

**Minutes of Telford Town Deal Board**  
**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July, 11.30 am - 1.00 pm**  
***Held via Microsoft Teams***

**Attended:**

**Board Members**

Graham Wynn OBE (GW)	Chair
Cllr Shaun Davies (SD)	T&W
Cllr David Wright (DW)	T&W
Mandy Thorn MBE	Marches LEP
Paul Gascoine (PG)	Homes England
Professor Nazira Karodia (NK)	University of Wolverhampton
Paul Hinkins (PH)	Telford Business Board
Graham Guest (GG)	Telford College
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
James Dunn (JD)	T&W
Clive Jones (CJ)	T&W
Julie Wedge	Minute taker

**1. Welcome**

GW welcomed everyone to the meeting including new Board Members Felicity Wingrove from Zen Communications and Guy Beaumont from Sovereign Centros.

**Actions**

**2. Apologies**

Lucy Allan MP  
Mark Pritchard MP  
Karl Tupling – Paul Gascoine had joined in KT place  
Maria Machancoses  
Caro Hart  
David Evans  
Clare Hannah

**3. Declarations of Interest**

GW asked if there were any specific declarations in light of today's Agenda. None were raised.

GW thanked those who had submitted their declaration of interest forms and asked for any final forms to be sent to Julie Wedge as soon as possible.

**ALL**

**4. Notes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

GW reviewed the notes from the previous meeting held 19 June 2020. No amendments were requested.

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

**AGREED**

## **5. Developing our Narrative - Discussion**

AA advised that KK will talk through the slides shared prior to today's meeting along with colleagues JD and CJ. AA expressed her thanks to the board for their input into the proposals shared at the last meeting and also to those board members who had taken part in the survey, shared following June's meeting. The aspiration remains to achieve the October submission deadline.

AA acknowledged that we need to do a level of community and business engagement following discussions today hopefully confirming focus for investment.

GW / AA / KK have met with the newly appointed Towns Fund Delivery Partner. They will work with us to advise and offer guidance as required on the development of the bid proposals including engagement.

The draft narrative had been circulated with the Agenda informed by the themes and discussion at the last Board meeting.

GW commented that the narrative, helpfully, sets the scene and highlights areas that we want to focus on. Following today's discussion and agreement that these are our priorities, we need to flesh it out using our data/intel as the context for our investment proposals.

GW invited questions / observations / thoughts on the document from the Board.

DW had raised at the previous meeting that we needed to tell a story that linked all the proposals, when communicating back to government. DW felt that the narrative started to do this well. It establishes a context for the range of work that we and partners are doing and can link into. DW thanked those involved for the work that had been done.

PH emphasised the importance to Telford of the business & professional services sector and commented that this and also the SME sector didn't come out of the page and asked that this be reviewed. GW stated this was a good point.

MT raised that the manufacturing sector is being hit hard illustrated by Make UK latest reports and we need to ensure the educational offer supports the changes in the sector and enables the right type of engineering. We need to ensure we are at the cutting edge of what is needed.

GW raised the opportunity for Telford from on shoring. We need to be alert to this. Covid has identified a weakness in the supply chain which offer opportunities to attract inward investment.

GW recognised that there were a number of apologies for today's meeting and asked that Members send any additional comments on the narrative to KK by Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July.

**ALL**

## **6. Agreeing our Investment Priorities - Presentation & Discussion**

KK reminded the board of the high level investment packages discussed at the last meeting. The subsequent survey had gathered some further comments included in a paper circulated with the agenda, and provided a ranking of the projects as set out in the slides. All projects had received a level of support and work has progressed to develop the detail of the proposals for the Board's endorsement today.

KK handed over to JD – Director, Prosperity & Investment to present Gigabit Telford and Station Quarter.

### **Gigabet Telford**

Digital infrastructure has been identified by the Board as a key driver for Recovery and Long Term Economic Growth with benefits across communities. This priority aligns with UK Industrial Strategy and the Marches Strategic Economic Plan and Digital Strategy Vision

While in Telford we do have good broadband provision, full fibre coverage is quite low.

JD confirmed we are exploring options to work with a number of private providers looking to invest into opportunities.

JD endorsed MT's earlier comments regarding ensuring the curriculum focus on digital to be right.

### **Station Quarter**

JD outlined the location and opportunities from developing this brownfield and largely cleared site located between the Shopping Centre and Central Telford Train Station. It is an ambitious, strategically important development which would highlight Telford's ambition and create investment opportunities through a mixed development.

JD confirmed that Local Growth Funding via Marches LEP has given the opportunity to take forward land assembly making the scheme increasingly 'shovel ready'.

JD shared details of the initial master plan which is for a mix of uses including education & enterprise and residential

It was confirmed that to deliver in its entirety Station Quarter will require investment in excess of £25 million. In the light of the Board priorities around skills, it is proposed that the Town Deal investment include a focus on establishing the master plan and planning application for the site and investment to deliver the skills & enterprise hub, enabling works and support the first phase of residential. This will put Telford in a strong position to attract further funding opportunities and support partners plans for wider investment into the Town Centre

CJ - Executive Director: Children's & Family Services provided an update on plans for skills provision as part of SQ. This is focussed on extending the existing offer in Telford with an employer focus including digital and engineering. Intention is to establish a new model of delivery that offers everyone the opportunity to access. The work is being shaped with local HE and FE partners and will continue in tandem with the physical investment plan's development.

### **Opportunity Towns - Wellington**

KK outlined plans for investment into Wellington and Oakengates as the two identified 'opportunity towns'

Wellington - Largest market town with exceptional transport links and opportunities to repurpose existing buildings to focus retail and open up investment opportunities for other uses including residential. Work would also focus on strengthening walking and cycling links and redesigning the look and feel of the public realm.

The next stage is to work with the Regeneration Board and Town Council on a more detailed masterplan and set of proposals.

### **Opportunity Towns – Oakengates**

A large Borough Town with a substantial hinterland of communities it supports. Home to the Town's theatre with rail connections.

KK outlined suggested investments including a focus on the Square and approaches to the Theatre, repurposing some key buildings to introduce a greater mix of uses and opportunities for more residential development. The next step is engagement with local Members, the TC and Regeneration Group.

### **Telford – Connecting Communities**

This is a key theme for the Board and KK outlined intention that this be a golden thread running through the investment projects.

With the Investment Plan identified as an opportunity to start a longer term dialogue with government, it is important that we seek Government support to continue to work with us to address other barriers to connecting our communities including estate renewal.

KK provided an update to the Board on a call from Government to submit proposals for a £1m capital fund linked with the Town Deal to fast track some elements of the TIP plans. Submissions need to be made by 14<sup>th</sup> August for spend by end March 2021. The Council has been asked to submit proposals and it is proposed to include:

- Delivery of a series of community hubs providing space for 'home working in the community'
- Targeted acquisitions and repurposing of buildings to kickstart regeneration in the Opportunity Towns
- Procurement of Digital private sector partner including targeted investments

The proposals are subject to further discussion with MHCLG to ensure they fit the bid criteria. The Board supported the focus of the bid.

KK concluded the presentation confirming that the Board's endorsement was being sought today to the draft narrative and investment packages. These can then be worked up targeting the October submission deadline.

In relation to community engagement, this remains challenging but the Council are undertaking an online resident's survey (launched 27 July) and this will include some questions relating to the investment proposals. Targeted engagement would also follow in Oakengates and Wellington.

A survey of businesses within the borough has not been undertaken by the council to date given the extensive survey work done recently by the Marches LEP and a number of other business and regional organisations. However it is proposed to do some local engagement with business after the Summer linked with recovery and new investment opportunities and to pick up the Investment Plan as part of that.

It is proposed to hold the next meeting of the Board in September allowing time for work to progress.

GW thanked all for the presentation and opened the meeting up for comments.

PH - Connecting communities is an area of concern. Those with the highest support needs rarely get the recognised help, how are we going to help them connect? GW noted this comment which needs to be addressed in the Plan

NK – highlighted that the £25m investment can include up to 10% revenue and important to ensure we pursue this to deliver our ambitions and ensure buildings are occupied.

**KK/CJ/NK**

NK also offer to input to the narrative and data/intel underpinning this and to contribute to the curriculum/skills offer.

**KK/JD/PG**

PG - was encouraged to hear that there are residential opportunities in Station Quarter / Wellington and Oakengates. PG offered further discussions off line with Homes England

PG asked if there was any idea on unit numbers. JD advised that phase Station Quarter was roughly 100 units with potential for 250 – 300 over further phases. Oakengates and Wellington we haven't yet got quantum's, and will need to undertake some master planning.

GG - confirmed very supportive of Station Quarter and the College have been doing work around digital skills and this will enable retention of more students within Telford. Currently undertaking work around attainment and the plans fits nicely into their strategies.

GB - advised that the Shopping Centre are looking at re-purposing of buildings and spaces to introduce more residential development in the town centre which would help to achieve the critical mass. GB would like to assist with plans and to have further discussions with Homes England.

**PG/JD/GB**

FW - commented that from an SME perspective, businesses are re-evaluating and moving towards a new normal. It would be really interesting to build into plans / shared spaces / hubs allowing more to work flexibly. FW asked if this was something that was actively being considered? KK advised that this was very much a model for the initial £1m through the community hubs.

FW - with regards to surveys of businesses, FW had done some research of around 100 SME and feedback was that about 15 businesses regularly respond to surveys, FW felt that we needed to look at reaching businesses in a different way and offered to support with ideas on how this could be done.

**KK/FW**

GW - We heard at the last meeting the number of people registering as unemployed. There is potential for people who want to start up their own business, and felt that we would start to see this emerging.

PH - commented that post pandemic he felt there would be a lot more new businesses and starts up as well as loss of jobs and felt it was important to be mindful of support for 'back to basics'.

MT was encouraged by the conversations taking place, we have an opportunity to make a difference and we need to make it happen. We need to be reimagining the town centre, and the conversion to residential and recognising changing work patterns and the need to retain work/life balance.

MT also highlighted need to support the Voluntary and Community sector. Shropshire Youth Support Trust, for example who also work in Telford & Wrekin.

JD advised that the community hubs proposed for the £1m funding would respond to changing work/life patterns.

SD – confirmed his agreement with all the comments from Board members. We need to get this underway and really encouraged to hear the conversations and support for investment into Wellington, Oakengates and Station Quarter and working with the College, Uni and Town Centre.

DW - also agreed with comments that had been raised and felt the ideas were really positive and the joining up of approach and support from the TC particularly from GB and PG. Hoped we can look at and work together to deliver Station Quarter and compliment the work the Shopping Centre want do to bring residential life into the Town Centre.

DW suggested that the story here is Connecting Telford – from all that has been discussed we are connecting in a number of ways - digitally / transport hubs / office space / training opportunities.

KK/JD

DW asked if there are conversations that could be had with transport colleagues and possible investment into the stations. Telford Central, we have the new bridge but the station area / environment is tired. Wellington is more positive and Oakengates aware there are some challenges.

DW advised that as an elected member he had purposely chosen not to take part in the survey as wanted the response to be from a non-council perspective.

DS – echoed what had already been said and the positive comments. Proposals set out our ambition, aspiration and need to challenge expectations of our Town. Station Quarter represents a gateway of opportunity for the Town.

GB picked up on DW comments and working together around the Town Centre. Advised that the nightclub had now gone and this was one area of focus for the Shopping Centre.

FW felt that this was really exciting, FW was proud of the area and chose to live in Telford.

GW - thanked everyone for their input and support and confirmed that on this basis Officers would work up the projects and engagement work and feedback in September.

## 7. AOB

No other business raised.

GW confirmed that the next meeting would be on 25 September. Any further feedback on the narrative or investment proposals illustrated today, please send this to JW and KK by Friday 24 July.

ALL

GW thanked everyone for their attendance and formally closed the meeting.

## 8. Date of Next Meeting -

- 25 September - 14.00 - 15.30 via TEAMS