

TOWNS FUND BOARD

Notes and Action Points

Friday 9 July 2021, 8.30-9.30 am via Zoom

Chair:	Lauren Rogers	LR	Project Manager, Rural Media
Board Present:	Ellie Chowns	ECH	Cabinet Member, Environment and Economy, HC
	Ian Christie	IC	Big business representative / MD, Welsh Water
	Kath Hey	KH	Councillor, Herefordshire Council
	Frank Myers	FM	Herefordshire Business Board / Marches LEP
	David Langley	DL	Chief of External Engagement, NMITE
	Jesse Norman	JN	MP for Hereford and South Herefordshire
	Ruth Parry (part)	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
Other Attendees:	Ivan Annibal	IA	Rose Regeneration
	Rebecca Collings	RC	Consultant, The Nichols Group
	Christian Dangerfield	CD	Rose Regeneration
	Olli Hindle (part)	OH	MHCLG Representative
	David Hitchiner	DH	Leader of the Council, Herefordshire Council
	Joni Hughes	JH	Portfolio Manager, Capital Development, HC
	Andrew Lovegrove	AL	Chief Finance Officer, Herefordshire Council
	Nick Webster	NW	Economic Development Manager, Herefordshire Council
Apologies:	Judith Faux	JF	Trustee, HVOSS
	Will Vaughan	WV	Hereford Pedicabs and Pedicargo
	Paul Walker	PW	Chief Executive Officer, Herefordshire Council
Notetaker:	Jan Bailey	JB	Herefordshire Business Board

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
1.	<p>Welcome / Attendance & Apologies / Declarations and Register of Interest</p> <p>LR welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were as noted above. There were no Declarations of Interest.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising</p> <p>The notes of the meeting held Friday 25 June were confirmed as a correct record.</p> <p>With reference to item 1. under 'Any Other Business', LR advised that she had not yet been back in touch with the Women's Equality Group. She also mentioned that she had been approached by several other particular interest groups who were keen to be involved with project planning to ensure schemes met with their various needs.</p> <p>IA suggested that it would be more appropriate to engage with the Women's Equality and other groups once more detailed information about the projects was available. Further discussion about this issue would be held at forthcoming PDG meetings.</p>	

	<p>With reference to item 2. under ‘Any Other Business’, LR said that she had made no specific requests or received any offers of help from Board members.</p> <p>JV asked when Board members would be involved in direct discussions with project leads, which he felt would be mutually beneficial. LR/IA agreed that this was a good idea and that also it would be beneficial for project leaders to talk to one another. Indeed, some of them had already requested this.</p> <p>IA suggested two options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members could attend the second planned PDG meeting (to be held on Friday 30 July at 8.30 am) • This opportunity could be provided at an additional Board meeting, proposed to take place on Friday 23 July. 	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Programme Planning Process</p> <p>IA confirmed that the signed Heads of Terms agreement had been returned in line with Government deadlines.</p> <p>IA referred to his previously circulated document: “Programme Planning Process”, which outlined next steps and three issues requiring agreement or clarification:</p> <p>3.1 Agreement to hold an additional Board meeting on Friday 23 July</p> <p>This item was agreed. IA/JB to set up and circulate details of the meeting, to take place via Zoom from 8.30 – 9.30 am.</p> <p>3.2 Local Assurance Framework</p> <p>IA presented the suggested local assurance framework for the agreement and management of the Towns Fund, as outlined and depicted in the circulated “Programme Planning Process” document.</p> <p>3.3 Budget considerations</p> <p>IA referred again to the “Programme Planning Process” document in which he outlined a number of alternatives for accommodating the reduced Stronger Towns budget offer. He suggested that the PDG would be in a better position to make a recommendation to the Board on this after the PDG’s meeting on 30 July.</p> <p>IA also referred to the email recently received from AL (circulated prior to today’s meeting), in which AL outlined a number of items that needed confirmation before he would sign individual project business cases on behalf of the Council as Section 151 Officer.</p> <p>CD advised attendees that he had met with all Project Sponsors and that all were now completing their 1st draft of a business case. These will be available for the PDG meeting scheduled for 16 July. He referred to his document, “Hereford Towns Fund – Project Status Report 07/07/21” (circulated) which included further detail.</p> <p>IA invited comments from members on the above.</p> <p>JN: Demanded clarification from DH/AL/NW as to the status of the library/Maylord Orchards project in the light of any agreement by the council to rent this space to the DWP.</p> <p>JN wanted to know on what basis this agreement had been made, what democratic processes had been followed to make this agreement, and on what democratic basis plans which are central to the success of the whole STF bid had been set aside by the Council.</p>	<p>IA/JB</p>

	<p>DH/AL/NW were unable to provide this clarification. LR requested this information as a matter of urgency, also that Council members provide a timeline as to how these decisions had been taken. DH agreed to find the answers to these questions immediately after today's meeting. Board members echoed JN's concerns.</p> <p>AL provided further explanation on his circulated email. In particular, he stressed that all details would not be expected from projects in their outline business cases. However, they would be expected to indicate an understanding of what would be required of them in their full business case and indicate how they would be preparing to build this information into their plans.</p> <p>AL acknowledged that there is a variety of projects, from very experienced organisations to novices. However, he stated it is important that all understand the level of information that will be required of them. In this way, AL said that the Board can be made aware of any gaps and provide support where needed.</p> <p>RC confirmed that outline business case development isn't required at the 8-week stage to prioritise and confirm projects. A pragmatic approach, where projects answer the questions raised to the best of their ability at this stage, is recommended. OH agreed saying a greater risk would be to try and get everything done in the 8 weeks and, in doing so, miss the Government's deadline. DL asked for clarification as to what was required from Government by the 8-week deadline. OH said this was Project Confirmation for each project, signed by LR and AL; a spreadsheet summary of all projects; a monitoring and evaluation plan; and details of any major project variations. IA commented that requesting the Outline Business Case from projects at this stage is Rose Regeneration's chosen method for collecting and collating the information required for the project summary document JV/JN stressed how important it is to help the Project leads with this process and to not make them feel under too much pressure and so feel they have to withdraw. JN asked for reassurance from Herefordshire Council members that similar standards would be applied to Council backed projects. AL confirmed that this is the case.</p> <p>DH stated his support for AL's approach, saying the Council has to be careful to undertake all due diligence in the management of the fund and that AL had raised important issues that need to be taken into account.</p> <p>JV reminded attendees that he wished to set up a budget committee to develop robust processes for going forward. This was agreed; members are JV/FM/LR/CD and IA.</p> <p>JV also stated that he was having difficulties in receiving detailed information from the Council regarding historic expenditure and projections. AL agreed to provide this information within the next week.</p> <p>PS asked for clarification regarding matched funding offers, which was also raised in a note from JF (circulated). LR said she would discuss this with IA/CD after today's meeting.</p>	<p>DH</p> <p>JV</p> <p>AL</p> <p>LR</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Budget Development</p> <p>Members were asked to reflect on the options outlined in IA's circulated "Programme Planning Process" paper. Further discussion to be held at a later date.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>None</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Date of Next Meetings</p>	

	16 July, 8.30-9.30 am - PDG Meeting 23 July, 8.30-9.30 am - Full Board Meeting (NEW DATE) 30 July, 8.30-9.30 am – PDG Meeting 13 August, 8.30-9.30 am – Full Board Meeting	
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