



Towns Fund Board

Minutes - 26 November 2021

Attendance

Members of the Towns Fund Board

Ninder Johal	Owner, Nachural
Simon Archer	Director, Bilston BID
Councillor Ian Brookfield	Leader of the Council, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC)
Craig Bateman	Representative from the Office of Stuart Anderson MP
James Crowter	Managing Director, Tecman
Adam Daniels	Regional Operations Director, Countryside Properties
Lindsey Flynn	Representative of Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership
Ray Flynn	Associate Director (Place), University of Wolverhampton
Janis	Youth Council Representative
Ro Hands	Owner, Learn Play Foundation
James Holland	General Manager, Collins Aerospace
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, 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

In Attendance

Liam Davies	Head of City Development, CWC
Shelley Humphries	Democratic Services Officer, CWC
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration, CWC
Simon Marks	Partner - Arcadis
Tony Marvell	Towns Fund Programme Manager, CWC
Julie Obada	Head of Skills, CWC
John Roseblade	Head of City Transport, CWC
Jack Stevens	Towns Fund Coordinator, CWC
Peter Taylor	Regeneration Officer, CWC
Pete Thomason	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)
Renata Walton	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)
Isobel Woods	Head of Enterprise, CWC

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
Apologies were received from Stuart Anderson MP - Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South West, Tim Johnson - Chief Executive, City of Wolverhampton Council; Ben Reid - Board Member, International Co-Op Alliance and Mal Cowgill - Principal and Chief Executive, City of Wolverhampton College.

- 2 **Notification of substitute members**
Craig Bateman attended from Stuart Anderson MP's office.

- 3 **Declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest.

- 4 **Minutes of the meeting of 24 September 2021**
Resolved:
 That the minutes of the meeting of 24 September 2021 be approved as a correct record.

- 5 **Matters arising**
In respect of minute 1 and the nomination for a new representative of the Youth Council, the Chair welcomed Janis, Vice Chair of the Youth Council. At this point it was also noted that Ray Flynn was proposed as the University of Wolverhampton representative going forward. It was agreed that the Terms of Reference would be refreshed to reflect these changes and brought before Towns Fund Board for noting.

The Chair also took the opportunity to welcome Simon Marks, Partner at Arcadis who would be presenting and Renata Walton from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) who was in attendance as an observer.

It was also noted that the role of the Towns Fund Board was becoming an oversight Board, and that the structure of future meetings would be based around dashboard reporting.

Resolved:
 1. It was agreed that Ray Flynn, Associate Director (Place) would represent University of Wolverhampton and Janis would represent the Youth Council going forward.
 2. That the Terms of Reference would be refreshed to reflect these changes and brought before Towns Fund Board for noting.

- 6 **Towns Fund Action Tracker**
Tony Marvell, Programme Manager, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) presented the Towns Fund Action Tracker which outlined the outcomes of actions agreed at the last meeting.

Resolved:
 That the outcomes from the actions agreed at the meeting of 24 September 2021 be noted.

7 **National Towns Fund Update**

Peter Thomason, DLUHC provided a verbal update on the National Towns Fund. It was reported that Wolverhampton had received the grant offer letter on 11 November 2021. The remaining 15 of the 101 towns were due to receive their offers which would enable business cases to be finalised.

Resolved:

That the National Towns Fund Update be received.

8 **Levelling Up Bid - Tranche 1**

Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration, CWC provided a verbal update on the Levelling Up Bid – Tranche 1 for funding for the City Learning Quarter. It was highlighted that the bid for the £20 million had now officially been approved. The scheme had been backed by Wolverhampton South West MP, Stuart Anderson, and it was noted that the planning approval was in place. The update outlined plans for a new purpose-built education facility at a location close to the City centre and transport links which incorporated the City of Wolverhampton College's Metro One Campus, Adult Education Service and the Central Library. This amalgamation into one building also contributed to the Council's climate change agenda through building efficiency.

Janis, Representative of the Youth Council added that the timing of these plans aligned with a need to create a quiet study space which could be accessible to all learners at all times. It was proposed that such a space be considered as part of the plans as the existing facility closed at 9.00 pm which did not suit all schedules. Ray Flynn, Associate Director (Place), University of Wolverhampton and Councillor Stephen Simkins, Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy, CWC expressed their support of this proposal and that they were happy to enter into more detailed discussions outside of the meeting.

Resolved:

That the proposal to incorporate an accessible quiet study space with extended hours for all learners be explored as part of the City Learning Quarter planning.

9 **Programme Dashboard**

Simon Marks, Partner, Arcadis introduced the Programme Dashboard presentation. CWC officers Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration; Liam Davies, Head of City Development; John Roseblade, Head of City Transport; Tony Marvell, Towns Fund Programme Manager; Isobel Woods, Head of Enterprise; Julie Obada, Head of Skills and Peter Taylor, Regeneration Officer provided an update on the progress of each project, its funding position and the stage projects were at in the expected timelines.

9a **City Learning Quarter**

Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration, CWC provided a verbal update on the City Learning Quarter progress. In addition to the information provided earlier, it was reported that Phase 1 was currently at delivery stage whilst Phase 2 was procurement ready.

9b **Brewers Yard / Culwell Street**

Liam Davies, Head of City Development, CWC provided a verbal update on the Brewers Yard / Culwell Street depot progress. This was currently at delivery stage with the new depot on track to be operational by the end of 2024.

9c **WM5G**

Tony Marvell, Programme Manager, CWC provided a verbal update on the WM5G project progress. It was added that funding was already in place and that Towns Fund topped up the existing offer. The accelerator was now running at the Science Park and 5G was currently available throughout the site. A legal agreement was due to be finalised in December 2021 outlining the relationship with 5G to allow greater control over funding and monies.

9d **Events Programme**

John Roseblade, Head of City Transport, CWC provided a verbal update on the Events Programme which was at delivery stage. The update outlined recently held events and future events planning.

A query was raised around how funding would be split between the City Centre, Bilston and Wednesfield. This thought was echoed as it was important to know what funds were available to Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) so budgets could be planned. It was reported that this had not been finalised as yet however a process on how to allocate funding was being co-produced with stakeholders to determine this and a meeting would be planned involving the Events team and the BIDs to discuss this.

It was suggested that there was an amphitheatre based in Wednesfield as well, which would be good to make use of as an entertainment venue.

In response to a query around the British Art Show, it was clarified that Towns Fund wasn't contributing directly to the show however funding could potentially be used to support its legacy.

9e **Wednesfield Markets and Permeability**

John Roseblade, Head of City Transport, CWC provided a verbal update on Wednesfield Markets and interventions project which was at initiation and project planning stage. The update outlined plans to refresh the high street to encourage higher footfall. A project manager had been allocated to commence work on a project plan shortly.

It was acknowledged that the existing consultations and feedback among stakeholders and traders had been hugely beneficial however it was requested that the wider community be included in terms of engagement. Members were assured that this would be taken into consideration in the planning of the existing engagement programme.

9f **Bilston Markets**

John Roseblade, Head of City Transport, CWC provided a verbal update on plans for the Bilston Markets project. The update outlined that this included wider connectivity between the high street and transport links and a project manager had also been appointed for this.

9g **Wolves @ Work**

Isobel Woods, Head of Enterprise provided a verbal update on the Wolves @ Work initiative to support Wolverhampton residents into employment. It was reported that the Authority worked in partnership with Department for Work and Pensions to deliver a wide range of support mechanisms to enable residents to undertake apprenticeships, become successful in interviews or gain the required experience, training and qualifications to pursue a chosen career. This included support for older residents, Work Coaches and pop-up Youth Hubs aimed at a younger cohort.

9h **Public Realm P2**

John Roseblade, Head of City Transport, CWC provided a verbal update on the City Centre Public Realm Phase 2 project which was at initiation stage. It was noted that the project sought to improve public realm by creating improved spaces to encourage more City Centre footfall and create more jobs.

9i **National Brownfield Institute Block A**

Ray Flynn, Associate Director (Place), University of Wolverhampton provided a verbal update on the National Brownfield Institute (Block A) project which was at initiation stage.

9j **Grand Theatre**

Peter Taylor, Regeneration Officer, CWC provided a verbal update on Phase 1 of the Grand Theatre project. It was reported that plans were in progress to acquire the adjacent building to develop as an outreach hub known as the Green Room for community use. Conversations had been ongoing with the current owners to agree an offer.

Concerns were raised around the acquisition of the property adjacent to the existing theatre and the financial implications of a compulsory purchase order (CPO). Assurances were offered that the Authority had sought advice from a commercial agent on possible approaches. If the CPO route were to be considered, advice would continue to be sought on evidence of value for money before committing.

Resolved:

1. That a meeting was to be planned involving the Events Team and the BIDs to discuss funding allocations.
2. That the Programme Dashboard update presentation be received.

10 **Town Fund Programme Plan**

Tony Marvell, Programme Manager, CWC provided a verbal update on the Town Fund Programme Plan. The update provided the Board with a snapshot overview of the progress of all the Towns Fund projects.

The Events Programme, WM5G, and Brewers Yard/Culwell projects had been submitted to DLUHC and had progressed to delivery

Wolves@Work, City Learning Quarter, Bilston Markets and Grand Theatre had progressed to tranche 2a and finalisation of summary business cases stage with a view to submit these to DLUHC by 14 January 2022.

In Tranche 2a, summary business cases for Public Realm Phase 2, Wednesfield Markets / Permeability and National Brownfield Institute Block A projects were on track to be submitted in March 2022 before progressing to detailed business cases.

Resolved:

That the update on the Town Fund Programme Plan be received.

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Any Other Business

There was no other business.