Herefordshire Council

# TOWNS FUND BOARD

## Notes and Action Points

## Friday 25 June 2021, 8.30-9.15 am via Zoom

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| **Acting Chair:** | **Frank Myers/** | FM | Herefordshire Business Board / Marches LEP |
| | **Julian Vaughan** | JV | Managing Director, Green Dragon Hotel |
| **Board Present:** | **Ellie Chowns** | **ECH** | Cabinet Member, Environment and Economy, HC |
| | **Judith Faux** | JF | HVOSS |
| | **Kath Hey** | KH | Councillor, Herefordshire Council |
| | **David Langley** | DL | Chief of External Engagement, NMITE |
| | **Ruth Parry** | RP | Director Operations & Marketing, Simple Design Works Ltd |
| | **Felix Smithson** | FS | Hereford 6th Form College, Youth Representative |
| | **Paul Stevens** | PS | Hereford Business Improvement District (HBID) |
| | **Will Vaughan** | WV | Hereford Pedicabs and Pedicargo |
| **Board Apologies:** | **Lauren Rogers** | LR | Project Manager, Rural Media |
| **Other Attendees:** | **Ivan Annibal** | IA | Rose Regeneration |
| | **Rebecca Collings** | RC | Consultant, The Nichols Group |
| | **Christian Dangerfield** | CD | Rose Regeneration |
| | **Olli Hindle** | OH | MHCLG Representative |
| | **David Hitchiner** | DH | Leader of the Council, Herefordshire Council |
| | **Joni Hughes** | JH | Senior Project Manager – Capital, Herefordshire Council |
| | **Andrew Lovegrove** | AL | Chief Finance Officer, Herefordshire Council |
| | **Paul Walker** | PW | Chief Executive Officer, Herefordshire Council |
| | **Nick Webster** | NW | Economic Development Manager, Herefordshire Council |
| **Notetaker:** | **Jan Bailey** | JB | Herefordshire Business Board |

| ITEM | NOTES | ACTION |
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| **1.** | **Welcome / Attendance & Apologies / Declarations and Register of Interest**<br><br>FM welcomed everyone to the meeting. A particular welcome was extended to AL and PW.<br><br>Apologies were as noted above.<br><br>There were no Declarations of Interest. | |
| **2.** | **Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**<br><br>RP stated that the inaccuracies in the budget pointed out at the last meeting had not been corrected in the document circulated with today's meeting Agenda. FM agreed that this was the case, but said that the document circulated was not a budget, rather an income and expenditure statement. He said that more work was needed on the Project budget, which would be addressed later in today's meeting.<br><br>There were no other matters arising. | |
| **3.** | **Next Steps / Heads of Term Acceptance**<br><br>IA referred to the document (circulated): 'Towns Fund Next Steps (RR)' that outlined two key next steps that the Board needs to undertake, specifically:<br>1. Formally accept the offer (by 29 June 2021) | |

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| | 2. Decide the process and plan for the next eight weeks in order to meet the MHCLG deadline for confirmed projects (29 August 2021).<br>IA advised that detailed documentation has to be submitted to MHLCG by this date, as outlined in the circulated document.<br><br>IA / CD confirmed that they had met with all of the projects except one (Electric Buses), and that all had confirmed their projects were deliverable and that they wanted the funding, albeit with some adjustments.<br><br>IA referred to the document circulated with the Agenda for today's meeting, 'Hereford Towns Fund - Project Status Report 18/06/21', which briefly outlines the current status of all projects.<br><br>IA pointed out that the Electric Buses project had been described as 'fast track' by MHCLG in its offer documentation. Although this terminology has since changed, it is an indication of a project that the Department would want to progress faster than others.<br><br>CD added that some of the other projects, eg the Cycle Track component of the Holmer Extreme Sports Hub, had indicated that they would need guarantees and swift access to funding in order to progress with their plans.<br><br>IA stated that feedback had been received on the one project that had been rejected for funding by the MHCLG (Soil for the City). The reason given was that it did not fit the criteria required by the STF.<br><br>A number of comments were made by meeting attendees:<br><br>1. DL asked how the Maylord project would be affected by the lease of part of the premises to the DWP. IA agreed that changes would have to be made to the plan for this project, but he believed it was still deliverable, with adjustments. However, DL's concerns were noted.<br>2. AL advised that he had made a decision that Chamberlain Walker should be engaged by the Council to help the Council with an independent assessment of the Outline Business Cases to be developed by each project so that he could make an assessment of whether to sign them off in the role of Section 151 Officer. He stated that before signing the agreement on behalf of the Council, he would need to have a clear understanding of risk, in particular what would happen in the event of cost overrun. AL said he would also want to understand how the costs of managing projects would be accommodated. With regard to this latter point, AL and JV agreed to discuss this further outside of today's meeting.<br>3. JF asked for clarification regarding the process for allocating funding to projects, specifically since savings would have to be made to adjust to the reduced sum available. JV replied that these issues could be addressed once the Heads of Terms offer had been agreed. IA pointed out that several meetings of the Board / Project Development Group have been scheduled for July and August. These would enable the Board to be fully appraised of all details in order to inform this decision making.<br>4. RP asked for confirmation of the approach for using local contractors / talent to deliver the projects. JV confirmed that this would be encouraged by the Board. IA cited examples of when this approach had been taken by other STF recipients and said he would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with the Board.<br><br>**JV asked for the Board's agreement to formally accept the Heads of Terms offer. This was unanimously given**. | AL/JV |
| **4.** | **Budget Update** | |

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| | JV asked for and received the Board's approval to convene a small committee to work with IA and CD to develop a comprehensive budget. | JV |
| **5.** | **Accountable Body MOU Agreement**<br><br>Item deferred by request of LR. | |
| **6.** | **Any Other Business**<br><br>1. EC advised that she had been contacted by Herefordshire Women's Equality Group. She suggested that members of this group be invited to attend future Board meetings to ensure all projects are holistically assessed.<br>The Board agreed that this was a sensible request, and stated that they would encourage any groups who wished to represent particular views to attend.<br>2. CD said that the PDG had discussed the possibility of utilising Board members as mentors to the project leaders. JV stated that he would discuss further with LR and approach individual Board members regarding whether and how they felt they could use their personal expertise to support projects. He encouraged Board members to contact him with offers of help too.<br>3. IA advised that he had liaised with JH to develop a Gantt chat showing pertinent dates and actions required. He outlined the following key dates for note by Board members:<br>**- 9 July, 8-30-9.30 am – full Board meeting**<br>**- 16 July, 8.30-9.30 am – Project Development Group meeting**<br>**- 30 July, 8.30-9.30 am – Project Development Group meeting**<br>**- 13 August, 8.30-9.30 am – full Board meeting (NB: moved from 6 August)**<br>A list of these dates and the Gantt chart will be circulated to members after today's meeting.<br>JF's apologies for the meeting on 9 July were noted.<br>4. JV encouraged all members to share their thoughts with himself and IA/CD at any time rather than waiting for specific meeting dates.<br>5. RP requested that she be invited to attend future PDG meetings to help her to communicate messages effectively. JV agreed to this request. | LR<br><br>JV/LR<br><br>JB/IA |