

**Hereford Stronger Towns Board Meeting
Friday 2 June 2023 (8.30 am – 10.00 am), held via Zoom
Notes and Action Points**

Chair:	Abigail Appleton	AA	Principal, Hereford College of Arts
Board Present:	Judith Faux	JF	Trustee, HVOSS
	Cat Hornsey	CH	Councillor, Hereford City
	Grace Joiner	GJ	Youth Board Member
	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
	Paul Stevens	PS	Hereford Business Improvement District
Other Attendees:	Govin Ajula	GA	Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
	Ivan Annibal	IA	Rose Regeneration (RR)
	Alex Collins	AC	Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
	Christian Dangerfield	CD	Rose Regeneration (RR)
	Joni Hughes	JH	Portfolio Manager, Capital Development, HC
	Andrew Lovegrove	AL	Chief Finance Officer, Herefordshire Council
	Elizabeth Parbutt	EP	Orphan's
Apologies/Absent:	Graham Biggs	GB	Councillor, Herefordshire Council
	Lauren Rogers	LR	Rural Media Company
	Julian Vaughan	JV	Green Dragon Hotel, Hereford
Notes:	Jan Bailey	JB	Herefordshire Business Board

Summary of Actions

Minute No	Action	Resp.
1.4	Circulate note from EC. Write to EC on behalf of the Board.	AA
2.1	Outstanding Declarations of Interest Forms	RR
5.2	Liaise with Encore Project Lead to explain Funding Agreement	RR
5.4	Review processes around electronic approval	RR
6.4	Consider how Project Leads can be invited to Board meetings	AA/RR
6.8	Add caveat to spreadsheet regarding inflationary pressures. Send information on inflationary pressures to AC	RR
6.10	Submit spreadsheet to DLUHC	RR
7.2	Scoping document regarding increased video content	EP
8.1	Circulate schedule of future PDG meetings to Board members	CD
8.2	Proposal regarding future Programme Management Reports	AA/RR
8.5	Actions to do with Board recruitment activities	AA
8.6	Discuss best opportunities for promotion of Youth Board member recruitment	AA/EP
9.1	Circulate details of Manchester ST Event to Board members Alert Marches representative that FM attending Manchester event	AA AC

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
1.	Welcome and Apologies	

1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies and absences are as noted above.	AA
1.2	Following recent local elections, the Chair introduced Cat Hornsey to the meeting as the new Hereford City Council representative. Graham Biggs will be the new Herefordshire Council representative, though unable to attend today's meeting due to a prior commitment.	
1.3	The Board officially confirmed CH's and GB's membership to the Board and warmly welcomed both.	
1.4	The Chair advised that she had received a note from Councillor Chowns to say that due to the local election results and subsequent changes to councillor portfolios, she would be stepping back from the Board. The Chair will circulate the note to Board members and will pass on the Board's thanks to Councillor Chowns for her past engagement with the Board.	
2.	Conflicts of Interest	RR
2.1	There were no new Conflicts of Interest. The Chair advised that RR will be in touch with new Board members and those still outstanding to complete their Declarations of Interests.	
3.	Minutes of the last meeting (held 12 May 2023) and notes from PDG meetings held on 12 and 17 April 2023	
3.1	The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 12 May were approved as a correct record.	
3.2	The notes from the two PDG meetings had been circulated with the Agenda for information as part of improved governance processes. FM reminded all Board members that they were welcome to attend any PDG meeting.	
4.	Matters Arising	
4.1	The Chair advised that there were no outstanding matters arising from last month's meeting. All had been actioned or would be discussed as part of today's agenda.	
4.2	There were no further matters arising.	
5.	Progress Update and Future Planning	RR
5.1	IA referred Board members to the papers circulated with today's Agenda and attached as Appendix A to these notes.	
5.2	IA was pleased to report that all Funding Agreements have now been signed, apart from those for Powerhouse and Encore. Following a comment from JF, RR will liaise with the Encore Project lead to clarify the position with regard to their Funding Agreement.	
5.3	IA advised that projects were now developing/had developed their Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) and were scheduled to present these to forthcoming PDG meetings. Once presented, these would come to Board for formal approval.	
5.4		

5.5	<p>The Chair reminded Board that the Financial Agreements for Southside and Digital Culture Hub projects had been circulated to Board members for comment and approval. IA asked for any further comments from Board members. None were received and the Board stated that they were content to approve these documents. However, following a comment from JF, RR agreed to review the processes around electronic approvals to ensure all Board members are clear as to what is being asked of them.</p> <p>PS advised that following local election changes, AL had met with Herefordshire Councillors who had confirmed their ongoing support for the Encore Project to be based at the Town Hall.</p>	RR
6.	<p>Current Programme Overview and Budget</p> <p>6.1 IA referred to the details contained within the document circulated prior to today's meeting and attached as Appendix A to these notes.</p> <p>6.2 IA referred to the table within his report that highlighted those projects considered to have the greatest number of current challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Wye Infrastructure: redevelopment of project being managed effectively within the spirit of the Funding Agreement. CD is in regular contact with the Project Lead, and a presentation to PDG is planned within the next few weeks. • Encore: As outlined in note 5.5 above, local councillors have confirmed their support for the location of this project at the Town Hall. • Digital Culture Hub: Financial Agreement is being finalised. RR in liaison with AC regarding Project Adjustment Request requirements. • Southside Project: Financial Agreements for Belmont Wanderers and Growing Local elements means these projects can progress. The build aspect of the project requires further management. • Powerhouse: Following discussion at the PDG meeting held on 17 May, the Financial Agreement is being developed. <p>6.3 IA also referred to excellent progress being made on many of the projects, such as the Cycle Track and Castle Green.</p> <p>6.4 JNo asked whether projects could be invited to Board to present on their ongoing progress. The Chair welcomed this suggestion and said she would discuss with RR how this could be effected.</p> <p>6.5 With regard to the Risk Register, IA advised that his main concern remained inflationary pressures.</p> <p>6.6 IA referred to the spreadsheets circulated with the papers for today's Agenda (summary included in Appendix A of these notes). He referred in particular to the last three columns of the spreadsheet which detail: i) spend to date vs spend to profile to March 24; ii) Remaining to commit vs total allocation; and iii) Remaining to spend vs total allocation, all expressed as percentages.</p> <p>6.7 IA advised that he was also required to submit a more detailed spreadsheet to DLUHC (Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) by 9</p>	AA/RR

<p>6.8</p> <p>6.9</p> <p>6.10</p>	<p>June and he outlined how this differed to the financial information provided to Board. This spreadsheet had been circulated to Board members prior to today's meeting, for which he was seeking approval, subject to final checks by Herefordshire Council's officers.</p> <p>JNo suggested a caveat is added when submitting the spreadsheet to DLUHC regarding the possible impact and risks of inflationary pressures. This was agreed by the Board. AC commented that this position was not unique to Hereford and asked for further details regarding Hereford's position to be shared with him.</p> <p>JF asked whether the projects' matched funding element had been significantly affected by inflation. IA said that overall the matched funding element of the programme had increased. However, some projects had seen a reduction in match funding, for example where a change in location had changed anticipated rental arrangements. However, IA confirmed that there was no risk in relation to matched funding elements of the projects.</p> <p>The Board confirmed their approval for the detailed spreadsheet to be submitted to DLUHC, subject to final checks by Local Authority officers.</p>	<p>RR</p> <p>RR</p>
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p>Communications Update</p> <p>EP spoke to her briefing document previously circulated to Board members and attached at Appendix B to these notes. There were no specific comments or queries raised by Board members, but the Chair advised that any subsequent thoughts can be emailed direct to EP.</p> <p>The Chair asked EP to develop a document that considers the possibility of developing additional video material and likely associated costs. JNo suggested cost-effective ways of obtaining video footages from a number of sources that could be used in promotional materials.</p>	<p>EP</p>
<p>8</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p> <p>8.3</p> <p>8.4</p> <p>8.5</p> <p>8.6</p>	<p>Governance Update</p> <p>FM advised that the agendas for future PDG meetings will be circulated to all Board members. This would make it easier for members to schedule to attend PDG meetings if they wished.</p> <p>The Chair advised that she was holding ongoing discussions with RR regarding future programme management reports. A proposal will be brought back to Board.</p> <p>The Chair further advised that work was ongoing with respect to the Board's Terms of Reference.</p> <p>The Chair thanked JH/IA for their work in developing the improved financial procedures.</p> <p>The Chair provided an update on Board recruitment activities. These had been put on hold during the local election period, but she felt that they were now in a position or progress. The Chair said that she would contact those Board members who are currently on sabbatical to understand their position. She would also contact those who had previously expressed an interest in joining the Board. Youth Board membership would not be paused. The Chair said she will provide an update report at the next Board meeting.</p> <p>AA and EP to discuss promotion of Youth Board membership opportunities and optimum times for advertising.</p>	<p>CD</p> <p>AA/RR</p> <p>AA</p> <p>AA/EP</p>

<p>9.</p> <p>9.1</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Chair advised that an event is being held in Manchester on Tuesday 20 June for Towns Fund representatives from across the country. The aim is to share best practice and ideas. She will circulate further details to Board members. In the meantime, FM confirmed his attendance. AC said he would alert the Government's Towns Fund Representative for the Marches so that he can make contact with FM.</p>	<p>AA</p> <p>AC</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Friday 7 July from 8.30 – 10.00 am at Hereford College of Arts, Venn's Lane Campus (hybrid alternative available).</p>	

Appendix A

Progress Update and Future Planning

1. Introduction

This report provides a high-level overview of progress since the last Board meeting.

2. Funding Agreement Progress

All funding agreements apart from Powerhouse and Encore are now agreed.

PIDS from the following projects are currently being scheduled for consideration by the PDG and subsequent reporting to the Board:

- Wyeside,
- Skatepark,
- Future of Skills,
- HCA,
- Meadow Arts,
- Belmont Wanderers,
- Growing Local,
- DCH,
- Powerhouse,
- Encore

7. Current Programme Overview

1. Introduction

This report provides an overview on progress since the last board meeting and in advance of detailed implementation negotiations. A brief commentary on a project by project basis is provided below and the accompanying excel table RAG rates each project. The highest level risks are set out below. Due to the short time lag between this meeting and the meeting on 12 May there is relatively little to report in terms of change in the intervening period.

2. Top Risks

Project	Town Fund	Match	Total	Risk Rating	Challenge	Current Position
River Wye Infrastructure	1.035	0.112	1.147		There are clear cost over runs for this project, support for the programme management is being provided by Herefordshire Council.	This project is now in train with programme management support. Generating a full understanding of the strategy for managing the value engineering activities planned in relating to this project is a priority and this will be addressed through a presentation of the PID at a future PDG meeting.
Encore Music Hub	0.21	0.6	0.810		FBC has now been approved but needs detailed implementation scrutiny	The change of location proposed for this project will, as previously notified, affect its output and funding profile. These issues will be discussed in detail when its PID is discussed at a future PDG.

Digital Culture Hub	1.201	0.55	1.751		The development of a funding agreement to reflect the now agreed change from rent to purchase	The project has identified funding from Charity Bank to meet the financial shortfall in relation to the purchase of the property. There are still some issues to manage in relation to the delivery of matched funding, outputs and finalising the explanation of the relationship with Powerhouse who will be hosted at the building. A meeting is scheduled for 12 May to finalise the process of preparing a funding agreement for this project and Powerhouse.
Southside	3.656	0.613	4.269		Significant programme management requirements on multiple fronts. PDG is providing significant ongoing support.	Since the last meeting the funding agreement for the Grow Local component of the project has been circulated to the Board and is now in play with the project sponsors to countersign.
Powerhouse	0.31	0	0.31		The principle of co-location with the Digital Culture Hub is now in a detailed stage of development	This has now been identified raised with the Accountable Body and a detailed dialogue is in train with Powerhouse, Rural Media (DCH) and the TF secretariat. The Board has agreed to support this proposal.

3. Project Progress

Skills Foundry

Southside

Current progress with the project is best summarised as per the report to the last board meeting on 12 May (set out below):

- A funding agreement has been set up, with Growing Local (changed from NMITE as project Lead). The funding drawdown profile will now differ to that in the FBC but, in all other respects, including outputs, the project remains unchanged.
- Growing Local have been granted a licence on the land, allowing them to start garden development works from 7/4/23. Full Community Asset Transfer or 125 lease to be issued by the summer.
- Growing Local has started with recruitment for their first two roles, they will begin garden development works by late May/early June depending on recruitment. They are currently hosting a series of open events on the land to attract volunteers to assist in development.
- Outline planning is live on the Herefordshire Council portal with a target determination date 1/6/23
- ITT for the Design & Build contract is in the process of being issued now for EOI, tenders to be received by May with a proposal for outline design by August.

The Funding Agreement for this project was circulated to the Board for agreement with a deadline of 26 May and no adverse comments were received.

Digital Culture Hub

Following a meeting to discuss the detailed content and issues discussed at the last meeting the funding agreement for this project has now been drafted and shared with the Board. It has now been shared with the project sponsors for them to sign as no adverse comments were received by the deadline of 26 May.

HCA School of Creative Digital Futures

There has been no significant change to overall progress since the last meeting. HCA have confirmed it is a real imperative to get contractors on site over the summer break to reduce the disruption to student experience through the autumn they are therefore keen not to delay process whilst still ensuring appropriate oversight. A tendering process is in train. The Chair of the HCA Board has now signed the main funding agreement. A PID is being drafted. Some value engineering is required to ensure that the project meets the spend total agreed. It is not anticipated however that this will impact on the overall delivery of the outputs and outcomes within the agreed funding envelope.

NMITE Future of Work

There are no major concerns about progress at this. A funding agreement has been issued for the project.

Access and Greening

River Wye Infrastructure

There has been no significant change in relation to this project since the last report in on 12 May. An update was provided at the PDG on 17 April linked to how the direct tendering strategy arising from the design work is progressing. Programme management support is being provided to the project by Herefordshire Council. It has already made some capital purchases associated with its plans including a river crane. The contract for the tree management associated with the project has been let. The development of a solid pontoon and the discontinuation of the original arrangements around the provision of a ramp access to the Great Western Way in favour of a simpler access have been agreed as part of the revision of the scheme. The PDG asked for an updated risk register from the project and planning permission is still to be achieved.

Greening the City

There has been no significant change in relation to this project since the last meeting on 12 May. This project is now in the implementation planning stage. Work is underway to confirm the level of financial spend which can be achieved this year through entering into contractual agreements with suppliers. We are optimistic that the project will be able to hit its profiled spend for this financial year. A funding agreement for the project is now in place. There is likely to be a modest delay in the contracting of the Active Travel Planning element of this project.

Meadow Arts

There has been no significant change to this project since the last meeting on 12 May. The second installation by artists Mathew Cornford and John Beck is now underway. This provides an excellent opportunity to promote Stronger Hereford more widely and discussions are ongoing with Meadow Arts on how best to maximise this opportunity. This project will be able to commercially commit its expenditure to meet its funding profile. It has now been issued with a Funding Agreement which has been completed.

Castle Green Pavilion

The project recently circulated this update on progress:

The Board unanimously agreed to approve the recommendation from the ITT project team to award the contract to the lowest bidder at £1.22m. Contracts have now been signed. This now confirms that the project can be delivered within the envelope of the budget agreed with the Towns Fund.

Cultural Assets

Maylords Library and Learning Resource Centre

There have been no significant changes from the position on 12 May when this project was last reported on. The plans for the implementation of this project are proceeding effectively. The Council are currently working to confirm the financial profile and output delivery timing associated with the current profile. A Funding Agreement for this project has now been issued. A contract for the delivery of the physical works associated with the project has been agreed pending signature.

Powerhouse

A hot desking arrangement has been put in place to enable this project to begin operating from Packers House. The PDG on 17 May agreed to support this project in its new manifestation. A Funding Agreement for the project is in train.

Encore Music Hub

There has been no significant change to this project since the last meeting on 12 May 2023. The project has reported that a potential site has now been identified and the project lead is optimistic that this might be brought to fruition. It is likely however that both the timescales and the nature of the outputs to be delivered will change significantly and once the Project Initiation Document which will be supplied to the project has been completed the Project Delivery Group will need to review the proposition as it now stands pending a referral to the Board. The project has its Funding Agreement but it is proposed that no work is initiated in the short term pending further analysis of the situation.

Individual Projects

Marches Experience

The interview associated with the HLF application was scheduled for 15 May. A detailed public consultation process associated with the development has just been completed. The decision following the 15 May interview is expected in early June 2023. The ITT for the construction works has been sent to a framework. The planning application for the project is progressing with no objections to date although some not unexpected issues from a conservation perspective by the planners within the Council.

Electric Buses

There are no significant changes to this project since the last meeting on 23 May. The order for the buses has now been issued and discussions are underway to identify the most appropriate operator for the facility. Herefordshire Council has agreed a rapid turnaround arrangement for reimbursement expenditure on this project. Ongoing discussions in relation to the route configuration are still in train with Herefordshire Council. At the last meeting of the Connected Coast Board the following proposed adjustments to the delivery of the project were agreed by the board and we are currently seeking a discussion with DLUHC to see whether a formal Project Adjustment Request is required for these changes.

- Transfer of £60,000 of surplus capital to NMITE in return for £60,000 of revenue from them to the Electric Buses
- Confirmation that staff training (4% of the tender price from Yeomans) can be capitalised and paid up front

- Confirmation that depot rental (11% of the tender price from Yeomans) can be capitalised and paid up front

Extreme Sports Hub

There are two components to this project the skate park and the cycle track. There had been some questioning of the deliverability of the cycle track in the timescales desired by Sport England this issue has now been resolved with Sport England confirming its ongoing support for the project. Contracts have now been let by the projects to a combined value of £815,615. The situation in relation to these two projects is therefore largely and positively unchanged since the last Board meeting. A video showing progress with the cycle track is attached [here](#).

4. Programme Level Risk Register

The cross cutting risk register is attached below for discussion and updating post the Board.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Actions/Actions Required	Latest Position – June 2023
Completion of Project Initiation Documents	Medium	Medium	Close liaison and clear indication of requirements with each individual project and then consideration at PDG	The first tranche of PID presentations has been completed and the second is being scheduled.
Achieving Target Spend	Medium	Medium	We have identified the relative risks on a project by project basis, individual mitigations measures at the level of specific projects are in place and further intelligence is collected on a real time basis through our engagement with each project as the TF secretariat. There is scope for some projects to offset an under commitment of others by increasing their	The Funding Agreements ensure there is clarity on timescales and activities associated with the spend profile for each project. We also have to manage the distinction between the amount of spend profiled by DLUHC and from a programme management perspective. Our intelligence from the individual project discussions enabled us to meet our commitment targets for 2022/23.

			spend and we are currently investigating this position.	
Achieving Matched Funding Totals	Medium	High	It is clear that due to project design changes arising from the FBC development process that there is a need to value engineer projects as a result of inflationary pressures. This may knock on in terms of matched funding contributions. We are alive to this issue and we have been involved in detailed project by project risk rating to understand and plan mitigations at the level of individual project development.	A changing pattern of matched funding has emerged as the Funding Agreements were firmed up. Considerable additional matched funding has been identified in conjunction with the Museum project. Reduced and rescheduled matched funding arrangements have been notified in terms of Powerhouse, the Digital Culture Hub and Encore Music Hub projects. Overall the level of programme wide matched funding is in excess of the amount initially cited in the bid.
Programme Management Capacity	Low	High	The team has a good level of dedicated staff with additional capacity in the There is scope to seek support from partners to mitigate unforeseen capacity challenges.	As the Funding Agreements have proceeded the challenges around the delivery of this aspect of the work have been confirmed as fully manageable. Herefordshire Council has recently deployed programme management support to assist the delivery of Wyeside and Southside projects.
Achieving Overall Programme Outputs	Medium	High	The programme management role followed by the team provides good scope to identify early and then intervene to manage and mitigate risks as identified.	Four projects: Powerhouse, Digital Culture Hub, Southside and Wyeside have major delivery challenges. A reduced portfolio of outputs could arise. The secretariat is keeping this situation under careful review and will maintain a detailed overview of progress in conjunction

				with the Project Delivery Group as project implementation begins.
Achieving Programme Spend Within Annual Profiled Phases	Low	Low	There is a danger in view of the inflationary pressures faced by the programme and in terms of limited supplier availability in some cases that achieving spend on planned time may be difficult.	The Funding Agreements have in each case considered this challenge. Where it occurs unexpectedly a project change form will need to be submitted to Government. With nearly all the Funding Agreements confirmed with projects we believe we have a robust level of intelligence and understanding in relation to the programme and that at this stage it is straightforwardly manageable.
Meeting Evaluation Requirements	Low	Medium	There is a requirement to evaluate the impact of the programmes in the town, we are yet to put the arrangements in place to collect the evidence and programme the evaluation. We have significant experience of these actions in other settings and are beginning to make preparations for the meeting of this obligation once the current stage of the Funding Agreement process is completed.	We currently have no evidence to suggest that this will be a performance issue.
Individual Project Failure	Medium	Medium	There will inevitably be some challenges which occur in terms of project delivery. Through the Funding Agreement process these we have a clear overview of these challenges and we will be able to keep on top of them through the project implementation process. Depending on the scale of the project and its relative	We have identified the relative vulnerability of each project to inflation in this report. More widely we have a risk register for each individual project. We have the following projects under close scrutiny: Wyeside, Encore Music Hub, Powerhouse, Digital Culture Hub and Southside. None of the projects have yet failed and we are

			importance to the programme (we have individual risk registers for each project) we will be able to put mitigations in place or escalate the solution to the issue to a discussion with DLUHC using as appropriate project variation forms rescheduling timescales and outputs.	confident that with our ongoing support they will be able to continue successfully.
Multiple Project Failure	Low	High	This is a relatively low risk because of the comprehensive and varied spread of projects across the programme both thematically and in terms of delivery organisations. Should it occur we will, through monitoring be able to plan amelioration as it gathers pace so that the implications are fully understood and reported before they reach an unmanageable stage.	There is no evidence to suggest that this is an issue at this stage of progress towards the establishment of individual funding agreements. We are however exercising a careful overview of vulnerabilities at a programme level as 1/3 of the total TF portfolio involves projects at different levels of delivery challenge.
Subsidy Control Challenges	Low	High	Relatively few of the projects have a subsidy control component. We are planning a desk review of the relative challenge associated with each project where required and will have mitigations pre-planned should any challenges arise.	We are yet to schedule this detailed desk review and it will be initiated once the final funding agreements are in place.
Programme Level Inflation Cost Pressures	High	High	This is a material risk. We are already involved in value engineering discussion with projects on an individual basis as the PISs progress to enable us to mitigate this in relation to individual projects.	This is a significant but manageable risk. Preceding elements of this report set out how we have been managing the process as does the project by project narrative which precedes it.

Programme Governance Failures	Low	High	We have the operation of the Board and its assurance framework including the PDG under constant review and the Chair has been interviewing individual members to understand their perspectives in relation to these challenges. We have also recently agreed a new financial reporting process to enable us to manage the challenges linked to this issue.	The current Chair has reviewed the governance status of the programme and a separate report will be discussed at this Board meeting
----------------------------------	-----	------	--	---

5. Budget

The Period 1 (April) position in relation to the programme is set out below. The secretariat is also working on the submission of the latest return to DLUHC which is attached (as a separate document) for consideration and approval. It needs to be returned by 9 June 2023.

Project	Total TF Allocation	Spend to P1 23-24	23-24 Spend P1	Total Spend to Date	Total to Spend	23-24 Profile Spend	Spend and Profile to Mar 24	Total Committed 22-23	Remaining to Commit	Spend to date vs Spend and Profile to Mar 24	Remaining to Commit vs Total Allocation	Remaining to Spend vs Total Allocation
Castle Green Pavilion	1,568,252	137,800		137,800	1,430,452	1,005,290	1,143,090	1,294,608	273,644	12%	17%	91%
Cycle Track	690,263	325,616	105,773	431,389	258,874	0	690,263	690,263	0	62%	0%	36%
Digital Culture Hub	1,201,322	52,092		52,092	1,149,230	573,015	625,107	44,858	1,156,464	8%	96%	96%
Electric Buses	1,708,993	85,250		85,250	1,623,743	703,703	788,953	1,068,350	640,643	11%	37%	95%
Encore Music Hub	201,058	0		0	201,058	201,058	201,058	0	201,058	0%	100%	100%
Future of Work	2,337,291	27,363	4,418	31,781	2,305,510	1,317,135	1,348,916	24,054	2,313,237	2%	99%	99%
Greening the City	411,164	80,685		80,685	330,479	0	411,164	411,164	0	20%	0%	80%
HCA School of Digital Futures	653,439	0		0	653,439	452,381	452,381	35,000	618,439	0%	95%	100%
Marches Experience	5,026,450	1,404,051		1,404,051	3,622,399	2,010,580	3,414,631	2,010,580	3,015,870	41%	60%	72%
Maylords Library	3,015,870	328,917		328,917	2,686,953	879,842	1,208,759	2,137,289	878,581	27%	29%	89%
Meadow Arts	90,476	18,000	2,050	20,050	70,426	0	90,476	20,050	70,426	22%	78%	77%
Powerhouse	301,587	19,050		19,050	282,537	0	301,587	38,097	263,490	6%	87%	94%
Skate Park	500,000	0	30000	30,000	470,000	0	500,000	19,050	480,950	6%	96%	94%
Southside	3,656,155	154,919		154,919	3,501,236	2,659,325	2,814,244	490,000	3,166,155	6%	87%	96%
Wyeside	1,035,875	34,017	99,195	133,212	902,663	517,937	651,149	166,862	869,013	20%	84%	87%
Total *	22,398,195	2,667,761	241,436	2,909,197	19,488,998	9,739,300	12,648,497	6,165,175	16,233,020	23%	72%	87%

* inc programme management (2%)

A spreadsheet setting more detail on payments is attached as an appendix with this report, including detailed individual project transactions.

6. Communications

A detailed report on communications from our contracted support body Orphans is attached with these Board papers as a separate attachment.

7. New Board Member Recruitment

Following the initial expression of interest process which was paused pending the outcome of the election more work is required to confirm arrangements going forward. The City Council have confirmed that their representative, following the decision of Councillor Kath Hey not to stand for election will be Councillor Cat Hornsey. We are currently awaiting notification of the nominee from Herefordshire Council following changes arising from the election results in May 2023. A wider range of considerations in conjunction with the filling of outstanding vacancies are covered in the governance report and will be discussed at the Board Meeting.

8. Project Sponsor Meeting

There has been no change to the position in relation to this aspect of programme delivery since the last Board Meeting on 12 May. A project sponsor meeting was held on 27 April 2023. The core of the meeting was dedicated to a mini-comms workshop run by the new support contractors Orphans Press. In addition to this element of the meeting, Roger Allonby from Herefordshire Council updated the group on progress with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Levelling Up Fund. There was also an opportunity to review the delivery experience of individual projects and for the Town Fund as a whole. It was agreed to develop a schedule of 6 weekly meetings, which will alternate between face to face and virtual meetings. Ivan Annibal from the secretariat agreed to produce a schedule of dates and a forward programme of activity, with the espoused hope that over time the meetings will be able to develop their own approach, becoming effectively self-governing.

Item 9: Governance Update

Purpose – for discussion

Abigail Appleton for Board meeting June 2nd 2023

Introduction

Following discussion of the Board’s desire to review and strengthen governance where necessary, at the March Board meeting, I invited all Board members to share their views with me on this topic and also carried out a series of 1:1 conversations during May and April to solicit views on areas for development with Board members JNe, LR, RP, JF, EC, KH, GJ, JV, PS. The first part of this paper summarises key areas for development identified in these conversations.

The second section addresses Board membership changes which has moved on since the governance conversations were held.

Areas for development

Financial Reporting - The strongest area of concern by far concerned the range and quality of financial reporting to the Board. Several members reiterated concerns about needing to improve the detail of financial reporting across all projects so as to ensure the Board had appropriate oversight of how money is being spent and to give Board an overview of planned spend ahead its being too late to raise questions.

However there were particularly strong views expressed around the reporting from projects led by Herefordshire Council and that the Board should be given as clear an insight into how money was being spent in council projects as well in those led externally. Specific areas of concern raised that the Board should have visibility of how much is being charged for Project Management services to Wyeside and Southside and how many internal costs were being charged to Stronger Hereford by Herefordshire Council on its own projects.

One Board member was worried that HC might reallocate Stronger Hereford core grant funding given the pressures from other areas but was reassured this funding is ring-fenced by central government.

A theme shared by several members was that the Herefordshire Council seemed unused to reporting to an external Board in this way and that systems needed to be developed to ensure more information was volunteered/presented as a matter of routine.

Action taken: following further discussion at the Board in April financial reporting has been improved but further detail needs to be added.

A number of people commented on the relationship between the Board and PDG. There was recognition and praise for the detailed project analysis and support work PDG does but a concern that it was sometimes difficult to keep up with the discussion and understand how projects have moved on. A suggestion was made that PDG minutes should be formally noted in the main Board which would allow for any matters arising and that PDG meetings and headline agenda points should be circulated to the full Board accepting these are sometimes confirmed very close to the meeting.

Action taken: PDG minutes will be included in Board papers as well being circulated by email once approved in order to ensure Board have up to date insight into sometimes fast moving discussion.

Board Terms of Reference – Several members flagged the need to update the Board Terms of Reference to reflect this delivery phase was necessary. It was mentioned for example, that Board members should understand how a vote would be taken if there was a decision that could not be otherwise resolved. The current terms do include reference to voting but it was thought this might not be fully understood.

New terms of reference could also update and bring together in one record the terms of reference for the comms and PDG committees.

Action – new Board and committee terms to be updated for the July meeting

Role of attendees - Comment was made on the importance of ensuring that in there is clearer recognition of the distinction between Board members and attendees in discussion and decision-making.

Programme management reporting – several suggestions were made for reviewing the format of Rose Regeneration's reports, including more project milestone tracking, and for formalising Board performance management of the contract, which will be discussed with RR as part of the contract renewal and then brought back to the Board for approval.

Part 2

Board membership

Following Kath Hey's decision not to stand for the City Council, the City Council has nominated Cllr Cat Hornsey to be their representative on the Board. Cat is in her second term as a Cllr for the Hinton and Hunderton ward and already sits on the Zipper buses committee Cat Hornsey – Hereford City Council. As it is a requirement from government that the City Council is represented on the Board it is proposed we formally approve her membership at the meeting on Friday subject to any concerns being raised before. We have yet to receive confirmation of the new County Council representative. With these roles in place we will be able to review and progress further Board recruitment. This will be discussed on Friday.

In the meantime we have resumed an active search for an additional youth member.

STRONGER HEREFORD

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT PLAN

APRIL 2023 - MARCH 2024

Working document, 26 May 2023

Introduction

Stronger Hereford successfully bid for £22.4 million from the Government's Towns Fund to deliver 15 projects which will transform the city.

With one project already launched (No.1 Station Approach), some nearing completion and others starting on delivery, the Stronger Hereford Board has commissioned Orphans to provide communications consultancy for 12 months (April 2023 - March 2024).

Our role is to:

- Facilitate a greater awareness and understanding of what Stronger Hereford means
- Create an appetite for people to get more involved
- Engender a spirit of pride and aspiration regarding Stronger Hereford and the benefits it will bring

This practical, targeted plan sets out how we will deliver on these aims.

Considerations

- Now that the funding has been awarded and project delivery has started, Stronger Hereford (SH) has little of its 'own' corporate news so working with project partners to amplify their achievements and ensure they are recognised as part of SH is essential.
- Likewise, to grow and reinforce understanding of what SH means for the city, we'll run campaigns which tell the overall story.
- In the run up to the recent election, there was some comment by candidates suggesting that all investment is going to Hereford and not the market towns or countryside areas. It would be worth being mindful of this and being clear in the

boilerplate, website FAQ etc that the money was ring-fenced for cities and major towns so it is clear that it couldn't be spent elsewhere in the county.

Our Approach

Given the considerations detailed above, it is important for the communications activity to operate on two levels:

1) The collective Stronger Hereford level

It's essential that we build the overarching brand and unite the different projects by telling the joined-up story. The foundation for this work will be a robust narrative, from which everything else will flow. Activity will include updated info on the website, social activity and a regular e-news, interspersed with small marketing campaigns. We will evolve the visual identity to ensure it has plenty of punch and leverage branding opportunities such as hoarding. With regard to media relations, we will make the most of positive news opportunities which arise from projects as well as proactively generating our own news stories.

2) The project partner level

We will work closely with projects to share and amplify their content through Stronger Hereford channels, e.g. invites to consultation events, job & volunteering opportunities, project update videos etc. We'll also support the projects with their press activity, from providing quotes to signing off on media releases.

Key Activity

Phase 1: Project Mobilisation (April/May)

April/ May

- **Dive into Stronger Hereford:** Read and digest relevant documentation
- **Get to know the projects:** Arrange one to ones with all projects (face-to-face and virtual) to gain a solid understanding of their objectives, plans, milestones and any communications challenges.

- **Review the visual representation of Stronger Hereford:** From identity to supporting brand assets, with an eye to their use at a large-scale on hoarding and small scale on social media.
- **Facilitate a discovery workshop:** Run an in-person session with board members and projects to gather thoughts and share ideas regarding the Stronger Hereford narrative and identity.
- **Develop the messaging and narrative:** Work up a strapline, press release boilerplate and other introductory copy which captures the vision and explains what Stronger Hereford will achieve.
- **Develop a content partnership:** We are also currently in conversation with HCA to pursue opportunities for students to be set a live brief to capture the projects' progress and create interesting content for social.

June

- **Run a Creative Workshop with projects:** Conduct a virtual brainstorm, sharing practical ideas and inspiration, to help projects think about how they can actively create engaging content to share on social and help build excitement. As part of this workshop, we'll also reinforce the importance of tagging SH accounts and sharing each other's news.
- **Share Brand Toolkit:** Including Stronger Hereford logos in all formats for use by partners in their marketing collateral.

Phase 2: Communications roll-out (in parallel, from April onwards)

In terms of the day to day delivery of the communications, our priorities will be to:

- Create excitement about the city's transformation & share opportunities to get involved
- Build awareness and understanding about each of the fifteen projects
- Explain that these projects are made possible thanks to £22.4 million funding from Government's Towns Fund
- Make it easy to find information about Stronger Hereford by regular updating of the website and e-news distribution
- Work with partners to help grow Stronger Hereford's own channels as part of a drive to show that the overall project is 'greater than the sum of parts' - there's a huge opportunity to cross-pollinate project followers so that they see the bigger picture.
- Devise campaigns which spread the word about Stronger Hereford in an engaging way and invite engagement.

- Generate news opportunities such as project phasing.
- Make the best of social channels and e-news to tell the SH story.

Campaigns

As part of the roll out, we will run a series of Stronger Hereford campaigns, as follows:

- **Proud to be Part of Stronger Hereford**

We will ask all partners to share on their socials that they are proud to be part of SH with a call to action to visit our socials. We will provide a carousel of graphics which summarise what Stronger Hereford is about and draft text for the post, although partners are welcome to translate into their own tone of voice.

- **Stronger Voices & Social Content**

We are keen to launch a video series which celebrates the projects via short interviews, shared on both our channels and partners' channels. The idea is to hear from individuals involved with and who will benefit from the projects. We would hope to feature a diverse range of voices to connect with our various communities. HCA photography students will be working with us to deliver these videos and other social content.

- **Stronger Hereford: Walk & Talk Briefing for Board members, Project sponsors & Cabinet Members**

With the new Cabinet in place, there is a need to ensure they are fully briefed and engaged with Stronger Hereford. Similarly, it is useful for all board members and project sponsors to have the opportunity to refresh their knowledge of all fifteen projects. We suggest that we work with Christian and Ivan to create a 'walk and talk' event where we call in at some of the projects before ending up at a relevant venue (e.g. Maylord Orchards) for short introductions to the remaining projects. This event could replace a Project Sponsors meeting and be held early evening.

If this proves a success then we could look at creating a Walk & Talk for local residents, although this would be a shorter format and not include a sit-down briefing. We would need to find a date/time which would suit all featured projects as well as the public - for example, an evening after work. We would promote the event via our website, socials, e-news and via press. We could also take short films on the night which would be shared on social afterwards.

- **Press Briefings**

We have recently had a positive conversation with Hereford Times and hope to put a date in for a tour of key sites. We will also offer this opportunity to Nicola Goodwin, the local BBC correspondent, as she was very engaged in the TIP days so important to keep her abreast of our activities

- **Phasing Stronger Hereford's progress**

If we create 'phases' of work, that enables us to clearly demonstrate SH's progress. Effectively, it works as a news hook for press and would also be the basis for social content e.g. a visual graphic to tick off Stronger Hereford's achievements over time.

Draft phasing for comment, please advise of any amends - this is based on projects being launched

- **Phase 1: Autumn 2023**

- Public Art: 2nd installation at Station Approach (spring 2023)
- Herefordshire Cycle Track (summer 2023)
- Electric buses (autumn 2023)

- **Phase 2: Spring 2024**

- Hereford Skatepark (winter 2023/24)
- Hereford Library & Resource Centre (spring 2024)
- HCA Digital Skills Centre
- Digital Cultural Hub
- Powerhouse
- Wyeside
- Public Art: 3rd installation at Station Approach

- **Phase 3: Summer 2024**
Castle Green Pavilion
Southside Project: community gardens
- **Phase 4: Autumn 2024**
HCA Digital Skills Centre
NMITE Future of Work
Greening the City
- **Phase 5: Spring/summer 2025**
Southside Project: building & sports facilities
Encore Music Hub

Monitoring & Evaluation

We will track and report on the following statistics, providing benchmarking data where possible

Socials: followers, reach and engagement for Facebook and Instagram, page visits, most popular posts

E-newsletter: open rates, click throughs, number of subscribers

PR: Coverage

Website: Unique visitors, dwell time

Monthly Activity Overview

Working document, to be added to over time

MONTH	TASKS	OUTPUTS
April	<p>Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read relevant documentation <p>Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meet with all projects on a one to one basis ● Facilitate discovery workshop <p>Messaging & visual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop strapline, narrative and boilerplate ● Evolve visual identity ● Write up project summaries for sign off by partners ● Draft a project timeline for sign off by Board <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update avatar with new logo ● Start managing social channels <p>Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start implementing new logo <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Familiarise with Hubspot account and website Divi builder 	<p>All completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evolved brand identity ● Workshop at Project Sponsors mtg ● Project summary text ● New logo on social & website
May	<p>Visual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create brand assets which will support social activity & leverage brand e.g. hoarding ● Pull together light-touch branding toolkit so all partners have easy access to logo in a variety of formats etc 	<p>All completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agreed narrative ● Signed off social campaign ● Designed draft brand assets ● Website: new page 'Our Projects'

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage with Friends of Castle Green Pavilion & Vision ref hoarding & speak to Council ref opportunities at Maylord Orchards <p>Social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prepare 'Proud to be part of SH' social campaign for all projects to share ● Liaise with HCA regarding live brief to students to generate social content including Stronger Voices interviews/ voxpops and initial conversation with Museum, Library & Skatepark ● Launch LinkedIn page to keep business community in the loop ● Manage social channels <p>PR & partner engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage with HCA and Meadow Arts ref press & social for No.1 Station Approach, including providing 'funded by' info & logos ● Speak with Wyeside ref CCTV installation, possible PR opp ● Liaise with Herefordshire Council ref library closure press release to ensure reference to Stronger Hereford ● Create spreadsheet with board and project contacts to help partners in relation to event invites ● Attend board meeting <p>Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add project summaries & a location map ● Add news (No 1 Station Approach launch & event, Castle Green work starting) ● Refresh text to reflect new narrative and that project is now in delivery <p>E-news</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft e-news for main database and stakeholders 	<p>plus location map, news, updated text & headers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contacts spreadsheet ● Article in Hereford Times ● E-news: No 1 Station Approach focus, plus Castle Green Pavilion, cycle track ● Briefed HCA Photography students ref live brief for social content ● Brand toolkit ● Linked in page - please follow!
--	---	--

<p>June</p>	<p>PR & partner engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Liaise with Halo ref informal opening of Cycle Track to public in summer holidays and how to best support & leverage for SH ● Provide quotes & logos as required ● Make contact with Hereford Times and BBC Hereford & Worcester ref one-to-one briefing ● Run a Creative Workshop with project partners <p>Social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start roll out of 'Proud to be part of' social campaign with partners ● Look to launch 'Stronger Voices' series, working with HCA ● Manage social channels <p>Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft FAQ and add to site once signed off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First Stronger Voices piece ● Website FAQ & updates ● Brand toolkit for projects to use ● Creative Workshop with partners
<p>July</p>	<p>PR & partner engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Liaise with Library: closing mid-Jul & temporary opening Friar St ● Offer briefings to Hereford Voice, Your Herefordshire ● Start to plan Walk & Talk event (board, project sponsors,cabinet members) with Rose Regeneration <p>Social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on & release latest Stronger Voices video ● Manage social channels <p>Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add news & meeting minutes <p>E-news</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft & distribute e-newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stronger Voices piece ● Website updates ● E-news: cycle track focus if open, plus other relevant news
<p>August</p>	<p>PR & partner engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stronger Voices piece

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Liaise with Halo ref official opening of Cycle Track & supporting press activity and how to leverage for SH ● Liaise with Skatepark ref messaging around their extension work & branding opportunities ref hoarding (due to start Sept) <p>Social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on & release latest Stronger Voices video ● Manage social channels <p>Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add news & meeting minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Website updates
Sept	<p>PR & partner engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Announce 'Phase 1' of Stronger Hereford now live, next steps ● Ongoing engagement with Cycle Track & Skatepark ● Engage with Library ref their consultation <p>Social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on & release latest Stronger Voices video ● Manage social channels <p>Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add news & meeting minutes <p>E-news</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft & distribute e-newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stronger Voices piece ● Website updates ● E-news: Skatepark focus (going into build), Library update, other relevant news ● Walk & Talk event ● Press coverage
October	<p>PR & partner engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TBC ● Liaise with Library ref public events <p>Social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on & release latest Stronger Voices video ● Manage social channels <p>Website</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stronger Voices piece ● Website updates

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add news & meeting minutes 	
Nov	<p>PR & partner engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage with Skatepark ref re-opening (Dec) <p>Social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on & release latest Stronger Voices video ● Manage social channels <p>E-news</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft & distribute e-newsletter <p>Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add news & meeting minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stronger Voices piece ● Website updates
Dec	<p>PR & partner engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Liaise with Skatepark ref re-opening <p>Social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on & release latest Stronger Voices video ● Manage social channels <p>E-news</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft & distribute Christmas message <p>Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add news & meeting minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stronger Voices piece ● Website updates ● Christmas e-news
Jan	<p>PR & partner engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tbc - keep speaking to everyone <p>Social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on & release latest Stronger Voices video ● Manage social channels <p>E-news</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft & distribute e-newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stronger Voices piece ● Website updates ● E-news: Skate park open, library focus

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manage website & social channels Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add news & meeting minutes 	
Feb	PR & partner engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tbc - keep speaking to everyone ● Liaise with library ref public familiarisation tours Social media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on & release latest Stronger Voices video ● Manage social channels E-news <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft & distribute e-newsletter ● Manage website & social channels Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add news & meeting minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stronger Voices piece ● Website updates ● E-news: Library focus, Digital Culture Hub & Powerhouse
Mar	PR & partner engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Announce 'Phase 2' of Stronger Hereford now live, next steps ● Liaise with library ref public familiarisation tours Social media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on & release latest Stronger Voices video ● Manage social channels E-news <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft & distribute e-newsletter ● Manage website & social channels Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add news & meeting minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stronger Voices piece ● Website updates ● E-news: Digital Culture Hub & Powerhouse focus if ready

STATISTICS