

Minutes of Telford Town Deal Board
Friday 25th September, 14.00 - 15.30 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
Maria Machancoses	Midland Connect
Graham Guest (GG)	Telford College
Caro Hart (CH)	Chief Officer Group (T&W Community & Voluntary Sector)
Felicity Wingrove (FW)	Zen Communications
Guy Beaumont (GB)	Sovereign Centros

Officers

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

1. Welcome

GW welcomed everyone to today's meeting.

2. Apologies

Mark Pritchard MP
David Evans
Karl Tupling
Clare Hannah
Angie Astley

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 17 July 2020 for accuracy. No amendments were requested.

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

AGREED

KK confirmed the actions on page 5 / 6, conversations with Homes England, NK and FW had either taken place or were scheduled in the diary. The link with Network Rail had also been picked up.

GW handed over to KK who gave an update on what was approved at July's board including the draft vision narrative and investment packages.

KK provided an update on the £1m Accelerated Delivery Fund thanking LA for alerting the Team that day that this funding had been approved by MHCLG and the full amount had been awarded.

Actions

LA stated that it was really good news that the full £1 million had been secured, Telford were one of only a few who had received the full amount.

GW handed over to LA who briefed the Board on the recent visit by Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick to Telford on Friday 11 September. This was an important opportunity to showcase Telford's Towns Fund proposals.

LA advised that the SoS visit was arranged at short notice and apologised that an invite was not extended to all board members. The SoS met with GW and some members of the Board for a walkabout including Station Quarter. LA stated the SoS does have links to the area and knows the area well.

5. Proposal for Leisure, Arts & Culture Recovery Fund

KK outlined the proposal to include a new Fund focussed on supporting the Leisure, Arts & Culture sector in the Investment Plan. This is a sector that has been hard hit by Covid and the proposal is to seek £1m as a recovery fund.

It was proposed that Board members would be directly involved in determining the recipients of the funding. KK advised that she was seeking board's approval for this proposal today so that it could be included within the expression of interest.

GW commented that it was good to directly engage the Board.

LA asked what was meant by recovery. KK confirmed that this would focus on viable proposals for growth with applicants needing to show how they would sustain their business and maximise on opportunities going forward.

This shouldn't been seen as extended furlough, it needs to be about growth for the future.

GW added that it will be linked with what the Chancellor announced yesterday re supporting viable businesses. Jobs that will be retained or opportunity's to create new jobs in the future. There will need to be a clear strategy for the future.

MT commented that we needed to ensure the sector is supported. LEP had provide some funding for work in this area working with the TBB. Could some of those criteria be looked at, this was about supporting businesses to grow and ways to promote the town, could build on the work PH and colleagues had done.

KK

GW thanked all for their comments and approval to the proposals.

KK

GW advised that he had met with IGMT, the Wellington based Orbit Project and Wellington Regeneration Partnership to look at their proposals going forward and get a better feel of how they have been affected. GW was trying to get out to visit as many businesses as he could.

6. Update on Telford Investment Plan Submission

KK gave an update on the process through to submission of the TIP.

This included a check and challenge session with the Delivery Partners in early October to get feedback on the direction of travel.

7. Engagement Plan

KK advised that the MHCLG are steering towards digital engagement and showing how this will continue as part of developing individual business cases post submission of the EOI.

A number of comments have been received through various routes including over 100 comments through the My Town Campaign as well as comments through the resident's survey. We also have material from engagement work with Wellington and Oakengates and a significant amount of business intelligence including the outcome of the Marches LEP Covid Recovery questionnaire and partner working group and business partners.

KK will also be going to the Telford Business Board to brief on the proposals.

It was confirmed that engagement will continue after the expression of interest is submitted to define and deliver the projects within the investment packages

The Board commented on the questions within the resident's survey regarding Station Quarter and the borough towns including Oakengates and Wellington which had included a menu of options for what residents would be interested in seeing in these locations.

PH commented that a hotel was on the list for Station Quarter, personally this did not sit right with him.

GW advised that the Station Quarter project is an evolving opportunity which would unlock private sector investment and job creation. The hotel was on the original master plan.

LA commented that she didn't think that the government should be funding a hotel at this time. LA asked for clarification that from the survey response residents had requested a hotel, along with the other ideas listed.

FW advised that as a resident she had completed the survey herself and hotel was listed as an option to tick. FW had attended the SoS visit and he had expressed he was excited about the ideas but FW did not believe the hotel was mentioned. FW emphasised importance of Telford becoming an exemplar, and need to be pushing the boundaries.

DS responded to the comments with some context. DS had been involved in delivering a number of hotels in the past and he had met with the MD of one of the biggest hotel brands and they do want to come to Telford. Telford is on the radar for significant investment and is seen as a place where companies want to invest. There is real interest from the sector and an opportunity to leverage in investment.

GW commented, he had not seen the offer, but this interest could well make the difference in terms of delivery.

8. Telford Digital Education & Enterprise Hub – presentation by Graham Guest / Professor Nazira Karodia on plans for Station Quarter

GW handed over to GG / NK for their presentation.

GG advised that this is v much a collaborative approach to delivering a new skills and enterprise offer including the College, University and Schools / Employers and Telford and Wrekin Council. GG

emphasised the ambition to deliver something very different and aspirational hence the image of the Guggenheim.

The project has been evolving over the last 6 months, and a lot of work has been done around data to underpin the proposals.

Approximately 300 students migrate to Shrewsbury with others going to Stafford / Wolverhampton and a key target is to retain these young people in Telford.

A further driver is to raise skills to level 3 and above across all communities.

Maths is key for all and the College are working with local schools on pathways from Level 1.

TBB have also been involved in activity.

GG handed over to NK. NK confirmed the plans are to be an exemplar place based partnership. There is a need to be aspirational and she has been talking with employers about their plans and understanding what attracts young people and will keep them for longer. The proposals will include both a physical space as well as a virtual space.

This will be a unique alliance between College and University with a blended learning approach. There will be a structured programme with a seamless pathway, enabling students to step on and off at any time. The curriculum can be packaged into bite size chunks and aims to create new knowledge and resilience and build digital skill capacity.

GG drew the Board's attention to the student on the final slide as an example of what we're aiming to achieve – having gained her qualifications through the College she is now going on to take her HND.

CH thanked GG/NK for the presentation and including a focus on soft skills. CH was interested to make a link with VCSE.

MT - thanked GG / NK for the presentation, really positive, welcoming anything that supports enabling businesses to grow. MT noted that health was referenced. The LEP had undertaken work around health and care sector and NHS digital is an exciting opportunity to upskill social care network. Key is equipping employers for digital change and delivery.

SD – commented on an excellent presentation, excited around the offer and location of offer. SD commented that the look and feel will be important. It can't look like a college or school, it will need to look different to give people the confidence to attend.

PH - Vision is about working up delivery for the future. Building is a shell, heart of the building is what it is delivering. PH commented that the student featured was also a student governor in the corporation.

DS – thanked GG/NK for the presentation. The proposals are of real strategic importance and will set us apart, driving aspiration and ambition - challenging perceptions of the town for students

GW – Thanked GG / NK for the excellent presentation, it was an exciting offer for this town. GW was particularly interested in the business engagement.

9. Next Steps

KK advised that today's meeting was seeking board's approval to finalise the Expression of Interest based on the vision, investment packages and inclusion of the £1m Recovery Fund.

Over the next 2-3 weeks GW with KK/AA would like to meet with board members either individually or in groups to gather their observations and comments.

KK confirmed the intention to circulate the draft submission papers to the board the week before next board meeting.

10 AOB

PH asked if we have any idea of the programme for draw down. GW advised that we don't have any information and believed it will be set against delivery.

KK felt it would be couple of months before we have a clear decision, allowing for due diligence period.

LA queried if we have 6 individual projects or if we are down to 3? KK confirmed that there are 4 including the recovery fund with the 3 geographical investment packages.

DW commented that it was really exciting, with good projects and strong pathways for everyone to benefit from projects.

DW asked about match funding. What do we have to show to match – will we have to show indicative figures. KK advised we do not have a % of match funding but will be identifying the private investment that will be unlocked.

GW advised it is about unlocking funding and bringing in private sector investment and jobs. We will hold the meetings with Board members before the next meeting to make sure that everyone is comfortable and happy with the direction of travel.

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

11. Date of Next Meeting -

23 October - 14.00 - 15.30 via TEAMS subsequently amended following the change to submission date, to Friday 27th November.