

## Minutes of the Birkenhead Town Deal Board

7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 11am

Wirral Met College, Hamilton Campus, Argyle Street, Birkenhead

REF	ITEM	Action
1	<p><b>Welcome and apologies</b> Leigh-Anne Stradeski (LS) as Chair welcomed the Board and visitors.</p> <p>In attendance: Leigh-Anne Stradeski - Eureka! Science &amp; Discovery Dave Hughes – Wirral Council Cllr Tony Jones - Wirral Council Cllr Pat Cleary - Wirral Council Liam Kelly – Make CIC Gill Banks - Wirral Met College Nikki Leising – Wirral Met College Adrian Jones (for Louise Healey) - DWP Mark Gilbertson – LCR CA Paula Basnett - Wirral Chamber of Commerce Dean Paton – Big Heritage Mark Hoskisson – For Mick Whitley MP Stuart Whittingham – For Mick Whitley MP Georgia Millership – Cities &amp; Local Growth Unit Rosie Jenkins - Cities &amp; Local Growth Unit Kate Pierce - Wirral Council Cathy Palmer – Wirral Council (Regeneration) Luke Bithall – Wirral Council (Regeneration) Samantha Howes – Wirral Council (Museums) Julia Redhead – Wirral Council (Museums)</p> <p>Apologies received from: Mick Whitley MP Richard Mawdsley - Wirral Waters – Peel L&amp;P Louise Healey – DWP Paul Stuart – Wirral Council Mark Lightburn – Wirral Council (Finance)</p> <p>LS welcomed Gill Banks to the Board</p>	
2	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b> Declarations of interest were recorded from members of the Board with Town Deal projects including Leigh-Anne Stradeski, Paula Basnett, Liam Kelly, Gill Banks. <b>ACTION:</b> Further declarations of interest to be sent to Kate Pierce (KP).</p>	Board Members
3	<p><b>Meeting Minutes</b> The Board received and approved the minutes of its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023.</p> <p>KP updated the Board on the outcome of the actions completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects with RAG rating of 12 or more were to be reviewed later in the agenda.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rosie Jenkins reported back on how DLUHC might support projects with challenges faced.</li> <li>• Active Travel slides had been circulated</li> </ul>	
4	<p><b>Update on the Town Deal projects</b></p> <p>KP noted that Board members had received a written update as part of the meeting papers.</p> <p>Of the 12 projects funded by Town Deal 8 were progressing well and had low RAG ratings.</p> <p>Of the 4 remaining projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport Shed and Birkenhead Priory were both the subject of change control proposals with details to be presented to the Board under agenda Item 5.</li> <li>• Woodside Ferry Village is the subject of a pre-application submission and is currently being considered by the planning team. Once feedback had been received the project adjustment request could be considered by the Council.</li> <li>• Sustainability Central – A summary updated had been provided as part of the meeting papers. However, a full update was unavailable at the meeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b> That an update on the timeframe, risks and mitigation be given on the Sustainability Central project to provide reassurance to the Board of its progress and deliverability.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> That a representative of the project attends the board meeting for any projects with a RAG rating of 12 or more, in order to present the project and provide reassurance to the Board of its progress and deliverability.</p> <p><b>Monitoring and Evaluation Performance Reporting Q1&amp;2 2023/24</b>  KP reported that the twice annual Performance Report was currently being prepared and would be circulated to the Board for review prior to submission to Department of Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).</p>	<p>RM</p> <p>KP to invite</p> <p>KP</p>
5	<p><b>Project updates</b></p> <p><b>Transport Shed</b>  Dean Paton (DP) left the room due to a conflict of interest.</p> <p>Cathy Palmer (CP) presented an update and project adjustment on Transport Shed setting out that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed project exceeded the cost envelope</li> <li>• Alternative sites had been reviewed but none had been found to be suitable.</li> <li>• A joint project between NML and the council was unlikely to be deliverable within the budget and timeframe.</li> <li>• A revised project involving an extension to the Wirral Transport Museum would deliver similar outputs to the approved project.</li> <li>• A full business case was currently being prepared for the revised project.</li> <li>• A new site for a future NML project had been identified as part of the Waterfront Masterplan area. Funding had not been secured for the project and it could not be delivered as part of the Town Deal programme. The</li> </ul>	

	<p>council would explore this opportunity further as part of the masterplan development.</p> <p>The Board considered the presentation and noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The challenges in delivering the original project were acknowledged. The Board expressed disappointment that the project could not go ahead in its current form and that NML would not be part of the Town Deal programme.</li> <li>• A presentation be brought back to the next meeting of the Board with the result of the Full Business Case.</li> <li>• Several projects in the Town Deal and wider regeneration programme were currently experiencing funding challenges due to inflation. Consideration should be given to how best to use the funding should Transport Shed as originally proposed not be able about to ahead.</li> <li>• The implications of the revised proposal in relation to Dock Branch Park.</li> </ul> <p>The Board agreed to move to the next step and asked that:</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> An updated proposal to be brought back to the Board following completion of the Full Business Case.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> That a presentation be made to the Board setting out how the extended Wirral Transport Museum proposal would fit in the wider package of local heritage attractions.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> That any funding shortfalls in other projects be identified.</p> <p>DP rejoined the meeting.</p> <p><b>Birkenhead Priory</b>  Julia Readhead presented an update and project adjustment setting out that:</p> <p>Following development of the project, including a more detailed understanding of costs, it is proposed that a change be made to one aspect of the project. Instead of the construction of a new visitor facility called 'The Pavillion', it is now proposed that the grant be used to create an updated visitor facility in a currently underutilised space. The revised element of the project involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updating and redisplaying the Undercroft space with new content, cases and interpretation to create a 21st-century visitor centre</li> <li>• Improving visitor ability to explore, view and engage with the historic architecture with new transparent flooring for viewing the ancient floor</li> <li>• Making the Refectory space a more flexible 'all-weather' event, exhibition and community space with new access facilities.</li> </ul> <p>The revised aspect of the project would meet the original objective which is to increase visitor capacity and improve accessibility and the visitor experience.</p> <p>The Board considered the proposal and supported the change.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Approval be sought from the Council for the change to the project.</p> <p><b>Sustainability Central</b>  A representative of the project was unable to attend the meeting and no further update was given.</p>	<p>CP/LB</p> <p>DP</p> <p>KP</p> <p>JR</p>
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### **Pathfinder Simplification Pilot**

The Board received a presentation from Dave Hughes (DH) regarding the Pathfinder Simplification Pilot. DH confirmed that Wirral was one of ten Local Authorities invited to participate in the pilot which would streamline the delivery of three funds; Future High Street Fund, Town Deal and Levelling Up Fund (Round 1). The Pathfinder would:

- Align spend deadlines for all funds to the 31st March 2026
- Enable increased flexibility to reallocate money between the projects
- Enable future change control of projects where less than £5m
- Reduce administrative burden

An Investment Plan had been submitted to DLUHC setting out 22 projects. DH noted that 2 projects were potentially subject to further change and that future engagement would be undertaken as part of the project development before being reported to Economy, Regeneration & Housing Committee.

A consolidated governance structure would be established which would exercise strategic oversight over the total portfolio of projects. The successor body would build on the positive local role of existing Town Deal Board. Town Deal Board would be reconstituted and expanded to reflect wider geographical remit. The successor body would be advisory, and the Council would remain the accountable body for the Simplification Pilot.

The Board discussed the opportunity that the Pathfinder presented. Comments and concerns were noted regarding:

- The extent and timeliness of engagement with market traders regarding plans for Birkenhead Market.
- Potential new projects being introduced to the programme when there was already significant pressure on existing projects to deliver within their cost envelope.
- The potential for a larger board to be less effective.
- The new arrangements not reflecting what the Town Deal Board had originally set out to achieve, with a potential loss of vision for the regeneration of Birkenhead.
- Where there is a reallocation of Town Deal funding because of project change or failure, this might lead to a potential reduction in funding for Town Deal projects.
- The need for longer term members of the Town Deal Board to remain on the new successor body to ensure a continuation of vision and objectives set by the Board at its inception.

DH confirmed that:

- Options and proposal would be put to the Economy, Regeneration & Housing Committee in December and consultation would be undertaken before that.
- The funding was not for new projects.
- Consideration would be given to the size of the new successor body to ensure that it remained fit for purpose.

	<p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A report regarding governance would be considered by Policy &amp; Resources Committee on 21st November 2023</li> <li>• Confirmation of acceptance on the Simplification Pilot is awaited.</li> <li>• If approved, the first meeting of successor body is planned for early 2023.</li> </ul>	
7	<p><b>Regeneration Delivery Programme</b></p> <p>The new Assistant Director posts for both Regeneration and Planning were expected to commence in December.</p> <p>CP provided an update on both Hind Street and Dock Branch Park projects.</p>	
8	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>KP thanked Wirral Met College for hosting the meeting. It was noted that the refurbished meeting room was part of the Town Deal project and it was good to see progress made in the delivery of the Education Engagement Network project.</p> <p>LAS thanks Cathy Palmer and Damian Cooke who were both leaving the Council, for their contribution to the Town Deal programme.</p>	
9	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> KP to arrange next meeting</p> <p>LAS thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.</p>	KP