



City Investment Board

Minutes - 21 April 2023

Attendance

Members of the City Investment Board

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| Ninder Johal (Chair) | Owner, Nachural |
| Simon Archer | Director, Bilston BID |
| Ray Flynn | Associate Director, University of Wolverhampton |
| Cathy Francis ^v | Director, Housing, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities |
| James Holland ^v | General Manager, Collins Aerospace |
| Tim Johnson | Chief Executive, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) |
| Pat McFadden MP | Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South East |
| Maninder Mangat | Director, MM Consulting |
| Nicola Mumford | Paycare Representative |
| Harleen N | Youth Council Representative |
| Councillor Stephen Simkins | Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy, CWC |
| Jane Stevenson MP | Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton North East |

In Attendance

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| Liam Davies | Head of City Development, CWC |
| Shelley Humphries | Democratic Services Officer, CWC |
| Darowen Jones | Towns Fund Programme Manager, CWC |
| Savreena Kaur | Project Manager, CWC |
| Richard Lawrence | Director of Regeneration, CWC |
| Ayesha Malhan | Regeneration Officer, CWC |
| Andrew Scragg | Participation Officer, CWC |

^v = virtual attendance

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ian Brookfield, Leader of the Council, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC); Adam Daniels, Regional Operations Director, Countryside Properties; Ro Hands, Owner, Learn Play Foundation; Josie Kelly, Chief Executive Officer, Access 2 Business, Stuart McLachlan, President, Moog Industrial Group and Lead of Wolverhampton Business Champions and Patricia Willoughby, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) although it was noted that Gareth Bradford, would be the WMCA representative moving forward.

Apologies were also received from Julia Nock, Deputy Director of Assets, CWC and John Roseblade, Director of Resident Services, CWC.

- 2 **Notification of substitute members**
Nicola Mumford attended for Kevin Rogers, Executive Director of Paycare.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

4 **Minutes of the meeting of 17 February 2023**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of 17 February 2023 be approved as a correct record.

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 **Meeting Action Tracker**

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, City of Wolverhampton Council presented the Towns Fund Action Tracker which outlined the outcomes of actions agreed at the last meeting.

In respect of nominations for the Vice-Chair it was confirmed that, on closer inspection, who could be nominated as Vice Chair had not been specified within the Towns Deal Guidance from Government. It did specify that the Board should be independent from the accountable body which was why the Chair had been elected from the private sector therefore with the Board's agreement, it would follow that the Vice Chair be elected in the same way in the event they should have to step in.

Queries were raised around who was legally accountable for decisions made at City Investment Board (CIB) meetings and what influence the Board had as an entity to move projects forward more quickly for example. It was noted that the Council was the accountable body and Town Deal projects were managed and executed using a strong governance structure already existing within the Council. It was noted that the City Investment Board endorsed decisions on where the funding should be allocated as well as any decisions around re-allocation of money in the event of an underspend or change of plan. Assurances were offered that if anyone had any queries in respect of progress on projects to contact Darowen Jones. It was also noted that there was an audit trail in the meeting minutes recording when Board members had raised concerns around timelines and any delays would be communicated to the Board via the Dashboard.

It was requested that there be refreshed work in terms of governance of the Board and agreed that David Pattison be consulted in his capacity as Monitoring Officer for the Council. It was also acknowledged that the role of the refreshed CIB was to have oversight of multiple funding streams and activity as well as Towns Deal all with the common goal of regenerating the City however clarity was needed. It was agreed that a paper be brought to City Investment Board clarifying approaches and responsibilities for each area.

In response to a query around diversity, it was noted that this was taken into account, however the Board membership was made up of stakeholders from all sectors who had submitted expressions of interest.

It was again requested that members please provide nominations for the Vice Chair for election as none had been received.

Resolved:

1. That David Pattison be consulted in his capacity as Monitoring Officer for the Council around City Investment Board governance.
2. That a paper providing clarification of City Investments Board's role and responsibilities in decision making be provided at the next meeting.
3. That nominations or expressions of interest for Vice Chair be submitted via the City Investment Board mailbox.

7 **The Deeper Devolution Deal**

Ed Cox from West Midlands Combined Authority delivered the presentation which provided an overview of the Trailblazer Devolution Deal announced by the Chancellor on 15 March 2023, defining its background, purpose and next steps.

It also defined the difference between the creation of six Levelling Up Zones around the Black Country and an Investment Zone. The Levelling Up Zones would be identified by West Midlands Combined Authority and approved by Central Government whereas the Investment Zone would be selected as part of a Government programme.

It was acknowledged by CIB members that the deal presented both challenges and opportunities for the City.

In response to concerns raised by members in respect of communicating consultation processes with local authority leaders as well as timescales for decision making, it was noted that there was not yet any clarity on the process for selecting the Investment Zone however it was hoped that this would be confirmed in due course. The draft implementation plan would be considered by the seven local authority leaders at the 9 June 2023 WMCA Board meeting.

In respect of a concern raised around the single commissioning framework, it was clarified that this was the basis upon which any funding was secured from government although Gareth Bradford, West Midlands Combined Authority may be able to provide further detail at future meetings.

Resolved:

That the Deeper Devolution Deal presentation be received.

8 **Bilston Health and Regeneration Project (Levelling Up Fund 2)**

Liam Davies, Head of City Development delivered the presentation on Bilston Health and Regeneration Project [Levelling Up Fund 2] which provided background to the projects and an update on progress of the refurbishment of Bilston Markets and development of the Bilston Health and Wellbeing Facility.

It was acknowledged by Board members that it was huge positive that alternative funding streams meant the project could go ahead and the Council was commended for its flexibility managing changes in terms of funding streams. It was recognised that the programmes would be of great social and economic value to the community.

A request was made to be mindful of interest rates due to the current financial climate, however assurances were offered that finance colleagues were being consulted and contingencies were being built into all business cases.

Resolved:

That the Bilston Health and Regeneration Project (Levelling Up Fund 2] be received.

9 **Prospectus Delivery Strategy Update**

Liam Davies, Head of City Development, City of Wolverhampton Council provided a verbal update on the Prospectus Delivery Strategy. It was highlighted that the Wolverhampton Investment Prospectus had been launched following approval at Cabinet.

The Wolverhampton Investment Prospectus provided a detailed digital showcase of existing developments and investment opportunities within the City.

It was noted that a number of projects were underway including the Accelerated Sites programme, City Centre West Programme and the next phase of delivery of the Commercial Interchange exploring hotel provision and new office space developments.

Resolved:

That the Prospectus Delivery Strategy Update be received.

10 **Arts Park Project Adjustment Proposal**

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, City of Wolverhampton Council presented the Arts Park Project Adjustment Proposal briefing note and highlighted salient points.

The briefing note outlined proposals for the acquisition of and refurbishment programme for the Newhampton Arts Centre, Newhampton Road, Whitmore Reans following a meeting of the task and finish group as requested at the last meeting. Thanks were extended to volunteer CIB members Ray Flynn, Associate Director of University of Wolverhampton, Cherry Shine, Director of Wolverhampton BID and Councillor Stephen Simkins, Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy, CWC for their contributions at this meeting.

It was highlighted that the new proposals anticipated outputs which had not existed in the previous bid, which included the retention of 66.7 jobs and development of additional office space.

It was confirmed that the project would entail the purchase of the Newhampton Arts Centre (NAC) site from City of Wolverhampton College and offering them a long-term lease to continue its use as an arts facility.

It was clarified that the proposal to re-allocate the funding would still need to undergo internal decision-making processes and be formally submitted to Government for approval.

It was queried what the other options were and why the Board was only considering one. It was clarified that several options had previously been outlined to the board via a report considered at the February 2023 meeting. The Task and Finish Group that had been established following the last CIB meeting then reviewed a shortlist of three options in more detail prior to instructing the Council to move forwards with the proposal for the Newhampton Arts Centre.

It was requested that the minutes of the meeting of the task and finish group be shared with the CIB membership.

Resolved:

1. That the Arts Park Project Adjustment Proposal be received.
2. That the City Investment Board approve the revised project as outlined.
3. The City Investment Board approve the Council via its s151 Officer to sign and complete the Project Adjustment Form and that this is submitted to HM Government.
4. That the minutes of the meeting of the Arts Park Task and Finish group be shared with the City Investment Board membership.

11 **Towns Fund Programme Update Dashboard**

11a Wednesfield Interventions Project

Savreena Kaur, Project Manager, CWC delivered the presentation on the Wednesfield Interventions Project and highlighted key points. The presentation provided a detailed overview of the agreed interventions for Southern Gateway restructure; refresh of facades and frontages along the high street, Bealey's Fold improvement project and Canalside improvement project.

It was agreed that communication had been an issue as many residents and visitors to the area had been enquiring about timescales and when work would begin therefore further work needed to be undertaken around improving communications.

It was also considered whether undertaking smaller projects with quicker results may be worth exploring. It was acknowledged that local stakeholder, Jay Basso had been instrumental in organising the placement of a sculpture and festoon lighting near a roundabout in the vicinity to great effect.

Resolved:

That improved communication methods to the public in respect of the progress of the Wednesfield Interventions Project be explored.

11b Project Updates

The Chair moved to accept the published Project Update slides as read and move to the next agenda item and any queries in respect of the dashboards be directed to Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, City of Wolverhampton Council.

Resolved:

That the Project Updates be received.

11c Programme Level Risk Register

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, City of Wolverhampton Council presented the update Programme Level Risk Register. It was reported that this recorded risks identified by project managers and cross referenced with contingency plans before being brought before CIB members to determine.

It was suggested that the Risk Register could be circulated to Board members monthly along with the dashboard to ensure access to the most current information.

It was queried whether a specific focus could be centred upon as a separate agenda item at meetings.

Resolved:

That the Programme Level Risk Register be circulated to City Investment Board members following each monthly update.

11d Evaluation and Monitoring Return: June 2023

It was noted that the next Evaluation and Monitoring Return would be due in June 2023 and Kevin Rogers Executive Director of Paycare had volunteered back in November 2022 to support with the last one. Board members were invited to volunteer to work on this one prior to submission.

Resolved:

That any City Investment Board members wishing to volunteer to work through the Evaluation and Monitoring Return submission for June 2023 should contact the Programme Manager via the City Investment Board email address of Townsfund@wolverhampton.gov.uk.

12 **Future High Streets Fund**

The Chair moved to accept the published Project Update slides as read and move to the next agenda item and any queries in respect of the dashboards be directed to Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, City of Wolverhampton Council.

Resolved:

That the Future High Streets Fund dashboard be received.

13 **Any Other Business**

The representative from the Youth Council reported that the Youth Council had met with Chris Kirkland, Head of City Investment for CWC to provide their input into the Investment Prospectus to make it more accessible and engaging for young people. It was reported that an animated version of the Prospectus was to be developed, narrated by a young person explaining the investments and regeneration project in a way that was relatable to young people. Councillor Stephen Simkins, Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy, CWC suggested that the proposal be taken through the Council's scrutiny process and presented to CIB by Youth Council representatives.

Resolved:

That Youth Council representatives present the proposal for a young persons' edition of the Wolverhampton Prospectus to City Investment Board following the Council's internal scrutiny processes.