

**Notes from a meeting of the
STRONGER TOWNS FUND – PROJECT DEVELOPMENT GROUP (PDG)
held 7 December 2022, 8.30-9.30 am via MS Teams**

Members:	Frank Myers MBE (Chair) Cllr David Hitchiner James Newby Paul Stevens	FM DH JN PS	Herefordshire Business Board / Marches LEP Leader, Herefordshire Council (first part) President & CEO, NMITE Hereford Business Improvement District
Attendees:	Ivan Annibal Christian Dangerfield Joni Hughes	IA CD JH	Rose Regeneration (RR) Rose Regeneration (RR) Portfolio Manager, Capital Development, HC
Invited Guest:	Cliff Woollard	CW	Encore Project Lead (first part)
Apologies:	Abigail Appleton Cllr Ellie Chowns Cllr Kathy Hey Julian Vaughan	AA EC KH JV	Principal, Hereford College of Arts (and Chair of Herefordshire Stronger Towns Board) Cabinet Member, Environment and Economy, HC Hereford City Council Green Dragon Hotel, Hereford
Notetaker:	Jan Bailey	JB	Herefordshire Business Board

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies are as noted above.</p>	
2.	<p>Notes of Meeting held 30 November</p> <p>The notes of the PDG meeting held on 30 November were agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
3.	<p>Project updates</p> <p>3.1 Encore</p> <p>3.1.1 CW referred to a document circulated to PDG members in advance of today's meeting and provided an update on location proposals for the Encore project. In particular, he expanded upon the possibility of Encore being based within the Town Hall.</p> <p>3.1.2 CW explained that negotiations are underway for a possible asset transfer of the Town Hall to a newly constituted charity/CIC that would include Encore as one of its partners. However, CW was keen to clarify that STF budget would be used only as outlined in the original FBC, ie for the purposes of changing spaces to accommodate Encore's specific needs, storage, technical requirements, etc, and not for general repairs and other costs associated with the building. He confirmed that the Funding Agreement would remain with Encore Ltd and not with any newly constituted charity.</p> <p>3.1.3 CW outlined the biggest risk to these plans, which was to do with fund raising c £3.5-5million to cover the costs of necessary renovations to the building. He said the intention would be to engage specialist support to help with this process and stated that it was unlikely that outcomes would be known until at least the autumn of 2023.</p>	

	<p>3.1.4 Attendees queried whether this change would need a project variation request to be submitted to Government. IA advised this would be possible, as the original FBC was based on an assumption that Encore would purchase a property. However, if expected outcomes were unchanged, he advised this may not be necessary. IA will seek further guidance from Government officers, when needed.</p> <p>CW left the meeting.</p> <p>3.2 Southside</p> <p>3.2.1 JN advised of discussions with project partners to find cost savings in order to bring total project costs within budget. He said that a further meeting was planned for later today to agree any cost cuts, following which discussions would be held with JH to finalise the Funding Agreement (noting that a Project Variation document may need to be submitted to take into account any outcome variations following budget cuts). The next steps would then be to go out to planning and tender applications.</p> <p>3.2.2 Members discussed possible cross-STF financial measures that could be taken to support the Southside project and ensure its delivery. They agreed that Southside is a flagship STF project – the only one south of Hereford – and all possible measures should be taken to ensure it does not fail.</p> <p>3.2.3 It was agreed that a Task and Finish Group will be set up to look in more detail at possible options. The first meeting of the T&F Group will be held in early January. IA will discuss with FM those Board members to be invited to be part of this group and an outline agenda for the first meeting.</p>	<p>IA</p> <p>IA</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>4.1 IA stated that he will circulate a quarterly review spreadsheet for comment to PDG members.</p>	<p>IA</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Dates of next meeting</p> <p>Next PDG Meeting – Wednesday 14 December, 8.30 – 9.30 am</p> <p>Next Board Meeting – Friday 6 January 2023, 8.30 – 10.00, then first Friday of each month.</p>	