

**HEREFORD STRONGER TOWNS BOARD
Notes and Action Points
Friday 06 November 2020 at 08.30
Zoom Video Conference**

Chair:	Lauren Rogers	LR	Project Manager, Rural Media
Minute Taker:	Melissa Walker	MW	Growth Programme Support Officer, Herefordshire Council
Board Present:	Alan Anderson	AA	British Land – Old Market
	Ellie Chowns	ECH	Cabinet Member Environment, Economy & Skills, H.Council
	Ian Christie	IC	Big Business Representative / MD, Welsh Water
	Elise Cummings	ECU	Younger Persons Representative
	Kath Hey	KH	Mayor of Hereford, Hereford City Council
	David Langley	DL	Chief of External Engagement, NMITE
	Frank Myers	FM	Herefordshire Business Board / Marches LEP
	Jesse Norman	JN	MP for Hereford and South Herefordshire
	Ruth Parry	RP	Director of Operations & Marketing, Simple Design Works Ltd
	Julian Vaughan	JV	Managing Director, Green Dragon
	Will Vaughan	WV	Hereford Pedicabs and Pedicargo
Board Apologies:	Laura Hughes	JH	Director, Signs And Labels
	Will Lindesay	WL	Chief Executive, HVOSS
	Paul Stevens	PA	Hereford Business Improvement District (HBID)
Other Attendees:	Ivan Annibal	IA	Rose Regeneration
	Rebecca Collings	RC	Consultant, The Nichols Group
	Christian Dangerfield	CD	Rose Regeneration
	Judith Faux	JF	HVOSS Board Member
	Clare Hannah	CH	MHCLG representative
	David Hitchiner	DH	Leader of the Council, Herefordshire Council
	Nick Webster	NW	Economic Development Manager, Herefordshire Council
Other Apologies:	<i>None</i>		

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
1.	<p>WELCOME / ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES / DECLARATIONS AND REGISTER OF INTEREST</p> <p>LR welcomed everyone to the meeting and acknowledged the difficulties everyone is experiencing as result of the latest Covid-19 restrictions. The Govt extension of the furlough scheme was welcomed as a positive step, it is seen as a welcome lifeline to many in the County. The infection rate in Herefordshire is low compared to other counties but it was felt it was important to note this at the start of the meeting. The Towns Fund guidance notes how the fund will enable us to agree strategic investment tailored to each towns circumstances including the impact of Covid so we need to keep this in mind. The impact has been brought up at some of the sector sessions run by Rose Regeneration (RR) this week. It was felt that if board members are aware of anyone feeling isolated or struggling that between us we can refer them to places for help and support.</p> <p>At the end of the last meeting there was a sense of frustration about the amount of work required and how we are going to achieve it within the timescales. A lot of ideas are being submitted, and RR are reaching out to hundreds of people so there is a question about how we are going to distil all of these ideas into a really strong TIP. LR has been attending the sector sessions being held over the last few weeks and is glad that she has as it doesn't take long to see how all of these ideas and proposals can be pulled together and how packages of proposals are going to fit well together. When you add into that the cross cutting themes / golden thread we are in a good position to be submitting a really solid TIP that will go down well with members of the public. This has made her feel more confident about what we can achieve.</p> <p>The other thing felt after these sector sessions is that we need to be striking a balance with teasing out the big ideas and ambitions from our community whilst at the same time being quite clear about setting expectations for the Towns Fund. LR noted that IA has stressed at the sessions that we're thinking about jobs and sustainable economic regeneration.</p> <p>Attendance and apologies are recorded above. LR welcomed AA & JF to the group and asked them to provide a brief summary of their background.</p>	

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	<p>AA is the Centre Manager at a number of British Land (BL) sites including the Old Market in Hereford. BL are one of the largest retail and property management companies in the UK, they currently own and manage in the region of £11.5b worth of property equating to about 22million square feet across the country. They are quite defined in what they invest in, they have a commercial side and a retail side, with a small portfolio of residential. They own most of the TGI's in the country and also the Sainsbury's site in Hereford. AA has been involved with the Old Market since 2013 so has been in place since it was being built and has seen the difference it has made to Hereford City, from the initial negative response to it being built through to the positive impact it's had. AA was vice chair of BID from bid 1 so was involved from its first conception through to it being voted through. When it got to bid 2 he and NW stood down as they had been involved for seven years. He has sat on various council boards and meetings over the last seven years so has a good insight into how the city runs. He is able to bring knowledge about the retail and commercial side of things. Retail was already experiencing difficulties prior to Covid-19 and the initial lockdown in March. As a landlord they have supported their tenant's right across the portfolio by writing off rents for the first quarter for any independent traders, and with various rent deferrals for some of the larger tenants. It has been a tough and challenging time for everyone in retail.</p> <p>JF is a trustee at HVOSS and is attending whilst WL is unwell. She understands that she is not able to replace him on the board but they wanted to ensure they were represented at the meetings and that information is fed back. LF has been a trustee at HVOSS for seven years, prior to retirement her career was in the NHS on the commissioning side so she has a lot of experience in terms of planning and service development. She also undertook a similar role to WL in the voluntary sector in a similar organisation in another part of the country so has a lot of relevant background. Attending as an observer.</p> <p><u>Declarations of Interest;</u> LR declared an interest; the company she works for, Rural Media, are working with Rose Regeneration, however, she is not involved with any of the work being undertaken.</p> <p>WV declared an interest; his company Pedicargo have submitted a project to the Towns Board, it is a project they have been working on for a while which they think could be accelerated by this and could tie another couple of projects together. He advised that he will step back as necessary when required.</p> <p>LR felt it was worth noting that there are likely to be a number of board members with an interest, that may be involved themselves or via a company they are involved with, who may be developing ideas for submission. She suggested we take a common sense approach for people to step out as necessary.</p>	
2.	<p>MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>The minutes from the meeting held on 16 October were agreed as a true record. Actions from that meeting were discussed and updated.</p> <p><u>Page 4, Item 6: Formation Of Technical and Community Group;</u> ECH advised that she had volunteered for the Technical Sub-Group group but that it had not been noted in the minutes – notes to be amended to reflect this</p> <p>JN thought it had previously been agreed that politicians should not be involved with the sub-groups, if this is the case it should be applied locally as well as nationally. LR wasn't aware this had been agreed but was happy for it to be discussed. JN thought the role of the Technical Sub-Group was to undertake technical work rather than to bring wider considerations to the table. IA stated that there is a broader point that is more pertinent to this discussion and that is that one of the key roles of the tech group is to be independent of any organisation proposing a project, he was less concerned about the issue of politician involvement, more with input from those that could be seen to have an interest. It has worked better elsewhere where members of the group are not seen to have any association with organisations that have submitted projects. They can still take a view as part of the Board, as shown in the gantt chart later, but the idea is that it is only an advisory group and it maintains a strong sense of independence if that group doesn't have on it individuals from organisations proposing projects.</p> <p>ECH offered assurance that she only wants to be on the group to contribute her technical background from her professional work designing and assessing projects and working on evaluating, not to promote council projects. She noted that the other volunteers listed, FM & DL, both have involvement in at least one project that has been proposed, i.e. skills foundry. She felt it would be difficult to get people involved that have no association with any of the proposed projects. DL acknowledged that he has an association with a project but he didn't</p>	MW

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	<p>feel FM has any direct interest in any of the projects put forward.</p> <p>ACTION: LR, FM & IA to discuss sub-group attendees to identify any conflicts of interest</p> <p>FM suggested that the TOR provide clarity on these points, to ensure that anyone attending can be held accountable and that their contribution is appropriate. He didn't think people should be excluded from attending. NW offered to create draft TOR for review by LR, FM, IA, ECH, etc. FM advised that he'd discussed TOR with IA already as it is important that everyone understands what the group is doing. JN agreed that's it important for us to be as technically robust as possible and as obviously independent as we can be. DL queried if IA has existing TOR that could be used; IA advised he has some from Lincolnshire that could be adapted.</p> <p>ACTION: FM to discuss with IA the creation of draft TOR for the Technical Sub-Group</p> <p>ACTION: Draft Technical Sub-Group TOR to be circulated to the Board for approval</p> <p>KH noted that PS had submitted some comments in relation to this issue, LR shared PS comments; as we start to get to the business end its vital that the board have every confidence in the tech group and they in turn are open, honest, transparent, approachable and can reach out to the Board and Herefordians. The Towns Fund guidance is clear that it's a partnership agreement between the Govt Towns Fund Board and HC, want to be reassured that the Board is independent but working closely with HC as its accountable body which includes working with council officers and its cabinet sign off.</p> <p>DL requested clarity that the Board had agreed that FM will Chair the Technical Sub-Group; LR confirmed that it was raised under AOB at the last meeting and agreed. ECH queried if this was voted on at the last meeting; NW advised that DL has proposed FM, this was seconded by JV, but it was not voted on. ECH queried if this was recorded in the minutes; LR confirmed it was recorded under AOB.</p> <p>LR noted that there are other sub-groups but they don't require a Chair in the way that the Technical Sub-Group does. She queried if the Board felt that the Chair should be voted on; ECH asked if there had been any other offers to Chair the group; LR advised that no other offers has been received. DL suggested a vote could be taken now if necessary; ECH stated that she wanted the paper trail to be clear. LR queried if the Board wanted to vote on this or were they happy it had been agreed at the last meeting; no response received. JV asked if anyone objected to FM being Chair of the Technical Sub-Group; WV advised that no objection but that there is a need to ensure that there is no conflict to ensure integrity of our proposals and what we're doing, as long as everyone is happy with that then can see no problem.</p> <p>ECH asked FM to confirm that he has no involvement with any of the projects that have been proposed, she recalled that he had previously actively lobbied for funding for the pre-cursor to the Skills Foundry Project; FM advised that he didn't recall 'lobbying' for anything, he acknowledged that he's involved in a lot of organisations across the city and county and that he expresses an opinion on behalf of those organisation or himself, but he wouldn't call that lobbying, if he thinks something is a good idea he will say so. ECH advised that she was seeking clarification as she had the impression that FM was actively part of the project team putting forward the proposal, she just wanted to clarify that this was not the case. FM advised that all he has done is take part as Chairman of the Business Board when invited to pass on his opinion by the people who had the idea. The idea of the group is to assess ideas and come up with a sensible way of measuring them and their fit to the whole ethos.</p> <p>LR no objections raised so need to progress the meetings asap. NW advised that he is happy to assist with the creation / circulation of the TOR if required.</p> <p>KH felt the comment about observers being able to attend the Technical Sub-Group was useful, from a transparency point of view it's important that there is an oversight of what's going on and the process being followed. FM queried practicalities, it is clearly our intention as often as possible to be transparent, how is he expected to convene a meeting of the Technical Sub-Group and invite any observers that might want to be there, how will we know who these observers are, how will we know when we put the invitation out because there won't be time to go out to public announcement; it was clarified that observers only relates to members of the Board, some have an interest in the process but do not have the technical expertise to contribute. It was agreed that the Technical Sub-Group meeting invites will be cc'd to Board members.</p> <p>KH provided an update on the recent community group meeting which included LR & ECU. They looked at the engagement list from CD's consultation work to identify any gaps, and</p>	<p>LR, FM, IA</p> <p>FM, IA</p> <p>FM, IA</p> <p>FM</p>

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	<p>noted that there are a number of groups pending consultation, plus a few gaps including multicultural element which is an important element that needs to be pushed. KH has a number of contacts that she can share if required. JF noted that WL was going to be involved with the community group and queried if it would be helpful for someone else from HVOSS to attend in his place for the time being; LR suggested the group identify any gaps and contact HVOSS for input as necessary.</p> <p>KH asked CD if there is still the opportunity to invite people to take part in the focus groups; CD confirmed and advised that details of all the focus groups are on the website. He advised they are pulling together another focus group around education.</p> <p>JF queried if all members on the sub-groups are board members; this was confirmed. LR felt that with the timescales involved the community group can talk to HVOSS. KH confirmed they will liaise with them to use their expertise to plug any gaps identified. JF felt there are lot of places where voluntary sector organisations can make a big contribution in terms of their work with the more disadvantaged within the community.</p> <p>ACTION: KH & ECU to liaise with HVOSS about voluntary sector organisations input</p> <p>JV queried timelines for the sub-groups to undertake the work required; LR advised that a detailed timeline is included within the meeting papers.</p> <p>WV queried if there is enough support within the technical group, are they well equipped enough to undertake the required work, do the group feel they need more people to assist; JV raised the issue of budget, are funds available to bring resources in to assist the groups in getting work done asap, he felt a supportive administration role would be beneficial; LR advised that budget is on the agenda. FM noted that the more people involved the bigger the task, he envisaged that they will use the evaluation tool to assess, ideally someone is required to correlate the results. NW advised that HC would happy to assist with the appointment of external support along similar lines to that used by LEP to assess applications and come up with a recommendation; this would provide S151 officer with confidence that a rigorous process has been followed. FM felt a lot of this support is already available, i.e. via RC, he felt it was a pure clerical task to pull together submissions and correlate for discussion at meetings. Written paper to be pulled together and circulated to outline the clerical support required by the Technical Sub Group.</p> <p><u>Page 5, Item 7: Comms and website</u>; the need to get additional comms support in place need to be followed up.</p> <p>ACTION: RP to discuss with NW getting additional comms support in place</p> <p><u>Page 5, Item 7: Board Representation</u>; to be reviewed to establish if further members are required. LR queried if any board members are able to offer assistance to go through the Board matrix, will discuss HVOSS representation at the same time.</p>	<p>KH, ECU</p> <p>IA, FM, NW</p> <p>RP, NW</p>
3.	<p>FEEDBACK FROM COHORT 1 AND 2 SUBMISSIONS AND DIRECTION OF TRAVEL WORKSHOP</p> <p>RC ran through the aim of the direction of travel report; meeting to be arranged mid-November to go through.</p> <p>ACTION: RC & NW to circulate update to board once direction of travel work has been completed</p> <p>CH advised that MHCLG have pulled together a list of things learnt from cohort 1 and 2 submissions; the main advice is to stick to the guidance circulated when pulling together the TIP and to go through the point by point. It's hard to say what has gone down well as very different in all areas. There needs to be connectivity between the strategic vision and the proposals put forward, and engagement with communities is a plus point. She suggested that as things progress we need to keep revisiting the guidance as that ultimately is what's being used to assess the TIP when it's submitted.</p>	RC, NW
4.	<p>CONFIRMATION OF VISION</p> <p>It was agreed that further work will be undertaken to link the objectives to the vision; it will be circulated to the board for approval once completed.</p>	
5.	<p>UPDATE ON PROJECT ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>IA provided an update on work undertaken by Rose Regeneration; timescales are tight to complete the work required to achieve the TIP submission deadline; discussions took place about the work required following the soft stop date.</p>	

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	CD provided an update on Stakeholder Engagement; discussions took place about the projects received to date and the emerging themes. ECH suggested it would be useful to have a verb action for each of the emerging themes, i.e. Visit, Learn, Live Hereford, this would fit nicely with the vision. It was agreed that Themes and narrative that fit back to the vision would be good.	
6.	PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UPDATE IA provided an update on Programme Management.	
7.	PROGRAMME BUDGET LR noted that the board need to agree how to make decisions about how to allocate funding; discussions took place about the budget and where additional support is required. Concern was expressed that potential projects could be missed because individuals / organisations do not have the resource in place to work up proposals.	
8.	REVIEW OF STRATEGIES AND EVIDENCE BASE UPDATE Thanks were expressed for feedback received to date, the aim is to have a final version available shortly.	
9.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS - Chair <u>Website</u> It was requested that links to the website and online survey are circulated to enable members to share the same info. ACTION: links to the website and online survey to be circulated	LR