

TOWNS FUND BOARD
Notes and Action Points
Friday 4 February 2022, 8.30-10.00 am via Zoom

Chair:	Abigail Appleton	AA	Principal, Hereford College of Arts
Board Present:	Alan Anderson	AAn	British Land – Old Market, Hereford
	Ian Christie	IC	Big Business Representative/MD, Welsh Water
	Judith Faux	JF	Trustee, HVOSS
	Kath Hey	KH	Councillor, Hereford City Council
	David Hitchiner	DH	Leader of the Council, Herefordshire Council (Representing EC)
	Frank Myers	FM	Herefordshire Business Board / Marches LEP
	James Newby	JNe	Chief Officer, NMITE
	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)
	Julian Vaughan	JV	The Green Dragon Hotel
	Will Vaughan	WV	Hereford Pedicabs and Pedicargo
Other Attendees:	Ivan Annibal	IA	Rose Regeneration
	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 (part)
Board Apologies:	Ellie Chowns	EC	Cabinet Member, Environment and Economy, HC
Other Apologies:	Paul Walker	PW	Chief Executive, Herefordshire Council
Board Absent:	Felix Smithson	FS	Younger Person's Representative
Notetaker:	Jan Bailey	JB	Herefordshire Business Board

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies and Absences are as noted above. The Chair advised that FS had written to tender his resignation from the Board, due to exam and other pressures. A note from FS was read to the meeting. The Chair advised that she has written to FS on behalf of the Board to thank him for his contribution to date.</p>	
2.	<p>Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>None declared.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting (held 28 January 2022) and Matters Arising</p> <p>3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 January were agreed as a true and correct record.</p> <p>3.2 The Chair advised that a Project Sponsors' Meeting has now been arranged for 17 February from 5:30 – 7:00 pm (tbc). IA has sent a 'Save the date' communication to all Project Leaders. IA</p>	

	<p>advised that he is holding discussions with Project Leaders to set the Agenda for the 17 February. IA advised that he will also be setting dates for future meetings (to be held monthly). IA reminded the Board that all are welcome and encouraged to attend these meetings.</p> <p>3.3 The Chair thanked IA and said that these meetings would also be a good opportunity to invite specific interest groups, eg Women's Equality, Disability Awareness, so that they feel that their issues are considered within projects' Full Business Cases (FBC).</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Monthly Programme Update – including budget update</p> <p>4.1 IA talked to his previously circulated document, section 'Project Management Overview – progress review of individual projects'. He summarised the situation with regard to those projects currently most considered 'at risk' and also referred members to the budget calculations included under Section 3. of this same document.</p> <p>4.2 IA referred to the Recommendations Section 4. of this document, under which the Board were asked to consider how to address a number of challenges being faced by the most 'at risk' projects.</p> <p>4.3 The Chair asked for comments from Board members. The following were received:</p> <p>4.3.1 FM asked for clarification in terms of how requests for funding from the unallocated 5% advance funding budget would be authorised/managed. JH responded that the Stronger Towns Board can put forward a proposal for allocation of these funds. A contract variation would then be needed to reflect these payments. AL reminded the Board that the 5% advance funding is not additional funding, so any payments from this fund would be taken from the projects' overall allocation. He assured FM that if requests were made against this fund, the Council's Contract Variation processes are simple and should not cause undue delay.</p> <p>4.3.2 KH asked for clarity regarding the support the Southside project is receiving in terms of planning and asset transfer. JNe responded that expertise had been bought in to provide this necessary support and that the project is now in a good position to move forward on these elements. PS raised his concerns regarding the capacity within the Council's Legal Team to manage asset transfers in a timely way. The Chair said that this concern would be added to the cross-programme risk list.</p> <p>4.3.3 The Chair asked if the Board could provide any additional support to the Powerhouse Project Leaders at this stage. IA replied that nothing additional is currently required, however the situation was being kept under review by the PDG, who will keep the Board fully informed.</p> <p>4.3.4 RP asked whether there is a property specification document in relation to Encore's site needs as she has several contacts with the private property sector who may be able to help. CD replied that there is no such document, but that he will put RP in touch with the Encore Project Leader.</p>	<p>AA/IA</p> <p>CD/RP</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Critical Path for Future Board Meetings to the Achievement of FBC</p> <p>5.1 IA referred to his circulated paper, section 7. And in particular the six recommendations to the Board.</p> <p>5.2 The Chair referred attendees to IA's first recommendation: that the Board considers scheduling additional meetings to take account of the FBC approval process. The following comments were received:</p> <p>5.2.1 JNe stated his concerns regarding Project Leads getting started on their FBCs and suggested that many may need intensive support with this. The Chair advised that the Project</p>	

	<p>Sponsors meeting (17 February) would provide an opportunity to share information. LR highlighted that many questions on the FBC would have to be answered by all Project Leads, so a standard answer / documents available to all would be useful. LR asked IA to send her a copy of the FBC template.</p> <p>5.2.2 IA offered to run a workshop at the next Board meeting which would provide an overview of the Towns Funds processes / requirements in relation to the FBC. The Chair said this would be welcomed. It was also agreed that additional Board meetings be scheduled by IA to take into account FBC approval processes and that the Project Sponsors meeting would be used to identify common issues, where information can be shared and where peer-to-peer support might be possible.</p> <p>5.3 With regard to the second recommendation in IA's paper to the Board, the arrangements to be put in place for delivery of programme management post the FBC phase, the Chair advised that FM and the PDG are already exploring options. It was agreed that the PDG develop a proposal for consideration by the full Board.</p> <p>5.4 With reference to the third recommendation in IA's paper to the Board, regarding the development of dedicated sub-groups, the Chair advised that the establishment of a separate Communications Group was on today's meeting Agenda. She asked members to let her know if there were other sub-groups which they felt could be usefully established.</p> <p>5.5 With reference to the skills needed by the Board, the Chair stated that it would be useful – especially in light of FS's resignation – for the Board to identify which skills area(s) need to be strengthened. The following comments were received:</p> <p>5.5.1 RP referred attendees to a useful document on the Towns Fund website entitled 'Good Governance Guide' (https://townsfund.org.uk/s/Good-Governance-Tool.docx) which may provide a useful starting point. She also reminded attendees that matrix of members' sector experience had previously been developed and could be accessed via Google Docs (https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Od_iq5z1fEIE9PaqM046d8Ze9yaymPHL/edit#gid=1806732082), although she acknowledged this was now a little out of date.</p> <p>5.5.2 Various comments were made regarding the engagement of young people on the Board. PS referred members to the Hereford City Youth Council (school age and higher education) and a number of members suggested the Hereford Young Professionals Network (under 30s) run by Harrison Clark Rickerby's. PS also reminded members of the need to include representation from ethnic minority and disability groups. KH said that she would be happy to liaise with a number of minority groups with whom she already has strong contacts.</p> <p>5.6 The Chair asked IA to develop a skills matrix for consideration by Board members. Once members had completed their details, this could be used as a basis for identifying the additional skills needed on the Board.</p>	<p>IA</p> <p>IA</p> <p>FM/PD G</p> <p>IA</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Roles and Responsibilities Agreement – including organogram</p> <p>6.1 IA referred to his previously circulated document, item 8. and in particular asked members to affirm their commitment to the various principles outlined therein.</p> <p>6.2 The Chair invited comments from the Board.</p> <p>6.2.1 FM commented that the two parts of the Council's responsibilities were not kept sufficiently separate in the document, ie their responsibility as Accountable body and as a Project Lead/Sponsor.</p> <p>6.2.2 The Chair suggested that an organogram would be useful to describe the relationships between the various parties.</p>	

	<p>6.2.2 RP commented that transparency is required from all sides – both the Board and the Accountable body – and that the Roles and Responsibilities Agreement should reflect this.</p> <p>6.2.3 DH welcomed these comments and added that the wording used in the draft document was much more appropriate than the previously tabled Memorandum of Understanding.</p> <p>6.3 The Chair asked IA to redraft the Agreement to incorporate the above suggestions and to return to the Board for further discussion and/or approval.</p>	IA
<p>7.</p>	<p>Communications and Publicity</p> <p>7.1 LR referred to the recommendations contained within IA's previously circulated document, item 9.</p> <p>7.2 Members agreed to the first recommendation that all Board members and the secretariat team be added to the list of e-shot recipients.</p> <p>7.3 LR presented a grid illustrating a number of communications channels: Project Sponsors, the wider general public and internal, and the communications tools that could be used to engage with them. The following comments were received:</p> <p>7.3.1 JF stated that few projects would be procuring their own communications specialists and asked whether support could be something with which the proposed sub-group could help. RP replied that as well as a proposed general workshop, specific one-to-one support could be provided.</p> <p>7.3.2 FM commented that the work RP has already done (for example with regard to development of a website, CRM) should be congratulated. However, he said that lots of Projects had already spent a lot of time on publicity and also pointed out the sensitivities regarding what is publicised and when – in particular with regard to any contentious or sensitive issues.</p> <p>7.3.3 JF added that the emphasis should be on communications and engagement rather than just communications.</p> <p>7.3 The Board agreed that a Communications sub-group should be developed. RP suggested its first task would be to decide what the focus of the group should be and enabling the Project Leads to talk about their projects in the right way.</p> <p>7.4 JV and JF volunteered to be members of the new sub-group.</p> <p>7.5 The third recommendation in IA's report, that a regular update on communications be added to each Board meeting agenda, was agreed.</p>	LR/RP
<p>8.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>8.1 The Chair asked JN for an update on the recently published 'Levelling Up Agenda' document. JN provided an overview of this document, highlighting particularly the inclusion of NMiTE. This, he suggested, could provide important leverage in attracting business involvement with the university in the future.</p> <p>8.2 OH advised that pre-launch guidance on the UKSPF (Shared Prosperity Fund) was now available. The website address is: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-pre-launch-guidance. Information on the Levelling Up White Paper is available here (note there is also a reference to Hereford Town's Fund on page 290 of the full version): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom</p>	

	<p>8.3 JV commented that these sorts of opportunities highlighted for him the importance of Stronger Towns Hereford being its own legal entity so that it could apply for these funds in its own right.</p> <p>8.4 The Chair thanked everyone for attending and reminded them that they are welcome to join the weekly PDG meetings, should they so wish.</p>	
9.	Date of Next Meeting Friday 4 March 2022, via Zoom 8.30 am – 10.00 am	