

TOWNS FUND BOARD
Notes and Action Points
Friday 6 May 2022, 8.30-10.15 am via Zoom

Chair:	Abigail Appleton	AA	Principal, Hereford College of Arts
Board Present:	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
	Jesse Norman	JNo	MP for Hereford and South Herefordshire
	Paul Stevens	PS	Hereford Business Improvement District (HBID)
	Julian Vaughan	JV	The Green Dragon Hotel
	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
	James Newby	JNe	Chief Officer, NMITE
	Ruth Parry	RP	Director Operations & Marketing, Simple Design Works Ltd
	Lauren Rogers	LR	Project Manager, Rural Media
Absent:	Alan Anderson	AAAn	British Land – Old Market, Hereford
	Ian Christie	IC	Big Business Representative/MD, Welsh Water
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.</p>	
2.	<p>Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>No new conflicts of interest declared.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting (held 1 April 2022) and Matters Arising</p> <p>3.1 The minutes of the STF Board meeting held on 1 April were accepted as a correct record.</p> <p>3.2 Matters Arising</p> <p>Minute 3.3.1 – Skills Matrix Development: The Chair thanked everyone for their input so far. She said that she would come back to the next STF Board meeting with a proposal regarding Board membership composition. In the meantime, she advised that LR is working on a brief for youth membership, which would be shared with all members. She thanked FM for sharing the Community Foundation’s ‘Recruitment of Trustees Policy’.</p>	<p>AA</p> <p>LR</p>

	<p>Minute 3.3.2/4.6.2 – Schedule of Board Members link to specific projects: The Chair advised that she is working on this and thanked those members who had already stepped forward to volunteer support for particular projects, eg WV for working alongside the Skate Park and Powerhouse projects; LR for her work with Encore and the Library project. Members to let the Chair know if they wish to support particular projects, otherwise the Chair will contact all to discuss further.</p> <p>Minute 4.3 and 4.4 – Electric Buses and 5.6 – Scenario planning re cost risk management: covered in today's Agenda</p> <p>Minute 6.2 – Invitation to Roger Allonby to present on Levelling Up Fund: Deferred to a future meeting, in light of current pressures. The Chair suggested convening a special one-off meeting to cover this topic; this suggestion was accepted by all present.</p> <p>Minute 7.1, 7.2 and 7.4 – Communications issues: Deferred to next meeting as LR not at today's meeting.</p> <p>Minute 8.6 – Invitation to Tender Project Management Document: The Chair advised that she and FM had taken on board the feedback from last month's STF Board meeting and will present this to a forthcoming PDG.</p> <p>Minute 9.1 – Updates on University of Southampton Impact of Culture on Civic Pride event: LR not present, deferred.</p>	<p>AII/AA</p> <p>AA/IA</p> <p>FM/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', highlighting in particular those projects most at risk (as outlined in the document).</p> <p>4.2 The Chair invited comments from the Board. The following were noted:</p> <p>4.2.1 JNo asked for clarification as to the steps being taken to ensure all projects submitted their FBCs (Full Business Cases) on time and to the correct specification and quality. IA advised that RR were supporting all projects and had prioritised time for those in greatest need of support. However, he acknowledged that based on the experiences of developing the Electric Buses FBC, more work than anticipated may be required and advised that he is in discussion with the Chair and Herefordshire Council colleagues to try and secure additional support.</p> <p>4.2.2 DH referred to the fundamental change with regard to the Digital Cultural Hub (ie change of location from Maylord Orchards to Packer's House) and stressed the importance of the project team liaising with AL and his team as soon as possible to ensure no significant issues regarding approval of the FBC arise.</p> <p>4.2.3 KH asked for clarification regarding the Encore project's final choice of location (indicated in IA's document that a definitive choice had been made). JNo expressed concern regarding the potential effect of locating social enterprises such as Powerhouse and Encore at Maylord Orchard's and questioned whether Council colleagues had considered the long-term plans for the development of this site. FM replied that in his view the strategy for Maylord Orchard's fell outside the Stronger Towns Fund Board's remit, however he stated that the STF Board had broadly supported projects when they had identified suitable sites for their activities. DH agreed with FM and in response to JNo's query stated that the Council does have a strategy for the immediate use of Maylord Orchard's and that for the longer term, this would be part of the masterplan for the city. JNo further queried the leasehold period for projects taking space within Maylord Orchard's. IA responded that leases would initially be on a relatively short term because STF initial support is in itself time limited. PW stated that he would be happy to update the Board on strategy for Maylord Orchard's and how it fitted in with the Stronger Towns Fund,</p>	

	<p>if they wished. In the meantime, he said he would contact JNo to confirm the Council's current strategy with regard to the centre.</p> <p>4.2.4 PW asked for further clarification regarding the process for signing off FBCs and strategic decision making if issues to do with, for example, over-spends came to light. The Chair referred members to the Risk Analysis undertaken by RR (included in the previously circulated document) which highlights key risk factors and highlights those projects most at risk. IA stressed also the importance of PDG meetings when any particular issues could be identified and escalated to Board. FM added that a huge amount of work is being undertaken by RR and Board members to help each project progress successfully.</p> <p>4.3 The Chair reminded attendees of the agreement made at the last Board meeting to submit FBCs incrementally as they were finalised. However, she asked for this decision to be reviewed following new information from IA which indicated that FBCs could not be revised once submitted, OH confirmed that this was the case and advised that whether FBCs were submitted incrementally or all together would not affect the payments timescale (anticipated in September). Following discussion, the Board agreed that FBCs would be developed and signed off by the Board incrementally, as outlined in RR's schedule. However, they would be submitted all together to government, not individually to allow for any last minute adjustments to be made.</p> <p>4.4 JF referred attendees to the cross-cutting risks affecting all projects. In particular, the matched funding element and whether projects were being asked to submit evidence on progress being made. The Chair responded that these cross-cutting risks are included in RR's report and any issues should emerge during the development of FBCs.</p>	PW
5.	<p>Electric Buses Full Business Case</p> <p>5.1 IA referred attendees to Item 7 in his previously circulated report. He reminded attendees that the initial intention was to submit this FBC in time for the April cut off date, but that this hadn't proved possible. He referred attendees to Chamberlain Walker's (CW) assessment of the FBC and RR's response, including four remaining issues to do with risk transfer, supply chain, infrastructure and statutory consents which he said RR would work with the City Council to address. That being the case he requested the Board's sign off of the Electric Buses FBC. The Board agreed to this sign off, subject to the understanding that the outstanding issues would be satisfactorily resolved.</p> <p>5.2 IA highlighted an additional issue to do with the Electric Buses FBC, with regard to the revenue/capital balance of the project. He referred to his previously circulated report, where the implications of this switch had been outlined. The Board agreed to the reallocation of funding, as proposed in the report.</p> <p>5.3 IA stated that the experience of developing the Electric Buses FBC had demonstrated the huge amount of work involved in order to meet CW's/the Section 151 Officer's requirements. It had, he said, raised concerns that if this level of detail is required for all projects, there would be insufficient time and resources available to complete all FBCs before the deadline. Attendees expressed concerns regarding seemingly unnecessary time delays and poor communication between parties. Also, that involving an external organisation (CW) meant additional scrutiny was being applied than was the case with other STF awardees. This was particularly significant with regard to Hereford's STF which included more small projects and relatively inexperienced project sponsors than is the case in other regions. Attendees agreed that this was a huge strength in Hereford's bid, but that it did result in some of the difficulties now being experienced. OH advised that other areas had used a similar process to Hereford's in terms of using an external auditor to sign off FBCs.</p> <p>5.4 AL confirmed that all FBCs would have to go to CW for assessment before coming to him for sign-off. However, he was confident that all FBCs could be processed in time to meet the end of June deadline. What the Electric Buses case had highlighted, he stated, was the importance of FBCs being of high quality before they are submitted to CW. IA</p>	

	<p>stated that an initial validation of FBCs before they were passed to CW was important, although he reminded the Board that RR's role was to support projects with their FBCs, not to write them. AL stated that the level of detail required within each FBC would be proportional to the amount of funding being received. He also acknowledged that some projects would need more support than others</p> <p>5.5 The Chair asked for clarification regarding how the FBCs would be developed and submitted to Board for approval and whether any of the processes involved with CW/Section 151 Officer could be streamlined. IA referred attendees to the gantt chart included as Item 9 in the previously circulated papers, and stated that additional support to progress the FBCs would be welcomed. It was agreed that he and AL would meet to further discuss how processes could be streamlined.</p>	AL/IA
6.	<p>Communications and Publicity</p> <p>Deferred to the next meeting as LR/RP both sent apologies.</p>	
7.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>7.1 The Chair advised that the Castle Green project had recently held a celebration and consultation event to mark their submission of planning permission.</p>	
8.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>STF Board Meeting – Friday 27 May, 8.30-10.00. Meeting link to follow.</p>	

Action Items
STF Board Meeting – 6 May 2022

Minute No	Action	Responsibility
3.2	Skills Matrix Development	AA
3.2	Finalise brief for youth membership recruitment and circulate to Board members	LR
3.2	Schedule of Board Members link to specific projects	AA
3.2	Set up meeting for Roger Allonby to present re Levelling Up Fund	IA/AA
3.2	Project management tender to PDG	FM/IA
3.2	Draft Communications Toolkit available by 16 April	LR/RP/JF
3.2	Provide comms support to Friends of Castle Green regarding submission of planning application	LR/RP/JF
3.2	Compile list of media spokespeople for all projects	TBC
3.2	Updates on University of Southampton's Impact of Culture on Civic Pride event	LR
4.2.3	PW to provide details of Maylord Orchard's strategy to JNo	PW
5.5	Discussion with regard to streamlining of processes involved with FBC submission and responses	IA/AL