

**Hereford Stronger Towns Board Meeting  
Friday 5 January 2024 (8.30 am – 10.15 am),  
held at Hereford College of Arts and via Zoom  
Notes and Action Points**

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

**Summary of Actions**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>2.2</b>	Declarations of Interest to be circulated to members for checking	<b>JB</b>
<b>5.1.6</b>	Check status of revenue/capital transfer for Electric Buses project	<b>GA/IA</b>
<b>5.1.7</b>	Carry out retrospective check of project adjustments <30%	<b>RR</b>
<b>6.2.1</b>	Written highlights report to be produced to accompany all future Board finance reports.	<b>JH</b>
<b>6.2.3</b>	GA to confirm to JH regarding reprofiling of budgets	<b>GA</b>
<b>7.5.5</b>	Develop formal letter of agreement regarding unspent contingencies and reporting mechanisms for the library project.	<b>RR/AA/FM/PW</b>
<b>7.6</b>	Meeting to be set up to discuss HC vision and future for Maylord Orchards	<b>PW/GB/PS</b>
<b>7.7</b>	Project Adjustment Request to DLUHC re Library relocation	<b>RR</b>
<b>7.8</b>	Comms to be developed and published to highlight decision process regarding Library relocation	<b>AA/Orphans</b>
<b>8.1</b>	Circulate comms update from Orphan's	<b>JB</b>
<b>9.1</b>	Write position statement for Southside project	<b>RR</b>
<b>9.2</b>	Compile options analysis regarding programme level unallocated funding	<b>RR</b>

<b>Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	

1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies and absences are as noted above.																									
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>																									
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2.2	All existing Declarations of Interest will be circulated to Board members for checking and confirmation/amendment of details.	<b>JB</b>																								
3.	<b>Minutes of the STF Board Meeting held on 1 December 2023</b>																									
3.1	The Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday 1 December were approved as an accurate record.																									
4.	<b>Matters Arising</b>																									
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	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Item</th> <th>Notes</th> <th>Action</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>5.1.2</td> <td>Provide list of scheduled PDG meetings and projects to Board</td> <td>Will take place every Wednesday at 8.30 am unless otherwise advised.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.1.1</td> <td>Review letter from Football Foundation regarding Southside building dimensions.</td> <td>Completed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.1.5</td> <td>Written update on the Powerhouse project for the new year</td> <td>Scheduled</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7.3</td> <td>Compile full update report on Library/Resource Centre project</td> <td>Provided</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7.4</td> <td>Board statement to be agreed and submitted in advance of Cabinet meeting</td> <td>Completed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8.1</td> <td>Circulate Communications report to Board</td> <td>Completed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9.1</td> <td>Submit latest report to Government officers</td> <td>Completed</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Item	Notes	Action	5.1.2	Provide list of scheduled PDG meetings and projects to Board	Will take place every Wednesday at 8.30 am unless otherwise advised.	6.1.1	Review letter from Football Foundation regarding Southside building dimensions.	Completed	6.1.5	Written update on the Powerhouse project for the new year	Scheduled	7.3	Compile full update report on Library/Resource Centre project	Provided	7.4	Board statement to be agreed and submitted in advance of Cabinet meeting	Completed	8.1	Circulate Communications report to Board	Completed	9.1	Submit latest report to Government officers	Completed	
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4.2	With reference to Minute 6.1.1 regarding the Southside project. JNo advised that he had recently met with a senior member of the Football Foundation who had confirmed that this project's funding application was due to be considered in April and that everything looked in order. PS added that his recent discussions with the local Football Association also indicated that everything was on track. The Board welcomed these updates but stressed that this would be the last opportunity for the funding to be agreed. Also, that the project was a complicated one and that many obstacles and challenges lie ahead.																									
5.	<b>NB: Board Papers <a href="#">can be viewed via this link.</a></b>																									
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<p>5.1.2</p> <p>5.1.3</p> <p>5.1.4</p> <p>5.1.5</p> <p>5.1.6</p> <p>5.1.7</p>	<p>With reference to the Programme Management Budget, IA drew Board members' attention to the uncommitted element of £147K. This amount is unchanged since the December Board meeting.</p> <p>Changes to the Programme Risk Register since the last Board meeting are highlighted in the Board report. IA said the most significant changes relate to the Library project, which is the subject of further discussion at today's meeting.</p> <p>FM asked for clarity regarding a letter sent by DLUHC in July relating to greater flexibility and less formality around project changes up to 30% of their individual funding envelope. The letter was received by the Accountable Body (Herefordshire Council) and was shared with AA and FM, though not circulated to all Board members.</p> <p>GA provided a link to guidance: (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/project-adjustment-request-par-changes-town-deals-levelling-up-and-future-high-street-funds">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/project-adjustment-request-par-changes-town-deals-levelling-up-and-future-high-street-funds</a>). He confirmed that there is flexibility for project adjustments of up to 30% to be approved by the local STF Board. However, these changes should still be notified to DLUHC via a Project Adjustment Request (PAR).</p> <p>PS asked whether this change could have helped with the Electric buses request to move capital and revenue monies earlier in the year and could potentially help with any current requests. GA/IA will check the situation pertaining to the Electric buses and advise, but IA stated his belief that the new flexibilities had already been considered.</p> <p>The Chair asked RR to undertake a retrospective check of all small adjustments (&lt;30%) made to projects in the past 6 months to ensure the appropriate PAR notification is made to DLUHC.</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p><b>GA/IA</b></p> <p><b>RR</b></p>
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.1.1</p> <p>6.1.2</p> <p>6.1.3</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.2.1</p>	<p><b>NB: Board Papers can be <a href="#">viewed via this link.</a></b></p> <p><b>Current Programme Review</b></p> <p>IA referred attendees to the information provided in today's Board papers. He highlighted three projects with items to note, as follows.</p> <p><b>Powerhouse:</b> the final Funding Agreement has now been drafted and is ready for signature. The project leads are due to attend PDG in the near future, following which recommendations regarding the funding agreement will be made to Board.</p> <p><b>Digital Culture Hub:</b> Packer's House has now been purchased.</p> <p><b>Electric Buses:</b> Some issues are arising regarding insurance costs for the buses. Discussions are taking place between the project leads and RR. Further updates will be provided via PDG and Board meetings.</p> <p><b>Finance</b></p> <p>FM requested that a short written report of key items of note for the Board is produced to accompany future finance reports. The Chair suggested in future that the Agenda includes a distinct focus on</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p><b>JH</b></p>

<p><b>6.2.2</b></p> <p><b>6.2.3</b></p> <p><b>6.3</b></p>	<p>budget reports. JH and IA will discuss the format for this outside of today's meeting.</p> <p>JH highlighted remaining budget to be spent by projects before April 2024. IA advised that RR is carrying out an expenditure profiling exercise with projects and would keep JH informed. Further detail is included in the quarterly report recently submitted to DLUHC and previously circulated to Board.</p> <p>JH asked for clarification from GA as to whether funds could be reprofiled. GA will advise.</p> <p><b>Encore:</b> JF confirmed that negotiations regarding a premises for this project are ongoing and looking positive. A public announcement is expected soon and further updates will be provided to Board.</p>	<p>GA</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p> <p><b>7.1</b></p> <p><b>7.2</b></p> <p><b>7.3</b></p> <p><b>7.4</b></p> <p><b>7.5</b></p> <p><b>7.5.1</b></p> <p><b>7.5.2</b></p> <p><b>7.5.3</b></p> <p><b>7.5.4</b></p>	<p><b>Library Project</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked the Library project team for the significant work that has already been undertaken to answer the Board's/PDG's queries on the project and to keep Board members informed.</p> <p>The Chair referred attendees to the details contained in the <a href="#">Board papers</a> that summarise the background and current status of this project.</p> <p>The Chair stated the importance of Board members reaching a decision today on the request from the Project team for the Board to submit a Project Adjustment Request to DLUHC. This would formally request approval from DLUHC for the move from Maylord Orchards to Shire Hall.</p> <p>In addition, Board members were asked to state their views on the request from the project team to keep the contingency amount for the project at 29%</p> <p>The Board held extensive discussions on these two requests, as follows.</p> <p>JNo asked what would happen if the 29% contingency amount is not committed by the Project team. He was also concerned to understand the processes that would be in place to ensure continued feedback and accountability to the Board as the project progresses.</p> <p>GA asked how the move to the Shire Hall would affect the outcomes and outputs stated in the original project plan. IA stated that these would be improved upon, as outlined in the revised cost/benefit ratio analysis. He said the Shire Hall option also provided more space.</p> <p>FM raised concerns regarding a large contingency being held by the library project whilst others, particularly Southside, may be struggling to raise sufficient funds. He broadened this point to include other projects which have not so far committed funds that could be used for the benefit of others.</p> <p>The Board agreed to the principle that if contingency funds are unspent by the Library (or any other project) they should be</p>	

<p><b>7.5.5</b></p>	<p>reallocated on a programme and not project level basis. Decisions on reallocations to be decided by the STF Board.</p> <p>PW said that the Library project team feel it is important to retain the contingency amount at 29% due to cost uncertainties. However, he suggested that after each RIBA stage is completed a report is provided to PDG to review the financial situation. He said he supported the principle outlined in point 7.6.3 that any unspent contingencies should be reallocated to the STF programme. A formal letter to confirm this agreement will be developed by RR/AA/FM and PW.</p>	<p><b>RR/AA/FM/PW</b></p>
<p><b>7.6</b></p>	<p>The Chair asked for each Board member to vote on the proposal to submit a PAR to DLUHC to request the location change to Shire Hall. The proposal was agreed by a ratio of 7:2. Individual votes were as follows:</p> <p><b>Agreement</b> (subject to caveat outlined in 7.6.3 and to HC providing a financial update and reporting after each RIBA stage is reached)</p> <p>FM, JNo, GB, JF, LR, CH, JNe</p> <p><b>Abstentions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PS: Reflecting concerns of Hereford BID members regarding the future of the Maylord Orchards shopping centre. PW, GB and PS will meet separately to discuss.</li> <li>- RP: Concerns remaining regarding civic and community aspects of the Shire Hall location.</li> </ul>	<p><b>PW/PS/GB</b></p>
<p><b>7.7</b></p>	<p>Following this vote, RR will draft the PAR at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p><b>RR</b></p>
<p><b>7.8</b></p>	<p>Communications will be developed to highlight the constructive discussions undertaken by the Board and with the council to reach this decision. These to be released alongside a general update of the highlights from the projects for the past year.</p>	<p><b>AA/Orphans</b></p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Communications Update</b></p>	
<p><b>8.1</b></p>	<p>EP was not present at today's meeting. The latest comms update will be circulated to Board members.</p>	<p><b>JB</b></p>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>Southside Programme Management</b></p>	
<p><b>9.1</b></p>	<p>RR will prepare a document that outlines the current position with regard to the Southside project. There are many issues currently affecting the project which may require additional project management support from the RR team.</p>	<p><b>RR</b></p>
<p><b>9.2</b></p>	<p>An options analysis will be prepared alongside the above that reviews any unallocated funding across the programme that could be redirected to Southside.</p>	<p><b>RR</b></p>
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p>	
<p><b>10.1</b></p>	<p>The Chair confirmed that project leads would be invited to some of the future Board meetings, as previously discussed.</p>	
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p>	

	Stronger Towns Fund Board: Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2024 at 8.30 – 10.00 am at Hereford College of Arts and online.	
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