



# City Investment Board

## Minutes - 24 November 2023

### Attendance

#### Members of the City Investment Board

Simon Archer (Vice Chair in the Chair)	Director, Bilston BID
Cllr Steve Evans	Deputy Leader, CWC
Ray Flynn	Associate Director, University of Wolverhampton
Ro Hands <sup>v</sup>	Owner, Learn Play Foundation
James Holland <sup>v</sup>	General Manager, Collins Aerospace
Tim Johnson <sup>v</sup>	Chief Executive, CWC
Pat McFadden MP	Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South East
Peter Merry	Principal and Chief Executive, City of Wolverhampton College
Maninder Mangat	Director, MM Consulting
Kevin Rogers <sup>v</sup>	Paycare Representative
Amit Sharma	Director, Sapphire Innovation
Cherry Shine	Director, Wolverhampton BID
Jane Stevenson MP	Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton North East
Scott Thompson	Chair of Economic Growth Board
Harleen	Youth Council Representatives

#### In Attendance

Mark Bassett	Programme Director, CWC.
Matthew Fletcher	Employee, Kinver Business Solutions
Helen Hansen-Fure	Kinver Business Solutions
Shelley Humphries	Democratic Services Officer, CWC
Darowen Jones	Towns Fund Programme Manager, CWC
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration, CWC
Kassandra Polyzoides	Deputy Director of Regeneration (Interim)
John Roseblade	Director of Resident Services, CWC
Andrew Scragg	Participation Officer, CWC

Item No. Title

- 1 **Apologies for absence**  
Apologies were received from Ninder Johal, Owner, Nachural and Chair of City Investment Board; Stuart Anderson MP, Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South West; Mal Cowgill, Principal and Chief Executive, City of Wolverhampton College; Cathy Francis, Director, Housing, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; Pat McFadden MP, Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South East and Councillor Stephen Simkins. Leader of the Council.
- 2 **Notification of substitute members**  
Peter Merry attended for Mal Cowgill, Principal and Chief Executive, City of Wolverhampton College and Scott attended for Cathy Francis, Director, Housing, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- 3 **Declarations of Interest**  
There were no declarations of interest made.
- 4 **Minutes of the meeting of 15 September 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 **Towns Fund 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.  
  
It was requested that any outstanding Declaration of Interest forms be completed and returned by the end of the calendar year.  
  
It was again requested that any comments or feedback on the refreshed Invest website be provided by the end of the calendar year.  
  
Resolved:
  1. That any outstanding Declaration of Interest forms be forwarded by the end of the calendar year.
  2. That any comments or feedback on the refreshed Invest website be provided by the end of the calendar year.
- 7 **Long- Term Towns Award, Bilston £20 Million**  
Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) delivered the update on the Long-Term Towns Award, Bilston £20 Million. It had been announced that Bilston, Wolverhampton was one of 55 towns that had been awarded £20 million endowment-style funding over 10 years to invest in local people's priorities with a view to residents being involved in how the money was invested.

The presentation outlined the timeline and that currently, Q4 guidance was due by the end of December 2023 to provide a structure on how to plan the use of the funding. It was clarified that CIB would oversee the project however the Council would remain as the accountable body.

It was noted that the High Street Taskforce would support Towns Fund Boards in development of plans however it was proposed to also establish a sub-group of City Investment Board to provide good governance and oversee the project. Once established, this would then move the project into a community engagement stage to identify what residents' priorities were.

Board members were in favour of the establishment of the sub-group and it was acknowledged that input from elected ward Councillors in Bilston would also be beneficial. It was also noted that the investment plan should go to Full Council as the accountable body for formal approval to ensure the money was being spent appropriately.

In response to a query, it was clarified that the £20 million was not included in the Pathfinder, Bilston Heart projects or Levelling Up and was a separate funding stream.

Resolved:

That City Investment Board agree to the establishment of a sub-group to provide oversight for the Bilston Long-Term Towns Award projects.

## 8 **Pathfinder Pilot**

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) provided a verbal update on the Pathfinder Pilot. It was reported that on 3 November 2023, Wolverhampton was one of four authorities in the country to be approved for the Pathfinder. A memorandum of understanding was expected by the end of November 2023 which would then allow the Pathfinder project to get underway. Assurances were offered that although the Council remained the accountable body, City Investment Board would still have continued oversight of the project.

The presentation went on to outline the projects which would benefit from the funding, which included all the Town Deal Projects.

It was highlighted that the funding also attracted a further £78 million of match funding.

The work was commended by the Chair.

Resolved:

That the update on the Pathfinder Pilot be received.

## 9 **Levelling Up Fund – Round 3 Award**

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) provided a verbal update on the Levelling Up Fund – Round 3 Award.

It was reported that notification had been received that around £20 million was to be awarded to Wolverhampton for the Green Innovation Corridor as part of Levelling Up Round Three.

Conversations had begun with the University of Wolverhampton and further updates would be provided in due course.

Resolved:

That the Levelling Up Fund – Round 3 Award update be received.

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### **Wednesfield Project Lead Update Presentation**

It was moved to defer the item as a crucial development was expected in January 2024 and a more in-depth update would be available at that time. The project was still on track to be delivered by the scheduled date of March 2025.

Jane Stevenson MP for Wolverhampton North East highlighted concerns around delays around this and other projects and residents being kept abreast of developments. Assurances were offered that although the update was delayed, the project itself was still running to the anticipated timescales and briefing sessions would continue to be provided.

A number of points were raised around communication and residents feeling they weren't being kept informed, leading to the misconception that nothing was moving forward. It was agreed that further work needed to be undertaken in terms of communication and this would be actioned as soon as possible.

Resolved:

1. That the Wednesfield Project Lead Update Presentation be deferred until further information was available.
2. That further work towards communications to residents and the general public be undertaken.

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### **City Learning Quarter Project Lead Update Presentation**

Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration, CWC introduced the item and Mark Bassett, Programme Director, CWC delivered the presentation on the City Learning Quarter Project Lead Update.

It was confirmed that the ambition of the programme was to provide education for residents across two main campus locations; the new Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre (ATAC) building in Wellington Road, Bilston and a new centrally located City Centre College building. In addition to these, works would be carried out to refurbish the Central Library and Paget Road Campus to make use of these as well. The presentation outlined funding streams totalling around £69 million, key milestones and projected outcomes. It was anticipated that building projects would be complete by September 2025. In terms of communications, it was noted that content had been released into the public domain around progress, for example the signing of the building contract.

It was noted that there would be an increased footfall in the City Centre due to Christmas shopping and there would be an opportunity to perhaps include something on the hoarding surrounding building site areas advising of works to come and progress to avoid the perception of an empty site with nothing going on.

In terms of procurement, it was noted that local supply chains were being approached in the first instance to ensure local businesses benefitted from the work and supply opportunities available.

The representative of the Youth Council expressed a wish for the Youth Council to be more involved in the project and noted that it was hoped that there would be services available for secondary school students around the 11-18 age group as well as those in higher education. It was noted that project managers would work with the Youth Council for general input and to establish what could be provided for this particular cohort of young people.

Resolved:

1. That additional communications of City Learning Quarter project progress be explored for City Centre hoardings.
2. That City Learning Quarter project leads engage further with the Youth Council throughout the programme.

## 12 **Towns Fund Programme Update Dashboard**

### 12a Project Updates

Resolved:

That the Project Updates dashboard be noted.

### 12b Programme Level Risk Register

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) presented the Programme Level Risk Register for information and noted that inflation had been flagged as a red risk. It was requested that extra narrative be added to the register around programme level spend and impact on output and performance, etc. It was agreed and noted that the latter could be included in future Project Update dashboards.

Resolved:

That extra narrative be included in the Project Dashboards around programme level spend and impact on output and performance.

## 13 **Future High Streets Fund**

Resolved:

That the Future High Streets Fund dashboard be noted.

## 14 **Any Other Business**

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) added that an audit had been undertaken with a deep dive on a random project, which had been the Culwell Street project. Overall, it had been a favourable result, achieving the highest level outcome for internal governance and Board members were invited to approach Darowen Jones who was happy to provide greater detail should this be required.

Jane Stevenson, MP for Wolverhampton North East reported that, in addition to the Green Innovation Corridor Funding announcement, it had been noted in the Chancellor's Autumn statement that the West Midlands Investment Zone had been

confirmed therefore it was requested that an update be provided on the potential of an Investment Zone for the City at the next meeting.

The Youth Council representative reported that the Wolverhampton Prospectus video had now been completed and successfully previewed at Business Week and at this point the video was viewed. Thanks were extended on behalf of the Youth Council to everyone who took part in supporting its production and it was expressed that the Youth Council enjoyed taking part in Business Week and looked forward to working with the Regeneration Team in the future.

Resolved:

That an update on the West Midlands Investment Zone be included on the agenda for the next City Investment Board meeting.