



Bridgwater Town Deal Board

24th August 2022

2:00pm – 3:30pm

Teams Meeting

MINUTES

1) Introduction and Apologies

Attendees:

- Paul Moore,
- Paul Edwards,
- Doug Bamsey,
- Haf E Morris,
- Geoff Sawyer,
- Cllr Mick Lerry,
- David Ralph,
- David Mears,
- Deb Richardson,
- Julie Wooler,
- Ruth Lambert,
- Cllr Gill Slocombe,
- Cllr Bill Revans.

Supporting the board:

- Nathaniel Lucas,
- Keith Thomas,
- Erin Davey,
- Jaycee Ellis

Apologies:

- Ian Liddell-Grainger
- Jonica Walkinshaw

Introductions were made,

- Cllr Bill Revans – new SCC rep,
- Erin Davey – gov contact.
- Geoff Sawyer – BTC Project Manager,
- Deb Richardson – Somerset Film

Previous minutes agreed as correct.

2) Submitted Projects – Progress & Updates

- Funding received for Town Wardens & Dunball Junction.
 - Update on Celebration Mile Business Case submission
 - Step-Up Enterprise Centre – Progressing with Government
- All projects that have been submitted to Government have been approved.
 - Have had informal notification from Government that Celebration Mile and Bridgwater Step-Up have been approved and are just awaiting the final financial checks.
 - Funding has been secured for Dunball Junction and SDC are just looking to finalising the funding agreement between SDC and SCC.
 - Have also received the first year of funding for the Town Wardens and recruitment is well underway for the Senior Warden post.
 - Expected to receive funding for Celebration Mile and Step-Up by the end of September.
 - As discussed in the last board meeting, SDC did put a bid in to the agent for the building which is currently being reviewed.
 - SDC have also commissioned a conditions survey to be undertaken.
 - SDC are still liaising with SCC regarding some points that SCC raised about the building.
 - SCC raised points regarding accessibility and carbon neutrality of the building, of which SDC are in discussion with SCC regarding this.
 - Cllr ML enquired if there are other premises within the town centre that could be utilised if the building is later not deemed suitable?
 - KT added that the team are continuing to look for other buildings as contingency, although SDC want to take SCC through the process as the Angel Crescent building is a good building in a prime town centre location.
 - There is possibility that other organisations could take the responsibility of the Step-Up facility.
 - Town Deal focuses on town centre regeneration which town centre properties are difficult to come by.
 - Cllr ML also enquired about the creation of workspace that Step-Up would bring and if that could be absorbed by the Town Hall if it was to fall through?
 - The creation of workspace in the Town Hall would integrate with the office space at Step-Up.
 - Not able to merge Step-Up operation into the Town Hall as would be classed as a completely new project.
 - DaR enquired about the Comms for the Town Deal and commented that he feels uneasy about the community awareness on the Town Deal.
 - As part of the Celebration Mile allocation, there is funding allocated to appoint an Events Co-ordinator which will look to support promotional messaging.
 - SDC have also been making press releases/social media posts when milestones have been reached.
 - There is also an allocation in the Celebration Mile funding for PR and Marketing for all Towns Fund projects – a procurement spec for this is due to be written for this.
 - Bridgwater Town Deal Board also have the PR of Paull Moore being on BBC Somerset talking about the recent announcements of the Town Deal and what it means for the future of Bridgwater.
 - DB highlighted that there are new owners of Angel Place – the Martin Group.
 - It would be good to start the engagement with them.

- DB recommended that they attend the next board meeting to introduce themselves to the board.
- There is a natural link as the proposed pop-up shops in the Angel Place co-ops are included in the Celebration Mile business case

3) Bridgwater Cultural Venues Business Case

- The Cultural Venues Business Case consists of the following projects:
 - Bridgwater Arts Centre (grade I listed building),
 - Bridgwater Town Hall Theatre (grade II listed building),
 - Engine Room (within the Conservation Area).
- The Bridgwater Arts Centre is looking at improving the internal facilities it currently provides in order for them to become flexible and accessible.
 - They are also looking to install an accessibility ramp at the premises.
 - Further improvements to the first and second floor to become presentable spaces to rent out – with the focus of local artists/media enthusiasts.
 - Improvement to the auditorium and equipment to enhance the quality of space for events and activities.
 - These investments will look to increase overall cultural events and volunteers at the Arts Centre.
 - The match funding initially outlined in the TIP has been reduced with greater priority for match funding being given to the Town Hall following the design review. The Arts Centre will be able to phase improvement work with further opportunities to apply for alternative funding including Arts Council and Heritage Lottery.
- The Bridgwater Town Hall Theatre is looking to improve the current facilities and equipment available.
 - Looking to improve the quality of resources and accessibility to the space.
 - Improvements to be made to the dressing rooms and auditorium to be flexible for performance and exhibition space.
 - Improvement to vacant space above the BOS café to provide additional meeting rooms to cater towards the demand of rented office/meeting space within the town centre.
 - These improvements will allow for additional community events, additional jobs created and further employment space for enterprises – which all contributes towards further town centre footfall.
- The Engine Room is looking to improve current/additional floors, creating flexibility to the environment.
 - Initial investment from SDC allowed the installation of a lift and staircase to the additional floors.
 - Further improvements to studio/training spaces on the second floor.
 - Reconfiguration of the ground floor, including bi-folding doors to allow for further interactivity with the community.
 - Somerset Film and Video are looking to acquire the freehold of the property ahead of the Local Government Reorganisation.
 - Investment will allow for increased training and cultural offering/events.
- Each of the schemes is about improving accessibility, flexibility and increasing capacity for events/activities.
 - With the Engine Room specifically looking to increase educational services.
- The finance behind each project is broken down in the following:
 - The Arts Centre with a town deal allocation of £700k with match funding of £89'200.

- The Town Hall Theatre with a town deal allocation of £900k with match funding of £2'728'900 to be funded by Town Council
- The Engine Room with a town deal allocation of £500K with a match funding of £101'000.
- Overall, across all three schemes, the overall value for money demonstrates a benefit cost ratio at 1.92.
 - This means that for every £1 of public money invested, £1.92 would be returned.
- Each individual project also demonstrates a positive benefit cost ratio which is broken down into the following:
 - The Arts Centre having a benefit cost ratio of 1.31.
 - The Town Hall Theatre having a benefit cost ratio of 1.95.
 - The Engine Room having a benefit cost ration of 2.72.
- The Engine Room generates a much higher social value due to educational facilities that the venue provides.
- The Arts Centre figures have been cautious in order to project the BCR, there is opportunity for the outputs to be much higher.
 - Arts Centre BCR is based on looking to support additional voluntary opportunities.
- The Town Hall Theatre BCR is based on the small enterprise space, creating direct jobs and providing more capacity of meeting space due to popular demand.
- All three schemes are defined and have clear propositions with tangible/measurable outputs after quantifying showing the value for money.
- All three schemes have a strong link together.
 - They also link into the Celebration Mile and the relationship with the Bridgwater Cultural Partnership.
- Plan to submit business case to Government in September 2022.
 - Expect to receive a funding decision by December 2022.
 - All projects are planned to be completed by 2024 with Town Fund Investment being completed earlier than this.
 - Delivery risks are manageable.
 - Facilities must remain operational around the time of works.
- Confident that the business case is robust, provides value for money and provides operational and wider economic benefits for the town centre.
- The Town Hall Theatre is a much larger project than initially anticipated – in preparation for this, they have appointed a full time Project Manager, Geoff Sawyer.
- Project partners will look to secure orders of equipment and appoint contractors at earliest possibility to mitigate the risk of inflated prices on top of what is already estimated.
- Cllr ML enquired if the number of reports that have been completed on the town hall and arts centre is part of the submission of the business case to support the proposal.
- KT added that they are listed in the appendices of the full business case.
- Business cases are confidential until they have been approved by Government.
- Cllr Bill Revans enquired regarding the inflation contingency figures. Capital contingency costs that he has reviewed have been much higher than the figure inputted into the business case.
 - The QS report have produced the costing figures, and have built in realistic cost assumptions.
 - The chartered surveyors have costed the projects based on next years' inflated prices and have then included an inflation contingency figure on top of that.
- Cllr Bill Revans also enquired about the wider wellbeing positives that each scheme brings as he mentioned he couldn't see much detail of this outlined in the business case.

- KT added that the business cases are constructed on the guidance from the Treasury Green Book – which outlines particular things that need to be measured and monetised for the projects.
- There are wider benefits/reasons for the projects to take place, including the contribution to diversifying the town centre and creating strong linkages to the Celebration Mile and the Bridgwater Docks.
- DM added that whilst the Town Deal focuses on the economic benefits for the town, all three cultural venues provide arts and culture for the community, adding to the wider benefit of positive mental health and wellbeing.
- All three buildings are a significant part of the town and help contribute to the transformation of Bridgwater Town Centre.
- All three schemes can swiftly move forward once an approval has been received from Government.
- DM added that there is a large part of the Town Hall which is being underused which can provide greater potential for the building, there is also additional works for improvements to renewable energy for the premises.
- DeR added that the investment will allow for the Engine Room will unlock further growth for the business, the additional investment in film equipment will add to the longevity. There has been additional funding/recognition from Public Health for the Engine Room to run a variety of additional projects which have really supported the community.
- DaR raised concern regarding inflation and how the project partners will look to manage those costs.
 - DM recognised that it is a concern for all project partners with the current economic climate, although is confident that the chartered surveyors have given accurate costs that have been built on inflated prices with additional inflation budgets.
 - DM also added that each area of works is broken down with detailed costs and project partners are confident that they have the resources to decide and manage the phasing which can be reflected on costs.
 - DM is satisfied with costs received and acknowledges that the longer the projects take, the riskier it will be for inflated project costs.
 - DeR has assured that there is contingency buffering for all works QS costed, Somerset Film and Video have also been making additional funding applications to help support with further costs whilst they continue to raise capital funds.
 - DeR have managed projects previously and is confident they have the resources to make decisions according to the budget.
 - DM and DeR are reassured with the due diligence that has been received.

The board agreed to approve the Cultural Venues Business Case (Arts Centre, Bridgwater Town Hall Theatre and Engine Room schemes)

4) Bridgwater Docks – Progress and Update

- At the last meeting it was discussed and agreed that the Walking and Cycling element of the town deal was to be brought into the Docks business case which is currently being mobilised.
- There was discussion about making a Heritage Lottery Fund application to help support the funding for the Docks proposal – KT had a discussion with a contact at the Heritage Lottery Fund and it was decided that the project was currently not in a strong enough position to apply for the funding.
 - The funding application would require more detailed consultation and to really capture the heritage education/interpretation of the Docks.

- Meanwhile work has progressed on the technical work required for the Docks restoration and it is proposed to bring the Business Case to the Board meeting in October.

5) Carnival Sheds – Site Constraints impacting floorspace capacity

- Potentially be able to bring the updated master plans and concept to the next board meeting to present to board for information on progress.
- The Community Renewal Funding has allowed for detailed design and feasibility to go ahead.
 - From the design and feasibility, it has been revealed that there are multiple technical challenges due to capacity of the site.
- Carnival business case is likely to be brought to either the November or December board meeting.

6) AOB

- PM mentioned that when the Town Wardens business case was signed off, board would be involved in creating a mission statement/expectation for the role, now that the recruitment process has started, if this was something that could be revisited in a future board meeting.
 - KT added that it can be something that is brought forward to the September board meeting.
 - DM re-iterated that Bridgwater Town Council would like to be involved/work closely with the Town Wardens once they have been appointed.
- The evolution of the board's responsibility will develop as the projects start to be delivered.

Paul thanked all for their time and the meeting was closed at 3:30pm.

Actions Log:

Action item	Date Created	Action Owner	Progress	Completed?
Invite new owners of Angel Place Shopping Centre	24/08/2022	SDC		
Consider presentation on Northgate imminent opening	24/08/2022	SDC		
Design proposals for Carnival and floorspace changes	24/08/2022	KT		
Mission & Vision Statement to inform role of Wardens	24/08/2022	Board		
Consider Rob Semple attending update on recruitment and Senior Warden to attend a Board meeting when in post.	24/08/2022	SDC		