

**Notes from a meeting of the
STRONGER TOWNS FUND – PROJECT DEVELOPMENT GROUP (PDG)
held 25 January 2023, 8.30-9.30 am via MS Teams**

Members:	Frank Myers MBE (Chair) Abigail Appleton	FM AA	Herefordshire Business Board / Marches LEP Principal, Hereford College of Arts (and Chair of Hereford Stronger Towns Board)
	Cllr David Hitchiner Paul Stevens	DH PS	Leader, Herefordshire Council 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
Apologies:	James Newby Cllr Ellie Chowns Julian Vaughan	JN EC JV	President & CEO, NMITE Cabinet Member, Environment and Economy, HC 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 7 December 2022</p> <p>The notes of the PDG meeting held on 7 December 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
3.	<p>Project updates</p> <p>3.1 CD provided an overview, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board member ‘buddy system’ is now being rolled out. CD advised that the meetings that have already taken place have been welcomed by project leads. CD will prepare a grid showing which Board member(s) have been allocated to which project, for inclusion in the papers for next week’s Board meeting. AA requested that CD advise her of any Board members who have not been ‘buddied’ so that she can engage with them prior to next week’s Board. • Good progress is being made with the Extreme Sports/Cycle Track project, with heavy equipment now on site. One issue has arisen with drainage, which has necessitated a small change. This is currently with the Planning Dept, but the team is not envisaging any problems and confident of delivery within the required timeframe. • All other projects progressing according to plan/previous reports with no additional issues to report. 	<p>CD CD</p>
4.	<p>Youth Investment Fund / Sport England / South Wye Project</p> <p>4.1 CD provided information on the Youth Investment Fund (YIF), which has recently awarded £500K to invest in five wards in Herefordshire (earmarked for two projects in South Wye and three in Leominster).</p> <p>4.2 CD advised that discussions are ongoing in terms of where this money will be invested and could include a portion coming to the South Wye Project.</p>	

	<p>4.3 Attendees agreed to continue engagement with the YIF team and monitoring of the opportunity for investment from this fund into the South Wye project, whilst recognising that funding will be made on the basis of a competitive bidding process.</p> <p>4.4 The Chair reported recent discussions held with Alex Collins with regard to the VAT position faced by the South Wye Project and the effect that this had had on available budget. He said that Alex would be raising this matter with the team.</p> <p>4.5 PS mentioned an article in today's <i>Guardian</i> newspaper that highlights the inflationary/VAT pressures on STF projects nationally. It was agreed that RR will develop a summary of the adjustments to original plans projects within Hereford's STF have had to make as a result of inflation and/or VAT obligations. When completed, this will be submitted to Alex Collins.</p>	RR
5.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>5.1 IA referred to a flowchart previously circulated to PDG members that outlines a suggested financial reporting process to PDG/Board/Accountable Body. Attendees emphasised the importance of robust and proper procurement processes for all projects and JH provided reassurances as to the controls that would be put in place. RR will include this document in the papers for next week's Board meeting, subject to any further comments being received from PDG members before 12 noon on Friday 27 January.</p> <p>5.2 AA advised that work is progressing on an advertisement for additional Board members. Details will be included in next week's Board meeting papers.</p> <p>5.3 A new document that records any Board members' Conflicts of Interest will be utilised with effect from next week's Board meeting. This will also be published on external websites with the meeting minutes. The document template will be circulated with the papers for next week's Board meeting.</p> <p>5.4 IA advised of a planning meeting taking place on 2 February to discuss the Southside Project, which will include the presentation of an options paper.</p>	RR AA/RR RR
6.	<p>Dates of next meeting</p> <p>Next PDG Meeting – Wednesday 8 February, 8.30 – 9.30 am, remote</p> <p>Next Board Meeting – Friday 3 February 2023, 8.30 – 10.00, remote, then first Friday of each month.</p>	