

Bridgwater Town Deal Board

13th December 2021

2:00pm till 3:30pm

Teams Meeting

MINUTES

1) Introduction and Apologies

In attendance:

- Gavin Roberts,
- Andrew Harper,
- Cllr Mick Lerry,
- Cllr Christine Lawrence,
- Paul Moore,
- Justin Sargent
- Doug Bamsey,
- Julie Wooler,
- David Ralph,
- Cllr Gill Slocombe,
- Stephanie Parsons,
- Neil Smith,
- David Mears,
- Paul Edwards,
- Stephanie Mott (Bridgwater Town Council project manager)
- Andrew Cockcroft.

Supporting the Board:

- Keith Thomas,
- Nathaniel Lucas,
- Jaycee Ellis,
- Dawid Zaleszczyk

Apologies: Jonica Walkinshaw and Ruth Lambert

As there were new members of the board in the meeting, introductions were made.

2) Project Confirmation / Change Mechanism & LUF Update

- In October 2021, due to not having enough board members to make quorate, remote voting was done in order to agree the change of ToR, agreement of the project confirmation list and to agree the election of the new chair.
- All projects on the list were retained.
- The Levelling Up Fund (LUF) decisions were released on same day that the deadline for the list of project confirmation was due into government.
- The LUF bid application from County has been successful and therefore a contribution of £10m is going towards the A38 proposal (which includes the Dunball Junction).
 - Due to the Dunball Junction now being funded through the LUF, this will now reinstate the £1.8m worth of cuts made, leaving us with an additional £400k of the allocation left to distribute.
 - Somerset County Council have asked is £400k could be retained for the Dunball Junction for the project delivery.
 - There is a risk if we try and increase other project allocations – government require a strong reason as to why we are doing it and what the additional monies would be used for, therefore the £400k retained for the Dunball Junction is going to be the simplest way to allocate the remaining town deal monies.
 - The quality of the work for Dunball Junction does not change, the only change to the project is how it's being funded.

The board has agreed to the above proposal.

3) Business Case Progress & Delivery Programme

- The River Barrier, Dunball Junction and Cycling business cases are to be done by externals.
- The Arts Centre, Town Hall and Somerset Film business cases are currently planned to be done as one single cultural business case.
 - If one of the cultural projects was further ahead than the other – we have the option/flexibility to produce a separate business case for this.
- The business case programme was presented.
 - Andrew Cockcroft mentioned that the town wardens could create a link/partnership with the EDF night-time street pastors.
 - Access to the Carnival Sheds and onto the A38 will be enhance and will provide a formal route to the carnival sheds. This will be on a "left in, left out" basis.
 - The plans to improve Wylds Road and Bristol Road (which EDF proposed) will be reflected in the design scheme
- Justin Sargent gave an update on the Somerset Community Foundation funding
 - The funding is a 2-stage process.
 - There are a number of conditions attached to the bid.
 - It could be a good contribution for carnival.
 - The SCF committee meet quarterly.
- Unfortunately, the Bridgwater Docks was not successful in the Community Renewal Fund (CRF) bid. Initial design work and feasibility will be funded through the Town Deal advance although recognising this could be at risk of completing the business case.
- JE to set up addition board meetings in April and June for flexibility for business cases and updates to board.

4) Town Deal Funding & Advance Draw Down

- Not all lead authorities could front the funding to get projects started.
 - Government made the decision to release 5% early draw down to Town Deal towns to help support this.
 - Bridgwater Town Deal will be able to access 5% of our £23.2million funding allocation from December.
- Any match funding identified for projects should be used first. For example, SDC are applying their match funding to Celebration Mile to advance the design proposals.
- There is a risk that due to funding being spent before government can sign business cases off, there is a possibility that if a business case was unsuccessful, we would have to pay the funding spent to date on that project back.
 - Government haven't made the guidance on this clear.
 - The board need to understand the risk, but supporting members are confident that the business cases are strong.

5) Forward Meeting Plan

included in Item 3

6) Project Partner Engagement & Presentations

- Board agreed that it would be a good idea to have project partners to present their proposals to board. This will include proposed plans, attraction it could bring to the town etc.
 - This will add value to the projects, provide transparency and will help the board have a deeper understanding of the proposals including the outputs and outcomes.
 - The board would be interested in the Cultural Partners to present their proposal in January to start this off.
- The board would receive progress on the projects regularly to keep updated with the progress on the proposal and to see if there is any slippage, and if so, how to help rectify this.
 - DM updated the board that the Town Hall will have received design options in February.
 - DM also updated the board that there will be a full structural survey/report completed on the Arts Centre which will be returned to the Town Council in the new year, this will help address/outline the concerns with the roof/windows in the Arts Centre.
 - Carnival has been successful in the CRF bid which will help contribute to the planning, design and access works for the site.
 - ⇒ Carnival's biggest risk is the access. Need to have a principle agreement with Highways to submit with the business case to help support the business case.
 - ⇒ Timing of the works at the Carnival site will need to be aligned with the wider A38 improvement work.
 - ⇒ Stantec have been appointment to undergo all prep work for the site up to the point of providing the planning application. The application does not need to be submitted in time for when we submit business case to government.
 - ⇒ Government have extended the window for successful CRF projects so the works can now be completed by June 2022 instead of March 2022.
 - ⇒ Carnival Committee have been applying for further match funding. An example of this would be the Arts Council funding.

7) Understanding the Business Case – Member Briefing

- There is a 5-case Business Case which will need to be followed in order to follow the Greenbook regulations. The 5-cases are as follows:
 - Strategic
 - Economic
 - Commercial
 - Financial
 - Management

With consultation and engagement with Stakeholders to be carried out throughout the business case stage.

- Business cases will be signed off by Bridgwater Town Board, SDC Assurance Board and SDC Executive before they are sent off to government.
- Business Cases will need to be delivered with confidence for the following:
 - To meet TIP Objectives and prove Evidence of need.
 - Ensure delivery risks are manageable/resolved.
 - All Town Deal monies are spent by 2025/2026.
 - That projects are financially viable upon completion.
 - The outputs/outcomes are value for money.
 - The monitoring and reporting/funding agreement is in place.

8) Business Case Summary for approval – Tidal Barrier Project

Paper attached

- River Barrier outline business case was presented to board.
- The River Barrier has been through multiple critical approval stages.
- The River Barrier is contributing to flood protection with some public access for Bridgwater.
- Agreements will be in place with project partners to ensure they are delivering the project as proposed in the business case.
- A board member posed the question as to whether the town deal money would be funding a specific part of project?
 - Unable to confirm for definite what the Town Board monies are going to be used against, will be put into the barrier's general pot of funding.
- Another board member asked how can we be so certain that certain aspects of the project won't drop?
 - There has been a lot of consideration in the design process for the engineering proposals for the barrier and the wider consent order approving the works .
 - KT/NL to liaise with Nick Tait from SDC who will be able to give an insight to certainty behind the delivery of the cycle-way aspects of the River Barrier.

The board has agreed to The River Barrier Business Case.

9) Community & Private Sector Engagement

Paper attached

- There has already been a level of engagement with different community groups including:
 - The Sedgemoor "Conversation" Briefing
 - Spark Somerset – Forum on the 20th October
 - Bridgwater Town Council on the 22nd November

- Bridgwater Town Development Forum on the 23rd Nov
- Bridgwater Youth Forum on the 25th November
- Going forward, SDC will look to use internal resources to help with Community and Private Sector engagement.
- SDC internal digital team will look to reach out to the public by:
 - Press Releases,
 - LinkedIn
 - Youtube,
 - Facebook,
 - Twitter,
 - Instagram,
 - Sedgemoor Biz Twitter,
 - Sedgemoor Biz Newsletter (Economic Development Newsletter),
 - SDC website,
 - Sedgemoor Customer Access Panel – which reaches out to residents and business (around 300 people in total).
 - Also have the option to reach out to local school and community hubs.
- Any ideas on any further engagement is welcomed.
 - It was suggested that we could look into obtaining one of the market stalls in the Bridgwater market on a Friday to help share information.
- An idea was presented to board regarding the creation of Bridgwater Town Deal Identity/Branding.
 - The creation of the Town Deal branding/logo could be done as a local school competition to engage with schools – this would later spark conversations with the parents and potentially reach out to channels that we may not have reached before.
 - The board had concerns about how we would explain to children what the Bridgwater Town Deal was in order to get a logo that truly represents the town deal.
 - A decision regarding what to do with this idea is to be made in the next board meeting due to the meeting overrunning and numbers not being quorate.

10) AOB

- No AOB was discussed.