Hereford Stronger Towns Board Meeting
Friday 4 August 2023 (8.30 am – 10.00 am), held at Hereford College of Arts and 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
	Ruth Parry	RP	Director Operations & Marketing, Simple Design Works Ltd
	Lauren Rogers	LR	Rural Media Company
	Paul Stevens	PS	Hereford Business Improvement District
Other Attendees:	**Christian Dangerfield**	CD	Rose Regeneration (RR)
	Joni Hughes	JH	Portfolio Manager, Capital Development, HC
	Andrew Lovegrove	AL	Chief Finance Officer, Herefordshire Council
	Paul Walker	PW	Chief Executive, Herefordshire Council
Apologies/Absent:	**Ivan Annibal**	IA	Rose Regeneration (RR)
	Graham Biggs	GB	Councillor, Herefordshire Council
	Jesse Norman	JNo	MP for Hereford and South Herefordshire
	Elizabeth Parbutt	**EP**	Orphan's
	Julian Vaughan	JV	Green Dragon Hotel, Hereford
Notes:	**Jan Bailey**	JB	Herefordshire Business Board

Summary of Actions

Minute No	Action	Resp.
4.1	Follow up outstanding Declarations of Interest	RR
6.3	Invite Library/Resource Centre Project Leads to attend September Board	RR
6.5	Send details of Maylord Orchards/Shire Hall Tours for circulation	AL/JB
6.7	Schedule update on Wye Valley Infrastructure Project at PDG	RR
6.10	Produce Matched Funding summary at programme and project level	RR
7.4	Costings on Independent Governance Support.	RR
	Report on remainder of 2% administrative budget	RR
7.6	Draft letter of agreement	AA/IA/JH
8.4	Councillors/Parish briefings proposal	PW
9.1	Prepare paper on Board membership for next meeting	AA

Item	Notes	Action
1.	**Welcome and Apologies**	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies and absences are as noted above.	
2.	**Conflicts of Interest**	
2.1	The Chair declared an interest in the Project Initiation Document (PID) being tabled for approval today relating to the HCA School of Digital Futures project.	

		There were no other declarations of interest.	
3.		**Minutes of the last Board meeting (held 7 July 2023)**	
3.1		The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 7 July 2023 were approved as a correct record.	
4.		**Matters Arising**	
4.1		Final Declarations of Interest are being followed up by RR.	RR
4.2		All other Actions have been completed or will be discussed during today's meeting.	
5.		**Progress Update and Future Planning**	
5.1		The Chair referred Board members to the paper circulated with today's Agenda and attached as Appendix A to these notes.	
5.2		The Chair advised that a PID for the Digital Culture Hub had been reviewed by the Programme Delivery Group (PDG) yesterday (Thursday 3 August). Some elements required further revision, but AL confirmed that he was satisfied with regard to the mortgage elements of the project and that the purchase of Packer's House could now proceed, subject to Rural Media's Board approval.	
5.3		FM advised that the HCA had presented their comprehensive PID for the new Digital Skills Centre at a previous PDG meeting. The PDG was happy to recommend this to the Board. The Board approved the PID. The Chair thanked the Board and advised that work was due to commence on site on 14 August.	
6.		**Current Programme Overview and Budget**	
6.1		The Chair referred to the details contained within the document circulated prior to today's meeting and attached as Appendix B to these notes.	
6.2		**Library/Resource Centre Project**	
		The Chair reminded Board of the current situation with regard to the Library/Resource Centre. In essence, that a decision had been taken by Cabinet to pause work at the original proposed location of Maylord Orchards whilst a business case could be developed for an alternative site at The Shire Hall, Hereford. AL confirmed that the intention is for a Full Business Case to be presented to Cabinet at their October meeting.	
6.3		The Chair stressed how important it is for the Library/Resource Centre leads to continue to engage with the STF Board during this period. The Project leads will be invited to the September STF Board meeting to present an update.	RR
6.4		JF asked for clarification as to costs already incurred by the project. She asked whether these could be clawed back by Government. AL said that his understanding is that Government is unlikely to request clawback. He advised that Alex Collins (DLUHC representative) has	

	been kept fully aware of the situation and that further details would be contained within the revised business case. However, he advised that Board members should keep a close watch on the situation as it evolves.	
6.5	PW advised that tours are being arranged for Councillors to view the two locations (Maylord Orchards and the Shire Hall) in order that they could get a full sense of what is being proposed. He invited STF Board Members to attend these tours and will send further details for circulation.	AL/JB
	Encore	
6.6	The Chair advised that following this project's decision to withdraw from the Town Hall consortium, an alternative location is being sought. No further updates have been provided to PDG.	
6.7	**River Wye Infrastructure**	
	An update on this project will be scheduled at PDG.	RR
6.8	**Castle Green Project**	
	CD advised that Castle Green Project leads are putting together an Expression of Interest in an asset transfer of the adjacent Bowling Green Site. This follows a decision by the Bowling Club to pass the site back to the Council after 150 years of operation.	
6.9	**Programme Level Risk Register**	
	The Chair referred to the detailed Programme Level Risk Register information contained within the papers for today's meeting and included within Appendix B of these notes.	
6.10	JF requested a summary of Matched Funding, In particular, a comparison of current versus original Matched Funding elements at programme and individual project level and brief details of the status of that matched funding, ie whether it was secured, still awaiting a decision on an application(s), etc. RR will be requested to produce this for the next Board meeting.	RR
7.	**Secretariat Process Reset**	
7.1	The Chair referred to the document circulated with the papers for today's meeting and attached as Appendix C. She advised that the proposals put forward in the document follow discussions between herself and RR and her discussions with other Board members.	
7.2	RP provided an update on discussions she had held recently with RR, in particular to do with reporting format. She advised that the new format would be utilised from the September Board meeting and feedback from the Board would be welcomed.	
7.3	The Chair referred to the suggestion by RR that Board meetings are changed to 6-weekly, instead of the current monthly format. However, following discussion the Board agreed that these should stay as monthly for the remainder of this year, due to the important issues under discussion. This decision will be reviewed for next year's meetings.	

7.4	With reference to Independent Governance Support, the Board were generally in support but a point was made that it might be more useful to consider this in terms of independent audit advice on procedures. The Chair advised that a report will be brought to the September Board meeting that outlines the amount currently unspent from the 2% administrative budget. She said a proportion of this could be utilised to pay for Independent Governance Support, subject to Board approval and funds being available.	
7.5	The Board agreed with the principle of inviting Project Leads to present at future Board meetings. This would mean meetings being extended. JF suggested that these meetings could possibly be held at project sites.	
7.6	The Chair advised that a draft Letter of Agreement with RR would be brought to the September Board meeting. In the interim, RR's contract had been extended until the end of September.	
7.7	FM stressed the importance of the Legacy Project as part of the Agreement with RR.	
8.	**Communications Update**	
8.1	EP was unable to attend today's meeting but provided an update on latest communications activities, which is attached to these notes as Appendix D.	
8.2	LR requested that all Board members advise the communications sub-group if they hear of anything affecting the STF projects. This will enable an appropriate communications response to be developed.	
8.3	The Chair advised that a Councillor briefing is proposed for 6 September (tbc). On 29 September, the cycle track project will be holding its formal opening event, to which Councillors will also be invited. She requested Board's permission to invest up to £2,000 to prepare a briefing pack/materials for these events. The Board agreed to this request.	
8.4	Board members agreed that it is important for County Councillors and Hereford City Councillors to be invited to these events. PW suggested a number of ways in which Councillors and Parishes could be engaged and which would provide a forum for ongoing updates and the sharing of information. CH suggested that the City Youth Councillors are also included in a briefing. PW will discuss further with FM, PS, Roger Allonby, LR and CD and suggestions will be brought back to the Board for further consideration.	PW
9,	**Any Other Business**	
9.1	The Chair reminded the Board that they had suspended a Board recruitment process earlier in the year. She would bring a paper on membership to a future meeting but considered the appointment of CH and GB had addressed the previous desire to increase business experience. Active recruitment of an additional youth member would restart in September.	AA
10.	**Date of Next Meeting**	

	Friday 1 September from 8.30 – 10.00 am at the Hereford College of Arts, Venn's Lane and via Zoom link.	

Appendix A

5. Progress Update and Future Planning

5.1 Introduction

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

5.2 Funding Agreement/PID Progress

All funding agreements are now agreed.

The Digital Skills Centre PID which has been considered and recommended by the PDG is attached for Board Approval at Appendix B

At its last meeting the Board approved the following PIDS:

- Southside,
- NMITE,
- Meadow Arts,

The following PIDS have been approved previously:

- Castle Green
- Cycle Track

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

- Wyeside,
- Digital Culture Hub
- Powerhouse,
- Encore,
- Electric Buses,
- Museum,
- Greening the City,
- Library
- Skate Park (an update presentation was provided at the PDG on 25 July 2023)

Appendix B

6. Current Programme Overview

6.1 Introduction

This report provides an overview on progress since the last board meeting. A brief commentary on a project by project basis is provided in the report below. The highest level risks are set out in table form immediately below.

6.2 Top Risks

Project	Town Fund	Match	Total	Risk Rating	Challenge	Current Position
Maylords Library and Learning Resource Centre	3.1	4	7.1		This project is the subject of a detailed options appraisal and could move to a different location with issues to resolve in relation to abortive costs, changed matched funding and output/outcome issues	The Board and DLUHC/BEIS are fully sighted on the options appraisal and the preferred option – still to be formally ratified of a move to the Shirehall Building . Once the position is finalised should a proposed move be the outcome a full Project Adjustment Request will be required.
Encore Music Hub	0.21	0.6	0.810		FBC has now been approved but needs detailed implementation scrutiny	This project has withdrawn from the Town Hall initiative which was its preferred option for a base – it how has no clear location
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	On 5 June the Government Town Fund Board identified that a Project Adjustment Form was required for this project. This was drafted and has been agreed through written

						procedures with the Board.
Southside	3.656	0.613	4.269		Significant programme management requirements on multiple fronts. PDG is providing significant ongoing support.	The PID updating progress has been reviewed and supported by the PDG and is attached for Board approval.
River Wye Infrastructure	1.035	0.112	1.147		There are clear cost pressures 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 relation to this project is a priority and this will be addressed through a presentation of the PID at a future PDG meeting. In the meantime the secretariat continues to actively support the development of this project.

6.3 Project Progress

Skills Foundry

Southside

This project is proceeding to schedule and the PID was approved by the Board at its last meeting.

Digital Culture Hub

The Project Adjustment Request for this project has now been agreed by written Board procedures and positively noted by the Government Office staff.

HCA School of Creative Digital Futures

The PID for this project has been considered in detail and approved in principle by the PDG it is now presented to the Board for final approval and is attached at Appendix B.

NMITE Future of Work

The PID for the project has been approved by the Board (at its last meeting). The secretariat has been in discussion with the project about it: seeking to convert a modest proportion of its capital expenditure into revenue, about the practicalities of classification in terms of revenue and capital expenditure and about the scale of programme management costs which are eligible within the technical rules of the Town Fund. It is excellent that NMITE has sought to test these issues prior to making any formal decisions and we anticipate formally feeding back (in conjunction with the council as the accountable body) on these issues once they have been formally lodged with the secretariat in terms of detail. Any issues requiring a major decision will be escalated to the next Board meeting.

Access and Greening

River Wye Infrastructure

There has been no significant change in relation to this project since the last report in on 7 July. The next substantive discussion in relation to this project will follow the presentation of its PID to the PDG which is currently being scheduled.

Greening the City

There has been no significant change in relation to this project since the last meeting on 7 July.

Meadow Arts

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. The PID for this project was agreed at the last Board meeting on 7 July and the project is running successfully to profile.

Castle Green Pavilion

This project is proceeding professionally to budget and schedule. There have been some concerns that the letting of a catering concession as a component within the search for a new operator of the bowling green adjacent to the facility could have a negative impact on the catering plans for this project. That issue has now been logged with Herefordshire

Council who own the bowling green and they are reviewing their disposal plans to take account of the issue.

Cultural Assets

Maylords Library and Learning Resource Centre

The outcome of the options appraisal for the future location of the library has proposed moving it from Maylords to Shirehall. A full business case is being prepared and will be considered by the Herefordshire Council Cabinet in October 2023. As part of the final decision making process the Maylords option will remain on the table as a viable alternative to the Shirehall. The Towns Fund Board received a presentation at its last full meeting and then considered the plans for the way forward post the outcome of the options appraisal at an Extraordinary Meeting on 12 July. The Board will need to maintain a close overview of the evolution of the decision making process in relation to the location of the library. There will be an opportunity to discuss the management of this issue from a board perspective in more detail at the Board Meeting. It is important at this stage to note that no formal endorsement of the proposals has been provided and there are a number of issues relating to the quality and accessibility of the new proposed arrangements which Board members have already raised as materially important issues. If a move is finally decided upon a detailed PAR will need to be prepared covering all the key issues associated with the proposed move – including quality of proposal in terms of the robustness of the FBC, outputs, outcomes, costs (it is not proposed to allocate any additional TF resources to the project) and matched funding.

Powerhouse

The agreement of the PAR for this project means that it can now proceed as planned and at this stage there is no substantive progress to report.

Encore Music Hub

This project has withdrawn from the Town Hall initiative which was its preferred option for a base – it how has no clear location. This reintroduces significant risk, particularly timescales to the project. The secretariat is seeking to schedule an update to the PDG in the near future to revisit the challenges facing the initiative.

Individual Projects

Marches Experience

It has now been confirmed that the full funding package for this project is in place with the wonderful news that a £5 million grant from HLF has been approved. This will enable the facility to become a world class part of the tourism offer in the City and more widely. The link to the HLF press release about the project is attached here:

https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/projects/hereford-museum-and-art-gallery-revamp-receives-ps5m-national-lottery-funding-boost

Electric Buses

Government office have confirmed that there is no need for a PAR in relation to the three recent asks for this project which can now proceed with the next stage of its implementation namely:

- 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

It is anticipated that the bus service itself will be operational from September 2023.

Extreme Sports Hub

The cycle track is now close to completion and it is anticipated that it will be able to open in the early autumn with the official opening now scheduled for 29 September. The Planning permission for the Skate Park was approved in July 2023 and the construction of the new facilities is due to commence in early August 2023. The build is anticipated to be completed within 6 months maximum.

6.4. 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
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. The potential relocation of the Library project which has a match of £4 million associated with the building may be an issue when the PAR associated with the project is submitted. We now however have a letter from Government allowing us scope to authorise variances up to a margin of 30% and overall if this funding is lost, with the Museum increase it will still leave us within the new tolerances allowed.
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 scheduled with PIDs for approval in respect of Southside, Meadow Arts and NMITE approved at the last Board

				meeting and the HCA project coming to this meeting.
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. Inflation is high but gradually settling out at a more manageable level.
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 positive new governance arrangements have been agreed.
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 spend and we are currently investigating this position.	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. Our recent submission of the quarterly return in June 2023 indicated that we are on profile but we did raise the issue of inflation as a potential challenge.

Programme Management Capacity	Low	High	The team has a good level of dedicated staff with additional capacity. 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. We have a good schedule of PIDs now coming on line which help provide an insightful overview of the status of 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. The Library relocation if decided upon will introduce an additional element of challenge into the programme. 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.
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 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 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.	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 confident that with our ongoing support they will be able to continue successfully. The proposed relocation of the Library to a location other than Maylords may introduce additional risks to the programme should it proceed, particularly in terms of abortive costs. We have this issue under close review and it is too early to make any firm assumptions about its implications at this stage.

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 50% 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.

6.5. Budget

The Period 3 (June) position in relation to the programme is set out below. There has been no new spend between periods 2 and 3:

Project	Total TF Allocation	Spend 21-23	23-24 Spend P1-3	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	Remaining to Spend vs Total
Castle Green Pavilion	1,568,252	137,800	65,334	203,134	1,365,118	1,005,290	1,208,424	1,294,608	273,644	17%	17%	91%
Cycle Track	690,263	325,616	266,842	592,458	97,805	0	690,263	690,263	0	86%	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	6,118	33,481	2,303,811	1,317,135	1,350,616	24,054	2,313,237	2%	99%	99%
Greening the City	411,164	80,685		80,685	330,479	0	411,164	411164	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	30,000.00	30,000	470,000	0	500,000	19,050	480,950	6%	96%	94%
Southside	3,656,155	154,919	27,469	182,388	3,473,767	2,659,325	2,841,713	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	497,008	3,164,769	19,233,426	9,739,300	12,904,069	6,165,175	16,233,020	25%	72%	87%

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

Appendix C

7. Secretariat Process Reset

7.1 Introduction

The current arrangement for the secretariat will move into a new phase from September 2023 onwards. Consultation with the Board on a one to one basis has identified some merit in adjusting the format and style of the Board papers and options for revision, to make navigation and decision making clearer are in train.

7.2 Options for Refinement

The following refinements have also been suggested through a dialogue with the secretariat reflecting on the opportunity to fine tune the operation of the Board:

- *Meetings*: 1) it is proposed that consideration be given for the potential that Board Meetings move from a monthly to a six weekly cycle. This is consistent with common practice in local authorities and would allow enough time to elapse between meetings for meaningful progress reporting in the new less rigid delivery phase of the programme. Any change would need to take account of a sensible transition period relating to current decision making requirements. 2) It is also suggested that a detailed implementation log to aid reporting, generated from the PIDs completed by each project and refreshed in its reporting format is developed. 3) It is also suggested that the format of meetings could evolve to comprise an extension of time to 1 hour 45 minutes with the final 30 minutes providing a facility for a project showcase at each meeting at which the detailed progress of projects could be reported and assessed by the Board. With a proposed new start time of 8.15 am. In line with this suggested refinement it is also suggested that the PDG meeting schedule is revised (post agreement of outstanding PIDs) to a formal fortnightly frequency.
- *Independent Governance Support* – it is proposed that the secretariat should commission light touch, call off, independent governance support as part of this new arrangement. This would involve assistance with the re-drafting of the terms of reference, Board recruitment processes and ad hoc support for governance challenges and issues as they arise.
- *Wider Engagement of Project Sponsors* – a more regularised pattern of project sponsor meetings is suggested, to run 6 weekly in synchronisation with the pattern of Board and PDG meetings. These meetings would provide an opportunity for projects to feedback insights to the Board, share good practice and identify future individual and group focused opportunities for future action which supports the work of the Towns Fund programme.

7.3 Secretariat Activities

Moving forward the following activities would then be the core of the work of the secretariat:

- *Ongoing support for the management of the day to day running of the Board and Project Delivery Group* – including scheduling meetings, report writing, support for individual board members, independent governance advice and external stakeholder relations and engagement.
- *Leading the reporting and compliance requirements of DLUHC/BEIS* – working with Herefordshire Council to provide scheduled and one off (including Project Adjustment Request) reports to DLUHC covering financial, output and outcome requirements, audit, governance and compliance reporting.
- *Support for Individual projects* – work on the ground with individual project sponsors to support them in their procurement, programme management and wider project deliver activities.
- *Wider policy support and representation* – linking the work of the programme to other regeneration activities of relevance, supporting the external representation of the work in conjunction with the communications lead body, assembling responses to external enquiries and promotional activity.
- *Evaluation support* – development and reporting activities associated with the delivery of evaluation of the programme, including capturing and reporting outputs and outcomes.
- *Legacy thinking* – at an appropriate juncture within the progress of the programme working with the Board to look at options for how the legacy of the programme is developed.

7.4 Next Steps

We would welcome feedback on the direction of travel set out above ahead of the development of a formal proposal for consideration which will be brought back to the Board for agreement.

Appendix D

8. Communications Update

This bullet point update from Elizabeth Parbutt at Orphans set out the most recent progress associated with this aspect of the work of the Board

- Published first film content from HCA students ref CGP - see here
- Launched 'project spotlight' series on social, see posts ref Museum and Skatepark
- Drafted & distributed e-news: introduce HCA team, Library move, cafe opportunity at CGP, job at Cycle Track, Zipper spotlight
- Hosted Creative Workshop with partners (12 July) to provide social content ideas & discuss different approaches, as well as 'essentials' such as tagging @strongerhereford
- Shared 'Proud to be Part of campaign' - a set of graphics with accompanying posts for projects to share on their socials to raise awareness of SH and encourage e-news sign ups. See content here.
- Website updates (news and board minutes)

Media Liaison & Coverage

- Organised one-to-one
- briefing with Hereford Times (7 July) inc visits to Skatepark & Cycle Track - led to extensive coverage in July 20th issue (3 stories plus Museum HLF news)
- Organised Hereford Times interview & photo at CGP (11 July)
- Hereford Times ref Electric Zipper (quoted)
- Hereford Times ref Library (quoted)
- Hereford Times ref Skatepark (quoted
- Your Herefordshire ref Sports Hub
- Your Herefordshire ref Museum
- Your Herefordshire ref Southside
- Your Herefordshire ref Skatepark

Stats

- Excellent Facebook engagement, due to Zipper Spotlight being shared by Your Herefordshire & Hereford Voice
- E-news open rates & clickthroughs also performing well
- Would like to increase web visits, it is hoped that Proud to be Part of campaign will have an impact

Social media audience	Apr 2023 (15-30th)	May	June	July
Facebook Page followers	477	502	525	
Instagram followers	296	345	369	
Linked in followers	n/a	27	37	

Engagement				
Facebook page reach	2,587	1,606	7,231	
Instagram reach	208	336	356	
Facebook page visits	123	192	226	
Instagram profile visits	46	149	88	
Linked In page views	n/a	48	6	
Linked In Click throughs	n/a	33	0	
Website				
Website Users	312	882	599	
Sessions	335	980	632	
Average session duration	01:05	00:45	00:23	
Visitors coming direct	66.80%	58.80%	68.8%%	
Visitors from organic search	21.40%		14.20%	
Visitors referred by email	0	27.10%	0	
Newsletter signups				
Subscribers	1	6	5	
Newsletter eshot				
Open rate	n/a	42%	n/a	44.06%
Click throughs (of those who opened)	n/a	21.30%	n/a	42.90%
Newsletter benchmarking				
Mailchimp data				
Not profit: average open rate 25.17% average click rate 2.79%				