Herefordshire Council

TOWNS FUND BOARD

Notes and Action Points

Friday 15th October 2021, 8.30-10.00 am via Zoom

Chair:	**Lauren Rogers**	LR	Project Manager, Rural Media
Board Present:	**Judith Faux**	JF	Trustee, HVOSS
	Kath Hey	KH	Councillor, Hereford City Council
	Frank Myers	FM	Herefordshire Business Board / Marches LEP
	Ruth Parry	RP	Director Operations & Marketing, Simple Design Works Ltd
	Paul Stevens	PS	Hereford Business Improvement District (HBID)
	Julian Vaughan	JV	Managing Director, Green Dragon Hotel
	Will Vaughan	WV	Hereford Pedicabs and Pedicargo
Other Attendees:	**Ivan Annibal**	IA	Rose Regeneration
	Rebecca Collings	RC	Consultant, The Nichols Group
	Christian Dangerfield	CD	Rose Regeneration (PART)
	Olli Hindle	OH	MHCLG Representative
	David Hitchiner	DH	Leader of the Council, Herefordshire Council
	Joni Hughes	JH	Portfolio Manager, Capital Development, HC
Board Apologies:	**Alan Anderson**	AA	British Lane – Old Market, Hereford
	Ellie Chowns	EC	Cabinet Member, Environment and Economy, HC
	Ian Christie	IC	Big Business Representative/MD, Welsh Water
	David Langley	DL	Chief of External Engagement, NMITE
	Jesse Norman	JN	MP for Hereford and South Herefordshire
	Felix Smithson	FS	Younger Person's Representative
Other Apologies:	**Nick Webster**	NW	Economic Development Manager, Herefordshire Council
	Andrew Lovegrove	AL	Chief Finance Officer, Herefordshire Council
Notetaker:	**Jan Bailey**	JB	Herefordshire Business Board

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
1.	**Welcome / Attendance & Apologies / Declarations and Register of Interest** LR welcomed everyone to the meeting. Particular mention was given to IA and CD following the re-engagement of Rose Regeneration to the project. Apologies were as noted above. There were no Declarations of Interest.	
2.	**Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising** The Minutes of the last meeting, held 3 September 2021, were agreed as a correct record, apart from the following amendments: • **Page 1**: LR advised that she will circulate the dates for future meetings to the Board as soon as possible. She is hoping that meetings will be held **weekly**. This should state: "She is hoping that meetings will be held **monthly**."	

	• **KH:** requested that her role should be stated as Councillor of Hereford City Council and not Herefordshire Council. LR apologised that this change request hadn't previously been actioned. **Matters Arising** • FM requested that the Board formally thank Claire Frowd for picking up the role of Note Taker at the last meeting. LR will action.	**LR**
3.	**Programme Management Arrangements and Priorities (See paper circulated)** 3.1 IA spoke to his paper 'Programme Management Arrangements' previously circulated to Board members. He provided an overview of the current situation and a summary of actions required in the forthcoming 10 months. The main priorities, he said, were to provide a Full Business Case (FBC) for each project and to ensure a full monitoring and evaluation plan for ongoing project management is in place. 3.2 IA referred to a Project Leads Event taking place w/c 18 October at The Green Dragon in Hereford, to which all project managers have been invited. Board Members are also encouraged to attend. 3.3 IA stated that Rose Regeneration (RR) will be putting together a detailed Gantt chart to lay out in full detail for the Board the important milestones for the next 10 months. 3.4 RC spoke to her presentation 'Hereford STF Board', previously circulated to Board members. This contained recommendations for project management, based on successful processes other Towns Fund recipients had adopted. RC stressed the importance of Board members understanding what is happening and what should be happening in terms of the Hereford STF Project Management. She suggested a 'Plan on a Page' approach which would be useful to provide Board members with the information they need. RC said she would be happy to work with RR to develop such an approach for Hereford. 3.5 RC also recommended the Board create a 'Responsibilities Matrix', and provided an example used in Cornwall. She said this would really help everyone involved to understand their responsibilities. 3.6 OH stated his agreement with RC's recommendations. He said it was critical that the Board and Herefordshire Council work together with RR to achieve project objectives, bearing in mind the Council's role as Accountable Body. 3.7 OH advised that with reference to Project Confirmation, final paperwork is currently being signed off and the Grant Offer Letter should be received in the next few weeks. He stated that the 5% funds should be released from November. 3.8 OH reminded the Board that although the Hereford STF featured 14 projects, for the purposes of the FBCs, these should be grouped as outlined in IA's papers into the three groups and stand-alone projects. In addition, full monitoring and evaluation plans for each project would be needed. He reminded the Board of the clear risk of falling behind in what is required of them if they do not work closely with projects to develop FBCs. 3.9 LR thanked RC and OH for their contributions and invited comments from Board members. 3.9.1 IA agreed that the matrices presented by RC would be very usefully adapted to the Hereford situation. It was agreed that RR would work with JH to develop draft planning tools for the Board.	IA/CD IA/CD/JH

	3.9.2 LR stated that she and OH had discussed the possibility of putting on workshops around project planning. These will be arranged, if needed.	
4.	**Hereford Council MoU with Towns Fund Board (see paper circulated)** 4.1 IA referred to the paper 'Herefordshire Council MoU with Towns Fund Board', which had been previously circulated to Board members. 4.2 LR requested that all Board members read through this MoU and submit any comments or observations to IA/LR copied to JH at their earliest convenience. 4.3 FM made the comment that timelines were missing from the document, but these are critical to the successful delivery of the STF projects.	All
5.	**Programme Management Activities (see paper circulated)** 5.1 IA referred to the paper 'Programme Management Activities', which had been previously circulated to Board members. Much of the detail of this, he said, had been covered in the previous Agenda item (3. above). 5.2 IA reiterated to the Board his recommendation that the project management tools suggested by RC are adopted and embedded in Hereford's approach. As agreed previously (see 3.9.1) he, CD and JH will work on a suggested approach to submit for the Board's approval.	IA/CD/JH
6.	**Project Progress Update (see paper circulated)** 6.1 IA spoke to his paper 'Project Progress Update', previously circulated. 6.2 IA suggested that the Board consider how any future project achievements are communicated to the public, for example making announcements when some of the smaller projects' FBCs are completed. 6.3 IA recommended that any dates identified in the project management planning processes are considered to be 'hard stops' in order to ensure everything is achieved on time. 6.4 LR invited comments from Board members. 6.4.1 JV stated the importance of project managers understanding their responsibilities. He expressed particular concern with regard to the Skills Foundry (NMITE) project especially in light of recent developments at the University and the lack of a Project Lead. IA acknowledged JV's concerns and stated that the Skills Foundry and Marches Experience projects are the two he considered would need most support through the process. As far as NMITE is considered, he advised that he is currently liaising with James Newby (Chief Operating Officer). 6.4.2 LR advised the Board of a recent discussion she'd had with DL, who had been made redundant from his position at NMITE. FM added that he had recently had discussions with JM and Elena Rodriguez-Falcon, CEO at NMITE. He had offered Herefordshire Business Board support with NMITE's external engagement activities, if wanted. FM encouraged Board members to publicly support NMITE. 6.4.3 LR advised that she had recently attended a City Centre Strategy meeting where details of the Council's Programme of Works were being discussed. She stressed how important it is for the Stronger Towns Fund Board to be kept informed of these developments to avoid any repeat of the situation which occurred	

	with the Maylord Orchards / Library development. JH suggested that the Board requests to be added to the list of Stakeholders so that they can be kept informed of any future developments. 6.5 IA provided an update on the Southside group of projects (Grow Local, Belmont Wanderers FC, NMITE). Because of the ambitious nature of the project and sensitivities around its location, IA explained that the project was subject to complicated planning requirements, which would need lots of consultation and studies (some of the latter of which are time-critical). 6.6 IA explained that Southside project sponsors had previously identified a need to access funds from the Capacity Fund for initial planning activities, for which the Board had already agreed a scheme of delegation. These were likely to amount to c£4,000. 6.7 However, IA explained that Southside had an additional need for funding to retain a planning consultant in the order of £50-£60,000 (CD has obtained quotations – awaiting evaluation), which could potentially be met from the 5% initial tranche of funding. IA stressed that this was not additional funding to Southside's bid, but was an immediate requirement in order to progress the project. He requested the Board's agreement to this approach.	LR/JH
7.	**5% Project Advance (see paper circulated)** 7.1 Continuing with the previous Agenda item, LR advised that at the current time no criteria had been set with regard to how the 5% initial funding is spent. She advised that this decision is left to local agreement and referred members to IA's report '5% Project Advance', which had been previously circulated. IA/CD will prepare a detailed paper with recommendations for the next STF Board Meeting. 7.2 JV stated that any format for priority setting and decision making in relation to this 5% fund must be seen to be fair and equitable. WV agreed and added that Board members must also feel fully equipped and advised before being asked to make a decision regarding draw down of these funds. For example, he didn't feel he had sufficient information about the Southside project to make such a decision. 7.3 IA advised that a paper had been prepared that outlined the details with regard to the Southside Project and that this will be circulated to Board members after today's meeting. 7.4 FM provided information about the Capacity Funding budget in relation to RR's professional fees. Following discussion with JH, RR's fees would now be met from the 5% funds on a month-by-month basis. As a result, he confirmed that Capacity funds are available to support projects. 7.5 IA advised that until RR had spent further time with the other individual projects, it could not make formal recommendations regarding the capacity and other funds that would be required by each. However, he confirmed a detailed overview would be provided for Board members in time for the next meeting on 5 November. In the meantime, he stressed that the situation with regard to Southside was a 'dealbreaker' because of the time sensitivities involved. He reassured the Board that their situation was exceptional and that in RR's considered and professional opinion there was a genuine need for funds to be released. 7.6 FM questioned the use of the word 'Fair' in terms of the Board's decision-making processes and suggested 'Well governed' would be more appropriate.	IA/CD IA/CD/JB

	7.7 JV requested that FM's discussions with JH (referred to in Minute 7.4 above) are formally recorded. LR stated that this information was already available and will be circulated to Board members. 7.8 PS stated he shared WV's concerns and was keen to receive more information on projects, including Southside, before being asked to make important decisions regarding funds release. He also expressed his concerns regarding the NMITE backed projects and wanted to understand the implications of recent developments at the University for the STF NMITE projects. 7.9 LR asked members to indicate whether they supported IA's proposals with regard to the Southside project. All Board members present (LR, WV, KH, JV, JF, RP, PS, DH – on behalf of EC) stated their support. 7.10 OH reminded the Board that the 5% is for Capital not revenue funding but he confirmed that in appropriate circumstances some costs could be capitalised.	LR/JB
8.	**Any Other Business** 8.1 JF reminded Board members regarding the need to consider how they support projects to secure matched funding. RP suggested that this could be included in the responsibilities matrix being prepared by RR (see Minute 3.9.1 above). 8.2 JV/LR reminded members of the Project Leads Meeting happening next Wednesday, 5pm at the Green Dragon and hoped that they would be available to attend. LR will discuss with IA/CD as to whether the responsibilities matrix could be available in time for this meeting. 8.3 LR advised that she would be stepping down as chair of the STF Board, however she wished to continue as a Board member. JV will act as interim chair until a new chair is appointed. Chairmanship of the STF Board will be added to the next meeting of the Board. Board members thanked LR for all the work she had done as Chair. 8.4 JV asked for clarification from RC as to whether the slides she had shared with the Board could be shared with others. RC confirmed that they can be shared with other Towns Funds officers, but for other purposes suggested Hereford's name is substituted for other towns'.	LR IA/JB
9.	**Date of Next Meetings (via Zoom)** • Friday 5 November, 8.30-9.30 am • Friday 3 December, 8.30-9.30 am Links to be circulated	JB