

Bridgwater Town Deal Board

26th April 2022
12:00pm till 1:30pm

Teams Meeting



Minutes

1) Introduction and Apologies

In Attendance:

- Cllr Mick Lerry,
- Cllr Gill Slocombe,
- Cllr Christine Lawrence,
- Andrew Harper,
- Justin Sargent,
- Gavin Roberts,
- Paul Moore,
- Julie Wooler.
- Paul Hickson,
- David Ralph.

Supporting the board:

- Nathaniel Lucas,
- Keith Thomas,
- Katherine Schollar,
- Sophie Davenport,
- Jaycee Ellis

Apologies:

- Andrew Cockcroft,
- David Mears,
- Doug Bamsey,
- Ruth Lambert,
- Paul Edwards,
- Ian Liddell-Grainger.

Minutes agreed as correct.

2) Matters Arising

- Historic Reference to Orlove Place
- Further Business Consultations
- Town Deal Logo
- PR & Marketing

- At the previous board meeting, a point was made regarding the historic reference to Orlove Place.
 - Within the Celebration Mile plans, are looking at renaming Clare St to Orlove Place.
 - Background research on the area brought up that in the 1300's it was called Orlove Street.
 - A board member questioned the timeline of when it changed from Orlove Street to Clare Street.
 - SDC will report back on when Orlove Street changed name to Clare Street.
- It was agreed a previous board meeting that the Bridgwater Town Deal Logo would be agreed by the Chair of the board and the Portfolio Holder.
 - Both have come to an agreement based on the variety of options considered.
 - The modern design was agreed – this design reflects the colours used in the Town Investment Plan and also reflects the Sedgemoor colours, continuing the Sedgemoor legacy once unitary is in place.
 - This logo will be used going forward on all forms of comms for the board – minutes, agendas, press releases etc.
- Previous conversations have taken place about the Bridgwater Town Board having PR & Marketing.
 - Currently looking into the possibility of securing funding for this.
 - SDC doesn't have capacity in the current budgets.
 - Some budget is included in the Animating Town Centre revenue element of the Celebration Mile Business Case to help promote the Town and local Events – this will give extra strength to the events that will take place.

3) Board Member Vacancies – Recruitment Process

- The Bridgwater Town Deal Board currently has two vacancies on the board from YMCA and Network Rail.
- SDC have been in contact with both organisations in which the following has developed:
 - Former board member, David Northey, has been in touch and has suggested a colleague to represent Network Rail on the board.
 - SDC will make contact within the next week to see if we can secure this position.
 - Conversations with the YMCA is ongoing. As soon as someone is recruited into Stephanie Parsons role, contact will be made and will look to secure this position as soon as possible.
 - SDC will update the board on both contacts as soon as we have any further information.

4) Confirmation of Future Board Meetings

- Board members were reminded to fill out the Doodlepoll for future meetings as soon as possible.
- It is very important that the board meetings are able to meet quorate at every meeting in order to meet crucial deadlines for each business case between now and September/October.

5) Celebration Mile Business Case

- for approval

- Mainly Capital Funding for Public Realm Improvements
- Some Revenue Funding included for Animating the Town Centre Events

- Following Board consideration, the Business Case will go to SDC Project Assurance Group – 28th April and then SDC Executive – 1st June (May Exec cancelled)
 - Copies of the Draft Business Case and summary paper were circulated to members prior to the meeting.
 - Key highlights of the Business Case were summarised in presentation
 - There is a robust Strategic Case for the project
 - The Celebration Mile proposals go back to 2009 as part of the Bridgwater Vision.
 - The idea is about connecting the town centre to railway with walking and cycling routes throughout the town.
 - Previous works have taken place at the Bridgwater Railway Station, Fore Street and the Cornhill.
 - The proposed work for Celebration Mile includes Eastover, Clare Street and Angel Crescent.
 - East Quay and Salmon Parade are also included in the remit with links being made to the Old Hospital Regeneration site.
 - Future development for the Celebration Mile would be St John Street, which would be property improvement focused and subject to future funding opportunities.
 - The Celebration Mile connects a host of sites throughout Bridgwater, ensuring its strong history, reasoning and rationality.
 - The Celebration Mile plans to improve Public Realm, Place Improvement, Walking and Cycling and Enterprise Space.
 - Proposed plans for the developments of Eastover and Angel Crescent can be found on the Sedgemoor District Council Town Board pages where the recent consultation material is hosted.
 - SDC has provided £360k match funding for this project.
 - £160k was previously spent on the traffic modelling for Eastover.
 - £200k yet to be paid for the design and feasibility for Eastover and Angel Crescent.
 - Within the Town Deal allocation– a £500k revenue allocation has been identified to support local events and to relaunch the town centre – linking with the public realm and other improvements through the Town Deal.
 - The funding would help strengthen the role and function of the Bridgwater Cultural Partnership (BCP).
 - Part of the allocation would be used to appoint an event coordinator.
 - They would have the responsibility to work with community and partnership to generate ideas of events for the town.
 - They would help stimulate and support partners in design, planning and delivery for the events.
 - Funding is for 3 years, and the post will be hosted by Bridgwater Town Council.
 - The role and remit, however, will report to the Bridgwater Cultural Partnership.
 - SDC, as the accountable body, will assess individual projects and will need to sign off each event proposal in order to put a funding agreement in place.
 - This should give energy within the town and will promote, raise the profile and awareness of activity in the town.
 - There will be an opportunity to look at alternative funding streams for the post going forward.
 - The outline approach identifies potential to support 20+ events over 3-year programme, with an expected benefit of attracting 130'000+ visitors to the town per annum.
 - The event proposals may not be fully funded by the allocated town deal monies – it could act as match funding in order to bring the event forward.

- Looking to support the current re-occurring events but will also be making use of other event opportunities.
- Cllr ML added that SEED Sedgemoor are very focused on Bridgwater and have lots of programmes they will be running. They would be a real value to the BCP and what they can bring (including funding opportunities).
 - KT assured Cllr ML that SEED have been engaged in the process and are part of BCP.
 - SDC would also look to bring new people within the partnership to strengthen its remit.
- PH questioned if a provision for any contingency costs and redundancy costs at end of funded period for the post been factored into the budget for this?
 - KT added that the finer details of the post need to be discussed with Bridgwater Town Council. The current figure includes the staffing grade, national pension contributions and equipment costs. These have been based on BTC terms of employment.
 - The post would be fixed-term agreement avoiding implications of redundancy payments.
- GR added that Bridgwater already has a varied and exciting events calendar. Bridgwater has 4 food festivals a year, a carnival and monthly markets. He questions whether the post would be needed at a full-time rate?
- Also, is there any scope for business support as part of the allocation? Frome and Burnham-On-Sea have previously employed consultants to help support businesses on how to improve their shop fronts or how they can get involved in the events taking place within the nearby area – could this be something that can be done in Bridgwater to help support businesses to get involved in the planned events in the town centre? – could it possibly be part of the Event Co-Ordinator role?
 - KT added that any direct support for businesses could fall into subsidy control, which can become difficult but could be potential for general advice and engagement to help business take advantage of the Celebration Mile improvements and planned events.
 - KT to take back the suggestions and develop them further.
 - NL added that there is a lot of business support out there for businesses, of which we would not want to be duplicating the spend if the support is already there. The co-ordinator could act as a link for businesses for links to current business support programmes.
 - It was suggested that BCP could also engage a local business voice with the Chamber encouraging business interaction with arts and culture.
- JS questions who the 130'000 visitors would be?
 - KT added that the information was drawn from evaluation of previous events in Bridgwater. For example, Quayside Festival brings in an estimate of 60'000 people over the course of the event. As this is a free to attend event, we are unable to differentiate if the visitors would be from outside the area or if they are local people – this can only be done through ticketed events.
 - Consideration could be given to undertake annual survey of events/activities to capture community feedback if necessary.
 - NL added that SDC will be able to measure footfall within the town centre, comparing it on an annual basis and will be able to analyse the data to see if event dates have a spike in footfall.
- JS also questioned if the BCP could become a formal organisation, so they have the authority to manage the budget and to avoid the counter-signing process.
 - KT added, for auditing reasons, SDC – as the accountable body – will still need to counter sign the proposals due to the governance process of the Town Deal. It must

be taken through a formal process. SDC will also be open to independent audit and evaluation to ensure funds have been spent in accordance with criteria.

- NL added that, as an addition, recently commissioned a town centre strategy built around comms and marketing which identifies the approach to securing 3 levels of visitors to the town. To Justin's point these levels are residents of Bridgwater, Tourist visitors and attracting businesses to the town. SDC will be looking to implement this approach over the coming months.
- JS added that other funding streams aren't always guaranteed, is it possible to get the BCP to become self-sustainable?
 - KT added this had not been previously considered in the Town Investment Plan.
 - Town deal is predominantly capital funding.
 - Provision for revenue funding must also provide demonstrable outputs and outcomes over the Town Deal funding period to 2025/26 and couldn't be used as an endowment payment as such.
 - Other capital projects with cultural venues including Arts Centre, Engine Room and Town Hall Theatre is intended to make them stronger and create capacity for more events – generating further income with the aim of making them more viable.
- Cllr ML added that Bridgwater has a Town Team which is a collective of independent retailers and is administered by the Bridgwater Town Council and they are involved in activity related to business like, Snowflakes and Easter events etc. The event co-ordinator could link up to what is going on in the Town Team to enhance the programmes.
- DR suggested that it is the Town Board's responsibility to be challenging government on bureaucracy.
- DR added, for the revenue project allocation, there is a clear value for money on the project, as inputting £500k into events for it to deliver £10m benefits shows good value for money. Although is concerned with £9m worth of investment of town improvements to see a £13m benefit – DR would like to ensure that it can be demonstrated that there are additional visitors coming to the town and would like to understand the evaluation of this going forward.
 - KT added that public realm is difficult to attribute direct value for money. There will be land value uplift which has been estimated in the Economic Case. But there are also a host of other non-monetised benefits including the sense of wellbeing/confidence in the town – encouraging more footfall and longer dwell time – thereby stimulating more potential spend in the town centre.
- DR mentioned that there isn't currently any application on how the social value of the project will be done. Factors including local businesses into the delivery of the project, apprenticeships on the delivery scheme etc.
 - DR also proposed that the Board should be setting its own priorities and social value targets against the Town Deal projects and funding allocated.
 - SDC to provide a briefing paper on potential Social Value targets for board consideration.
- DR raised the question as to whether the public realm enhancements are still needed?
 - PM added that the public realm enhancements were part of the longer-term strategy for Bridgwater (as part of the Bridgwater Vision from 2009).
 - Has much changed for the demand of public enhancements since then?
- Bridgwater Area Cycling Campaign (BACC) have sent in a document to the board.
 - A draft response on these comments will be sent to the Chair to reply.
- Cllr ML enquired if there is any future scope to secure funding for the completion of the Celebration Mile (improvements made to St Johns Street).
 - KT and SDC to clarify implications for future funding of St Johns Street through develop contributions.

- The Celebration Mile has a total Economic Benefit of £25.4m and a Benefit Cost Ratio of 2.48 providing good value for money.
- SDC are to lead the public realm delivery, working with Stantec and Enborne.
- The design and planning risks are manageable.
- Cost and contractor risks are manageable – with 8% price inflation included and 10% contingency.
- The revenue programme is manageable.
- The delivery timetable for the project is as follows:
 - Planning applications to be submitted in Spring 2022.
 - Funding approval expected in September 2022.
 - Contractor appointment in December 2022.
 - Start on site January 2023 - June 2024.
 - Event Co-Ordinator job advert in October 2022 – appoint in Q4 of 2022/2023.
 - Projects scheduled from October 2022 to March 2026.
 - Completion of all projects by March 2026.
- Overall, the Celebration Mile meets:
 - The TIP Objectives and shows that there is evidence of need.
 - The delivery risks are manageable/resolved.
 - Monies will be spent by 2025/2026.
 - The project is financially viable upon completion.
 - Outputs and Outcomes provide value for money.
 - Monitoring and Reporting/Funding agreements will be put in place.
- Comments from the board will be put into a revised business case and will be sent to the chair for approval.
- The Equality Impact Assessment was not included in the business case – SDC are awaiting this assessment from the Equalities and Risk Manager.
 - SDC will provide this to board to review.

The board have agreed to this business case on the basis that they will be able to review the equality impact assessment before it is sent off to government.

6) Forward Meeting Plan – Progress & Review

Next Business Case – Step-Up (May 2022)

- Bridgwater Step-Up will be brought to the board next month.

7) AOB

- Next meeting to take place on the 26th May starting at 12:00pm – if you haven't already, please let JE know your attendance to this meeting.