

**Burton upon Trent Town Deal Board Minutes**

**23<sup>rd</sup> December 2021**

**Board Members Present**

Ben Robinson                      Chairman  
 John McKiernan                  Parish Council Representative  
 Mick Clifford                      Burton Civic Society  
 Cllr Duncan Goodfellow        East Staffordshire BC  
 Cllr George Allen                East Staffordshire BC  
 Nik Hardy                          Business Representative  
 Lynette Howgate                Coopers Square Shopping Centre  
 Shaid Hussain                    Business and Community  
     Representative  
 Dennis Fletcher                 Parish Council representative

**In Attendance**

Andy O'Brien                      East Staffordshire BC  
 Mark Rizk                          East Staffordshire BC  
 James Abbott                      East Staffordshire BC  
 Thomas Deery                      East Staffordshire BC  
 Cara Wild                          East Staffordshire BC  
 Wayne Mortiboys                 Staffordshire CC  
 Andrea Davies                      East Staffordshire BC

**Apologies**

Chris Plant                          Chamber of Commerce  
 Kate Griffiths                      Member of Parliament  
 Cllr Victoria                        Staffordshire CC  
 Wilson  
 Valerie Burton                      Burton Civic Society  
 Cllr Bev Ashcroft                 East Staffordshire BC  
 Cllr Philip White                 Staffordshire CC

| <b>Agenda Item No.</b> | <b>Subject</b>  | <b>Decision / Discussion / Recommendation</b>  | <b>Action Points</b> | <b>Date Action Required</b> |
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| 1                      | Welcome and Apologies   | The Chairman welcomed the Board to the meeting and noted that apologies for absence had been received from Chris Plant, Kate Griffiths MP, Cllr Victoria Wilson, Cllr Philip White, Cllr Bev Ashcroft and Valerie Burton.      |                      |                             |
| 2                      | Minutes of 25 <sup>th</sup> November 2021 Town Deal Board meeting and Matters Arising | The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record, subject to the word "found" to be replaced by "drilled" within the section on page 3 entitled "New Pedestrian & Cycling Crossing over the River Trent". |                      |                             |

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| 3 | Project Updates | <p>The Board considered the updated Programme highlight report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair invited Project Leads to provide an update on each of the seven projects on the Towns Fund Programme.</p> <p><u>Regional Learning Centre</u></p> <p>In the absence of Cllr Philip White, MR provided an update to the meeting.</p> <p>MR advised the Board that Staffordshire University were considering the proposal following previous discussions with the university. The most recent information had been an email received on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021, requesting more information and potential programme details etc, some information had already been provided and the remaining information would be sent through in the New Year. The Board noted that the University Executive Board would be meeting in January 2022.</p> <p><u>High Street Linkages</u></p> <p>TD gave a presentation on the Project D Stage 3 proposal consultation website, which would be open to the public until Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022, for a total period of four weeks. The feedback from the consultation would be included within the business case before being considered by Members. AOB stated that he had received an email from the Chairman of the Trustees of the National Brewery Centre offering support with particular reference to the Town House proposal and archiving when it becomes a heritage centre and museum.</p> <p><u>Library and Enterprise Hub</u></p> <p>WM informed the meeting that an outcome on the listing from Historic England was expected in the early part of January 2022. The report was submitted to Staffordshire County Council's Cabinet and that the budget had been increased, which had been due to the final construction estimate. The report to Cabinet outlined progress against the four tests which had been set. At the meeting, the SCC Cabinet resolved to support the project subject to the external gap funding to be met by the Towns Fund or other external funding. The submission of the business case was approved at the meeting. Subsequently, the Cabinet decision had been called in and the decision would now go forward to the meeting of the County Council's Scrutiny Committee to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022.</p> <p>The Chairman indicated he had received a request on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021 from the MP to</p> |  |  |
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|  |  | <p>discuss at this meeting the alternative business case received from Burton Market Action Group (BMAG). It was confirmed that BMAG had previously presented the proposal to the Project D group, following which the concept was tested as part of the proposals for that project. The alternative business case was reviewed by the Board and a number of concerns were identified for the each of the five cases as well as the introductory sections of the document. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The population of Burton is grossly exaggerated by around 60% as it includes people living in Swadlincote. A more accurate figure is 77,500. Similarly, the population of other towns is understated, Doncaster is estimated to be 312,800 rather than 158,141 and Stockport is 294,200, rather than 136,923. The income figures provided for both towns is also lower than ONS figures and for Altrincham, the average annual income is actually £12,000 higher at £39,743. As such, these example areas are not considered to be comparative case studies.</li> <li>• The case study examples do not account for the ongoing investment/grant required by the Local Authorities. For example, Doncaster recently needed to provide just under £1m of grant funding to the private operators in order to mitigate losses and both Stockport and Sefton Councils operate with an annual net cost for their halls, rather than profit, which has been confirmed by both Councils.</li> <li>• There is no consideration of the amount of investment required to repair and renew the Market Hall itself, such as the roof replacement that is estimated to cost in the region of £650,000. No consideration is given to the existing businesses in the Market Hall either, whose retail uses are contradictory to the proposed food and produce proposal.</li> <li>• The business case generally contains a significant amount of opinions from the unnamed authors and photographs/images. For example, the only relevant sections of the strategic case are the references to the Burton Regeneration Strategy 2019 and Local Plan, and the referenced survey involves duplicated responses, where respondents could select more than one option meaning that 879 responses are not unique responses, and targeted consultation with particular interest groups.</li> <li>• The proposed investment cost is not justified but presumably based on the case study examples without accounting for the condition of the Market Hall building. The benefit cost ratio is not provided as a ratio, but is presumably based on the underestimated cost.</li> <li>• The procurement strategy is not compliant with the Council’s procurement policy, but this could be updated and resolved, however it is suggested that the works would be ‘relatively low complexity’, which is not an accurate statement.</li> <li>• The proposed income levels for the proposal appear very unachievable and unsustainable, with the suggestion that the facility could provide a profit to the Council from day one, with a year one turnover of £2.5m, based on an average one</li> </ul> |  |  |
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|  |  | <p>meal and one drink cost of £17, with an average spend of £13 per person, at a minimum of 150,000 meals or 190,000 visits per annum from year one. This does not correlate with the experiences of other Councils and it is not justified, explained or verified in any way within the business case. There is no evidence of market research within Burton to suggest that this could be achievable and there is no actual sensitivity testing of the figures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More consideration is needed of governance and contingency within the management case; the specific contingencies identified are not appropriate.</li> <li>• Overall, there is no empirical evidence within the business case to support the proposal.</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that the Board respond to the MP and the BMAG direct outlining the analysis which had been carried out, in addition to sharing this analysis with County Councillors and Borough Councillors who had also been sent a copy of the BMAG proposal.</p> <p>GA wished to place on record his frustration with the Towns Fund process given to the Board by the Government.</p> <p><u>New Pedestrian &amp; Cycling Crossing over the River Trent</u></p> <p>WM advised that the report was submitted to Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021, however the report had been amended to reflect a request from the Cabinet to change back to the original proposal which had been brought forward to the Board for a bridge with a 450m span of the Washlands. They proposed as part of the recommendation that the County Council seek to look for the additional £4m investment from the Levelling Up Fund application being made in 2022. MC and SH expressed their concerns in opposition to this amendment to the project; concerns included that the scope had since changed; the shortfall in funding; public consultation not including a viaduct; incomplete view caused up by a viaduct; difficulties of joining a modern structure to the Andressey Bridge and the vista of Town being spoilt.</p> <p>At this juncture DF left the meeting.</p> <p>Following a discussion about the project, it was proposed and duly seconded that “the New Pedestrian and Cycling Crossing over the River Trent project be withdrawn, with the assumption that the monies previously allocated to this project could be used to address any shortfalls in other projects“. This was agreed by the voting members present (with the exception of 1 abstention).</p> <p>At this juncture NH left the meeting.</p> | BR on behalf of the Board |  |
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|   |                      | <p>It was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To communicate this decision to the County Council;</li> <li>• That AOB/TD and JA reengage with Government to clarify about the reallocation of funding from this project;</li> <li>• That the draft Business Case be circulated to members of the Board, along with an assessment of the business case;</li> <li>• That a unified communications narrative be released by SCC/ESBC and the Board, indicating that this project could not be progressed any longer.</li> </ul> <p><u>Trent and Mersey Canal Towpath Improvements</u></p> <p>JMcK advised that costs had been received from Amey. The Canals and River Trust were looking into to shortening the length of the path by 1km and also looking at internal resources to see how they could sure up the canal side.</p> <p><u>Cycle Network Enhancements</u></p> <p>WM advised that the business case was complete and ready to be submitted. It provided a cycle network from the A511 through to the Town Hall, connecting into the canal network at Shobnall Bridge then heading into the Town Past the Railway Station and would connect with a project which the County Council will be delivering in 2022 to connect the Railway station with the Town Centre.</p> <p><u>College Specialist Education Offer</u></p> <p>JA advised that the focus was primarily on the consultation and had received support from various stakeholders. The final Business Case had been received ahead of the deadline.</p> | <p>BR on behalf of the Board<br/>AOB/TD/JA</p> <p>WM/TD</p> <p>AOB/TD/JA</p> |  |
| 4 | Date of Next Meeting | The next meeting would take place on Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> January 2022.  | All  |  |
| 5 | Any Other Business   | MC raised concerns with construction inflation prices and it was agreed to provide a short paper to reassure Board Members that projects were submitted which take into account previous/current and future inflation costs.  | AOB/TD/JA  |  |