



## Bridgwater Town Deal Board

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024

11:00am to 12:30pm

Hybrid

Bridgwater House/Teams Meeting

### MINUTES

#### 1) Introduction, Apologies and Minutes of the Last Meeting

##### Attendees:

- Paul Moore,
- Cllr Bill Revans,
- Cllr Mike Rigby,
- Cllr Mick Lerry,
- David Mears,
- Cllr Gill Slocombe
- Paul Edwards,

##### Supporting the board:

- Lara Bell,
- Jaycee Ellis,
- Nick Tait,
- Jackie Gill,

##### Apologies:

- Ruth Lambert
- Andrew Harper,
- Paul Hickson,

Previous minutes agreed as correct.

#### 2) Animating the Town Centre Update

- Jeremy James (JJ), the Events and Outreach Manager for Bridgwater Town Deal, gave an update on the Animating the Town Centre Scheme.
- JJ proposed the following proposals to the Animating the Town Centre Budget:

- A 5% reduction in the current budget lines to enable a marketing fund, to enable the marketing freelancer to help produce materials for advertising the events funded through the Animating the Town Centre scheme.
- Transfer funding for the legacy projects outlined in the budget proposal to allow for smooth delivery.
- JJ confirmed that he would continue to work in partnership with the legacy project partners to ensure best value.
- Cllr BR reminded the Board that the area targeted should be more than the Town Centre.
- PE questioned how events are being promoted outside Bridgwater?
  - JJ replied that leaflets and flyers would be distributed to libraries across Somerset.
  - DM offered to involve Tourist Information Centres and Neighbouring Parishes using internal communications to help amplify the messaging.

**The Bridgwater Town Deal Board agreed to both of these proposals.**

### 3) Docks Regeneration

- LB announced that since the last board meeting, she had managed to source a Project Manager to help support the project.
  - NT confirmed that due to the restructuring, he will no longer be leading the project but will continue to input into the Project Working Group moving forwards. he will continue to have input on the project but will no longer be leading on it.
- NT confirmed the following:
  - Work to be done on reviewing WSP reports for the Newtown Lock and the Swing Bridge.
  - Strategy to address how to manage the Silt within the Dock. Previous quotes will be revisited.
  - The Active Travel path will now progress with a new project manager.
- DM stated that it was great to see movement on this project. Bridgwater Town Council would like to have regular meetings with the new Project Manager.
- Cllr ML agreed that he was pleased that there was recently identified resource.
- Cllr ML stated in the meeting that the project was about the Regeneration of the Docks. What is the detailed scope of the project?
  - NT responded that the business case needs to ensure that there is a commercial element to the project. Creating footfall to the area is important, and there is emphasis on making it a destination.
  - NT covered that specific elements of the Docks will be expensive to recover. Once the Working Group is established, this will help decide the direction of the project and what elements should be prioritised.
- Cllr ML asked about the dilapidations claim.
  - Cllr GS stated that the dilapidations need to be sorted before the Bridgwater Town Council can take on the Docks.
  - NT replied that these are still progressing. However, there is a need to be realistic with these conversations as funding is a restriction.
  - **Action:** LB to liaise with Assets regarding the dilapidation conversations.

- DM asked for regular updates and a clear work plan for this project.
- **Action:** Somerset Council to set up a Docks Partnership Group and get regular meetings in the diary.

#### 4) Bridgwater Step Up Update

- LB presented a paper prepared by James Gilgrist (JG), the Head of Service for Economic Prosperity. This reviewed the Town Hall against the original business case that was approved by Government. Due to reasons set out in the paper, JG concluded that the Bridgwater Town Hall was not considered to be a viable proposition for SC to continue with.
- LB presented the board with 3 alternative options:
  - Bridgwater Town Council considers a revised offer for the space at the Bridgwater Town Hall.
  - Bridgwater Town Deal Board to seek alternative locations.
  - Bridgwater Town Deal Board to reallocate the funding to alternate projects, subject to conversations/agreement from Central Government.
- DM stated that the Town Hall has a business case for leasing space, if a specific level of income per square metre cannot be reached, the Town Council will lose income, which they are not prepared to do.
- PM asked who would retain control of funding?
  - LB responded that the only way the funding could be transferred to the Town Council is if the proposal strongly meets the original business case.
  - A Project Adjustment Request would also need to be submitted to Government for approval.
- The Board is unable to reach a decision today, the board concluded this agenda item with 2 alternative options:
  - The Town Council become the owners of the Step-Up Project
  - The Board considers other locations for Step-Up.
- Cllr GS suggested that both options are worked up.
- PM reintroduced the idea of the old Thompsons building to be considered by the board as another location.
  - **Action:** LB, JE, PE and PM to investigate other possible locations.

#### 5) Town Board Transparency and Compliance

- JE stated to the board that Somerset Council had received an email from Central Government regarding Transparency and Compliance on Town Deal Boards.
- JE has acknowledged the email and will bring a paper to the next board to outline where the Bridgwater Town Deal Board sit on Transparency and Compliance and Next Steps to be actioned following this.

#### 6) Resourcing and Skills Audit

- JE reminded board members to respond to the Skills Audit request that was sent out to board members previously.
  - The board requested for this email to be reforwarded to the board. JE to action.
- LB has resourced another team member to the programme to help with current resourcing challenges.

- JE will continue the current mechanisms that are already in place with all project partners to continue progress on projects.
  - Any strategic decisions that need to be considered/made, JE to raise with LB in the first instance, working collaboratively with the board as and when required.

## 7) AOB

- The Small Grants Panel under the Animating the Town Centre fund currently does not have a representative from Somerset Council due to recent restructuring. Somerset Council to action in due course.
- Cllr ML asked about the landing stages/pontoons and if they are being renewed as this will have an impact on the liability for the Town Council when taking it forward.

## Actions

Date	Action	Completed?/Comments
24/11/2023	Board meetings Bi-monthly interim reports to be sent out	Complete
24/11/2023	Skills audit for Board members	Complete
24/11/2023	Complete Partnership Agreement - JE	This has superseded as the project has progressed.
24/01/2024	Share Environment Agency Agreement with the Board - NL	
24/01/2024	Share finance details of the projects with the Board - NL	Closed
24/01/2024	NL to look at other funding options and explore the use of the Town Hall for Step Up	Complete
27/03/2024	Discussion with Alison and Peter RE Docks link to Firepool / Taunton Garden Town	
27/03/2024	NL to provide list of contact to BA for Moon Project	Completed
27/03/2024	Step Up NL to shared Options report before next meeting	Complete
27/03/2024	Cllr Bill Revens to contact Ian Liddel-Grainger re meetings.	Superseded due to change in MP. JE has contacted new MP to become a board member
29/05/2024	Skills audit to take place	In progress – NL sent email to Board Members
29/05/2024	Election of Vice Chair	To be taken before the end of the year
29/05/2024	Regular newsletter to be prepared	Complete
29/05/2024	JE to investigate physical signage	Complete
29/05/2024	PP & NT to speak to PH regarding Resources	Ongoing
29/05/2024	Town Deal Finance item on agenda for next meeting	
24/07/2024	The Step-Up Business Case to be shared with Board members before the next meeting.	
02/10/2024	LB to liaise with Assets regarding the dilapidation conversations on the Docks project.	
02/10/2024	Somerset Council to set up a Docks Partnership Group and get regular meetings in the diary.	



02/10/2024	LB, JE, PE and PM to investigate other possible locations for Bridgwater Step-Up.	
02/10/2024	JE to bring a paper to the next board meeting regarding the Board's position on Transparency and Compliance requirements.	
02/10/2024	Board Members to complete Skills Audit form.	
02/10/2024	Somerset Council to propose representative for the Small Grants Panel.	