

TOWNS FUND BOARD

Notes and Action Points

Friday 3rd December 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
	Judith Faux	JF	Trustee, HVOSS
	Kath Hey	KH	Councillor, Hereford City Council
	David Hitchiner	DH	Leader of the Council, Herefordshire Council
	Frank Myers	FM	Herefordshire Business Board / Marches LEP
	James Newby	JNe	Chief Officer, NMITE (Part)
	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
	Christian Dangerfield	CD	Rose Regeneration
	Olli Hindle	OH	MHCLG Representative
	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:	Ellie Chowns	EC	Cabinet Member, Environment and Economy, HC
	Jesse Norman	JNo	MP for Hereford and South Herefordshire
	Felix Smithson	FS	Younger Person's Representative
Board Absent:	Ian Christie	IC	Big Business Representative/MD, Welsh Water
Notetaker:	Jan Bailey	JB	Herefordshire Business Board

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
1.	<p>Welcome / Attendance & Apologies</p> <p>JV welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were as noted above.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting (held 5 November) and Matters Arising</p> <p>2.1 In the light of minute 2.1 of the previous meeting, KH asked for clarification regarding Board member substitution. FM advised that, as Herefordshire Council is the Accountable Body, EC had requested that DH represent her at any meeting(s) when she is unable to attend.</p> <p>2.2 JV suggested that if any other member is unable to attend a future Board meeting, any queries, notes or opinions they wished to express or have considered at that meeting should be submitted in advance of the meeting to the Chair/Admin support.</p> <p>2.3 The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2021 were approved as a correct record.</p>	
3.	<p>Project Management Overview – Progress review on individual projects</p>	

	<p>3.1 JV thanked IA and CD for the comprehensive document circulated in advance of today's meeting to all members and attendees.</p> <p>3.2 IA provided an overview of the current status of all projects, referring Board Members to the previously circulated document, where full details can be found.</p> <p>3.3 In addition, the document shows provisional allocations to each project of the 5% advance payment. IA asked attendees to note that the document had been updated since the Agenda had been circulated and that new details will be circulated to all members with the Minutes from today's meeting. IA provided a verbal update of the revisions to the 5% funding allocation that had been made.</p> <p>3.4 IA reminded Board members that this 5% advance funding is not additional funding. In addition, he reminded members that this money would be lost if any project doesn't proceed for any reason. However, provided the money has been allocated responsibly, IA said it would not be clawed back by Government if a project didn't proceed.</p> <p>3.5 IA invited questions from the Board:</p> <p>3.5.1 JV asked for an update regarding the planning application for the South Side project. JNe advised that the team's main concern was to ensure the planning application would succeed. He explained that he was looking for authority from the Board to spend money (from the 5% advance allocation) to engage professional consultancy support. He stated that time is of the essence. Spending would be phased so that there is minimum risk of losing money, if the project doesn't succeed. However, JNe said it was imperative that authority to spend from the 5% advance funding could be obtained outside of formal Board meetings.</p> <p>3.5.2 IA said the purpose of tabling the proposed 5% allocation at today's meeting was to secure Board's approval and then to put in place a procedure that has been developed and agreed with Council officers. This process will be circulated to Board members with the Minutes from today's meeting.</p> <p>3.5.3 AL advised that the 5% advance funding allocation had still not been received by the Council, but was expected very soon. He outlined a 'two track process' that would apply for payments to projects from this allocation, depending on the size of projects and their capacity to defray costs before being reimbursed from the fund. Following a query from LR, AL confirmed that Council officers would be happy to work with any project that has cash flow issues. AL agreed with the Board that money should be released as soon as possible, as it has to be spent before the end of March 2022.</p> <p>3.5.4 JF asked what would happen if projects needed these funds after the 31 March deadline. AL said he anticipated that most of the money would be needed prior to this date, but that IA and JH would shortly be meeting to discuss cash flow and that JH and other Council officers had been assigned to manage the fund.</p> <p>3.5.5 JV thanked Herefordshire Council (as the Accountable Body) for developing the process, which he said would significantly improve projects' ability to proceed.</p> <p>3.5.6 KH asked for clarification regarding an issue to do with the Power House. IA/PW indicated that they thought this issue had been resolved, but will check and advise. FM reminded members that if they have issues that are troubling them with regard to any of the projects, then they could refer these to the PDG for clarity/resolution.</p>	<p>JB</p> <p>JB</p> <p>IA/PW</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Recruitment of new Chair of the Board and Board members</p>	

	<p>4.1 JV advised the Board that he had received a nomination for Chair from WV. This nomination is Abigail Appleton (AA) (current Principal at Hereford College of Arts). He asked for a member of the Board to second AA's nomination.</p> <p>4.2 IA referred members to the document circulated with today's meeting Agenda, and reminded them of the need also to consider a Vice-Chair and additional members of the Board. He referred members to JNo's email, circulated prior to today's meeting.</p> <p>4.3 Members of the Board expressed reservations about the process that had been followed to date with regard to the election of a new Chair. In particular they highlighted the need to follow due process and ensure good governance at all times. Members also stated that they did not have any information on AA, so did not feel in a position to decide her suitability for the role of Chair. JV stated that he had received AA's CV, which would be circulated to Board members.</p> <p>4.4 Following discussion about the best process to adopt to recruit a new Chair, it was decided that any nominations for the role should be submitted to the Board Administrator (admin@herefordshirebusinessboard.co.uk) by 5.00 pm on Monday 6 December 2022. If any additional nominations to AA's are received, a ballot will be held to decide who will become Chair. If no additional nominations are received, Board members will be asked to vote for or against AA's appointment as Chair.</p> <p>4.5 JV reminded Board members that the need to elect a new Chair is imperative and has been known for several months, with no other names having been put forward to date.</p> <p>4.6 JV referred to the need to carry out a skills gap analysis with reference to securing additional members of the Board. This will be carried out in January, once the new Chair of the Board is in place.</p>	<p>JB</p> <p>All Board Members</p> <p>Chair/RR</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>'Big Issues' report – focus on specific projects for which the Board needs to understand additional complexities/risk</p> <p>5.1 Board members were referred to the paper circulated with the papers for today's meeting, where particular issues to do with the Skills Foundry and Marches Experience projects were highlighted.</p> <p>5.2 Detailed discussion about these issues was deferred until the next Board (January) Board meeting.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Memorandum of Understanding with Herefordshire Council</p> <p>6.1 Deferred to the next (January) Board meeting, pending further discussions between JV and PW.</p>	<p>JV/PW</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Budget</p> <p>7.1 JH confirmed that the 5% advance payment is expected soon. As there is money still left in the original fund, JH asked whether this could be used for RR's services, rather than utilising the 5% for these purposes. No decision was made on this point, pending a wider discussion on the MOU.</p> <p>7.2 JH advised that if a decision is made to pay RR from the 5% fund rather than the capacity fund, then this will need to come to the Board for formal approval.</p> <p>7.3 OH advised that he is liaising with colleagues to ensure the 5% fund will be received by the Accountable Body within the next week.</p>	<p>JV/PW</p> <p>OH</p>

