



Towns Fund Board

Minutes - 25 March 2022

Attendance

Members of the Towns Fund Board

Ninder Johal (Chair)	Owner, Nachural
Stuart Anderson MP	Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South West
Simon Archer	Director, Bilston BID
James Crowter	Managing Director, Tecman
Janis	Youth Council Representative
Ray Flynn	Associate Director (Place), University of Wolverhampton
Tim Johnson	Chief Executive, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC)
Pat McFadden MP	Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South East
Maninder Mangat	Director, MM Consulting
Amit Sharma	Director, INCO
Cherry Shine	Director, Wolverhampton BID
Councillor Stephen Simkins	Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy, CWC
Jane Stevenson MP	Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton North East
Patricia Willoughby	Head of Policy (Housing & Regeneration), West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

In Attendance

Annette	Youth Council Representative
Liam Davies	Head of City Development, CWC
Shelley Humphries	Democratic Services Officer, CWC
Darowen Jones	Programme Manager, Kinver Solutions Ltd
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration, CWC
Ayesha Malhan	Regeneration Officer, CWC
Andrew Scragg	Participation Officer, CWC
Peter Thomason	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
Apologies were received from Towns Fund Board members Councillor Ian Brookfield, Leader of the Council, CWC; James Holland, General Manager of Collins Aerospace; Mal Cowgill, Principal and Chief Executive of City of Wolverhampton College; Ro Hands, Owner of Learn Play Foundation; Kevin Rogers, Executive Director of Paycare, and Adam Daniels, Regional Operations Director of Countryside Properties.

Apologies were also received from Ian Fegan, Director of Communications and External Relations, CWC and John Roseblade, Temporary Director of City Housing and Environment, CWC.

2 **Notification of substitute members**

There were no notifications of substitute members.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

4 **Minutes of the meeting of 28 January 2022**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of 28 January 2022 be approved as a correct record.

5 **Matters arising**

Other than the actions covered in item 6, it was noted that there were no further matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

6 **Towns Fund Action Tracker**

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, Kinver Solutions Ltd presented the Towns Fund Action Tracker and provided the outcomes of actions agreed at the last meeting.

It was reported that the requested stakeholder meeting to discuss the Events Programme had been scheduled for 4 April 2022 and feedback would be circulated following this. It was noted that the Events Project Lead and BID Managers had been included in the invite.

In terms of the requested engagement with elected ward members, it was confirmed that stakeholder events had been held for individual projects, such as Bilston Market and Wednesfield, and ward members had been in attendance.

In response the request at the last meeting for the opportunity for Towns Fund Board members to view project sites, a programme of visits was being planned for May – June 2022.

Resolved:

1. That the outcomes from the actions agreed at the meeting of 28 January 2022 be noted.
2. That feedback from the Events Programme Stakeholder Meeting on 4 April 2022 be circulated to the Towns Fund Board membership.

7 **Local Assurance Framework**

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, Kinver Solutions Ltd presented the Local Assurance Framework for approval and highlighted key points. The document set out governance surrounding the Towns Fund Board as well as its purpose, functions and responsibilities.

An overview of the published document was provided to the Board and its content agreed.

Resolved:

That the Local Assurance Framework be approved.

Reallocation of Town Deal Funding

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, Kinver Solutions Ltd and Ray Flynn, Associate Director, University of Wolverhampton reported that the National Brownfield Institute project had unfortunately needed to be withdrawn from the delivery programme due to challenges in delivering the planned concept on a reduced budget. Despite best efforts to reconfigure the project, it was found to be unfeasible to stay true to the original concept at this time. It was noted that a communication to this effect had been circulated to the Towns Fund Board membership between meetings and that a similar scheme for the site may be considered at a future date.

It was proposed that the funding be reallocated with Bilston Market receiving £1.02 million and Wednesfield receiving £774,343. It was reasoned that this would allow for delivery of some originally planned interventions that had previously not been possible due to these projects not receiving 100% of funding. It was confirmed that, whilst the reallocation would not top up the funding to 100%, it would benefit the City and theoretically still allow for a submission for Levelling Up funding for further additionality. It was clarified that Levelling Up funding would be considered a separate funding stream and a bid could run alongside the submission of proposals for Town Deal fund reallocation.

It was confirmed that the correct procedures had been followed to identify suitable projects using the Towns Fund Re-prioritisation Toolkit and projects which had already been allocated 100% of the funding had been discounted from the process. Those projects already running, and those being delivered externally or through other funding streams were also excluded.

In response to a query on why the funding would not be divided into a fifty-fifty split between the two proposed projects, it was stated that the funding had been shared thus to adequately cover delivery of the next impactful intervention for each project.

Following discussion, including deliberations on channelling the money into other worthy City centre projects, it was agreed that the best course of action would be the proposal that offered best value for money and was of greater benefit to the City as a whole.

It was agreed that plans be set in motion to reallocate the funds to the Bilston Market Project and Wednesfield Project. Assurances were offered that funding streams would continually be explored to add to the delivery of all the other projects.

It was confirmed that Bilston and Wednesfield stakeholder engagement would be revisited to finalise with stakeholders which aspects of each project should be put forward for funding. Following this, proposals would be submitted to Government for reallocation.

Resolved:

That Towns Fund Board agree that proposals be submitted to Government to reallocate £1.02 million of the funds from the National Brownfield Institute Project to the Bilston Market Project and £774,343 to the Wednesfield Project.

9 **Engagement and Communication Strategy**

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, Kinver Solutions Ltd delivered the presentation on the Engagement and Communication Strategy which provided an overview of the implementation of the Strategy. It was noted that there were many methods of engagement, including traditional methods and social media platforms, and each project had its own tailored engagement and communication plan. It was reported that the refreshed Strategy would be presented at the next meeting for approval and a regular update be provided at each meeting as a standing item.

Resolved:

1. That the Engagement and Communication Strategy be presented to Town Fund Board at the next meeting for approval.
2. That the Towns Fund Board receive an Engagement and Communication Strategy update at each meeting going forward.

10 **Levelling Up White Paper 'What Levelling Up Means for Wolverhampton'**

Tim Johnson, Chief Executive, City of Wolverhampton Council provided a verbal update on the Levelling Up White Paper, published on 2 February 2022, to summarise what its content meant for Wolverhampton. Key principles and the next steps of action for the City were set out.

It was outlined that the intention was to develop a place-based partnership approach to Levelling Up. It was highlighted that Wolverhampton was considered one of two priority areas and therefore had the opportunity to submit Levelling Up proposals to Government before many other authorities and become the exemplar on what Levelling Up looked like at place level.

It was noted that the chief intended outcome was to improve the City and the fortunes of those living there and that it would require commitment at all levels to develop an investment plan that would continually evolve and endure.

Resolved:

That the Levelling Up White Paper 'What Levelling Up Means for Wolverhampton' presentation be received.

11 **The Role of the Board**

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, Kinver Solutions Ltd provided a verbal update on the Role of the Board. The update provided an overview of the vision for the City. It was outlined that the role of the Board was mainly to oversee development of the Town Investment Plan and delivery of the Town Deal and set out the responsibilities of Board members and stakeholders.

Resolved:

That the Role of the Board update be received.

12 **Programme Dashboard**

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, Kinver Solutions Ltd provided an overview of the status of each of the projects and reported that the remaining two business cases had been submitted on Monday 21 March 2022. Thanks were extended to all the teams involved.

It was agreed that, moving forward, updates would only be provided on individual projects if there were any significant changes or a milestone had been achieved.

Resolved:

1. That the presentation on the status of the Towns Fund Projects be received.
2. That individual project updates would only be received on significant progress such as completion of key project milestones.

- 12a Brewers Yard / Culwell Street
- 12b WM5G
- 12c Events Programme
- 12d Wednesfield Markets and Permeability
- 12e Bilston Markets
- 12f Wolves @ Work
- 12g Public Realm P2
- 12h Grand Theatre
- 12i City Learning Quarter
- 13 **Any Other Business**
There was no other business considered.