

TOWNS FUND BOARD

Notes and Action Points

Friday 14 May 2021, 8.30-10.00 am via Zoom

Chair:	Lauren Rogers	LR	Project Manager, Rural Media
Notetaker:	Jan Bailey	JB	Herefordshire Business Board
Board Present:	Ellie Chowns	ECH	Cabinet Member, Environment, Economy & Skills, HC
	Ian Christie	IC	Big Business Representative / MD Welsh Water Youth Representative
	Judith Faux	JF	HVOSS
	Kath Hey	KH	Councillor, Herefordshire 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 Operations & Marketing, Simple Design Works Ltd
	Felix Smithson	FS	Hereford 6 th Form College, Youth Representative
	Paul Stevens	PS	Hereford Business Improvement District (HBID)
	Julian Vaughan	JV	Managing Director, Green Dragon Hotel
	Will Vaughan	WV	Hereford Pedicabs and Pedicargo
Board Apologies:	Alan Anderson	AA	British Land – Old Market
Other Attendees:	Ian Annibal	IA	Rose Regeneration
	Rebecca Collings	RC	Consultant, The Nichols Group
	Christian Dangerfield	CD	Rose Regeneration
	Olli Hindle	OH	MHCLG Representative
	Joni Hughes	JH	Senior Project Manager – Capital, HC
	Nick Webster	NW	Economic Development Manager, HC

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
1.	<p>Welcome / Attendance & Apologies / Declarations and Register of Interest</p> <p>LR welcomed everyone to the meeting. Attendance and apologies are as recorded above. No declarations of interests were raised.</p> <p>LR welcomed Felix Smithson a Year 12 student from Hereford Sixth Form College who has joined the Board as Youth Representative.</p> <p>LR also welcomed Jan Bailey, who will be providing admin and clerical support to the Board.</p> <p>Finally, LR welcomed Olli Hindle who has replaced Clare Hannah as MHCLG representative.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising</p> <p>The Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 March 2021 were approved as an accurate record, apart from RP commented that a document that had been submitted with the budget was incorrect. Specifically, that the website charges (supplied by Simple Design Works) should have been stated as £2,200 whilst social media support amounted to £300 (supplied by Pocket Rocket).</p> <p>DL requested that minutes of future Board meetings are circulated as soon as possible after the meetings have taken place.</p>	LR/JB

<p>3.</p>	<p>Membership Update</p> <p>LR referred to previous discussions with members regarding membership of the Board. The main gap identified was with regard to youth representation, hence Felix had been appointed. Felix introduced himself to the Board.</p> <p>LR asked members to confirm they supported Felix’s appointment. Board members indicated their approval.</p> <p>KH advised that her tenure as Mayor of Hereford would shortly be coming to an end and PS will be the new Mayor. KH stated that she would like to continue on the Board. She advised that there is a full Council meeting next Tuesday where she will check with the Clerk to see if this is permissible. She will advise the Board of the outcome of these discussions.</p> <p>PS pointed out that he represents the City BID on the Board and so there was no reason why KH should not remain as City Council representative.</p> <p>RP advised that a news release about Ian Christie’s membership of the Board is due to be circulated next week. This story will also be added to the #Stronger Hereford website.</p> <p>LR suggested a ‘critical friend’ approach for the Board, rather than appointing new members. She asked Board members to think about the connections they have who may be useful to the Board and then to keep those contacts apprised of what’s happening with regard to the STF. LR said she would be happy to be contacted by any of these ‘critical friends’, if requested.</p> <p>Board members indicated their support for this approach.</p>	<p>KH</p> <p>RP</p> <p>All</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Consultancy Support for Project Confirmation and Early Business Case Development</p> <p>NW referred to the document, “Towns Fund Project Confirmation and early Business Case Facilitation”, which had been circulated with the Agenda. This document serves as a reminder of what will need be to done in the next phase of the project. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The offer must be signed and returned to Government within three weeks of receipt • Once signed there are two months to complete the project confirmation process <p>He stated the next stage will give the Board the opportunity to confirm or change the projects that will be developed, based upon the offer that is made.</p> <p>NW advised that Rose Regeneration (IA and CD) had been appointed to take forward this next stage on behalf of the Board.</p> <p>IA outlined his involvement in other Towns Fund bids, which he said will provide useful context to work on Hereford’s. He provided a detailed overview of what was involved in the next stage and advised that the two months allowed to confirm the projects that Hereford wished to take forward would require detailed consideration of each project, extensive dialogue with project leads and a lot of official paperwork. He suggested that the final details submitted for approval to Government might look somewhat different to the original bid.</p>	

	<p>One specific issue identified by IA was the availability of finance to start the projects – and in particular the larger ones. He stated that he was in discussion with MHCLG to see if funds could be released earlier in order to alleviate this problem.</p> <p>IA also said that the Board would have to agree a Local Assurance Framework and a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.</p> <p>A number of specific queries and comments were made by Board members.</p> <p>LR: Who would direct changes to the original Towns Fund Bid?</p> <p>IA advised that this was a Board decision. If the Board decides they don't have confidence in a particular project, this did not mean they would necessarily lose the money. They can choose to redistribute the funds to alternative projects within the bid but will have to complete a Project Variation Form.</p> <p>RC reminded members of the support available, including resources on the subject of project variations. See website: https://townsfund.org.uk/. LR also recommended that members sign up to the useful newsletter, which members can sign up for here: https://townsfund.org.uk/newsletter-sign-up</p> <p>PS: Asked for confirmation that the same team from Rose Regeneration as previously would be working on this next stage.</p> <p>IA confirmed that this was the case.</p> <p>DL stated that IA's overview had been very helpful, particularly in the way it highlighted the importance of Board members' support for individual project leads. He asked what plans were in place to share the 'What happens next' process with project leads.</p> <p>IA suggested that Board members could be divided into groups to buddy up with and support particular projects He agreed that it was important to advise all project leads of what will happen next.</p> <p>JN advised that an announcement regarding Hereford's Town Fund allocation could be expected towards the end of May / early June when the Prime Minister will be making his next 'levelling up' speech.</p> <p>JV stressed the importance of Board Members becoming actively engaged with the projects as quickly as possible. FM said that an efficient and effective way for the Board to get involved should be developed. KH agreed that regular communication with project leads would help to prevent any negative feedback.</p> <p>IA advised that he and CD had developed a mobilisation plan, structure and list of activities. He will circulate this to Board members. FM requested that JB is included in this circulation for information. JV asked that Board members are copied into all correspondence between members with regard to the Towns Fund Bid.</p> <p>LR said that she will arrange for a blog to be published on the Stronger Hereford website about the next stages of the Bid. She will also send an email to project leads. Following a suggestion from DL, LR agreed to invite project leads to a Zoom call to bring them up to date with developments and 'what happens next'. IA also to attend this call.</p> <p>Board members supported this approach. JV asked for all members who were interested in joining a Project Development Group to let him know.</p> <p>JV introduced the document, "Future Arrangements for Project Management and Administration". This had been tabled separately from the other papers and</p>	<p>IA</p> <p>LR</p> <p>All</p>
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	described the way forward which had been agreed with the acting Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council. This was taken as read and no comments ensued.	
5.	<p>Accountable Body Legal Agreement</p> <p>JH referred to the document, “Accountable Body Legal Agreement – draft”, which had been circulated with the Agenda. She invited comments from Board members.</p> <p>JF and FM queried the status of the document as they said it was their understanding that the Board is not a legal entity. That being the case, they asked what would be individual responsibilities of members.</p> <p>There was a discussion on whether legal advice/support should be sought in order to protect the Board and its members. If sought, budgetary provision should be made.</p> <p>JH reiterated that the circulated document is a draft for comment. She stressed the Council’s position, who will want reassurances in place when funds begin to be distributed.</p> <p>LR said she will discuss this further outside of today’s meeting and will keep members updated.</p>	LR
6.	<p>Budget Update</p> <p>LR referred to the document, “Copy of Towns Fund Budget”, which had been circulated with the Agenda.</p> <p>Members pointed out that there was a lot of detail still missing from this document, but acknowledged that more information will be available once the outcome of the bid was known.</p> <p>JV said he would work with LR to ensure the budget is kept as up to date as possible. DL suggested that ‘Budget Update’ is a standard item on all future Agenda, together with ‘Legal Advice’.</p>	JV/LR LR/JB
7.	<p>Communications Update</p> <p>RP advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger Hereford website continues to be regularly updated. RP will update with a news item about FS joining the Board. She will also add some general information about current progress and what to expect next. • NW has provided a link to the HC comms team. JB will be working with the Team to develop a template statement (for use when announcement on Bid is made). • Social Media activity mostly via Facebook and Twitter with good engagement and exposure. Traffic to the website is also pleasing. • Currently working with the national storytelling team who would like to talk to Hereford about innovation in an historical setting. <p>Following a query from DL, FS advised that Instagram is the platform most commonly utilised by young people. RP noted this. LR suggested a useful resource for this platform could be the Stronger Towns video story.</p>	RP
8.	Any Other Business	

	<p>LR asked for a decision from members regarding the additional amount requested from Orphans Press for work they had undertaken but that had not been factored into their quotation.</p> <p>RP commented that although she had offered to assist with this additional work, her offer had not been accepted. Members also stated that they would have expected Orphans to have highlighted these likely additional charges before proceeding with the work.</p> <p>All members were in agreement that the quality of the work produced by Orphans was exceptionally high.</p> <p>FM suggested that a partial payment could be made to Orphans. However, after discussion, and due to the reasons outlined above, a majority of those members present (IC, JF, ECH, DL, KH, JV, PW) voted not to approve payment of any of these additional charges to Orphans.</p> <p>JV will contact Orphans Press to communicate this decision and the reasons behind it.</p> <p>LR advised that she had been contacted by a Senior Researcher in the Arts and Humanities Research Council who wanted to create a case study about Hereford. She will circulate further details, when available, to members.</p> <p>JV requested that if members are both Board Members and project leads, they should be encouraged to keep communicating what's on their mind. This, he said, will help Board members to understand some of the issues and concerns that could also be affecting other Project leads.</p>	<p>JV</p> <p>LR</p>
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