



City Investment Board

Minutes - 15 September 2023

Attendance

Members of the City Investment Board

Ninder Johal (Chair)	Owner, Nachural
Simon Archer (Vice Chair)	Director, Bilston BID
Stuart Anderson MP	Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South West
Cllr Steve Evans	Deputy Leader, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC)
Ray Flynn	Associate Director, University of Wolverhampton
Tim Johnson	Chief Executive, CWC
Josie Kelly	Chief Executive Officer, Access 2 Business
Chris Kirkland	Head of City Investment, CWC
Maninder Mangat	Director, MM Consulting
Kevin Rogers	Paycare Representative
Cherry Shine	Director, Wolverhampton BID
Councillor Stephen Simkins	Leader of the Council, CWC
Jane Stevenson MP	Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton North East

In Attendance

Shelley Humphries	Democratic Services Officer, CWC
Charlotte Johns	Director of Strategy, CWC
Darowen Jones	Towns Fund Programme Manager, CWC
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration, CWC
Ayesha Malhan	Regeneration Officer, CWC
Julie Obada	Head of Skills, CWC
Kassandra Polyzoides	Deputy Director of Regeneration (Interim)
Ballal Raza	Programme Manager, CWC
John Roseblade	Director of Resident Services, CWC
Ed Whiting	Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing

Item No. *Title*

- Apologies for absence**
The Chair opened the meeting by congratulating Councillor Stephen Simkins on his election to Leader of the Council.

Apologies for absence were received from Board members Cathy Francis, Director, Housing, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; Adam Daniels, Regional Operations Director, Countryside Properties; Stuart McLachlan, President, Moog Industrial Group and Lead of Wolverhampton Business Champions; James Holland, General Manager, Collins Aerospace and Youth Council Representatives.

Apologies were also received from Andrew Scragg, Participation Officer, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) and Mark Bassett, Programme Director, CWC.

2 **Notification of substitute members**

Peter Merry attended for Mal Cowgill, Principal and Chief Executive, City of Wolverhampton College.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at this time although a reminder was issued for all members to complete and return Declaration of Interest forms.

Resolved:

That the Chair would contact Board members who have not yet returned their Register of Interests form

4 **Minutes of the meeting of 14 July 2023**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of 14 July 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 (CWC) presented the Towns Fund Action Tracker which outlined the outcomes of actions agreed at the last meeting.

In addition to the information within the report, it was highlighted that one expression of interest had been received for Vice Chair and that the election was on the agenda for this meeting.

It was noted that there was a draft version of the updated website available which would go live once the by elections had taken place. Increased detail had been included in respect of projects and milestones and Board members were invited to review and provide any feedback.

In terms of the City Investment Board proposals to participate in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Governance Pathfinder Pilot, it was added that intention to participate had now been submitted and was currently progressing.

Resolved:

1. That the Meeting Action Tracker be received.

2. That all Board members review and provide feedback on the refreshed Invest website.

7 **City Investment Board - Voting for Vice Chair**

The Chair reported that one expression of interest had been received and Simon Archer, Director, Bilston BID delivered a short speech declaring that interest. It was therefore proposed that Simon Archer be appointed Vice Chair for City Investment Board.

It was then moved by the Leader of the Council and seconded by Maninder Mangat that Simon Archer, Director, Bilston BID be appointed Vice Chair for City Investment Board.

Resolved:

That Simon Archer, Director, Bilston BID be appointed Vice Chair for City Investment Board.

8 **Update on Youth Council and Wolverhampton Prospectus**

Chris Kirkland, Head of City Investment, CWC provided a verbal update on the Youth Council and Wolverhampton Prospectus. It was reported that following discussions at a meeting of the Youth Council, an accessible video was currently in production with the Youth Council. It was planned to premiere the video on 25 September 2023 at the start of Wolverhampton Business Week on the igloo screen with an introduction by Youth Council Representatives. An invite for this had been shared with Board members. The video would then be shared more widely on social media following elections at the end of September 2023.

Resolved:

That the Update on Youth Council and Wolverhampton Prospectus be received.

9 **Wolves@Work Project Lead Update Presentation**

Julie Obada, Head of Skills, CWC delivered the presentation update for Wolves@Work which provided a background to the programme and the current offer.

It was queried what would be in place once the current funding stream ceased and assurances were offered that funding from another source was imminent and others would be sought to follow that. It was noted that such a valuable scheme needed a sustainability plan or exit strategy in place and that this was being explored extensively.

It was noted that feedback from employers had been mainly positive although some challenges had been experienced reaching smaller businesses as they did not always have the resources or time to spend engaging. A query was raised around how to support employees with a disability and it was noted that the Disability Confident Scheme was in place and conversations had been planned with DWP to better understand the needs of service users.

It was also noted that in terms of apprenticeships, the age barrier had been removed by extending the age limit and providing pay above the basic minimum wage.

It was highlighted that Wolverhampton had achieved the Gold standard for the Armed Services Covenant and the partnership working with Wolverhampton Homes was also acknowledged.

In response to a query around retention, it was noted that employee support continued with a scheme designed to provide employers with the right skills to continue supporting their staff. Also, a case was highlighted where a care home across the border had been closing leaving many at risk of redundancy and around 30 of these people had been found new employment through the scheme. Wolves@Work had also reached out to Wilko Ltd. staff in light of the current situation with the chain.

In response to a query around people on zero hours contracts or in receipt of Universal Credit, it was noted that this often skewed figures although DWP had been approached to share and compare records to resolve this.

Resolved:

That the Wolves@Work Project Lead Update Presentation be received.

10 **Culwell Street Project Lead Update Presentation**

John Roseblade, Director of Resident Services, CWC introduced the Culwell Street Project Lead Update and Ballal Raza, Programme Manager, CWC delivered the presentation which provided an overview of the Culwell Street Project and anticipated timelines.

In response to a query around inflation rates, it was noted that the 15% buffer rate was above the usual 10% and it was confirmed that this risk would be monitored.

In response to a query around communicating timelines and managing expectations, it was noted that the timeline included within the presentation had been published along with the recent Cabinet report which was publicly available on the Council website. In addition, hoarding had been designed to be placed around the site which outlined the details.

Councillor Steve Evans, Deputy Leader for the Council, CWC wished to record his thanks for the vision for the scheme and hard work undertaken as well as efforts in securing funding.

Resolved:

That the Culwell Street Project Lead Update Presentation be received.

11 **Towns Fund Programme Update Dashboard**

The Chair moved to take items 11 and 12 together and Darowen Jones drew attention to the Towns Fund Programme Update Dashboard which had been circulated with the agenda pack for information. Members were invited to forward any queries to Darowen Jones outside of the meeting.

11a Project Updates

Resolved:

That the Project Updates dashboard be noted.

11b Programme Level Risk Register

Resolved:

That the Programme Level Risk Register be noted.

12 **Future High Streets Fund**

Resolved:

That the Future High Streets Fund dashboard be noted.

13 **Any Other Business**

In response to an enquiry, assurances were offered that the position of City of Wolverhampton Council was secure in terms of funding from the West Midlands Combined Authority for projects already underway with an uplift should inflation worsen. It was noted that if projects elsewhere were unable to progress, this may potentially present opportunities to access unlocked funding.