

**Notes from a meeting of the  
STRONGER TOWNS FUND – PROJECT DEVELOPMENT GROUP (PDG)  
held 21 September 2022, 8.30-9.30 am via MS Teams**

<b>Members:</b>	Frank Myers MBE (Chair) Paul Stevens Will Vaughan	FM PS WV	Herefordshire Business Board / Marches LEP Hereford Business Improvement District Hereford Pedicabs and Pedicargo
<b>Attendees:</b>	Ivan Annibal Abigail Appleton  Christian Dangerfield Joni Hughes	IA AA  CD JH	Rose Regeneration (RR) Principal, Hereford College of Arts (and Chair of Herefordshire Stronger Towns Board)  Rose Regeneration (RR) Head of Chief Executive's Office, HC
<b>Apologies/ Absent</b>	Cllr Ellie Chowns James Newby Julian Vaughan	EC JN JV	Cabinet Member, Environment & Economy, HC President & CEO, NMITE Green Dragon Hotel, Hereford
<b>Notetaker:</b>	Jan Bailey	JB	Herefordshire Business Board

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
1.	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>As noted above.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Notes of the previous meeting and actions</b></p> <p>The notes of the meeting held on Wednesday 7 September were approved as a correct record.</p> <p>Ref 2.3 – Chair to discuss property strategy with Herefordshire Council – outstanding</p> <p>Ref 2.6 – Powerhouse/Digital Cultural Club co-location – on Agenda for today's meeting.</p> <p>Ref 3.3 and 3.4 – Wyeside project security issues – discussions ongoing.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Powerhouse relocation to Packer's House</b></p> <p>3.1 The Chair referred to the paper, "Digital Cultural Hub / Powerhouse paper for TF PDG" which had been previously circulated to members.</p> <p>3.2 Attendees expressed concern that the paper did not address the key issue of how the original project outcomes (as laid out in the Full Business Case submitted to Government) would be affected, if at all, by the move to Packer's House, despite this having been requested on a number of occasions by RR.</p> <p>3.3 It was agreed that RR will suggest a template for completion by the Powerhouse project leads. The template will list the original project outputs (as stated in the FBC) alongside columns for completion by the project leads that identify if and how each output will be affected by the move and a space to explain any variation. The project leads will be asked by RR for this information as soon as possible, to be available at the latest by the date of the next PDG meeting (5 October).</p>	RR
4.	<p><b>Museum project</b></p>	

	<p>4.1 CD highlighted some concerns regarding the funding for the Hereford Museum project. This was for information only but CD confirmed steps were being taken to mitigate any risks and that Jesse Norman MP was aware of the situation.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Inflationary Pressures</b></p> <p>5.1 CD highlighted two projects which he said were at particular risk from inflationary pressures: Wyeseide and Southside.</p> <p>5.2 With regard to Southside, CD updated the group on advice received from VAT specialists that neither of the potential organisational structures (CIC or registered charity) would enable the VAT amount of £700K to be offset. CD advised that an alternative option, for Herefordshire Council to contract the required works, was being explored with Paul Walker (CEO at Herefordshire Council). However, even if this was possible, a significant overspend was projected.</p> <p>5.3 CD advised that the Wyeseide and Southside project leaders would be meeting shortly to look at collaborative bids to other funds. He confirmed that both projects had already undertaken significant cost engineering of their respective projects to try and find savings. Members suggested that all projects would benefit from a united search for other funding opportunities. AA reminded the group that at the last full Board meeting it was agreed that a sub-group be established to look at matched funding opportunities. IA advised that any approach for new grant funding needs to identify new benefits in return for the additional cash.</p> <p>5.4 The group acknowledged that inflationary pressures would be affecting all Towns Funds projects nationally. The Government's response to these pressures was as yet unknown, but may be clarified in the forthcoming mini-budget (23 September).</p> <p>5.5 JH asked for clarification regarding the Accountable Body's risk position, ie should the Accountable Body release money for stages of a project where concerns had been raised that there would be insufficient monies for it to be completed. The group agreed that advice on this issue should be sought from Government, whilst recognising that cost pressures were being caused by national economic pressures beyond projects' control.</p> <p>5.6 IA advised that he would be meeting with Alex Collins (our new contact for the STF from DLUHC) before the next STF Board meeting.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>6.1 IA/JH will bring a model Funding Agreement for discussion at the next meeting of the PDG. IA stated that at future meetings of the PDG, he would propose to ask each project to present their Project Initiation Document, including budget details.</p> <p>6.2 AA referred to a note received from Ruth Parry with regard to the renewal of the Stronger Towns Hereford website domain and hosting arrangements. It was agreed that details will be circulated to all PDG members for consideration and approval of associated costs.</p> <p>6.3 IA advised that the next Sponsors Meeting will be held on Thursday 29 September from 5.00 pm at the Green Dragon Hotel. Agenda to follow.</p>	<p>AA/all</p> <p>RR</p>
7.	<p><b>Dates of next meetings</b></p> <p><b>Next PDG Meeting</b> – Wednesday 5 October, 8.30 – 9.30 am, then fortnightly thereafter</p> <p><b>Next Board Meeting</b> – Friday 7 October, 8.30 – 10.00 am, then first Friday of each month.</p>	