

**Hereford Stronger Towns Board Meeting
Friday 3 November 2023 (8.30 am – 10.00 am),
held at Hereford College of Arts and via Zoom
Notes and Action Points**

Chair:	Abigail Appleton	AA	Principal, Hereford College of Arts
Board Present:	Graham Biggs	GB	Councillor, Herefordshire Council
	Judith Faux	JF	Trustee, HVOSS
	Cat Hornsey	CH	Councillor, Hereford City
	Frank Myers	FM	Herefordshire Business Board/Marches LEP
	James Newby	JNe	Chief Officer, NMITE
	Jesse Norman	JNo	MP for Hereford and South Herefordshire
	Ruth Parry	RP	Director Operations & Marketing, Simple Design Works Ltd
	Lauren Rogers	LR	Rural Media Company
	Paul Stevens	PS	Hereford Business Improvement District
Other Attendees:	Ivan Annibal	IA	Rose Regeneration (RR)
	Alex Collins	AC	DLUHC
	Christian Dangerfield	CD	Rose Regeneration (RR)
	Joni Hughes	JH	Portfolio Manager, Capital Development, HC
	Andrew Lovegrove	AL	Chief Finance Officer, Herefordshire Council
	Paul Walker	PW	Chief Executive, Herefordshire Council
Apologies/Absent:	Grace Joiner	GJ	Youth Board Member
	Elizabeth Parbutt	EP	Orphan's
Notes:	Jan Bailey	JB	Herefordshire Business Board

Summary of Actions

Item	Notes	Action
5.2	Written confirmation from DLUHC on expenditure/commitment deadlines.	AC
6.2	Obtain progress update re premises purchase from DCH.	RR
6.4.8	Library and Resource Centre Project: Exchange of letters between Board and PW to confirm decision making regime.	AA/PW
6.4.9	Library and Resource Centre Project: Provide feedback on consultation process to PS.	PW
6.5.3	Museum: Provide detailed breakdown on expenditure to date	JH
7.1	Circulate communications update to Board	JB

Item	Notes	Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies and absences are as noted above.	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	FM advised that he had recently been appointed as Chair of Herefordshire and Worcestershire Community First. This organisation supports rural communities and runs the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Recovery and Wellbeing College.	

<p>3. 3.1</p>	<p>Minutes of the STF Board Meeting held on 6 October 2023</p> <p>The Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday 6 October were approved as an accurate record.</p>	
<p>4. 4.1 4.2</p>	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Full discussion of the Programme Management Budget will be deferred until the next Board meeting. However, proposals on how unallocated Project Management monies may be spent may be discussed at PDG and circulated to Board members for approval before the date of the next Board meeting.</p> <p>The Board agreed to the Chair's proposal not to appoint a Vice Chair. FM as Chair of PDG or an alternative Board member will stand in as necessary, should the Chair be unavailable.</p>	
<p>5. 5.1 5.2 5.3</p>	<p>NB: Board Papers can be viewed via this link.</p> <p>Progress Update</p> <p>IA asked Board to note that Project Management/Secretariat support for #StrongerHereford can only be contracted on a 12 months' basis. Hence the current contract with RR will expire in June 2024 and a procurement process will be needed to secure any such services for the period until March 2025.</p> <p>JNo asked for clarification as to whether #StrongerHereford funds could be spent beyond March 2025. IA responded that it is his understanding that expenditure could be extended until March 2026, (although projects are aiming for March 2025). AC will arrange for written confirmation of the deadlines from DLUHC to the Board.</p> <p>IA reminded the Board that the Project Management budget had been fixed at 2% of the total and that this wouldn't change regardless of expenditure deadlines.</p>	<p>AC</p>
<p>6. 6.1 6.2 6.3 6.3.1</p>	<p>NB: Board Papers can be viewed via this link.</p> <p>Current Programme Review</p> <p>IA referred to the current programme RAG status analysis, which shows that there are three projects currently causing some challenge: Southside, Library/Resource Centre, Museum.</p> <p>FM asked for clarification regarding the current status of the premises purchase by the Digital Culture Hub project. JH responded that purchase documentation was progressing, with completion and exchange expected on 13 November. The Chair asked for further clarification of the current position to be provided by the Project Sponsor.</p> <p>Southside Project</p> <p>IA advised that there is an issue about the asset transfer from Herefordshire Council to the project sponsors. If a successful resolution is not found, he said that this could affect a grant being provided by Sport England to the Belmont Wanderers part of the Southside Project.</p>	<p>RR</p>

6.3.2	JH provided additional detail with regard to the current position on the asset transfer, which hinged on a suitable partnership agreement being in place between the Project's three parties. The Chair advised that she and CD would be meeting with interested parties on Monday (6 November) to understand what is needed to resolve this situation as a matter of priority.	
6.3.3	FM expressed his concern about this situation, which he believed had become over-complicated. The Chair advised that this was a complex project and there needed to be a clear understanding of each party's responsibilities and how the three parties would work together.	
6.4	Library/Resource Centre Project	
6.4.1	<p>IA raised a number of concerns regarding this project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater understanding is needed regarding the council's final decision-making process and how it engages with the #StrongerHereford Board, including the mechanism for submission of a Project Adjustment Request to DLUHC, as required. • If the council supports the move of the Library/Resource Centre to the Shire Hall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Confirmation will be required from the council that they will underwrite the Stronger Towns funds already allocated to the development of the Maylord Orchard site. ○ The #StrongerHereford Board will need greater understanding of the interdependency between the different phases of redevelopment of the Shire Hall – the Library/Resource Centre being only part of the project - and how any associated costs will be met. 	
6.4.2	The Chair raised an additional question as to how decisions will be made in the event that the #StrongerHereford Board Members have different points of view on the revised business case.	
6.4.3	PW advised that Cabinet had approved the business case for the Library/Resource Centre to be relocated to the Shire Hall at its meeting on 26 October as well as additional funding for further development of the building. He said there would be a further review of the capital programme, with final proposals going to full council meeting on 8 December.	
6.4.4	After 8 December, PW said that the #StrongerHereford Board/PDG would be asked to review the business case for the relocation and a timeline could be developed to determine next steps.	
6.4.5	The Chair said that the #StrongerHereford Board needs to be given early sight of the revised business case in order that they have sufficient time to compare the two options and to come to a decision as to whether or not to support the move.	
6.4.6	JNo said that the Board needed to be sure that the additional sums mentioned for further development of Shire Hall would be available. Also, that an adequate process is in place for the Board to weigh up the two options.	
6.4.7	PW confirmed that any aborted costs in relation to the Maylord Orchards site works would be met by Herefordshire Council.	

6.4.8	It was agreed that the Chair would exchange letters with PW as CEO of Herefordshire Council in order to establish a regime for the Board's decision making process around the potential move of the library project in the context of the council's timeline.	AA/PW
6.4.9	Following a comment from PS, PW agreed to provide an update to him on the consultation process undertaken on the proposed relocation of the Library/Resource Centre. The Chair said it was important to ensure that the City Council's and Hereford BID's views were represented.	PW
6.5	Museum and Art Gallery Project	
6.5.1	IA advised that there are concerns regarding procurement of a contractor for this project.	
6.5.2	The Chair noted that an update on this project had been requested at the October Board meeting. PW advised that there are a number of outstanding issues that need to be clarified, after which he would be happy to provide a full briefing to the Board.	
6.5.3	FM asked for detailed information to be provided on expenditure to date on this project. JH will provide. The Chair welcomed FM's request, saying that it was important for Board members to ask for further information or clarification as they wished.	JH
6.6	IA advised that he will soon be compiling a return to DLUHC on project progress. This will be presented to PDG before submission.	
7.	Communications Update	
7.1	The Chair proposed circulating the written update that EP had provided around communications in her absence rather than presenting in the meeting.	JB
8.	Any Other Business None	
9.	Date and Time of Next Meeting Stronger Towns Fund Board: Friday 1st December 8.30 – 10.00 am at Hereford College of Arts and online.	