

Bridgwater Town Deal Board Meeting

1st March 2021

Via Teams

11am – 1pm

Minutes

1. Introduction and Apologies

In Attendance:

- Fiona McMillan
- Doug Bamsey
- Councillor Gill Slocombe
- Ian Liddell-Granger
- Councillor Mick Lerry
- Paul Hickson
- David Ralph
- Ruth Lambert
- Paul Moore
- Andy Berry
- Peter Elliot
- Andrew Cockcroft
- Paul Edwards
- Justin Sargent
- David Northey
- Sian Powell (*from 12:05pm*)

Supporting the Board

- Nathaniel Lucas
- Katherine Schollar
- Jaycee Ellis
- Keith Thomas

Apologies: Councillor David Hall & Adam Bradley

2. Town Investment Plan Submission

- The main Town Investment Plan Document was submitted on time at the end of January – including Town Investment Plan2 Project Files.
 - These documents are still confidential due to financial details and the possibility of Government changing projects and the funding available.
 - Once the final sign off has occurred we can look at sharing this into the public domain.
- A Summary Document has been circulated to board members and has been published on the SDC website for the public to view.
 - Summary document does not include the financial details to remain the confidential.
 - This document can be circulated to stakeholders.
 - Web link: [Bridgwater Town Investment Plan Summary](#)
- The project promoters that were not included in final Town Investment Plan have all been notified.
- Project partners have had an initial meeting convened to explain the next steps/process.
- Capacity Funding – request submitted for additional funding support – decision expected later in March.
- It was discussed about releasing the town’s full Town Investment Plan submission as some towns have done this, is this something Bridgwater would do?
 - It is each town’s discretion to publish the Town Investment Plan document for the public.
 - It was agreed that the Bridgwater Town Investment Plan Submission would remain confidential until project funding/submission is decided by government. The Board are then able to manage the expectation of progress from the board and the public.

Decision Process and Timeline

- The board are awaiting feedback from government.
- There are potential announcements in Budget (44 Deals were announced) and further announcements may be expected before Purdah.
- In principle agreement from government setting out the total fund award and which projects accepted or to be modified.
- The board then has 2-3 months to respond setting out proposed revisions.
- Heads of Terms agreement will then be confirmed and Ministerial announcement
- We then have 12 months to complete Business cases.



<p>1. Tidal Barrier</p> <p>Nationally significant project protecting Bridgwater town centre; unlocking housing & employment growth.</p>	<p>2. Dunball Junction</p> <p>Regional infrastructure project to resolve congestion and unlock housing and employment land for development.</p>	<p>3. Walking and Cycling</p> <p>Local cycling links connecting key employment areas & complementing investment by EDF into safer routes.</p>	<p>4. Celebration Mile</p> <p>Opening new Covid safe places and spaces in the town. Events management and promotion for Covid recovery.</p>
<p>5. Restoration of Docks</p> <p>Exciting restoration of historic docks quarter creating a new leisure and tourism destination.</p>	<p>6. Arts Centre</p> <p>Creating essential flexibility for Covid safe environment supporting local artists and cultural events.</p>	<p>7. Town Hall Theatre</p> <p>Transformed cultural facility for post-Covid future, inclusive access with office and meeting space for community and social enterprises.</p>	<p>8. Engine Room 2.0</p> <p>Increased capacity for community media centre engaging people with digital art and media – enhancing skills.</p>
<p>9. Bridgwater “Step Up”</p> <p>Flexible business and enterprise hub including creative “pop-up” and “taster-event” space and support.</p>	<p>10. Bridgwater Carnival</p> <p>Development of carnival production space to future-proof and enhance Carnival events for post-Covid recovery</p>	<p>11. Town wardens / event Ambassadors</p> <p>Visible community support presence to help reduce anti-social behaviour and build confidence for visitors</p>	

3. Business Case Process (Following Heads of Term’s agreement)

Business Case Process:

- Town Deal Board endorse Business Case/Outcomes
- Accountable Body to ‘Self-Assure’ or elect MHCLG
- MHCLG may call in some projects for review
- Summary report submitted to MHCLG
- Funds released to SDC on approval of Business Case
- SDC to establish funding agreements with project partners- deliverables, outputs, outcomes.
- Payments released on contract claims.

Governance, Delivery & Legacy:

- The Board is required to provide 6 monthly progress reports – funding, contracts, outputs.
- The Board is also responsible for final Output Reports for 3 years after completion.
- Towns Hub – will undertake an annual review of progress with the Board.
- Sedgemoor District Council is the financial accountable body.
- Proposed that the Board meet quarterly to receive progress reports from the business case/sub-groups.

Inclusive Growth:

- It was highlighted that a process was needed to ensure we maximise inclusive growth within all project proposals and consideration may be needed to establish an additional sub-group chaired and co-ordinated by a Board member to act as the filter for business case review.

→ Further thought to be given to this as part of the governance process and report back to the next board meeting.

4. Community Consultation & Engagement

- Release Town Investment Plan summary report and circulate
- Social Media and Press engagement
- Project Development Engagement
- Special Groups – Schools/colleges
- Subject to further funding can consider creating Town Deal social media pages for the board to post general updates etc. Bridgwater Town Board could also create a brand over social media as it will be a key part of the engagement.
- Social inclusive agenda into town wardens' group.

Action: Schedule Parish Liaison Catch-up Meeting

Action: KT to pull the Theory of change from Town Investment Plan to present to board on how it's monitored and how partners can be integrated into it.

Action: Cllr ML to send list of forums from who the Town Council is in contact with to KT.

Action: Board to feedback to SDC regarding the social media pages/branding for the board.

5. Bridgwater Library – Regeneration Proposals

Presentation from SCC on plans for the Bridgwater Library

Vision:

- Preserve and reimagine a well-loved and valued town centre facility – a flagship library within safe, attractive community gardens.
- Contribute to the regeneration and renewed spirit in the town and create a community hub
- Public sector partnership collaboration and community involvement to achieve regeneration
- Climate emergency response – contribute to meeting zero carbon target
- Create attractive and flexible environment to deliver 21st century services for the local and non-indigenous community
- Provide opportunities for new public facilities and services in the future
- Make a once in a generation investment statement into public services, attracting and supporting all parts of society.

Scope:

- Complete refurbishment of whole building, internally and externally, including fabric and systems
- Internal spaces within building to be flexible to facilitate future proofing
- Relationship between library and nearby Blake Gardens
- Opportunity to improve energy efficiency measures and contribute to climate agenda
- Improving accessible routes into and around library

Project Stakeholders:

Somerset County Council Primary Stakeholders:

- Somerset Libraries
- Registration
- Corporate Strategy
- Climate/Energy Team
- Public Health
- County Council Members

Partner Primary Stakeholders

- Town Council
- Friends Group/s
- District Council Members
- District Council
- Planning and Conservation

Secondary Partner Stakeholders

- Police
- South West Heritage Trust
- Heritage Lottery
- Bridgwater Cultural Partnership

Challenges and Dependencies

- Project resources and speed of project delivery
- Grade II listed building – Meeting and negotiating Heritage and Conservation Officer requirements
- Future Proofing Design – Balancing the desire for designing flexibility for the future as well as currently unknown post-Covid library service offerings
- Budget – A proportion of required repairs and maintenance funding is secured by SCC, remaining budget elements and opportunities from Heritage Lottery Fund are less certain.
- Regeneration- Underlining and defining scope of regeneration design elements and desired outcomes for the nearby Binford Place/Blake Gardens part of the town and managing partner expectations
- Decant – the library will need to close for the duration of the works, estimated at 9-10 months, so will need to find a suitable temporary decant facility for a reduced service which needs considerable planning.

Links with Bridgwater Town Investment Plan

The Bridgwater library refurbishment is **NOT** a project being funded as part of the Town Investment Plan.

- Of the 3 main objectives of the Town Investment Plan, the Library project complements:
 - 2. Skills and enterprise (small business development and skilled workforce)
- Of the 3 strategic aims, the library project complements:
 - 1. Maximise community potential – skills/business set up

- 2. Re-engerising the Town Centre
- Of the 11 Project within the Plan:
 - 4. Town Wardens and Event Ambassadors employed for 6 years
 - 10. Walking and cycling priorites access to town centre/Bridgwater Way

Next Steps

- Discuss, agree and confirm known budget commitments and confirm approach to take about uncertain funding sources
- Apply for grants through routes available
- Develop indicative design of building and surrounding area and project costs
- Confrim partnership scope and commitment, in particular for regeneration of Blake Gardens.
- Agree project timescale and brief
- Set up Project Group

6. AOB

- The next board meeting won't take place until after government have given their decision regarding the Bridgwater Town Investment Plan submission.