

STRONGER HEREFORD

Notes from a meeting of the STRONGER HEREFORD – PROJECT DEVELOPMENT GROUP (PDG) MEETING held on 8 November 2023, 8.30-9.40 am via MS Teams

Members:	Frank Myers MBE Abigail Appleton	FM AA	Chair Principal, Hereford College of Arts (and Chair of Hereford Stronger Towns Board)
	James Newby Paul Stevens	JN PS	President & CEO, NMITE Hereford City BID
Attendees:	Christian Dangerfield Joni Hughes	CD JH	Rose Regeneration (RR) Portfolio Manager, Capital Development, HC
Invited Guests:	Louisa Foti Chris Tipping	LF CT	Growing Local (Southside Project) Belmont Wanderers (Southside Project)
Apologies: /Absences	Ivan Annibal	IA	Rose Regeneration (RR)
Notetaker:	Jan Bailey	JB	Herefordshire Business Board

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
1.	<p>Notes of previous meetings</p> <p>The notes from the PDG meeting held on 25 October were approved as a correct record.</p>	
2.	<p>New Declarations of Interest</p> <p>2.1 JN declared an interest as one of the project sponsors involved in the Southside project. AA also declared an interest as the HCA Digital Skills Centre is part of the Skills Foundry cluster of projects.</p>	
3.	<p>Southside Project – Progress update</p> <p>3.1 LF provided an update on the Growing Local part of the project, highlighting several positive aspects such as appointment of project architects, being close to finalisation of the building design, successful volunteer recruitment activities and first school group sessions having been held.</p> <p>3.2 CT advised that the Belmont Wanderers part of the project is quiet due to awaiting a grant from the Football Federation (which is contingent on a lease being signed – see discussion below). However, he was pleased to update PDG that the number of players at the club has now doubled to 600 (Project target is 1,000).</p> <p>3.3 LF advised that there are some things causing concern.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning issues to do with permitted development at the site. The appointed architects are trying to resolve these with the Planning team. • Finances – significant value engineering has meant that the building will not be able to adhere to Passivhaus principles, as wished. <p>3.4 CT shared the latest building plans with PDG. CT/LF confirmed that there was scope – and intention – for expansion of the building when future finances allowed. LF also stated her hope to upgrade the premises to greener standards, again when finances allowed.</p>	

<p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p> <p>3.10</p> <p>3.11</p> <p>3.12</p> <p>3.13</p>	<p>CT also shared a plan of the external area of the site. He and LF highlighted key aspects and were very positive about the potential to secure additional funding in the future to buy additional trees for the site.</p> <p>LF shared with PDG the biggest current cause for concern, which is that there is no permanent lease in place for the site. The situation is now critical in that if no permanent lease is in place by the end of the year, the Football Foundation's grant to Belmont Wanderers will be in jeopardy.</p> <p>JH explained the complexities surrounding the transfer of the lease, which is contingent on a Development Agreement also being in place and signed by all partners. She said that discussions are ongoing with solicitors for Belmont Wanderers and Growing Local and was hopeful that agreement could be reached within the required timeframe.</p> <p>JH added that the Council's solicitor had committed to writing the minimum requirements for the Development Agreement by this Friday (10 November). She recommended that once this has been received, all parties' solicitors meet to discuss and agree a Development Agreement that meets all their needs.</p> <p>The chair encouraged consideration of decoupling the leases from the Development Agreement on the basis that the leases must go ahead and if the building was never built there would be no risk of clawback as nothing further would have been spent.</p> <p>JH agreed that the risk of clawback is minimal. However, she said that the Full Business Case for the project committed to the development of a building as one part of the overall Southside project.</p> <p>JN expressed some concerns regarding NMITE's obligations within the Development Agreement, due to its component part of the project not currently being progressed. JH acknowledged these concerns, which she agreed needed to be reflected in the Development Agreement.</p> <p>Due to the urgency of the situation, PDG asked for a key dates/milestones document to be developed so that all parties can understand the actions needed firstly to secure a lease for the site by Christmas and then for a Development Agreement to be in place shortly afterwards.</p> <p>In the meantime, LF asked for flexibility in terms of what is permitted under the current temporary licence agreement, particularly groundworks.</p>	<p>CD to liaise with all partners</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>None</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Next PDG Meeting: Wednesday 15 November, 8.30 – 9.30 am</p> <p>Next Stronger Hereford Board Meeting: TBC</p>	