

Minutes of Telford Town Deal Board
Friday 27 November, 13.00 - 13.45 pm
Held via Microsoft Teams

Attended:

Board Members

Graham Wynn OBE (GW)	Chair
Lucy Allan MP (LA)	MP for Telford
Cllr Shaun Davies (SD)	T&W
Cllr David Wright (DW)	T&W
Mandy Thorn MBE (MT)	Marches LEP
Professor Nazira Karodia (NK)	University of Wolverhampton
Paul Hinkins (PH)	Telford Business Board
Graham Guest (GG)	Telford College
Julie Mellor (JM)	Chief Officer Group (T&W Community & Voluntary Sector)
Felicity Wingrove (FW)	Zen Communications
Guy Beaumont (GB)	Sovereign Centros

Officers

David Sidaway (DS)	T&W
Angie Astley (AA)	T&W
Katherine Kynaston (KK)	T&W
Julie Wedge	Minute taker

1. Welcome

Actions

GW welcomed everyone to today's meeting, and thanked Julie Mellor for joining the board representing T&W Community & Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group.

2. Apologies

Mark Pritchard MP - GW confirmed that a pre meeting has taken place and comments received.
Karl Tupling
Maria Machancoses
David Evans
Clare Hannah (BEIS Observer)

3. Declarations of Interest

GW asked if there were any specific declarations in light of today's agenda. No new declarations raised.

4. Notes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

GW reviewed the notes from the previous meeting held on 25 September 2020 for accuracy. Meeting was held on 25 September not July as stated in the draft notes. This will be amended. No further amendments were requested.

GW confirmed that the notes were a true record of the meeting.

AGREED

The previous meeting date was set for the 23 October but this had been deferred by one month due to the extension of the submission date.

KK confirmed that the action under item 5 had been completed.

AA expressed her thanks to all board members for their time and feedback following the individual meetings with GW and KK/AA. These had been really helpful in shaping the submission draft.

DW expressed his thanks to KK & Kathy Mulholland for the briefings with the Town Councils for Wellington and Oakengates. Both TC very much welcomed being involved.

GW confirmed that a number of briefings on the TIP have taken place since the last meeting including the Marches LEP and TBB.

5. Board Feedback on Draft Investment Plan

KK advised that the target for submission is now 11 December.

KK stated that the individual meetings with board member were really valuable particularly in making the links between the Town Investment Plan and regional and national agendas. KK welcomed the letters of endorsement from stakeholders provided by Board Members. Those received so far were shared earlier in the week with Board members.

The papers sent out last week had included the full draft text of the TIP and also the designed up version of the Executive Summary. These are still a work in progress and over the next couple of weeks the team will be polishing the document.

KK thanked those who had already sent through comments and confirmed an updated version had been sent out a few days ago reflecting some initial changes from comments received. KK asked board members to share their comments today to ensure the strongest possible submission.

GW invited Board members to give their comments / thoughts particularly anything missing or to be improved upon.

PH - welcomed the amendments to the section on the College, but felt that there needed to be further reference made to 'blended learning'. This will be important in post Covid time when we won't be returning to same scale of 'physical' meetings and links to the maths and digital hub proposals.

PH also commented that the document is great but the message it gives is mainly on new investment and development but only made passing reference to supporting existing businesses (page 15 / 16). PH felt this diluted the importance of retaining these businesses to the Town which would also be achieved by the investments creating the environment for them to stay. This includes the offer from schools, FE, HE, new housing etc. which are part of Station Quarter.

LA felt that the document encapsulated the vision, ambition and uniqueness of Telford, the passion comes through in every page. The authors should be proud of what they have produced.

LA commented that section 3 should include reference to the challenges of oversupply of commercial office space.

It is really heart warming that we are doing something so positive at this time and LA confirmed she would be proud to put the Plan in front of the SoS, and felt this was a model for others to follow.

GW agreed that we should be proud of the work done to date recognising that we are not quite there yet and work will continue over the next couple of weeks

MT reiterated the comments shared by LA and PH, the LEP board were blown away by the proposals and presentation they received commenting on the

content, passion and ambition set out in the document. MT commented it would be a hard act to follow for other Town Deal areas.

MT confirmed that the formal endorsement from the LEP Board will be sent through next week.

MT

MT felt that the document could be strengthened to reflect the scale of collaborative working, for example MT attended the Telford Land Deal Board earlier today which is a good example of collaborative working with Homes England, the LEP, TBB and TWC. We need to make more of Telford's track record of collaborative working including with the voluntary and community sector. Overall though felt that it was an impressive bid.

GW echoed MT comments and having a business in Telford for a number of years agreed that there were also a number of sub groups that also work collaboratively. Telford is a positive place to start a business.

GG echoed what had already been said - this has been a great project to work on and there is a real collaborative spirit. GG had received a number of supportive letters which had been shared and also thanked LA for the letter of support from Robert Halfon MP which had also prompted a request to come back to visit the College. GG looked forward to working further on the project in the New Year.

FW advised that she had picked up on more of the detail and language used in her comments and recognised there was still some final proofing to do.

FW suggested there could be more reference to societal changes including on the High Street. Also in the local context piece there was a need to position this to identify what is right.

On Page 15 - where reference is made to grants we need to acknowledge central government support – and that we are delivering a lot but could be doing more with more.

FW felt that the picture of the BT e.g. Oakengates needed to be slightly bleaker reflecting the loss of local shops.

There could be further made of the business incubation elements of the Station Quarter investment proposals. We should also make more of the presence of businesses like VRS Simulation as a business and reflecting the digital skill set

The wording on Page 22 could be more dynamic.

FW felt that the Executive Summary needed further work, was a little bit dry and lacked the same transformative language included in the main text. Is a need to get in more about Telford's role as an exemplar and public/private sector partnership. The document is pushing boundaries and needs to be bold, visual and vibrant and some of the imagery didn't yet give this impression.

FW ultimately thought it was a brilliant document.

LA agreed with FW regarding the Borough Towns and also the comments regarding the Executive Summary

JM thanked the board for allowing her to join and represent the Chief Officer Group (T&W Community & Voluntary Sector). There is a lot of collaborative work happening within the voluntary sector which is really strong in Telford.

JM welcomed seeing the new investment proposals and that they represent an exciting opportunity going forward. JM suggested references to the strength of the voluntary/community sector could be further emphasised – there is strong collaboration and this is a sector that is data rich and supporting the changing landscape.

NK confirmed she would provide further comments directly to the team. NK picked up on the reference to inclusive growth which is emphasised at the beginning as a key part of the transformation and would like to see the same language used in other sections of the main document. NK endorsed the comments already made around the strength of partnerships including with business and community.

NK

SD had been working with the team and thanked all for their contributions these were appreciated by both SD and the team. SD stated it was an honour to work with the team and the quality and commitment reflects what is delivered every day by officers.

SD commented that the document shows the aspirations for Telford and reflects the level of collaboration with the private sector / LEP / TBB. This is a good story to tell all in one place.

SD had been speaking with Councillors across the Country and ours does shine through.

DW stated that a massive amount of work has been done already which enables us to polish the document and make sure it is top quality. It is a powerful document with a golden thread and the story shines through. DW welcomed the really positive feedback received including from the LEP. Collectively we can be really proud of the document.

DS thanked Board members for their comments and the Council wide team. DS was aware that Rt Hon Robert Jenrick having visited Telford and heard about the proposals will expect us to 'blow him out of the water' with our proposals. DS felt we were getting close to a fantastic document.

DS commented that on returning to work in his home town he had an ambition around education and with support of LEP investment is now seeing this coming forward driven by quality of local partnerships.

GW echoed that Telford had an excellent track record on delivery.

GB confirmed via chat that he had some statistics around the town centre which he would share with KK/AA outside of the meeting. GB echoed the sentiment of those who had commented. It is a very impressive document.

GB

Additional comments added via teams chat

MT - on the description about green spaces and Town Park at the top of Page 12 can we say that the Queen's Award is the Queen's Award for voluntary Service rather than shortening it.

LA - I am getting an endorsement from Secretary of State for Education

GW thanked all for the positive comments. We were not finished yet but it was an excellent start.

GW would like to see a polished document and wanted something LA can be proud to present. If he could GW would be putting it to ministers himself.

SD also expressed his thanks to Mark Pritchard MP. SD/AA had met with MP this week and he had fed in his comments and will support the bid. GW advised that MP had also raised the Telford Investment Plan in the House of Commons last week.

PH added that all should be proud and a really big thank you. He reflected that as you look at the proposals and the companies involved there are many links

with the Telford Business Board and more should be made of this. TWC and the TBB have a fantastic, collaborative relationship. We should also reflect the role of our MPs.

GW advised that he and SD were due to meet with Andy Street, and were looking to get support and endorsement.

GW asked that the board members mandate GW to sign off on the bid on their behalf. No objections raised.

GW

Once the final document is submitted all will get a copy of the document.

6. Next Steps

KK thanked all for their comments and confirmed these will be picked up as we finalise the Plan over the next couple of weeks.

KK

KK asked if there are any more endorsements to please send these through by the end of next week (Friday 4th December). We will be appending all of these and drawing some 'soundbites' to put into the document.

ALL

KK advised that after submission we were in the hands of MHCLG. On the basis of Wave 1 submissions it could be a couple of months before we have a response. The Board will be kept fully informed.

KK

7. AOB

GW asked if there was anything further anyone would like to raise.

SD offered a huge thank you to GW on behalf of the Council and all Board Members for the time he has given to his role as Chair of the Town Deal Board and his leadership.

GW thanked SD for his comments but emphasised the team effort.

8. Date of Next Meeting

GW proposed that the next meeting be on Friday 29 January 2021.

This date may be amended depending on when we hear back from MHCLG. Board members will be kept updated.

GW thanked all for attending the meeting and took the opportunity to wish all a safe and happy Christmas.