



## **Bridgwater Town Deal Board**

29<sup>th</sup> September 2023

3:00pm till 4:30pm

Bridgwater Town Hall

### **MINUTES**

#### 1) Introduction and Apologies

Attendees:

- Paul Moore,
- Cllr Bill Revans,
- Cllr Mick Lerry,
- Cllr Ros Wyke,
- Ruth Lambert,
- Gavin Roberts,
- David Ralph,
- Joe Wharton,
- Nick Tait,
- Stuart Martin,
- Paul Edwards,
- Claire Faun,
- Geoff Sawyer.

Supporting the board:

- Joe Wharton,
- Jaycee Ellis,

Apologies

- Nathaniel Lucas,
- Justin Seargent
- David Mears
- Jaycee Ellis

Previous minutes agreed as correct.

- Current Matters Arising
  - JE has issued the Terms of Reference Document.
  - Skills audit work is on-going.



→ Parish/Town Council involvement outstanding.

- Actions Completed:
  - Refresh Terms of Reference
  - Work has been undertaken with Dome Marketing on wider public engagement.

## 2) Progress and Updates

- The Engine Room Project has moved into the delivery stage, Board Members were invited to see the project.
- Welcome to Joe Wharton as Assistant Director of Major Projects, and Geoff Sawyer as Project Manager for the Town Hall Theatre/Arts Centre projects.
  - JW is currently responsible for all the regeneration projects across Somerset, working with Nick Tait and Stuart Martin.

### **Celebration Mile – Stuart Martin**

- The wider Celebration Mile scheme starts at Bridgwater Train Station, going through the town centre and ending at the Docks.
  - The Towns Fund element focuses on Angel Crescent, Eastover, East Quay/Salmon Parade and Clare Street.
- The design work for the Towns Fund part of the scheme is complete.
  - Work has taken place on value engineering of the project, looking at descopeing as and where needed to deliver the project.
  - PM asked if there is an example on where there is potential to descope within the project.
- The tender process has started, and Somerset Council have received 2 bids for this works.
  - This will go to committee on November 8<sup>th</sup>. To be approved by the Council in order to appoint the contractor.
  - There is the expectation that we can start works in January 2024.
- Work has taken place on value engineering of the projects looking at descopeing within the design and delivery of the project.
  - PM asked if there are any examples of de-scoping?
    - SM replied that as an example New Road streetscape may not be included,
  - Cllr ML stated that New Road was seen as an important gateway to the Town from the Bus station.
    - SM replied that different street furniture may be used on New Road, Benches and Planters may not be included.
  - DR asked if local contractors were being used? And do the Local community know that the work is commencing?
    - SM replied that one of the contractors was local working on a current scheme.
    - The local traders have yet to be informed, as the start date needs to be confirmed.
    - Both bidders made a strong case and both have public liaison officers.



- RL asked if there would be additional signage from the Council to inform the public.
  - SM replied this will be part of a communications package. Like the one for Northgate Yard.
- Cllr RW asked if there was any weighting for local labour in the procurement process.
  - SM replied that the council will work with colleagues to make sure that where possible local labour will be used. The main contractor has a sub-contractor that is Bridgwater based.
- CF stated that she has worked with SM on the Northgate Yard project, and as the delivery stage starts the communications will ramp up.

### **Docks Regeneration – Nick Tait**

- There is continuous engagement with the Canals and Rivers Trust on the Docks.
- The team are procuring specialist consultancy support for siltation issues.
- The EA have advised pumping the silt from the Docks into the River Parrett.
  - This can only be completed in a narrow window of December to February.
- Removing silt will take up some of the budget, and the project team need to understand how much.
- The Completed TOPO Survey and drone footage has given the team more information on the existing dock walls.
  - Cllr RW asked how do we ensure we get the best advice?
    - NT replied that the EA recommended the consultants for the silt work. Canals and Rivers Trust have also recommended the specialist they use.
  - Cllr RW said we need procure well and get the best advice.
    - NT Agreed and are currently seeking quotes from specialists as well as through WSP contract.
  - Cllr ML stated it would be useful to know how often the silt work will need to be undertaken.
    - NT replied that this is something the project team are exploring, as are the specification for any new lock gates mindful of long-term maintenance liabilities.
  - SM added that the silt from the Canal comes from the river Tone. There was uncompleted work on the weir at Firepool. Officers are looking at the Hamp Weir with the Canal and Rivers Trust to see how the water can be controlled.
    - Cllr RW recommended that the work with the two weirs gets picked up by the Council.
  - Cllr BR suggested using the Environment Agency to consult with, as closing the lock gates will impact on the Canal. Need to understand how the flood management will be affected.

### **Town Hall Theatre – Geoff Sawyer**

GS showed the Design and Access statement Drawings.

- The Town Hall Theatre is a venue that is hired/used day and night.
- The Carnival Committee are the biggest users with Carnival Concerts in October and Old Folks Show in March.



- Plans will allow for:
  - The existing light wells to be re-introduced.
  - A new lighting rig which will give the auditorium more flexible use.
  - Current seating capacity will increase for 455 to 500.
  - A new control box to be stationed on the balcony, which will allow the old lighting box to be changed into toilets and a lift.
  - The extension to the stage to be removed and new temporary staging used.
  - Dressing rooms to be damp treated and redecorated with toilets and a shower added.
  - Change of Colour from Dark Red to a lighter colour scheme.
- The Planning Application has been submitted, hoping for a decision in December with the work completed April to August.
- For the wider improvement scheme, there is also a planning application to convert the space over the BOS Café into a flat.
  - Cllr RW asked how much consultation had taken place and how will the end users be impacted.
    - GS replied that all end users had been consulted all the way through the process.
  - Cllr RW also asked if the Culture team had been involved and understand what is being delivered.
    - CF said that she will flag the project with the Cultural team at Somerset Council.
  - PE asked if the planning application had been validated?
    - GS replied that it was a concern that the application had not yet been validated, which has been raised with Somerset Council. If the validation is delayed – it can push the programme back a whole calendar year.
    - NT said they will chase up. NT also highlighted that they do not foresee any sudden issues with the application as there has been pre-app consultation with Mark Lidster, Conservation Officer.
  - SM enquired about procuring and the supply chain.
    - GS replied that the Town Council has an approved supplier list and the Town Council will do all the procurement.
  - Cllr RW asked about the governance, how is the financial responsibility being managed.
    - JW replied it was through a grant funding agreement. The projects have to follow a strict process.

### **Carnival Development – Joe Wharton**

- Somerset Council are acting as the procuring body for this project, on behalf of Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee.
- The project team have appointed Stantec for the RIBA Stage 4 Technical Design.
- This project has a fixed window due to needing to operate around the Carnival Season.
  - The project team have identified the end of Summer 2024 will be the preferred start time to look at contractor procurement to start on site in the new year of 2025.
- A QS is due to be appointed in the coming weeks.

### 3) Bridgwater Town Deal Terms of Reference

- PM stated everyone should have received the revised Terms of Reference document.
  - The Board Membership specifics are still being worked through.
  - If Board Members have any comments to make on this document, please contact PM or JE.

### 4) Open Event 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2PM – 7PM

- The open day will take place on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2pm-7pm to promote the Bridgwater Town Deal.
  - JE is working on producing documentation, material and advertisement.
  - It will also be promoted on Sedgemoor FM.
- PM stated that the Open Event is the chance to let people know this is a positive thing for Bridgwater and we need to get people on board and let them know the benefits.
- Cllr ML stated that he will help promote this through the Town Council and can help get posters/messaging out in the public domain.
- PM shared that Dome Marketing have asked Board Members for 50-100 words text that can be used on the social medias outlining what the Bridgwater Town Deal means to them and why the public should attend the event.
- NT stated that the project team behind the Docks are going to be used this as an early opportunity for public engagement around the Docks.
  - Formal consultation for the Docks will follow up in the Winter.
- CF stated that if the board want to keep Dome Marketing, the board/project teams will need to identify the budget.

### 5) Documentary Opportunity

- SM stated that there has been interest in Bridgwater for a documentary by Keo Films.
  - JE and SM met with Keo Films to find out more information. This has led to further conversations with Mickey Green and Paul Hickson about this opportunity.

### 6) AOB

- Action for SM and NT to follow up on the planning application for the Arts Centre/Town Hall Theatre and if they have been validated.
- Cllr ML enquired about a detailed follow up on Bridgwater Step-Up and how this is progressing.
  - JW replied that Michelle Fry was leading on this and feasibility about to start.
- JW shared that there was a successful visit with DLUHC last week where they covered several of the Town Deal projects, visiting the Engine Room, in conjunction with other Regeneration sites within Bridgwater.
- PM stated that the Board will now meet bimonthly, with each meeting being in person.



- It was also noted that when meeting bimonthly, there will also be paper monitoring on the projects in between meetings to keep the board updated.
- DR mentioned that DLUHC used to attend the board meetings. Has this now changed?
  - JW replied that it was expected that someone from DLUHC would attend.