



Towns Fund Board

25 November 2022

Time 1.00 pm **Public Meeting?** NO **Type of meeting** Partnership Boards
Venue Executive Boardroom 2 - Civic Centre

Membership

Ninder Johal (Chair)	Owner, Nachural
Annette	Youth Council Representative
Stuart Anderson MP	Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South West
Simon Archer	Director, Bilston BID
Councillor Ian Brookfield	Leader of the Council, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC)
Mal Cowgill	Principal and Chief Executive, City of Wolverhampton College
James Crowter	Managing Director, Tecman
Janis	Youth Council Representative
Adam Daniels	Regional Operations Director, Countryside Properties
Lindsey Flynn	Representative of Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership
Ray Flynn	Associate Director (Place), University of Wolverhampton
Ro Hands	Owner, Learn Play Foundation
James Holland	General Manager, Collins Aerospace
Tim Johnson	Chief Executive, CWC
Josie Kelly	Chief Executive Officer, Access 2 Business
Pat McFadden MP	Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South East
Maninder Mangat	Director, MM Consulting
Kevin Rogers	Executive Director, Paycare
Amit Sharma	Director, Sapphire Innovation
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 and Regeneration), West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

Information

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact:

Contact Darowen Jones, Programme Manager
Tel/Email email: Townsfund@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Agenda

PART 1 – Items open to all attendees

Item No. *Title*

MEETING BUSINESS ITEMS - PART 1

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
- 2 **Notification of substitute members**
- 3 **Declarations of Interest**
- 4 **Minutes of the meeting of 29 July 2022** (Pages 1 - 8)
[To approve the minutes of the meeting of 29 July 2022 as a correct record.]
- 5 **Matters arising**
[To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of 29 July 2022.]
- 6 **Towns Fund Action Tracker** (Pages 9 - 10)
[To note the outcomes of actions identified at previous meetings.]

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION OR DECISION - PART 2

- 7 **Levelling Up Agenda - Briefing Note and Update** (Pages 11 - 14)
[To receive and approve proposals to a review of the Towns Fund Board.]
- 8 **Towns Fund Programme Update Dashboard**
[To note an update on the Towns Fund Programme.]
 - 8a **Brewers Yard / Culwell Street**
 - 8b **WM5G**
 - 8c **Events Programme**
 - 8d **Wednesfield Markets and Permeability**
 - 8e **Bilston Markets**
 - 8f **Wolves@Work**
 - 8g **Public Realm P2**
 - 8h **City Learning Quarter**
 - 8i **Arts Park**

8j **Communications and Engagement**

9 **Towns Fund Programme Level Risk Register**
[To note the Towns Fund Programme Level Risk Register.]

10 **Towns Fund Financial Profile**
[To note the Towns Fund Financial Profile.]

11 **Towns Fund Performance Return to Government**
[To receive the Towns Fund Performance Return to Government for approval.]

12 **Any Other Business**

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Towns Fund Board Minutes - 29 July 2022

Attendance

Members of the Towns Fund Board

Ninder Johal (Chair)	Owner, Nachural
Craig Bateman	Representing the Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South West
Anthony Burns (v*)	Paycare Representative
James Holland (v)	General Manager, Collins Aerospace
Josie Kelly (v)	Chief Executive Officer, Access 2 Business
Maninder Mangat	Director, MM Consulting
Peter Merry (v)	City of Wolverhampton College Representative
Amit Sharma	Director, Sapphire Innovation
Councillor Stephen Simkins	Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC)
Tim Steele (v)	University of Wolverhampton Representative
Jane Stevenson MP	Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton North East
Patricia Willoughby (v)	Head of Policy (Housing & Regeneration), West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)
Tia	Youth Council Representative

In Attendance

Shelley Humphries	Democratic Services Officer, CWC
Darowen Jones	Programme Manager, Kinver Solutions Ltd
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration, CWC
Ayesha Malhan (v)	Regeneration Officer, CWC
Andrew Scragg	Participation Officer, CWC
Peter Taylor	Regeneration Manager, CWC
Peter Thomason	BEIS

*v = Virtual attendance

Item No. Title

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
Apologies were received from Board Members Simon Archer, Director of Bilston BID, Councillor Ian Brookfield, Leader of the Council - City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC); Ray Flynn, Associate Director of University of Wolverhampton, Tim Johnson, Chief Executive of CWC; James Crowter, Managing Director of Tecman; Adam Daniels, Regional Operations Director of Countryside Properties; Pat McFadden MP for Wolverhampton South West; Kevin Rogers, Executive Director of Paycare; Mal Cowgill, Principal and Chief Executive of City of Wolverhampton College; Stuart Anderson, MP for Wolverhampton South West and Ro Hands, Owner, Learn Play Foundation.

Apologies were also received from Liam Davies, Head of City Development for CWC; Ian Fegan, Director of Communications and External Relations for CWC and Jack Stevens, Towns Fund Coordinator for CWC.

2 **Notification of substitute members**

Tim Steele attended for Ray Flynn, Anthony Burns attended for Kevin Rogers, Peter Merry attended for Mal Cowgill and Craig Bateman represented the office of Stuart Anderson MP.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

4 **Minutes of the meeting of 20 May 2022**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of 20 May 2022 be approved as a correct record subject to a correction to the attendance to record Maninder Mangat, Director of MM Consulting as present.

5 **Matters arising**

Other than those covered in the Towns Fund Action Tracker at item 6, there were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

6 **Towns Fund Action Tracker**

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

It was noted that the requested Programme Risk Register had been included on the agenda at item 9 and there were plans for the September 2022 meeting to be held at the NBI Building, with future tours around wider projects discussed as part of the meeting agenda.

Resolved:

That the outcomes from the actions agreed at the meeting of 20 May 2022 be noted.

7 **Engagement and Communication Strategy**

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, Kinver Solutions Ltd delivered the update on the Engagement and Communication Strategy which included a demonstration of the new website on which members were invited to provide feedback.

This led to a discussion during which concerns were raised from Board members around the public perception of delays and level of engagement with stakeholders regarding the interventions at Wednesfield. Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, Kinver Solutions Ltd pledged to fully investigate the matter and provide a plan of action to reassure Board members.

In response to a query around maximising the potential of the Wolves Business Week, it was confirmed that content was currently being developed for this purpose, although any additional input from Board members would be welcomed. It was also noted that invites would be going out shortly to Board members for various events throughout that week.

Following a short live test, a search did not retrieve many results directing viewers to the website, therefore work around search engine optimisation was suggested. It was also noted that residents may be using search terms including the area of the City they were interested in, rather than 'Towns Fund' or 'Levelling Up' and a wider range of keywords could be considered.

In response to a query around clarification on the role and purpose of the Board, members were referred to the Assurance Framework as presented at the meeting of 28 January 2022.

It was noted that more use could be made of social media platforms managed by the City of Wolverhampton Council.

A discussion ensued around the role of Board members in communications and some Board members reported they had been using their own channels to communicate across their organisations on the achievements of Towns Fund Board. Other members stated that they were happy to act as ambassadors for Towns Fund on the proviso that the latest information be provided to them prior to engaging in any formal press releases or publishing information through social media or networking platforms.

A query was raised around the level of expenditure for each project and how this was monitored. It was confirmed that regular reports were being generated and agreed that these would be shared with the Towns Fund membership. It was suggested that information pertaining to expenditure, data analysis, marketing, etc could be stored somewhere with shared access although it was highlighted that this would need to be secure.

Resolved:

1. That a plan of action around public engagement for the Wednesfield interventions be provided to Towns Fund Board.
2. That Towns Fund Board members be kept abreast of developments ahead of media releases.
3. That further exploration of website and search engine optimisation be undertaken.
4. That expenditure records be shared with Towns Fund Board.

8 **Programme Dashboard**

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, Kinver Solutions Ltd delivered the Programme Dashboard presentation and provided a summary of the status of each of the projects. This included outputs, key milestones, projected timelines and funding positions.

Following the update on all projects, the Chair invited Board members to consider whether they felt the level of detail on each project within the presentation would allow them to confidently respond to any resident queries and feedback at the next meeting.

Resolved:

That Towns Fund Board members provide feedback at the next meeting on the level of detail for the projects within the Programme Dashboard.

8a Brewers Yard / Culwell Street

It was reported that the planning application for both the wholesale market re-development and Culwell Street sites was submitted on 31 March 2022 with a determination date of 25 August 2022. The project was on track to be operational by the end of 2024.

In response to a query, it was clarified that narrative shown during the presentation was not currently published on the website as it was subject to change.

8b WM5G

It was reported that the next reporting period to Government was due in September and that the 5G Accelerator Facility was now open and the test bed fully operational for both private 5G and Internet of Things (IoT) networks.

Feedback showed that 500 small and medium enterprise businesses had increased their awareness of 5G technology and how it could be used to optimise their business and 84% of organisations engaged with had reported an increase in commitment to incorporate 5G technology in their business offering.

8c Events Programme

It was reported that additional resources had been made available to work with the BID managers for Bilston and the City centre to develop a programme of events. Discussions around how funds would be allocated were being undertaken early to ensure swift transfer of funds once the programmes were finalised. It was confirmed that there were plans to extend the reach of the programme wider to other areas of the City. It was noted that there was currently no BID manager for the Wednesfield area therefore engagement would be needed with stakeholders.

8d Wednesfield Markets and Permeability

It was highlighted that conversations were ongoing with the trader stakeholder group in respect of the five physical interventions. Concept designs had been provided to the group and an update would be provided following stakeholder feedback.

It was acknowledged that stakeholder contribution was crucial to ensure they had input over decisions made for the area.

8e Bilston Markets

It was reported that the Bilston Market project was progressing well and RIBA 2 design concepts were due to complete during August. Conversations with market traders were due to conclude later today.

8f Wolves@Work

It was reported that the programme was showing promising results and having a positive impact. It was noted it wasn't a standalone project and aimed to align with all other projects.

A query was raised around there being no mention of Towns Fund support on the Wolves@Work website to demonstrate the affiliation, although it was noted that the DWP also supported the programme. A press release outlining the organisations working in partnership with Towns Fund was suggested to clarify involvement and achievements.

Resolved:

That a communication be released outlining the organisations working in partnership with Towns Fund to clarify involvement and achievements.

8g Public Realm P2

It was noted that this project was slightly behind the others however the project was still showing progression. Key stakeholder engagement remained ongoing and a decision was awaited on a match funding bid for £9.5 million.

8h Grand Theatre

It was reported that legal advice had been received in terms of a compulsory purchase order and the Council were in the process of making a final offer. Other options were being considered in the event that the building could not be purchased and these would be brought before the Board for a decision as per the Assurance Framework. An open dialogue with the Grand Theatre was ongoing to keep abreast of developments.

8i City Learning Quarter

It was highlighted that the Department for Education (DfE) had confirmed £20.4 million funding which had completed the funding and moved the project on to procurement stage using the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) framework. This process would ensure a swift move to market thus mitigating any risks around potential long term cost increases.

9 **Towns Fund Programme Level Risk Register**

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, Kinver Solutions Ltd delivered an update on the Towns Fund Programme Level Risk Register as circulated with the agenda pack and provided an onscreen demonstration of how information was recorded and analysed.

It was reported that the information was held and managed using project management software, Verto. It was noted that the system could identify risks and alert to trends as well as standardise how risks were approached across all the projects. Using the example of cost management, it was demonstrated how the system could be used to track any identified risk in this area and factor it into project planning.

In terms of unknown risk, it was conjectured whether any changes might be made to the Town Deal following the appointment of a new Prime Minister. It was requested that open dialogues were maintained with ministers to keep abreast of any developments. Ministers present pledged to offer any support to Wolverhampton bids and the interests of the City wherever possible.

Resolved:

That the Towns Fund Programme Level Risk Register be noted.

10

Levelling Up Bids (Round 2)

Peter Taylor, Regeneration Manager for CWC delivered a presentation which provided an update on the status of the second round of Levelling Up Bids. It was recalled that there was £20 million of funding available per application and each submission required endorsement from a Member of Parliament. It was noted that the second of three possible bids for Wolverhampton was now in the process of being submitted.

Proposals included the first phase of the Green Innovation Corridor and Bilston Health and Regeneration Programme.

The first formed part of the Green Innovation Corridor and included a hub based at the University of Wolverhampton's Springfield site designed to provide space for business growth and start-ups, with the potential to generate 300 new jobs. The Bilston Health and Regeneration Programme aimed to provide a central community facility with GPs, pharmacies and other health and wellbeing services together under one roof.

It was outlined how both schemes aligned with priorities in the Strategic Framework for Levelling Up. Plans were also outlined for additional improvements to public realm in Bilston.

A query was raised around whether the Green Innovation Corridor scheme was open to private investment and if so, interest was expressed.

It was also noted that the plans for Cross Street North had great potential however it was felt that the name was not reflective of the intended purpose of the site.

Resolved:

That the verbal update on Levelling Up Bids (Round 2) be received.

11

Levelling Up Agenda and Meeting Structure

Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration for CWC provided a verbal update on the structure of the Towns Fund Board.

It was proposed that Towns Fund Board would transition into the Levelling Up Board to support and oversee not only interventions under the Towns Fund scheme, but all programmes and funding streams under the Levelling Up agenda. It was suggested that the last meeting of Towns Fund Board would take place in September 2022 with the first meeting of Levelling Up Board in November 2022.

In addition, a refreshed membership and Terms of Reference to reflect the changes to scope and remit of the Board would be presented for approval at the final meeting of Towns Fund Board in preparation for the launch as the Levelling Up Board in November.

Resolved:

That the Levelling Up Agenda and Meeting Structure be noted.

12 **September 2022 Board Meeting - Proposal to be Onsite at National Brownfield Institute**

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, Kinver Solutions reported plans for the final meeting of the Towns Fund Board to take place at the National Brownfield Institute. Invites and further details would follow in due course.

Resolved:

That the proposal to hold the September meeting of Towns Fund Board at the National Brownfield Institute be noted.

13 **Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

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City of Wolverhampton - Towns Fund Board

Action Tracker (from the meeting of 29 July 2022)



Agenda Item No.	Issue	Action / Resolution	Board Member/Officer Responsible	Timescale	Progress / Update
7	Engagement and Communication Strategy	1. That a plan of action around public engagement for the Wednesfield interventions be provided to Towns Fund Board. 2. That Towns Fund Board members be kept abreast of developments ahead of media releases. 3. That further exploration of website and search engine optimisation be undertaken. 4. That expenditure records be shared with Towns Fund Board.	Darowen Jones, Towns Fund Programme Manager (Managing Director, Kinver Solutions)		1. Project Manager been appointed and procurement process has commenced. Stakeholder engagement scheduled for mid-November, date to be confirmed. 2. Process in place for board members to receive an email with news before media. 3. First update taken place and next phase to commence in October for a refresh. 4. 6 month expenditure is due October ready for November board meeting.
8	Programme Dashboard	That Towns Fund Board members provide feedback at the next meeting on the level of detail for the projects within the Programme Dashboard.	All	September 2022 meeting	The new project update shared and welcome feedback before next board meeting. Please send the feedback to townsfund@wolverhampton.gov.uk

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Towns Fund Board

25 November 2022

Levelling Up Agenda – Briefing Note and Update

Recommendations:

The Towns Fund board is recommended to:

- a) Discuss and agree proposed changes in relation to the Towns Fund Board scope, name and membership in light of current government policy.
- b) Commission new Terms of Reference and Local Assurance Framework for the next board meeting as required.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the key issues for consideration in how the Towns Fund Board continues to evolve, to ensure the City can best respond to government policy.
- 1.2 Should the Board agree any changes, then a new Terms of Reference will be produced for the next meeting, currently scheduled for January 2023.
- 1.3 Annually, the Towns Fund Board is required to formally review the Local Assurance Framework, and this will also be done alongside any changes to the Terms of Reference.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Towns Fund Board was set up in 2020 as a requirement of grant funding under the Towns Fund deal. The Board has overseen the successful submission of all Business Cases to government, ensured effective funding reallocation processes and is ensuring robust oversight of delivery across all projects.
- 2.2 Since the launch of the Levelling Up White Paper in February 2022, the Board has been actively reflecting on how it can best support the wider levelling up agenda for the City.
- 2.3 Despite some uncertainty on the future of government policy over recent months, the Autumn budget statement on 17 November 2022 indicates a continued commitment for aspects of levelling up – such as Levelling Up Fund Round 2 and a trailblazer devolution deal agreement with the West Midlands.
- 2.4 This paper formally sets out areas for the Board to consider, informing a new Terms of Reference and operating model, which would enable the forum to be a wider 'levelling up board' for the City.

3.0 Scope and Remit

- 3.1 Before the Levelling Up White Paper was launched in February 2022, the City of Wolverhampton Council has been successful in securing significant external funding, which aligns to the wider levelling up agenda.
- 3.2 This includes the Future High Streets Programme, which was launched in the 2018 budget and is a precursor to Towns Funding. Future High Street Fund (FHSF) aims to renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that drives growth, improves experience and ensures future sustainability by providing co-funding to support transformative and structural changes to overcome challenges in their area.
- 3.3 Wolverhampton secured a provisional FHSF grant award of £15.76 million. This grant award will allow the Council to implement and fully fund the programme of large-scale transformation and improvements to the public realm that will positively impact the City Centre West area. Delivery of Victoria Street and Civic Hall Public Realm Zones (Westside Links 1 and 3) will enhance activity, footfall, land values, and bring about significant wider economic, social and environmental benefits through improved resident, visitor and worker experience. In addition, this will enable the Council to deliver the Box Park scheme and a new public car park at Cleveland Street. This scheme will provide an anchor destination and car parking infrastructure support at the southern end of the public realm improvements, aiding Victoria Street's transition to more of a mixed-use, evening economy and an events destination.
- 3.4 The Levelling Up Fund (LUF), announced in October 2021 aims to tackle economic differences and drive prosperity as part of 'levelling up'. The Fund focuses on capital investment in local infrastructure that have a visible, tangible impact on people and places, and support economic recovery, prioritising bids that invest in regeneration and growth in places in need and areas of low productivity and connectivity.
- 3.5 Bids of up to £20 million can be submitted under LUF, either an individual project or package, which must be sponsored by the MP. Under round 1, the City secured £20 million towards the City Learning Quarter for Wolverhampton South West constituency.
- 3.6 Under LUF Round 2, in Summer 2022 the Council submitted two bids for the Green Innovation Corridor (Wolverhampton North East) and Bilston Health and Regeneration Hub (Wolverhampton South East). A decision is expected late 2022 following confirmation in the Autumn statement that this funding will continue.
- 3.7 A summary of the two LUF round 2 bids are as follows:
 - a. **Green Innovation Corridor:** will support growth of new green industries, turbocharging economic prosperity and closing the productivity gap. A key priority for levelling up the City, this bid will act as a catalyst delivering Phase 1, the Springfield Innovation Hub. The Hub will regenerate 1.21 hectares brownfield land producing 4,955 sqm new commercial workspace creating 330 high-quality jobs. It will be delivered in partnership with the private sector, maximising impact of LUF.

It will support new business starts, scale up, products and services aligning to the City's existing strengths in high value manufacturing, green technologies, and digital innovation

- b. **Bilston Health and Regeneration Programme:** links key public realm together to connect Bilston's public transport hub and Bilston Health and Wellbeing Hub which integrates NHS, Social Care, Wellbeing and Leisure services at the heart of the Bilston Community creating a campus that brings together in one place a range of health and well-being related services focusing journeys into the town centre.

- 3.8 For Future High Streets and Levelling Up funding, the Council acts as the Accountable Body. Unlike Towns Fund, there is no formal requirement for external oversight or governance.
- 3.9 However, given the opportunity to widen the scope of the existing board to include levelling up in the round, the board is asked to consider utilising the excellent forum and basis of the Towns Fund Board to include a wider briefing on Levelling Up and Future High Streets Fund programmes. Although it does not act as the final decision maker on funding streams outside of Towns Fund, considering wider projects will enable greater strategic join up and decision making on Towns Fund initiatives.
- 3.10 Should the Board agree to a wider remit, it is proposed the name of the Board is changed to reflect this – for example, Levelling Up Board or City Investment Board. The Board is asked to consider the future formal name of the Board.

4.0 Membership

- 4.1 There is particular acknowledgement to the time and dedication given by the current membership to the Board's work to date.
- 4.2 Given the potential changes to scope and remit of the Towns Fund Board, there is also the opportunity to review membership as part of the new terms of reference.
- 4.3 There are no proposals to change the arrangements for the Chair of the Towns Fund Board or current membership by key individuals and organisations, which includes key public, private, VCS partners and representatives, and our City Youth Council. However, some additions are proposed which are in line with the Board's previous feedback that membership should not be too large.
- 4.4 It is proposed that in order to make greater links to wider governance in the City, the Chair of the Economic Growth Board and Chair of City Business Champions are invited to join the Board.
- 4.5 Given the wider scope of 'levelling up' it is also proposed to invite a senior officer from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- 4.6 It is also proposed to extend an invitation to the Chief Superintendent of West Midlands Police.

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