

**Hereford Stronger Towns Board Meeting  
Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2024 (8.30 am – 10.00 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>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>Paul Stevens</b>	PS	Hereford Business Improvement District
<b>Other Attendees:</b>	<b>Ivan Annibal</b>	IA	Rose Regeneration (RR)
	<b>Graham Biggs</b>	GB	Councillor, Herefordshire Council
	<b>Alex Collins</b>	AC	DLUHC
	<b>Christian Dangerfield</b>	CD	Rose Regeneration (RR)
	<b>Andrew Lovegrove</b>	AL	Chief Finance Officer, Herefordshire Council
	<b>Elizabeth Parbutt</b>	EP	Orphan's
<b>Guest:</b>	<b>Paddy Nugent</b>	PN	Castle Green Project (part)
<b>Apologies/Absent:</b>	<b>Judith Faux</b>	JF	Trustee, HVOSS
	<b>Grace Joiner</b>	GJ	Youth Board Member
	<b>Joni Hughes</b>	JH	Portfolio Manager, Capital Development, HC
	<b>Lauren Rogers</b>	LR	Rural Media Company
	<b>Paul Walker</b>	PW	Chief Executive, Herefordshire Council
<b>Notes:</b>	<b>Jan Bailey</b>	JB	Herefordshire Business Board

**Summary of Actions**

Item	Notes	Action
6.4	Write note to Board members regarding secretariat arrangements. Add item on renewal of secretariat arrangements to May Agenda for discussion.	<b>AA</b> <b>RR</b>
6.7	Write to Government regarding potential to utilise unspent Towns Funds from elsewhere.	<b>AA/JNo</b>
6.11	Wyeside Project Team to come to PDG ASAP.	<b>RR</b>
6.15	Organised special PDG to look at cross-programme financial predictions.	<b>RR</b>
7.2	Programme Review items to be followed up with Board members.	<b>AA</b>
8.2	Any Board member interested in being part of the communications sub-group to contact the Chair.	<b>All</b>

Item	Notes	Action
1.	<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>	
2.1	There were no new Declarations of Interest	

<p><b>3.</b></p> <p><b>3.1</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes of the STF Board Meeting held on 1 March 2024</b></p> <p>The Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday 1 March were approved subject to one suggested change from JH regarding Orphan's Comms contract.</p>	
<p><b>4.</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b></p> <p><b>4.2</b></p> <p><b>4.3</b></p>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>Please see updated actions noted on <a href="#">page 5 in the Board papers</a>. See below for specific matters arising.</p> <p>The Chair provided an update on Youth Board membership. One person so far has expressed an interest and is being followed up by CH. The aim remains to find two Youth members, hence the recruitment campaign will continue.</p> <p>With regard to the action point concerning Orphan's contract extension, the Chair advised that JH had confirmed the maximum allowable period is three months and this has been agreed with Orphan's.</p>	
<p><b>5.</b></p> <p><b>5.1</b></p> <p><b>5.2</b></p> <p><b>5.3</b></p> <p><b>5.4</b></p>	<p><b>Project Showcase - Castle Green Project</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed PN to the meeting.</p> <p>PN provided a comprehensive update on the Castle Green project, including background and heritage, timeline, social value proposition, risk management, financial plans and current status update.</p> <p>PN highlighted an issue to do with securing caterers. Although there had been good initial interest, he advised that all candidates had since withdrawn. However, PN advised that he was pursuing other potential providers and is confident of securing a provider. Overall, he said he was happy with how the project is progressing and confident that it would meet its objectives.</p> <p>The Chair thanked PN for the presentation and commented on the value of capturing learning from all projects. For example, in the Castle Green Project's case their difficult decision to suspend regular events whilst focusing on the capital spend had proved to be absolutely the right decision.</p> <p>PN left the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>6.</b></p> <p><b>6.1</b></p> <p><b>6.2</b></p> <p><b>6.3</b></p>	<p><b>Progress Report, Programme Review and Budget</b> <b>NB: Board Papers can <a href="#">be viewed via this link</a>.</b></p> <p>IA Referred to the Board Report, as follows:</p> <p><b>PIDs (Project Initiation Documents):</b> IA advised that PIDs for Greening the City and Powerhouse are imminent but he had no concerns regarding these projects.</p> <p><b>Match Funding:</b> IA stated that there is no change to the match funding report since last month. The total amount remains higher than projected.</p>	

6.4	<p><b>Programme Management Budget:</b> IA referred to the report contained within the Board paper. This shows that there is an amount of c£130K unallocated to cover the remainder of the project, which he felt is sufficient. AA noted that current secretariat arrangements are due to expire at the end of June. She will write to Board members with a draft proposal regarding next steps and this item will also be discussed at the next Board meeting (May).</p>	<p><b>AA</b> <b>RR (Agenda)</b></p>
6.5	<p><b>Programme Risk Register:</b> IA highlighted changes to the Risk Register since the last Board meeting, which have been highlighted in red (pages 13-17 of the Board Report).</p>	
6.6	<p>With regard to Risk 8: Achieving programme spend within annual profiled phases, IA highlighted a possible risk of adjustment by Government. JNo asked how significant is the risk of clawback of funds from Government. Alternatively, he asked if there is an opportunity to bid for money which has not been spent by other Towns Funds.</p>	
6.7	<p>This will be discussed at PDG, following which the Chair will write to Government (with JNo's support) on behalf of the Board. This letter will highlight the success of Stronger Hereford projects and ask if there is a potential for further funding for Hereford from unspent Towns Fund monies from other areas. The target deadline for submission of the letter was set for the end of April.</p>	<p><b>AA/JNo</b></p>
6.8	<p>AC noted the above discussion and said in his view clawback of funds is unlikely. He said he would discuss with colleagues the issue of what happens to underspent money in other locations.</p>	
6.9	<p><b>Programme RAG status:</b> IA referred to the chart contained in the Board report (page 19).</p>	
6.10	<p>With reference to the Library project IA reported that the Project Adjustment Request had been approved by the Minister.</p>	
6.11	<p>With regard to Wyeseide, IA reported that there were some ongoing concerns principally to do with the progress of its planning application. The project team will be asked to attend PDG as soon as possible to discuss these. The Chair advised that she had asked JH not to sign off on further financial commitments until clarification from the project had been received. She suggested that all projects are reminded of the risks of making financial commitments. The Chair reminded the Board of the request that had been made regarding planning decisions as delays are impacting on this project's ability to progress.</p>	<p><b>RR</b></p>
6.12	<p>IA referred to a request from the Electric Buses project for a capital/revenue swap with Southside. This item will be discussed further at PDG.</p>	
6.13	<p>In response to a query from FM, the Chair said that the issue of the electric buses' performance against targets would be part of wider discussions on how to evaluate the performance of all delivered projects against objectives.</p>	
6.14	<p>IA reported that planning permission had recently been received for NMITE's Future of Work Skills Hub project.</p>	

<p><b>6.15</b></p> <p><b>6.16</b></p>	<p>IA reported that following advice from a tax specialist, Southside would be able to reclaim 100% of its VAT. This means that this project is now fully viable, albeit it with very low contingency. A special PDG meeting will be organised to review projected spending profiles across the programme so that any underspends can be identified and reallocated to projects that would benefit from extra funding, including Southside.</p> <p><b>Budget Profile/Highlights:</b> IA referred to the budget information contained within the Board report. He said that the past month had seen significant draw down of funding by many of the projects.</p>	<p><b>RR</b></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>Programme Review – Moving Forward</b></p> <p>IA recommended a number of items for further consideration by the Board as the programme moves into its next phase. These are outlined on pages 37-39 of the Board report.</p> <p>The Chair will follow up these items with Board members outside of today’s meeting.</p> <p>JNo suggested Councillors/Cabinet Members are invited to attend some future STF presentations by projects.</p>	<p><b>AA</b></p>
<p><b>8.</b></p> <p><b>8.1</b></p> <p><b>8.2</b></p>	<p><b>Communications Update</b></p> <p>A communications update had been circulated to Board members in advance of today’s meeting. The report <a href="#">can be viewed here</a>.</p> <p>The Chair said the Board needed to think about its communications objectives and the audiences it was trying to reach with these. A separate meeting of the communications sub-group will be arranged; any Board member wishing to take part is to contact the Chair.</p>	<p><b>All</b></p>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>None</p>	
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Stronger Towns Fund Board: Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 at 8.30 – 10.00 am at Hereford College of Arts and online.</p>	