

#STRONGERHEREFORD

Notes from a meeting of the STRONGER TOWNS FUND – PROJECT DEVELOPMENT GROUP (PDG) held 19 April 2023, 8.30-10.00 am via MS Teams

Members:	Frank Myers (MBE)	FM	Chair
	Abigail Appleton	AA	Principal, Hereford College of Arts (and Chair of Hereford Stronger Towns Board)
	Cllr David Hitchiner	DH	Leader, Herefordshire Council
	James Newby	JN	President & CEO, NMITE (part)
	Paul Stevens	PS	Herefordshire BID
Attendees:	Ivan Annibal	IA	Rose Regeneration, RR
	Christian Dangerfield	CD	Rose Regeneration, RR
	Joni Hughes	JH	Portfolio Manager, Capital Development, HC
Apologies:	Cllr Ellie Chowns	EC	Cabinet Member, Environment and Economy, HC
Guests:	Charlie Arthur	CA	Hereford Skate Park Project
	Richard Deane	RD	Digital Culture Hub Project
	Nic Millington	NM	Digital Culture Hub Project
	Mike Price	MP	Wyeside Project
	Stephen Taylor	ST	Wyeside Project
Notetaker:	Jan Bailey	JB	Herefordshire Business Board

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
1.	Welcome and Apologies The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies are as noted above. He advised that Andrew Lovegrove is unable to attend today's meeting.	
2.	Notes of last PDG Meeting The notes from the PDG meeting held on 12 April 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.	
3.	Project Updates 3.1 Hereford Skatepark 3.1.1 CA provided an overview of developments at the Hereford Skatepark project, which is proceeding according to plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The building and design contract has just been awarded.• First draw down of budget for design costs has been submitted.• The planning application is now being compiled. CA is hopeful that no major issues will be identified as the project team has been in ongoing dialogue with Council Planning Team officers.• Extensive public consultation has been undertaken. The first such meeting took place in August 2021, the most recent in October 2022.• As a result of these public consultations, comments have been taken on board and reflected in revised designs.• Cost increases have affected the project, but the design has been adapted accordingly.• There are opportunities for the skate park to be expanded in the future if additional funds become available.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is expecting an end of year completion date at the latest. <p>3.1.2 CA felt confident that, once completed, the skatepark would be one of the most competitive in the West Midlands and one of the best free access skateparks in the country.</p> <p>3.1.3 CD will liaise with CA to develop the Project Initiation Document, which is outstanding.</p> <p>3.1.4 CA advised that discussions are ongoing with the neighbouring #StrongerHereford cycle track project regarding, eg sharing of facilities. Longer term discussions will also continue in terms of the master vision for the area and the way the projects link to each other and to the city.</p> <p>3.2 Digital Culture Hub</p> <p>3.2.1 IA advised that there are some remaining issues that need to be resolved before a Funding Agreement can be signed with this project. These need to be resolved as quickly as possible in order for the project to progress.</p> <p>3.2.2 RD advised that a loan (mortgage) offer had been agreed with lenders, subject to a Funding Agreement being signed.</p> <p>3.2.3 PDG members agreed that the best way to resolve outstanding issues was via a face-to-face meeting with the project leads, Section 151 officer and PDG members. RR will arrange this for early next week (commencing 24 April).</p> <p>3.2.4 In preparation for this meeting RD/NM will prepare a document that addresses the outstanding issues: changes to the match funding element of the project; details of the mortgage offer; and how deliverables have been affected by the changes (if at all).</p> <p>3.3 Wyeside Project</p> <p>3.3.1 ST provided a presentation on the Wyeside project, including aims and objectives of the project and current position as at April 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topographical survey has now started. CCTVs have been installed (part funded by the local Police). Enhancement of riverside towpath and fence erection has commenced. The contract for the geophysical survey and design has now been let. Crane purchase is in progress. Details of how the project has been reengineered to keep within programme budget. <p>As far as possible, ST advised that contracts are being awarded to local, Herefordshire based contractors.</p> <p>3.3.2 Further details were provided by MP regarding the purchase of a crane to be provided on the riverside and which will have many benefits, including being available to the local Fire & Rescue service for emergency launches.</p> <p>3.3.3 ST provided details regarding very significant badger activity near to the Hereford Rugby Club, which means that plans to build a ramp at this site have had to be scrapped. He said that alternative arrangements were being investigated, which will need to be communicated to DLUHC via a Project Adjustment Request.</p> <p>3.3.4 ST provided details of the project's current financial situation, financial issues and risks and engineering schedule. He said outstanding issues are regarding Planning Permission and the development and award of the electrical contract (for electrical power hook-up points).</p>	<p>CD</p> <p>RR</p> <p>RD/NM</p>
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	<p>3.3.5 PDG Members raised a number of points/requests for clarification, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members said they needed to fully understand the work that has been contracted/tendered and asked ST to provide a report that details this. • Any requests to the DLUHC for a Project Adjustment Request should come through the PDG/Board and not direct from project leads. • Queries regarding the phasing of equipment purchase and planning permission, ie should equipment be purchased before planning has been approved to install that equipment. • ST was asked to provide an updated risk register to the PDG. • Queries regarding the decision to scrap the ramp at the Hereford Rugby Club and discussion regarding where this could be re-sited. <p>3.3.6 RR will liaise with ST/MP regarding all the above issues and report back to PDG.</p>	RR
4,	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>4.1 PS raised a number of concerns with regard to grants awarded via the Greening of the City project. In particular, how decisions are made on which projects to support and the consistency of these decisions and how an administration fee is authorised. The Chair/CD will arrange to discuss these issues with Roger Allonby (Council Officer).</p> <p>4.2 The Chair advised that discussions are ongoing with Council officers to understand how #StrongerHereford funds are being used to pay for staff time spent on the project. IA advised that, based upon practice elsewhere this may be permissible, but the Council must demonstrate that this has been done in a way that is open and transparent and has been market tested in accordance with established financial procedures.</p>	FM/CD
5.	<p>Dates of next meeting</p> <p>Next PDG Meeting – Wednesday 26 April 2023 – 8.30 – 9.30 am (remote)</p> <p>Next Board Meeting – Friday 12 May 2023, 8.30 – 10.00, remote, then first Friday of each month.</p>	