

Minutes of Telford Town Deal Board
Friday 16 April, 10.30 - 11.30 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&WC
Cllr David Wright (DW)	T&WC
Mandy Thorn MBE (MT)	Marches LEP
Professor Nazira Karodia (NK)	University of Wolverhampton
Graham Guest (GG)	Telford College
Paul Hinkins (PH)	Telford Business Board
Guy Beaumont (GB)	Sovereign Centros
Julie Mellor (JM)	Chief Officer Group (T&W Community & Voluntary Sector)

Observer

Officers

David Sidaway (DS)	T&WC
Angie Astley (AA)	T&WC
Katherine Kynaston (KK)	T&WC
James Dunn (JD)	T&WC
Julie Wedge	Minute taker

1. Welcome

Actions

GW welcomed everyone to today's meeting.

2. Apologies

Mark Pritchard MP
David Evans / Claire Skidmore
Karl Tupling
Maria Machancoses
Felicity Wingrove
Clare Hannah

GW confirmed that Claire Skidmore had been appointed as Interim CO for the CCG and would be attending future Town Deal Board meetings.

3. Declarations of Interest

No new declarations raised.

4. Notes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

GW confirmed that the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising - KK confirmed in response to FW question that a small area of rural T&W is part of the Shropshire ultra-based broadband programme. This does not impact on the plans around gigabit Telford.

5. Progress Update on Revisions to Town Investment Plan – Presentation

KK provided an update on the work on the TIP submissions since the last meeting. This has included significant work with the Delivery Partners and KK also thanked Board partners who have, and continue to contribute with data and evidence to support the process.

A positive check and challenge session has taken place and with a second one planned next week.

The main focus has been to look in more detail at the Station Quarter project and splitting this into sub projects, strengthening the need basis for the bid and supporting revisions to the vision / themes and objectives.

KK shared the proposed revised vision with the board. There were no comments from the Board.

KK will circulate the slides and happy to take further comments on the vision and objectives by Wednesday 21st .

KK

6. Station Quarter – Presentation

JD presented an update on the Station Quarter element of the bid. This proposes three sub projects - Infrastructure & Public Realm, Maths & Digital Skills & Incubator Hub, Town Centre Living & Associated Uses.

Infrastructure & Public Realm – focusses on investment to link pedestrian and cycle paths, improve the connections from the train station to the shopping centre making the journey through station quarter from the train station more accessible to businesses, residents and connecting surrounding communities. The ask will also support remediation of brownfield land enabling the delivery of commercial, education and residential floor space.

No questions were raised by the Board.

Maths & Digital Skills & Incubator Hub – this focusses on digital education and training co-developed and delivered by Telford College and the University of Wolverhampton ensuring courses offered really help to deliver and encourage businesses to the area and support access by all communities.

The Hub will be an iconic anchor building within Station Quarter and a focus for the town centre as a whole. Driving more businesses to come to the borough and meeting the demand for start up

LA - thanked JD for the presentation and was impressed with what is in the bid. LA asked how the £7.777m Towns Fund ask has been decided. LA perhaps would have expected more to be going towards Skills element.

JD advised that the size of the building, is just under £13 m, the gap between its market value and build cost is the towns fund ask.

LA asked how it was decided that only 30% will be used towards the skills element? Would it potentially improve the bid if we asked for more towards this?

JD advised that a large proportion of the costs form part of the Infrastructure costs in terms of the remediation, servicing and all the public realm. For an investment of this type it is critical that the quality of the public realm matches that of the building. The total investment into the skills element is therefore a lot more than 30%.

LA thanked JD for clarifying.

PH - Appreciated that there are major infrastructure costs but these are a difficult sell and if we are looking to secure funding it could make it difficult. Perhaps should reconsider. Also appreciated that the building needs to look nice, but it is important to focus on delivery and what comes out of the building, which is what the government are asking to be evidenced, we must not lose sight of this.

PH recognised the collaboration with the Marches LEP, but thought that the Telford Business Board could be referenced more, this is a gateway to gaining access to the businesses.

JD agreed to take the comments on board, and recognised that the Business Board is critical to engage with.

KK advised that today is just a snap shot of projects, the TIP1 which has not yet been shared, but will be prior to the next board meeting, will evidence more of the engagement with businesses.

GG offered assurance to the Board that Telford College is making another bid to back fill some of the activity and architects have tested figures and the College are satisfied that the build cost rates assumed reflect a good quality building for the SQ hub.

GG emphasised that delivery will be innovative in approach from both College and University, far from traditional classroom models. Intention is to do something very different which perhaps needs to come out a bit more. Work has started to take place with digital companies.

MT was really impressed and the Maths / Digital hub links with the Marches Skills Plan.

MT asked how the Maths / Digital hub and SQ will link with the existing university campus. Will it displace what is going on there?

NK reassured all that the E Innovation is part of the whole programme approach and also shows we are not starting from scratch with a solid foundation. The local skills report from the Marches LEP highlights digital and cross cutting skill needs and the new provision will support that.

NK advised that there will be no silo working, there will an advisory board for this programme which will bring in the key stakeholders.

MT felt that there needed to be more information in the final submission, around the nurturing environment giving examples and including case studies. Can make a real difference working with Telford College a really positive move.

Town Centre Living & Associated Uses – JD outlined that this sub project focusses on creating a market making town centre for living, a new housing offer for the borough. Meet unmet housing needs for smaller 1 /2 bed homes, creation of a new sustainable community. It is critical that we move Telford away from being a shopping centre with some offices around the edge. The creation of this new market will give confidence to investors and lenders looking at other sites within the Town centre. The Towns fund ask is £1m for this project which will unlock over £19m of match funding. The Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) for the project as a whole is underpinned by the match funding from this sub project.

PH queried regarding the Towns Fund Ask figure - £18.013m. JD confirmed that this figure was only for Station Quarter and did not include the 3 other elements.

GW invited GB to comment from the Town Centres perspective.

GB stated how important SQ and the residential element ask was for the future prosperity of the shopping centre and reinforced the Town Centres support for the Station Quarter proposals.

There has been a real change in visitor behaviour and there has never been a more important time for the Town Centre to be considering how it maintains and develops its offer to residents / workers / visitors.

There is currently no true residential offer, Station Quarter will establish a living destination. This will create the sense of community and wider offer including leisure / health and education.

The employment and education proposals alongside the improved connections across the town through the investment in public realm will deliver this.

GW thanked all for the comments and contributions and handed back to KK.

KK shared a comment taken from a telford resident received during the residents' 2020 survey.

KK confirmed that there is a delivery team in place to drive forward SQ including the University and College. Progress is also being made in relation to planning.

KK ran through feedback from the first check and challenge and confirmed that proposals shared with the Board had been well received. Case studies as raised by MT will also be included.

While focus of Board has been on SQ KK confirmed that the other projects Destination Fund / Wellington / Oakengates remain in the bid and have also been strengthened.

7. Next Steps

KK updated on the proposed next steps. The Board will meet on 30 April to sign off the submission and the TIP 1 document will be shared ahead of the meeting to allow for review/comments. Team are on track for re submission on 7th May.

8. **AOB**

GW asked if there were any further questions.

LA was glad that all was on track for resubmission and asked about the communications plan around the towns fund process? LA was concerned regarding recent communications from the Council which read as though they were on behalf of the Town Deal Board, which was not the case.

GW responded to propose that all formal communications around the submission of the Town Investment Plan would be made by himself as Chair on behalf of the Board. This would ensure a consistent message and that Civil Servants and Ministers recognise the value of investing in Telford.

LA thanked GW for this proposal which was accepted by the Board.

PH commented that as a board member and a business member, with a non political remit, the comms that had gone out did look like they were from the Board which was not the case. PH's understanding was that as a board it had been agreed to delay the submission until December.

GW acknowledged PH comments and reiterated that his proposal to manage the communications would address this concern.

GW confirmed that we need to be able to present our best set of proposals, show we are a constructive partner and worth investing in.

9. **Date of Next Meeting**

30 April - 13.30 - 15.00

GW closed the meeting.