



Towns Fund Board

Minutes - 3 July 2020

Attendance

Members of the Towns Fund Board

Ninder Johal (Chair)	Owner, Nachural
Stuart Paul Anderson	MP 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
James Holland	General Manager, Collins Aerospace
Josie Kelly	Chief Executive Officer, Access 2 Business
Professor Geoff Layer	Vice Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton
Maninder Mangat	Director, MM Consulting
Pat McFadden	MP for Wolverhampton South East
Kevin Rogers	Executive Director, Paycare
Tutsi	Youth MP
Amit Sharma	Director, INCO
Cherry Shine	Director, Wolverhampton BID
Councillor Stephen Simkins	Cabinet Member for City Economy, CWC
Jane Stevenson	MP for Wolverhampton North East
Mark Taylor	Deputy Chief Executive, CWC
Patricia Willoughby	Head of Policy (Housing and Regeneration), West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

In attendance

Rhiann Davitt-Jones	Associate Director, CBRE
Ian Fegan	Director of Communications and External Relations
Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer, CWC
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration, CWC
Sam Marks	Chief Executive, Arcadis
Tony Marvell	Programme Manager, CWC
Michelle Nutt	Area Director, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Energy Strategy (BEIS)
Simon Philips	Director, CBRE
Philip Singleton	Programme Manager, CWC
Andrew Scragg	Youth Service Participation Worker, CWC
Peter Taylor	Regeneration Manager, CWC

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Ben Reid, Co-Op Board Member, International Co-Op Alliance and Tim Johnson, Chief Executive, CWC.

2 **Notification of substitute members**

Mark Taylor, Deputy Chief Executive, CWC attended for Tim Johnson, Chief Executive, CWC.

3 **New Board Members**

The Chair welcomed onto the Board:

- Maninder Mangat - Director, MM Consulting
- Amit Sharma - Director, INCO
- Cllr Stephen Simkins - Cabinet Member for City Economy, CWC
- Simon Archer - Director, Bilston BID

4 **Minutes of the meeting of 15 May 2020**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of 15 May 2020 be approved as a correct record.

5 **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

6 **Towns Fund Board Action Tracker**

Resolved:

That the outcomes from the actions agreed at the meeting of 15 May 2020 be noted.

7 **Our Vision for Wolverhampton**

Sam Marks, Chief Executive of Arcadis undertook to arrange for the Board members to receive a link for a film 'A Top Ten UK City for Economic Growth', that would have been shown to developers and investors at MIPIM, the international property event in Cannes, France in March but for the Coronavirus pandemic. He encouraged members of the Board to watch the video.

Sam Marks delivered, as a precursor to the meetings of the five thematic focus groups scheduled for week commencing 6 July 2020, a presentation on Our Vision for Wolverhampton highlighting schemes being delivered across the City, and opportunities available.

8 **National Guidance Summary and Local Delivery Approach**

Tony Marvell, Programme Manager, CWC presented the National Guidance Summary and Delivery Approach and outlined salient points. The guidance set out the requirements of the Town Investment Plan ("TIP"), the funding criteria, governance arrangements, approval stages leading to the approval of funding, and information relating to the national support offer.

Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration, CWC reported on the receipt of a letter from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). As part of the Towns Fund, Wolverhampton had been offered a grant of £1 million to fund capital projects that could be delivered this financial year and that would support towns in responding to immediate challenges. MHCLG had asked that they receive a response by 14 August 2020 to confirm what would be done with the grant. Richard

Lawrence suggested that this be picked up as part of the discussions at the thematic focus group meetings scheduled for the week commencing 6 July 2020. Thereafter, a list of projects would be drawn up for the Board to consider on 24 July 2020 before responding to Government by its deadline of 14 August 2020.

Pat McFadden MP asked when the Board would be able to crystallise the projects on which it wants to spend the £25 million fund. Richard Lawrence reported that the focus groups would start to formalise the projects and asks. Officers would then pull together the outcomes from the focus groups and bring back for ratification by the Board on 24 July 2020, the projects for both the £25 million and £1 million funds.

Councillor Ian Brookfield, Leader of the Council, CWC agreed that the Board needed to crystallise the projects and accepted that there was a tight timescale and that the Board had to move quickly.

Councillor Stephen Simkins, Cabinet Member for City Economy, CWC commented that there was limited membership from Bilston and Wednesfield Wards on the Board. He also felt that the presentation on Our Vision for Wolverhampton focused on the City Centre instead of focusing on investing in the Towns. In response, the Chair advised that the way the five thematic areas had been set up meant that the Towns are included. In terms of the membership, he noted that Pat McFadden MP and Jane Stevenson MP represented those wards on the Board. As a collective, next week Board members would need to decide the best way forward for the allocations of the funds.

Resolved:

That the Towns Fund Board agree the evaluation matrix from the guidance that can be applied to candidate projects to ensure that we are able to submit a fully compliant bid.

9

Stakeholder Engagement

Rhiann Davitt-Jones, Associate Director, CBRE delivered the Stakeholder Engagement presentation. The presentation provided an outline of the approach to the Stakeholder Engagement Plan for inclusion in the Town Investment Plan.

Simon Archer, Director, Bilston BID commented that the 'My Town' campaign through social medial platforms had received a lot of hits with no comment at all. He suggested that, if there was still time, more external engagement would be helpful. Rhiann Davitt-Jones advised that the Government had set up the online campaign and they intended to do a refresh. She noted that the feedback received aligned with the five themes but acknowledged that more could be done.

In response to a suggestion, Ian Fegan, Director of Communications and External Relations, CWC undertook to support a level of engagement including signposting the public to the My Town campaign website in order to gather more feedback.

The Chair added that it was incumbent upon all Board members to undertake communications messages in their communities where they feel there is a lack of coverage on stakeholder engagement.

In response to a query around how the Board would capture those pockets of engagement that would not be online, Rhiann Davitt-Jones acknowledged that there

had been limitations as a result of the Coronavirus. In order to complete the engagement within the current timeline CBRE were looking at online engagement. That said, the Stakeholder Engagement Plan would be iterative. Once submitted, moving forward it would be about using that plan to undertake more engagement, including going out into communities, reaching out to schools and other forums. The plan would set out what was known and in the future.

Jane Stevenson MP supported Councillor Stephen Simkins' previous comment on engagement. She added that the City's Youth MPs were present at the meeting and suggested that they should have a role in the engagement process.

Josie Kelly, Chief Executive, Access 2 Business added that in terms of the digitally excluded, her organisation as well as other community groups in the City could carry out research or investigations with the people they work with.

The Chair asked if Board members had any further questions or feedback on the stakeholder engagement, to add them to the chat feature for the meeting and Rhiann Davitt-Jones would respond.

10 **Endorsement by Towns Fund Board to Proceed to Tranche One Submission**

The Chair asked the Board to determine if it wished to ratify the decision to prepare a Wolverhampton submission for the first cohort.

Pat McFadden, MP queried, if a Board Member or a group of the Board wanted to suggest a specific project for consideration, does the timeline mean it had to be done by 13 July 2020, and if the focus groups do not consider a project could it still be put forward for consideration.

Simon Archer, Director, Bilston BID advised that the focus groups would be meeting during the next week and it would be best if any projects could be raised at that time. He explained that a high-level assessment and evaluation and high-level business case would need to be produced on projects.

Pat McFadden, MP expressed his concern that the Board would not get an opportunity to properly consider and change the list of projects that emerged from the focus groups. A discussion ensued and suggestions were made on how this could be overcome within the timeline for delivering the Town Investment Plan to BEIS. At the end of the discussion, the Chair proposed that he review the project plan with Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration, CWC and Simon Phillips, Director of CBRE and notify Board Members of the date and time of an additional meeting to consider the list of projects that have emerged from the focus group meetings.

Resolved:

1. That the Board ratify the decision to proceed with a Wolverhampton submission for Tranche One on 31 July 2020.
2. That the Chair, Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration, CWC and Simon Phillips, Director of CBRE look at the project plan and notify Board Members of the date and time of an additional meeting to consider the list of projects that have emerged from the focus group meetings.

11 **Future High Streets Fund Update**

Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration, CWC confirmed that the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) bid had been submitted on time and confirmation as to its receipt had been received. He anticipated that a response would be received from Government around autumn time regarding any clarifications and the next steps. He undertook to report back to the Board on any response.

Simon Archer, Director, Bilston BID asked for an update on an item included on a previous agenda on work of the West Midlands Combined Authority regarding the Towns Fund.

12 **Terms of Reference**

Tony Marvell, Programme Manager, CWC presented the final terms of reference for the City of Wolverhampton Town Deal Board. Since the previous meeting on 15 May 2020 amendments had been made to reflect the new membership of the Board. Everything else remained unchanged.

Resolved:

That the refreshed Terms of Reference for the City of Wolverhampton Town Deal Board be approved.

13 **Any Other Business**

Thematic Focus Group Meetings – Week Commencing 6 July 2020

Simon Archer, Director of Bilston BID asked whether it would be possible for him to put forward a project for consideration at one of the focus groups that he would not be involved in. Rhiann Davitt-Jones, Associate Director of CBRE asked that he email her a precis of the project; the funding request; and the inputs and outcomes. It would then be taken to the appropriate focus group.