were completed in August, providing long overdue road safety for pedestrians and cyclists. An official opening took place on 4 September.

Appendix 2 is a table of all the significant outputs and outcomes achieved since the last report to Cabinet.

The Stapleford Community Pavilion has completed one year of operation, with all indoor facilities, pitches and courts available for community use. There is strong and growing usage with 120 young people attending the Steven Gerrard Academy on a weekly basis. A key Football Foundation target of growth in football especially women and girls are also close to being achieved, with the women and girls game use doubling. One new business spin-out and three new jobs have been created this quarter from activities at the centre. The team continue to support the local football partnership together with colleagues from the Environmental Services Department.

The 12-month snagging review many of the items identified have already been resolved but the team continues to negotiate over some matters. Additional onsite and offsite parking options have been proposed, and a start and finish task group has begun to examine restrictions on Hickings Lane. The community garden remains the one on-site project yet to start as the result of an external funding bid is awaited.

The construction of the Pencil Works Enterprise Hub is approaching completion, slightly behind schedule, practical completion is anticipated in November 2026. The additional £320,000 secured from EMCCA for the Makers Space element is being incorporated into the final delivery programme and will provide specialist facilities aimed at supporting creative industries, start-up businesses and circular economy initiatives. Significant progress has been made over the summer on internal fit-out, external works and utility connections. A procurement exercise is underway to identify a suitable operator and three have been shortlisted to engage in the final phase of competitive dialogue. Discussions regarding additional off-site staff and tenant parking have also been explored, with the objective of retaining public parking availability within the site. The most promising consideration is an arrangement with the Stapleford and Bramcote Conservative Club for provision of an alternative car park for the Pencil Works. As the accountable body Members are being asked for in principle permission to progress lease and licence agreement.

Subject to this, or a satisfactory alternative solution being achieved, it would be sensible and desirable to release parking at the Pencil Works for public use instead of becoming a privately managed car park.

Again, Members are invited to endorse the principle of taking this site back into the Broxtowe car parking estate. There are costs associated with this, which have not been fully budgeted for. The table below illustrates this:

Items	Cost £	STD Funded
NGED 7kW power supply	n/a	n/a
GEDA 2 x 7KW EV Chargers	21,000	Yes (Contingency)
Car Park Signage	450	No – Revenue
Pay Meter and support	5,200	No – Revenue
New 40kW Chargers	52,000	No – Capital
NGED Supply 40kW	n/a	n/a
Total Cost	78,650	
Total Additional Costs	£36,650	<i>STD pays £31,650</i>
Proposed Broxtowe Contribution	£26,000	

The two EV charging stations required for a public car park are at a higher specification than the ones originally planned, with a revised charge from NGED for an upgraded electricity supply and a new meter and signage. The total package of works could amount to £70,000, if the contractor has to delay installation until post completion.

At this juncture, it is not possible to judge whether these can be met from within the general project contingency budget. There was around £23,000 within the original specification for the parking area, so it is proposed that the around half the revised scope be set aside as a contingent liability within the Council's capital budget next year, to be defrayed if the project contingency is exhausted. If Members were minded supporting this decision, a suitable development budget would be included in the Capital Programme.

4. Key Decision

This report is not considered to contain a key decision.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not applicable.

6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer were as follows:

The Council's revenue budgets and capital programme for 2026/27 include the necessary provisions for the significant Kimberley and Stapleford regeneration investment projects.

There is no budgetary provision in the capital programme for any additional costs associated with the Victoria Street public car park. If Members were to approve the scheme, an uplift in costs relating to any additional Council contributions would be included in 2026/27 (or as a new capital development for 2027/28) and be funded from prudential borrowing. The revenue cost of borrowing would be offset by income generation from the public car park.

7. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The works would ensure compliance with all applicable health and safety legislation as well as for the protection of employees and the public.

The Council has the relevant power to enter into a lease or licence under s1 of the Localism Act 2011 and s111 of the Local Government Act 1972 but must ensure that any arrangement represents best value.

Any lease or licence that the Council choose to enter into with a private third party will need to ensure it complies with the Council's duty under s123 of the Local Government Act. The consideration or rent paid needs to align with market value evidenced by an independent valuation from a surveyor.

Legal Services will be able to assist in carrying out full due diligence on the third party's title to ensure there are no issues with restrictive covenants or third-party rights that would affect any lease taken.

8. Human Resources Implications

Not applicable.

9. Union Comments

Not applicable.

10. Climate Change Implications

No climate change implications are anticipated as part of the activities contained in this report.

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

As this is a change to policy / a new policy an equality impact assessment is included in the appendix to this report.

13. Background Papers

Nil