



# City Investment Board

## Minutes - 26 January 2024

### Attendance

#### Members of the City Investment Board

Ninder Johal (Chair)	Owner, Nachural
Simon Archer (Vice Chair)	Director, Bilston BID
Councillor Steve Evans	Deputy Leader: City Housing, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC)
Ray Flynn	Associate Director (Place), University of Wolverhampton
James Holland <sup>v</sup>	General Manager, Collins Aerospace
Tim Johnson	Chief Executive, CWC
Pat McFadden MP	Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South East
Maninder Mangat	Director, MM Consulting
Peter Merry	Deputy Chief Executive, City of Wolverhampton College
Kevin Rogers	Executive Director, Paycare
Cherry Shine	Director, Wolverhampton BID
Councillor Paul Singh	Office of the Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South West
Jane Stevenson MP <sup>v</sup>	Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton North East
Scott Thompson	Managing Director, Thompson AVC and Lead of Business Champions and Economic Growth Board (EGB)

#### In Attendance

Oliver Bhurru	Communications Manager (Place), CWC
Matthew Fletcher	Senior Consultant, Kinver Business Solutions Ltd
Shelley Humphries	Democratic Services Officer, CWC
Darowen Jones	Towns Fund Programme Manager, CWC
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration, CWC
Ayesha Malhan <sup>v</sup>	Regeneration Officer, CWC
John Roseblade	Director of Resident Services, CWC

<sup>v</sup> – virtual attendance

*Item No. Title*

- 1       **Apologies for absence**  
Apologies were received from Councillor Stephen Simkins, Leader of the Council, CWC; Youth Council Representatives; Stuart Anderson MP for Wolverhampton South West and Mal Cowgill, Principal and Chief Executive, City of Wolverhampton College.
- 2       **Notification of substitute members**  
Councillor Paul Singh attended for Stuart Anderson MP for Wolverhampton South West and 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.
- 4       **Minutes of the meeting of 24 November 2023**  
Resolved:  
          That the minutes of the meeting of 24 November 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 published in the agenda pack, it was noted that not all declarations of interest forms had been received therefore any members with forms outstanding would be contacted.  
  
Resolved:  
          That the outcomes from the actions agreed at the meeting of 24 November 2023 be noted.
- 7       **Investment Zone and Green Innovation Corridor Update Presentation**  
Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration, CWC delivered the Investment Zone and Green Innovation Corridor (GIC) Update Presentation which provided an overview of its purpose and status of its development.  
  
It was noted that the GIC would connect key assets at the University of Wolverhampton Springfield Campus (UoWSC) with University of Wolverhampton Science Park (UoWSP), providing opportunities along the main A449 corridor. At maturity GIC will link to the City centre and potentially further north to i54 Business Park, introducing new development opportunities and incubation space stimulating further improvements to the City's green and blue networks.  
  
Board members wished to acknowledge thanks and recognition for the input of the late Councillor Ian Brookfield into the instigation of the project.

It was recognised that the development had been a collaboration between all parties.

It was noted that developing a clear strategy would be key in communicating what the GIC was, which partners were involved and the breadth of opportunities and benefits it presented in a way that was meaningful to local businesses.

It was highlighted that it wasn't restricted to the Wolverhampton border and that including cross-border opportunities were also considered.

It was agreed to include regular updates as a standing item.

Resolved:

1. That the Investment Zone and Green Innovation Corridor Update Presentation be received.
2. That further updates be received as a standing item on future City Investment Board agendas.

## 8 **Youth Council, Wolverhampton Prospectus Video**

The official video developed in co-production with the Youth Council was screened which showcased the City and what it offered to young people and families.

The work was commended and thanks were recorded to everyone involved with its production.

Resolved:

That the Youth Council, Wolverhampton Prospectus Video be received.

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

Darowen Jones, Towns Fund Programme Manager, CWC provided the Wednesfield Project Lead Update Presentation which outlined progress against works to be completed by March 2026, a summary of engagement activity and highlighted key achievements to date. Key upcoming milestones were highlighted for reporting further updates to City Investment Board and other key stakeholders.

Concerns around timeframes were allayed as it was highlighted that the project was funded to complete in March 2026 and there were no concerns or indications at this time that this would not be achievable.

In response to a query around what consultation there had been with landlords in terms of shop frontages, it was noted that some of these were owned by Wolverhampton Homes (WH) and internal conversations were ongoing. Some were owned by traders and once consulted, further detail on this would be shared in the next update.

It was suggested to include places of worship in consultations for a wider reach into communities.

The importance of social value of the project was highlighted and it deliberated how to ensure local businesses benefitted from being involved in development and construction of any works.

It was noted that footfall for traders increased when events took place in the City centre and it was considered whether holding events in Wednesfield would give the feel of an emerging change while improvements were still ongoing.

It was acknowledged that often, visitor footfall would be highest in the morning then drop off by the afternoon and proposals such as the inclusions of extra seating and canopies in the street furniture might encourage visitors to dwell longer and stimulate business in the area.

Resolved:

1. That the Wednesfield Project Lead Update Presentation be noted.
2. That places of worship be included in future engagement / consultations.

## 10 **Towns Deal and Future High Streets Communication Strategy - Update Report**

Oliver Bhurru, Communications Manager (Place) delivered the Towns Deal and Future High Streets Communication Strategy - Update Report presentation which outlined the Strategy's key principles, methods and foci, as well as communication outcomes to date.

The refreshed website was commended by Board members who also put forward suggestions to continually share the link when involved in social media threads or discussions which raised negative perceptions of nothing going on in the City.

In response to a query around in person engagement, it was noted that there had been an initiative where one to one consultation had taken place over the phone, however the potential to include face to face engagement at various events was noted. A suggestion was also made to include BID ambassadors to engage with the public, although it was noted that there was only a BID team for the Bilston and City Centre areas.

It was also suggested that hoardings could be placed around the transport links to advertise works going on in the City to arriving visitors.

It was noted that conversations were ongoing with the Youth Council on how to make best use of a range of social media platforms to reach younger audiences as well as older adults.

It was highlighted that communicating the social value of the projects was a consideration and confirmed that this would be touched on in a future City Investment agenda item outlining social value and the Wolverhampton Pound.

It was requested to break down future updates to show outcomes for each of the projects.

Resolved:

1. That the Towns Deal and Future High Streets Communication Strategy - Update Report be noted.
2. That a breakdown be provided of Communication Strategy outcomes for each area / project.

## 11 **Longer Term Plan Bilston - Update Report**

Matthew Fletcher, Senior Consultant, Kinver Business Solutions Ltd delivered the Longer-Term Plan Bilston - Update Report which outlined funding and progress since the last meeting.

A query was raised in terms of here decision-making powers for the planning lay and it was noted that this responsibility would sit with the Town Board (which had been agreed at the last meeting to be established as a sub-group of City Investment Board) and following feedback from residents about what they wanted.

It was queried how much planning would actually be devolved down to Bilston residents and it was noted one of the stipulations of the new approach was to enable residents to have a greater influence on the plans for funding and consultation was key in this.

It was noted that much of the work should complement the work funded for the market and it was highlighted that Bilston Indoor Market had recently won a Highly Commended award at the Great British Market Awards 2024 as it currently was.

Resolved:

That the Longer-Term Plan Bilston - Update Report be noted.

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

### 12a Project Updates

Darowen Jones, Programme Manager, City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) responded to queries in respect of the individual projects as published within the pack.

It was queried what would be in place to minimise disruption around the Bilston Market site whilst improvement works were going on. It was acknowledged that there may be some challenges in orchestrating this as the market would remain open throughout, however the Board was assured that consultation was ongoing with traders and solutions to reduce any impact on trade were being explored, such as the temporary relocation of some stalls.

A query was raised around what interventions were in place in addition to Wolves@Work to tackle youth unemployment as Wolverhampton had seen a small increase. It was noted that this would be incorporated into the Social Value item for the next meeting.

Resolved:

1. That the Project Updates dashboard be noted.
2. That Wolves@Work updates be included in the Wolverhampton Pound and Social Value agenda item for the next meeting.

### 12b Programme Level Risk Register

Attention was drawn to the Programme Level Risk Register included within the pack. There were no further queries raised.

Resolved:

That the Programme Level Risk Register be noted.

13

**Future High Streets Fund**

Attention was drawn to the Future High Streets Fund dashboard included within the pack which provided an update on Bell Street Box Space. There were no further queries raised.

Resolved:

That the Future High Streets Fund dashboard be noted.

14

**Any Other Business**

There was no other business raised.