



Bridgwater Town Deal Board

26th May 2023

2:30pm till 4:00pm

Bridgwater Town Hall

MINUTES

1) Introduction and Apologies

In Attendance-

- Paul Moore
- Geoff Sawyer
- Beccy Armoury
- Cllr Mick Lerry
- David Mears
- Gavin Roberts
- Jenna Hunt
- Cllr Ros Wyke
- Sophie Davenport
- Nick Tait
- Nathaniel Lucas
- Ruth Lambert
- Paul Edwards

Apologies from-

- Cllr Bill Revans
- Haf E'Morris
- Paul Hickson
- Jaycee Ellis
- David Ralph
- Jackie Gill

2) Progress and Updates

- Recent press release regarding the final confirmation of the last 3 projects, securing the full £23.2m of Towns Fund for Bridgwater has been published and has had good engagement on social media.
- Somerset Council will be looking to bring wider comms support from internal Comms team.
 - Dome will continue until the end of their contract and once concluded, will hand over resources to SC.



- David Blackwell will be Comms lead for Economic Development.
- Step Up: Project adjustment request to be submitted shortly. 6-8 week turn around.
 - Somerset Council have been looking for a premises for Step-Up since losing Angel Crescent back in September. Following this, it has been internally agreed to utilise the space in Bridgwater House.
 - Bridgwater House offers more floor space which will generate a higher level of employment.
 - The benefit cost ratio (BCR) needs to be revised.
 - There is currently £200k capital funding as match to help deliver the project.
 - There is currently no definitive number of demand for the space and estimates might be impacted by home working.
- A board member asked what are the plans for the capital funding and what is the purpose of the space?
 - Step-Up is an enterprise space where the focus is on entrepreneurship.
 - The aim is to support people setting up their own businesses.
 - Opportunities to lease office space with good access to the town centre.
 - It has been highlighted that different communities will need different things, so the approach taken will need to be flexible.
 - Social value is important in this project.
 - Will need to investigate location and demand of car parking needed.
- SC to produce a high-level summary and detail sheet for updates to board.
- SC to produce a document or press release for residents' information on the Town Deal.
- An inception meeting for the Docks has taken place, inclusive of the Walking and Cycling infrastructure and a place-based approach.
 - Meetings are now taking place every 2 weeks for development and progress.
 - The Active Travel Team are delivering this element as part of docks project, by combining the projects, this provides better value for money overall and will help with land slide works.
 - The project team are looking for different approaches to the dock gates, such as solid oak for less frequent maintenance.
 - Procurement process will begin with design and feasibility on the site.
 - Canals and Rivers Trust are important stakeholders within this project and a meeting has been arranged with them.
 - Project team will have a clearer idea as to the scope of the project works given available funding whilst still delivering on the agreed outputs.
 - It is important to focus on not just the infrastructure but also on making the Docks become a location for leisure.

3) Animating the Town Centre – Project Update

- Overall, the animating the town centre part of the Celebration Mile focuses on increasing footfall, increasing variety and regularity of events, and instilling civic pride.
- From the initial budget table within the business case, the active travel budget line has now become a small grant scheme for organisations to hold town centre-based events.
 - This scheme has gone live.
- Have budgeted around £30k promotions over the next 3 years.
- The Town Deal Film budget has been stretched.
- Looking at ways of building partnerships and using the community as marketing advocates.
- Investigations on locations for the Bridgwater Trails have taken place and locations like Blake Statue, Kings Square, North Gate, Docks, and Engine room can be used.
 - Partners could also include Nandos and SEED Hidden Station.



- The Sculpture Trail will look to partner with communities, charities, schools, and cultural partners and show case sites across Bridgwater.
 - Will look to promote heavily over the summer period for increased footfall.
 - Statues can be auctioned off at the end of the event.
- Look at an international artist who has had instillation arts in Bristol.
- Current match funding is around £99,800 – with the ambition to fundraise the remaining £53,200, to total £153,000.
- Looking to outsource a Marketing Officer for consumer facing brand, website, social media, and to be a linked partnership working with BA.
- JE to invite BA to Celebration Mile Sub-Group meetings.

4) Town Hall Theatre/Arts Centre – Project Update

- Town Hall Theatre allocation of £900k Town Deal funding.
 - Currently the project is roughly 3 months behind.
 - Bridgwater Town Council received around 18 bids for consultancy, which was awarded at end of April 2023.
 - Company procured are Bristol based.
 - Induction meeting and initial ideas/options prepared.
 - Between April-September, the theatre has been blocked out for no bookings so works can be completed.
 - Seeking to create one flat within the plans (subject to planning).
- Bridgwater Arts Centre allocation of £700k Town Deal funding.
 - Pre-app has been submitted to Somerset Council/Mark Lister (Conservation Officer) and with Historic England.
 - Looking to seek permissions as it is a Grade 1 listed building.
 - Structural investigations will need to take place.
 - Acoustic consultants and preplanning are all in hand and all information will be submitted in June 2023.
 - Project will complete by March 2024.

5) Board Membership and Next Steps

- Need to encourage all board members participate, some have not been involved in recent meetings.
 - JE to chase one more time and ask for a different representative if need be.
- A request for a more refined reporting document.
- An audit of skills/representation to be completed as new organisations join the board.
 - Updated guidance available on board membership:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/towns-fund-supplementary-guidance-for-town-deal-boards>
- Review level of detail provided on projects including risk (including budget pressures) and status.
- JE to arrange a workshop on membership and skills audit.

6) AOB

- Town Deal Conference in Manchester on the 20th June.
 - This is to be attended by Chair and an SC Officer.