Herefordshire Council

TOWNS FUND BOARD

Notes and Action Points

Friday 5th November 2021, 8.30-9.45 am via Zoom

Acting Chair:	**Julian Vaughan**	JV	Managing Director, Green Dragon Hotel
Board Present:	**Alan Anderson**	AA	British Land – Old Market, Hereford
	Ellie Chowns	EC	Cabinet Member, Environment and Economy, HC
	Ian Christie	IC	Big Business Representative/MD, Welsh Water
	Frank Myers	FM	Herefordshire Business Board / Marches LEP
	James Newby	JNe	Chief Officer, NMITE (Part)
	Jesse Norman	JNo	MP for Hereford and South Herefordshire
	Ruth Parry	RP	Director Operations & Marketing, Simple Design Works Ltd
	Lauren Rogers	LR	Project Manager, Rural Media
	Paul Stevens	PS	Hereford Business Improvement District (HBID)
	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
	Olli Hindle	OH	MHCLG Representative
	David Hitchiner	DH	Leader of the Council, Herefordshire Council
	Joni Hughes	JH	Portfolio Manager, Capital Development, HC
	Andrew Lovegrove	AL	Chief Finance Officer, Herefordshire Council
	Paul Walker	PW	Chief Executive, Herefordshire Council
Board Apologies:	**Kath Hey**	KH	Councillor, Hereford City Council
	Felix Smithson	FS	Younger Person's Representative
Board Absent:	**Judith Faux**	JF	Trustee, HVOSS
Notetaker:	**Jan Bailey**	JB	Herefordshire Business Board

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
1.	**Welcome / Attendance & Apologies / Declarations and Register of Interest** JV welcomed everyone to the meeting. A special welcome was extended to JNe, who joins the Board as the replacement for David Langley who has recently left his post at NMITE. JV declared that he and CD are shareholders at the Green Dragon Hotel. No other Declarations were recorded. JV is acting as Interim Chair, following LR's decision to step down from this role. There was a discussion regarding the appropriate protocols for electing a new Chair. PW/JV to continue discussions and confirm process to Board members as soon as possible. In the meantime, RP directed members to the following weblink, which may provide additional clarification: https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/21332/hereford-town-deal-board-terms-of-reference.	PW/JV
2.	**Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**	

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	2.1 EC asked Board members to recognise DH as her formal substitute at meetings when she is unable to attend. In such circumstances, he should be listed in the minutes as a Board member. 2.2 JV will shortly be organising the dates for the 2022 Board meetings. Board members to let JV know if there are any particular days/times which should be avoided from their point of view. Subject to the amendment at paragraph 2.1, the notes of the meeting held on 15 October were agreed as a correct record.	All Board Members
3.	**Hereford Council MoU with Towns Fund Board** 3.1 JV advised that this document has not yet been finalised, but will be ready for circulation to Board members next week. He asked all Board members to read through this carefully when received and to raise any concerns with him as soon as possible. 3.2 JNo commented that coordination between the Board and Council officials to get this document right was very welcome. He stated that the document should be seen as a means to shape expectations and behaviour, rather than as a legalistic document. He stressed the importance of having procedures suitable for smaller businesses, who do not have large procurement departments or the capacity to undertake lengthy procurement exercises. JV agreed that this was important and had been taken into account in discussions so far. 3.3 EC said the Council would be happy to offer workshops and a named link person for each project in order to help project leaders understand procurement processes. 3.4 EC also confirmed that the Council would be waiving its 2021 fees as it was keen to support projects to be able to succeed. 3.5 WV stated that there are already good examples of successful processes in place. He mentioned the Business Energy Efficiency Programme and said he would be happy to share further details of this and other examples, if requested.	All Board Members
4.	**5% Project Advance** 4.1 IA advised that he had received confirmation from OH that the 5% draw down funding will be received by the Council by the end of November. He advised that there is considerable flexibility in terms of how the fund is allocated. Release of the money would be through AL as Section 151 Officer at the Council. 4.2 IA advised that following the above confirmation, he had produced a first indication as to how the 5% could be required by the projects. He referred Board members to his calculations, contained within the circulated document, “Agenda items (text) 3,4,5,7 and 8”. 4.3 IA reminded the Board that this draw down is not additional money. 4.4 IA advised that the main principle behind his calculations (for which he is seeking Board members’ agreement) is that larger public bodies can more easily defray and claim back costs than smaller private enterprises. With that in mind, JV added that the Board would welcome the council’s financial support for its sponsored projects until further funding is released. 4.5 IA reiterated that this 5% draw down will enable projects to achieve the Full Business Case stage required to unlock larger scale funding.	

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	4.6 Following a query from PW, OH confirmed that the 5% payment was due for payment at the end of November and could not be paid any earlier than this date.	
5.	**Programme Management Activities – including note from the October 2020 Programme Management Workshop (see paper circulated)** 5.1 JV advised that the meeting held on 20th October had been very constructive. The project management matrix (see circulated paper: "Agenda Item 5 – Copy of STF Hereford Project Plan Spreadsheet") had been presented to attendees and their part in achieving Full Business Case status had been stressed. Board support was offered to attendees to help them to complete their Full Business Cases. 5.2 LR agreed with JV's analysis and said she was also pleased to witness the keenness of Project Leaders to share their knowledge and insights and to collaborate. 5.3 RP stated that it is the Board's role to ensure terminology is kept simple so that Project Leaders have a full understanding of what is required from them. 5.4 JV thanked IA/CD for supporting the Workshop and agreed with RP that an explanation of what was required is needed, rather than sending spreadsheets to Project Leaders and expecting them to understand. 5.5 IA advised that the planning tool RR has developed is modelled on the one presented by RC at the last Board meeting. It will be updated for future Board meetings and a RAG rating provided for each project. RC advised that the version she presented to the last Board meeting is completely editable and she will send this to IA in case he wished to use it.	RC
6.	**Project Progress Update (see paper circulated)** 6.1 IA provided an overview of his paper "Agenda Item 6 - Project Progress Update", previously circulated, and said he would be happy to discuss individual projects with Board members, as they wished. 6.2 A number of specific points were raised relating to funding and planning for the skatepark/Halo Leisure. These will be clarified outside of today's meeting. 6.3 PS expressed ongoing concerns that council officers do not seem to be fully aware of the Stronger Town proposals. JV stated that, if all projects are allocated a named council liaison officer (as suggested by EC in point 3.3 above), this should improve communication.	AL/CD
7.	**Current Budget Position – Capacity Fund (see paper circulated)** 7.1 JV thanked JH for putting the budget together ("Agenda Item 7 – Copy of Towns Budget"). 7.2 FM said that the budget shows known commitments to date. He added that payments to RR, beyond receipt of the 5% will come from this separate fund so are not required to be included. On that basis, the Budget indicates that the Capacity Fund can fund what is needed until additional funds are available. 7.3 RP asked for the budget to reflect website hosting, etc, costs which are not currently shown.	JV

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8.	**Procurement Process (see papers circulated)** 8.1 AL directed Board members' attention to the documents previously circulated, "Agenda Item 8a – Draft STF Procurement Rules Oct 21" and "Agenda Item 8b – Managing Public Money Guidance." 8.2 EC asked whether Social Value Procurement would be included within the rules. AL confirmed that the rules would be very similar to the Council's/LEP's rules. They would be designed to be as streamlined as possible and AL said he would be happy to add in a Social Value element. FM confirmed that 'social value' consideration would be included in tender evaluation.	
9.	**Any Other Business** 9.1 JV asked Board members to let him know if they had any suggestions for additional Board members who could add value and provide additional expertise to the Board. 9.2 RC advised that this is the last meeting of the STF Board that she would be attending, as her contract was terminating at the end of November. JV and Board members thanked RC for her past contributions and wished her the best of luck for the future.	All Board Members
10.	**Dates of Next Meetings** – Friday 3 December 2021, 8.30 – 9.30 am 2022 dates to be confirmed.	

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