

TOWNS FUND BOARD
Notes and Action Points
Friday 1 April 2022, 8.30-10.00 am via MS Teams

Chair:	Abigail Appleton	AA	Principal, Hereford College of Arts
Board Present:	Judith Faux	JF	Trustee, HVOSS
	Kath Hey	KH	Councillor, Hereford City Council (Representing EC)
	Frank Myers	FM	Herefordshire Business Board / Marches LEP
	James Newby	JNe	Chief Officer, NMITE
	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
	Paul Walker	PW	Chief Executive, Herefordshire Council
Other Attendees:	Ivan Annibal	IA	Rose Regeneration (RR)
	Christian Dangerfield	CD	Rose Regeneration (RR)
	Olli Hindle	OH	MHCLG Representative
	Joni Hughes	JH	Portfolio Manager, Capital Development, HC
	Andrew Lovegrove	AL	Chief Finance Officer, Herefordshire Council
Apologies:	Ellie Chowns	EC	Cabinet Member, Environment and Economy, HC
	David Hitchiner	DH	Leader of the Council, Herefordshire Council
Absent:	Alan Anderson	AAn	British Land – Old Market, Hereford
	Ian Christie	IC	Big Business Representative/MD, Welsh Water
	Jesse Norman	JNo	MP for Hereford and South Herefordshire
	Julian Vaughan	JV	The Green Dragon Hotel
Notetaker:	Jan Bailey	JB	Herefordshire Business Board

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their ongoing commitment.</p> <p>Apologies and Absences are as noted above.</p>	
2.	<p>Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>None declared. The Chair reminded members of her role as Principal of Hereford College of Arts and sponsor of the School of Creative Digital Futures.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting (held 4 March 2022) and Matters Arising</p> <p>3.1 The minutes of the STF Board meeting held on 4 March were accepted as a correct record.</p> <p>3.2 The Chair referred to the strategy for allocating the 5% advance funding before the 31 March deadline. This was outlined in papers circulated to the Board prior to today's meeting. As no queries or comments had been received, this approach was taken as accepted by the Board.</p>	

	<p>3.3 Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere on the Agenda) – see 'Status Commentary relating to minutes from 4 March' grid in IA's circulated Board papers.</p> <p>3.3.1 Skills Matrix: The Chair advised that some returns had been received. She will now discuss future requirements with Rebecca Collings (RC) and will return to the Board with a proposal. She explained that this does not apply to additional youth members of the Board, where it had already been identified that there were gaps. The Chair advised that she and LR had discussed this issue and that an application process was being finalised to recruit two 16-19 year olds to the Board. Once completed, this information would be circulated to Board members with a request for it to be shared widely through networks. KH expressed her willingness to get involved with this process. FM's offer to share the Community Foundation's 'Recruitment of Trustees Policy' with LR/AA was accepted.</p> <p>3.3.2 Linking Board Members with specific projects: The Chair advised that she had received some expressions of interest from some Board members keen to help with particular projects. She said that she would take account of expressed preferences and will make proposals to individual Board members for their consideration to link to projects.</p>	<p>AA/RC</p> <p>AA/LR</p> <p>All FM</p> <p>AA</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Monthly Programme Update – including budget update</p> <p>4.1 IA referred to his previously circulated document, 'Item 6 – Project Management Overview – progress review of individual projects'. He highlighted in particular those projects most at risk (as outlined in the document). In addition, he referred to a new request from the Electric Buses project to increase the revenue portion of their funding from 7% to 10%.</p> <p>4.2 IA referred to the Budget section of the circulated paper, stating that no additional costs had arisen and advising that a strategy had been developed for ensuring that the 5% advance funding was committed before the deadline.</p> <p>4.3 IA highlighted an opportunity to trigger a proportion of the Project Management funding if FBCs are submitted by 14 April. He suggested that the Electric Buses project could meet this deadline. OH confirmed that if FBCs are submitted before the April deadline, programme management funds could be released by mid-July. AL commented that although this would be welcomed, the Board needed to be aware of allowing sufficient time for the Council and Chamberlain Walker to assess and review FBCs. AL/IA to discuss further. Members indicated their broad support for trying to submit the Electric Buses FBC before the 14 April deadline.</p> <p>4.4 KH asked what would be the impact of increasing the proportion of revenue funding to the Electric Buses project in terms of its likelihood to progress smoothly through the approval process. OH advised that he would need to discuss this further with Department colleagues and would come back to IA to advise.</p> <p>4.5 IA referred to the successful Project Sponsors' Meeting held on 10 March, which had included an opportunity to meet newly appointed Council officers.</p> <p>4.6 The Chair referred members to the specific recommendations in IA's report:</p> <p>4.6.1 There was no Board dissent with regard to the proposed relocation of the Digital Cultural Hub from Maylord Orchards to Packers House.</p> <p>4.6.2 With regard to ongoing support for projects identified at greatest risk in the programme, the Chair reiterated her commitment above (3.3.2) to drawing up a proposal for members' consideration.</p>	<p>AL/IA</p> <p>OH/IA</p> <p>AA</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Risk Management</p>	

	<p>5.1 IA referred to his previously circulated document, 'Item 7 - Risk Management (inflation and other global pressures)'.</p> <p>5.2 IA explained that this matrix had been compiled as a result of discussions at PDG and a presentation from the Cycle Track project. IA sought to reassure the Board that detailed discussion with projects about identifying and managing these risks was ongoing. IA also referred members to the cross-cutting risk matrix, which had also been updated.</p> <p>5.3 JNe said that this highlighted a significant dilemma for the Board. As highlighted by IA, some projects were very exposed to increased risk of cost increases. There was therefore a need to develop mitigation strategies around the risk of projects not going ahead, whilst at the same time supporting all projects to be able to continue.</p> <p>5.4 JF suggested that these mitigation strategies could include support to identify potential other sources of funding, eg local grant funders such as Bulmers, the Eveson Trust, Community Foundation.</p> <p>5.5 PW stated his agreement that the Board should develop mitigation strategies, his view being that the Board had to plan for the worst (ie projects failing) but always hoping for the best.</p> <p>5.6 The Chair suggested that IA/PDG engage in scenario planning activities, including the worst case scenario that some projects will not be able to continue. JNe recommended that mitigations be developed at programme rather than individual project level.</p>	RR/PDG
6.	<p>Levelling Up</p> <p>6.1 IA referred to his previously circulated document, 'Item 9: Levelling Up Round 2'. Please also see: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-round-2-prospectus.</p> <p>6.2 In the absence of JNo, PW explained that Herefordshire had recently been moved from category Priority 1 to Priority 2. He advised that the local authority was undergoing engagement activities to pull together a Herefordshire approach for approval by both Herefordshire MPs by the July deadline. He suggested that Roger Allonby be invited to the next STF Board meeting to provide further details. This was agreed.</p>	PW/IA
7.	<p>Communications and Publicity</p> <p>7.1 LR provided an update on activities from the Communications sub-group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A deadline of 16 April had been decided by the group for completion of the draft communications toolkit for project sponsors • Once signed off, the sub-group would like to present at a future Project Sponsors' meeting (Agreed) • Over the next two weeks, sub-group members will be speaking with all Project Sponsors to understand their current level of expertise/knowledge regarding communications matters. This will determine next actions. • Good discussions already had with Castle Green, Meadow Arts, Wyaside. • Also liaising with Luenne Featherstone (Herefordshire Council Comms Officer) to ensure communications are picked up, including in Councillors' briefings <p>LR reminded all members that they would be very welcome to join the sub-group. Also, that if they are aware of any good news stories or case studies associated with any project, to let the sub-group know.</p> <p>7.2 RP mentioned that Friends of Castle Green would shortly be submitting their application for planning permission and suggested they could need comms support with this to be clear on messaging and to identify media spokespeople.</p>	

	<p>7.3 JNe welcomed the sub-group's activities and suggested that regardless of Projects' comms expertise, a workshop on communications would be beneficial. LR agreed, saying that a general comms workshop could be provided supplemented by additional focused sessions to meet individual projects' needs.</p> <p>7.4 RP stated that having a list of media spokespeople associated with each project would be very beneficial.</p> <p>7.5 FM highlighted certain negative publicity and the importance of communicating that the Stronger Towns Fund is just for Hereford City and could not be allocated to the market towns and other regions of the county.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Future Programme Management</p> <p>Note: IA and CD left the meeting for this Agenda item</p> <p>8.1 The Chair referred members to item 10. in the previously circulated papers, 'Future Programme Management '.</p> <p>8.2 Following discussion, Board members identified potential other requirements in the Invitation to Tender than those identified in IA's paper, and which may be outside RR's expertise.</p> <p>8.3 WV suggested that in pulling together an Invitation to Tender for future Programme Management, the Board should develop a SWOT analysis and seek the views of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project leads regarding their perceived needs for the future • The Board on what is required • RR's views regarding required provision and the additional support they might need <p>8.4 FM agreed with this stating his view that one contractor may not be able to provide all that is required. The Chair agreed, stating that there were a number of models that could be used to secure the right programme management for the future.</p> <p>8.5 AL said that the Council did have in-house expertise in Programme Management, but was unclear as to whether this would be considered by the Board. Members agreed that no assumptions were currently being made about who may or may not be appointed. OH advised that the Board would need to consider how the programme management function interacted with the Council's role as accountable body for the funding. He further advised that in other towns a variety of approaches had been taken, including the Council completing the Project Management function, albeit sometimes supported by external consultants.</p> <p>8.6 The Chair stated that putting together the tender documentation was a significant piece of work. She requested that IA/FM take on board the comments made and come back with recommendations. FM agreed but reminded the Chair/Board of the tight timescales involved to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place for when RR's contract expires (end June).</p>	<p>IA/CD/FM</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Note: IA and CD re-joined the meeting</p> <p>9.1 LR advised that she had been invited to attend the University of Southampton's Impact of Culture on Civic Pride event, both as a Stronger Towns Fund Board Member and because of her work in the cultural development sector. She said she will provide updates to the Board as the project progresses over the next 12 months.</p>	

	<p>9.2 The Chair advised that the June Board meeting had been moved back to 27 May as the previous date (3 June) coincided with the Queen's Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend. An additional meeting had also been scheduled for Friday 10 June (??) to provide additional capacity for consideration of FBCs.</p> <p>9.3 The Chair again thanked members for their time and commitment, recognising that STF faces a difficult phase ahead. She urged all members to raise any issues or concerns they have with her as the project progresses.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Friday 6 May, 8.30 am – 10.00 am via Teams Friday 17 June, 8.30 am – 10.00 am via Teams – TO BE CONFIRMED</p>	

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Action Items

Minute No	Action	Responsibility
3.3.1	Skills Matrix Development	AA/RC
3.3.1	Finalise process for recruitment of youth members.	AA/LR & All
3.3.1	Share Community Foundation's 'Recruitment of Trustees Policy' with AA/LR	FM
3.3.2/4.6.2	Scheduled of Board Members link to specific projects	AA
4.3	Discuss timescales involved with submitting FBC for Electric Buses by mid-June	IA/AL
4.4	Understand implications of increasing revenue proportion of Electric Buses funding to 10%	OH/IA
5.6	Scenario planning re cost risk management	RR/PDG
6.2	Invite Roger Allonby to present at next Board Meeting (re Levelling Up Fund)	PW/IA
7.1	Draft Communications Toolkit available by 16 April	LR/RP/JF
7.2	Provide comms support to Friends of Castle Green regarding submission of planning application	LR/RP/JF
7.4	Compile list of media spokespeople for all projects	TBC
8.6	Recommendations on Invitation to Tender Project Management document	IA/CD/FM
9.1	Updates on University of Southampton's Impact of Culture on Civic Pride event	LR