

**Hereford Stronger Towns Board Meeting
Friday 14 February 2025 (8.30 am – 10.00 am)
held at Hereford College of Arts and via Zoom
Notes and Action Points**

Chair:	Abigail Appleton MBE	AA	Principal, Hereford College of Arts
Board Present:	Graham Biggs	GB	Councillor, Herefordshire Council
	Judith Faux	JFa	Trustee, HVOSS
	Jago Frost	JFr	Youth Board Member
	Frank Myers MBE	FM	Herefordshire Business Board
	James Newby	JNe	Chief Officer, NMITE
	Jesse Norman	JNo	MP for Hereford South & City
	Ben Proctor	BP	Councillor, Hereford City
	Paul Stevens	PS	Hereford Business Improvement District
Other Attendees:	Roger Allonby	RA	Herefordshire Council (obo Joni Hughes)
	Ivan Annibal	IA	Rose Regeneration (RR)
	Christian Dangerfield	CD	Rose Regeneration (RR)
	Sean Dubberley	SD	Department for Communities & Local Govt
	Rachael Sanders	RS	Section 151 Officer, Herefordshire Council
Guests:	Hilary Hall	HH	Hfds Council, Library Project (item 9 only)
	David Jones	DJ	Hfds Council, Library Project (item 9 only)
	Sarah Lee	SL	Hfds Council, Library Project (item 9 only)
Apologies/ Absences	Joni Hughes	JH	Portfolio Manager, Capital Development, HC
	Ruth Parry	RP	Director Operations & Marketing, Simple Design Works Ltd
	Paul Walker	PW	Chief Executive, Herefordshire Council
Notes	Jan Bailey	JB	Herefordshire Business Board

Summary of Actions

Item	Notes	Action
4.2	RR to ask JH to provide update to Board on Wyeside final project closure amounts and works to be completed before closure.	RR/JH
5.2	Clarification to be sought from the lender that removal of the Council's first charge on the mortgage would yield financial benefit to the Digital Culture Hub project.	JH
5.5.5	Encore project issues to be discussed at PDG.	RR/FM
5.6.1	Invite Growing Local directors to attend PDG.	RR/FM
6.2	Update on Greening the City project to Board	RA
6.3	Provide additional narrative to Board budget information.	RS
6.4	Project-by-project matched funding analysis to be prepared for Board.	RR
7.1	Add Financial Control information to amended Terms of Reference and recirculate for approval/adoption.	RR/AA
8.1	Comms support proposal to be developed and circulated.	AA
9.5	Circulate presentation to Board once seen by Cabinet.	SL
9.6	Provide update on contingency situation at the Library & Resource Centre Project	SL/DJ

Item	Notes	Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies / Introductions	

1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies and absences are as noted above.																					
2.	New Declarations of Interest																					
2.1	JNo declared he had recently taken up the post of Chairman of NMITE.																					
2.2	FM declared that he had recently become Chair of the Living Room Charity in Hereford.																					
3.	Minutes of the last Board meeting, held 10 January 2025																					
3.1	The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 10 January 2025 were approved as a correct record.																					
4.	Matters Arising																					
4.1	See updates below.																					
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Item</th> <th>Notes</th> <th>Action</th> <th>Update</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>5.4</td> <td>Continue discussions with Wyeseide on final project costs and timetable for closedown and report back to Board</td> <td>RR</td> <td>Ongoing but progress to report</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.6</td> <td>Contact Library/Resource Centre and Museum project leads to see if they are interested in an extension to their project delivery times</td> <td>RR</td> <td>Completed and extensions requested for both</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.7</td> <td>Request Library/Resource Centre Project Leads to attend Feb Board meeting</td> <td>RR</td> <td>Agreed and presenting today</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.9</td> <td>Include reporting on matched funding project targets and achievements at future Board meetings</td> <td>RR</td> <td>In train.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Item	Notes	Action	Update	5.4	Continue discussions with Wyeseide on final project costs and timetable for closedown and report back to Board	RR	Ongoing but progress to report	5.6	Contact Library/Resource Centre and Museum project leads to see if they are interested in an extension to their project delivery times	RR	Completed and extensions requested for both	5.7	Request Library/Resource Centre Project Leads to attend Feb Board meeting	RR	Agreed and presenting today	5.9	Include reporting on matched funding project targets and achievements at future Board meetings	RR	In train.	
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4.2	PS asked whether work on electric points and the public right of way would be completed before the Wyeseide project is wound up. IA said he believed that this is the case. He advised that JH is working closely with Ivan Powell to understand the final project closure amounts and the scale of any work remaining. RR to ask JH to provide an update to Board.	RR/JH																				
5.	Programme Review (See also Board report, which can be viewed here.)																					
5.1	IA referred attendees to the Programme Risk changes and RAG status that can be viewed at pages 9-11 of the Board report.																					
5.2	In response to a query from BP, IA advised that the question regarding first charge on the Digital Cultural Hub's mortgage would be revisited once major outcomes of the project had been achieved (projected around Easter time). In the meantime, clarification will be sought from	JH																				

	the lender that removal of the first charge would yield financial benefit to the Digital Culture Hub project.	
5.3	Castle Green Project	
5.3.1	CD advised that final costs for this project are expected next week. The project team are looking at how any shortfall could be met through value engineering and other means. He confirmed the project leads are not expecting any further funding from STF and advised that the cost increases have arisen primarily due to weather damage at the property caused by exposure to winter conditions that had resulted from delays caused by the previous contractor going into administration.	
5.3.2	IA summarised that the project is now largely back on track and CD is staying in close contact with the project leads. Board was pleased to hear that the projected launch date for the project is July 2025.	
5.4	Electric Buses	
5.4.1	IA advised that discussions are ongoing regarding the long-term delivery of this service (beyond November 2026). BP said that discussions are taking place with Herefordshire Council on this.	
5.4.2	FM asked for it to be noted that if a decision is taken to sell the buses, the money should be returned to STF and not to the city council funds.	
5.5	Encore	
5.5.1	IA advised that there is some uncertainty with this project due to significant planning issues that have emerged. These have caused the Encore Board to have serious concerns as to whether they can proceed with the purchase of the building.	
5.5.2	JFa said she had been in close contact with the project and it was regrettable that these fundamental planning issues have emerged now given that advice had been sought several months' ago.	
5.5.3	FM and JFa asked about the degree of discretion allowed to planning officers when making decisions taking into account conservation officers' views. RA advised that planning officers do have a certain amount of discretion but decisions would be made on the basis of developers' designs and plans for the building. As Encore had not submitted any detailed plans on their proposals for the premises it would be difficult for the planning officers to make a judgement.	
5.5.4	A number of other queries and points were made by Board members including the importance of this building and its location on a major thoroughfare into the city.	
5.5.5	The Chair asked that these matters be formally presented and discussed at PDG as a matter of urgency with the project team and RA.	RR/FM
5.6	Southside	
5.6.1	AA reported that the Project Manager for Growing Local would be leaving the project. RR to ask directors to come to a future PDG to discuss the implications for the project.	RR/FM
6.	Budget Report	

6.1	IA referred attendees to the Budget Profile and Highlights information contained at pages 27 and 28 of the Board report.	
6.2	PS noted that 74% of the Greening the City's budget is currently unspent. He asked RA to provide an update on this project to Board.	RA
6.3	FM made a comment on the level of financial detail provided to Board, which he felt was insufficient. RS assured Board that financial reporting for the STF is high quality and considered to be best practice. However, she agreed to provide some additional narrative to Board in the future so there is greater clarity and the Board can see what is being procured by each item of expenditure.	RS
6.4	IA advised that work to provide an analysis of project-by-project matched funding is in development and would be coming to Board.	RR
7.	Terms of Reference	
7.1	IA referred to revised Terms of Reference that had been circulated to Board before today's meeting. FM asked for more information on financial controls to be included. The Chair and RR will amend the Terms of Reference accordingly and circulate to Board for any further comments/adoption.	AA/RR
8.	Communications	
8.1	AA will develop a proposal regarding future comms support and circulate it to Board shortly for comment.	AA
9.	Library and Resource Centre Project Update	
9.1	The Chair welcomed HH, DJ and SL to the meeting.	
9.2	SL provided an update on progress for the project, which included recently approved planning permission and listed building consent to proceed with the development.	
9.3	SL advised that the next phase would be the development of a tender pack, which is targeted to go out in March with the successful contractor being appointed in May. Construction work will then commence in October.	
9.4	SL presented the latest draft plans and artists' impressions for the development, which are subject to Cabinet approval later this month. She agreed to circulate this presentation to Board members once it has been presented to Cabinet.	
9.5	Board members asked several questions to do with the plans, including access and capacity issues. They thanked SL for her presentation and said they were delighted that plans were progressing well.	SL
9.6	The Chair referred to the significant contingency that had been built into the project costs and asked how much of this is still remaining. SL/DJ said they would provide updated information on this to Board and would continue to keep the Board regularly updated on the project as it progressed.	SL/DJ

10.	Any Other Business None	
11.	Date of Next Meeting Friday 14 March 2025, 8.30-10.00 am Hybrid: Online or face-to-face at Hereford College of Arts, College Road campus	