



## **Bridgwater Town Deal Board**

24<sup>th</sup> November 2023

3:00pm till 4:30pm

Hybrid Meeting

Coleridge, Bridgwater House, King Square, TA6 3AR – Microsoft Teams

### **MINUTES**

#### 1) Introduction and Apologies

Attendees:

- Paul Moore,
- Cllr Bill Revans,
- Cllr Mick Lerry,
- Cllr Ros Wyke,
- Ruth Lambert,
- Gavin Roberts,
- David Mears,
- David Ralph,
- Stuart Martin,
- Paul Hickson,

Supporting the board:

- Joe Wharton,
- Jaycee Ellis,

Apologies

- Nathaniel Lucas,
- Justin Sargent
- Nick Tait
- Paul Edwards
- Claire Faun

Previous minutes deferred.

Paul Moore (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## 2) Progress and Updates

- PM thanked everyone for their help and attendance with the open event at the Town Hall Theatre on 13<sup>th</sup> October, especially JE for the organisation of the event.
  - The event was well attended, with a variety of feedback, both positive and negative.
  - Cllr RW added a huge well done to everyone involved with the event, and only heard positive comments.
  - PM stated that the Celebration Mile appears to be the most controversial project.
    - SM added that the direction of traffic along Salmon parade was one of the public's concerns, all the options had been assessed and this had been proved in transport modelling.
    - DM added that communication was key to get the public and businesses behind the project.
  - Cllr ML commented that he didn't receive any negative comments at the open day, only questions about the projects. Businesses as well as members of the public attended.
- The Comms contract with Dome Marketing has ended and the team are in the process of getting this handed in to the internal communications team.

### Town Wardens

- Yeovil and Chard are interested in starting a Town Warden Scheme since the implementation of them in Bridgwater.

### Celebration Mile

- A meeting was held with the preferred contractor and pricing was discussed.
  - Another meeting with them is planned for the week commencing 04/12/2023.
- A communication plan has not yet been prepared; SM will work with the contractor to achieve this.
- A desire to have a consultation event for the Celebration Mile to take place on Eastover in the new year.
  - It was suggested that the Community Church in Eastover could be used to hold this event, and that leaflets and media/billboards could be used to inform people.

### Town Events

- RL enquired what the upcoming 24 events were?
  - JE to seek clarification from BA.
- A request for BA to attend the next board meeting.

### Bridgwater Carnival

- Good Progress had been made with George Allen since his appointed as Project Manager.
- Continuing to meet with the design and client teams to discuss detail design.



- Procurement is planned to start in Summer 2024, in order to be on site in 2025 for a 42-week construction programme.
- JE to complete the partnership agreement between all parties involved.
- Cllr RW asked about the projects planning permission.
  - JE replied that the project was granted planning permission earlier this year, and developments with the project are being discussed with the planning officer.

#### Town Hall Theatre

- The project is moving forward, with the main hurdle being the planning permissions.
- Cllr RW asked where they are in planning?
  - JE replied they have both been validated.
  - DM stated that planning has been a big issue, it has delayed the Town Hall Theatre project by 10 months. Procurement of contractors cannot commence without planning permission.

#### Arts Centre

- Arts Centre project is planned to start in late summer of 2024.
- This project is also slightly delayed due to planning delays.
  - Paul Hickson (PH) added he understood the importance of these projects and getting them through planning permission. These will be investigated.
  - SM explained the Registration team were under pressure, this has now been resolved.
  - Cllr ML added it was flagged at the last meeting that planning was crucial to the projects.
  - JE stated that none of the other projects are currently waiting on Planning Permissions. JE will consult with the planning officers to get updates on the planning applications.

#### Engine Room

- Deb R has provided a project summary document.

#### Docks Regeneration

- A technically challenging and complex project.
- Recent investigations have revealed that the match funding for this project is not secured.
- Looking to appoint WSP to look at the Swing Bridge and the Newtown Lock.
  - They will also deliver the walking and cycling element of this project.
- The project team are looking to further understand the issues with silt, including the flow rate.
- Water testing is needed to understand the state of the water.
- There is a public consultation on 13<sup>th</sup> December to be held at the Sea Cadets Hall 3.30pm – 6.30pm in conjunction with the Blue Heritage event at The Arts Centre.
- JE stated that a press release will go out next week regarding the consultation event.
  - The Town Wardens are doing a leaflet drop to the local residents and businesses to help with messaging.



#### Step-Up

- Due to the financial position of the council, Bridgwater House can no longer be considered as an option for this project.
- Another review of the project is being undertaken by the officer's team and will bring new proposals to the board by the next meeting.
  - PM stated that this is devastating news, and would like to be part of the re-evaluation of the project.
- DM added that other properties in town could be used for Step-Up and showed an interest in being involved in the review of the proposals.

### 3) Somerset Council Financial Position

- The council is currently spending 63% of its total income on Adults and Social Care.
  - The cost of care has increased from £450 a week to in excess of £900 a week.
- All corporate property is being reviewed, hence the result in no longer being able to house Step-Up in Bridgwater House.
  - Somerset Council can no longer commit to the £200k match funding that was originally committed to the Step-Up project.
- Only externally funded projects are allowed to continue.
- Money for regeneration projects is secure and ringfenced for these projects as they are externally funded.
- DLUHC have been informed of Somerset Council's financial position.

### 4) Cllr Gill Slocombe – Board Representation

- It has been proposed that Cllr Gill Slocombe is to be invited back to the Board.
- Cllr ML suggested that if we are having a refresh of the board, representatives should be invited from the other projects.
- DR suggested that a skills audit of Board members take place.
- Cllr RW added the Glastonbury Town Deal Board have representatives of the projects on their Board and it works well.
- Cllr ML asked if people who do not attend Board Meetings regularly could send representatives in their place.
- SM asked if the College could be involved.
- Decision not made until skills audit has taken place.
  - SC to continue the skills audit PM started to identify gaps on the board.

### 5) AOB

- PM requested that the minutes of the board meetings can be circulated sooner.
- The next interim report will be sent out to board the week ending the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024 to avoid the Christmas week.
  - A report will then be circulated to board every other month.
- PM asked if there were records being kept regarding the finances for the Bridgwater Town Deal.
  - JW replied that there is a separate record of the finances being kept up to date for this.



The date of next meeting to be confirmed in due course.