

Sandwell Towns Fund Superboard

18 March 2021 at 14:00

Present:

- Jude Thompson, Black Country Chamber of Commerce (Chair)
- Geoff Layer, Local Enterprise Partnership
- Chris Hinson, Local Board Chair- West Bromwich
- Adrian Eggington, Local Board Chair- Rowley Regis
- James Morris, MP Halesowen and Rowley Regis
- Nicola Richards, MP West Bromwich East
- Shaun Bailey, MP West Bromwich West
- John Spellar, MP for Warley
- Graham Pennington, Sandwell College
- Cllr Danny Millard, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- Mark Davis, SCVO
- Geoff Foster, SCVO
- Sandeep Shingadia, Transport for West Midlands
- Gareth Bradford, West Midlands Combined Authority
- Keeley Bevington, West Midlands Police
- Jo Nugent, Homes England

SMBC Officers:

- Surjit Tour, Director - Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
- Rebecca Jenkins, Towns Fund Programme Manager
- Alex Oxley, Planning Regeneration Officer
- Alan Reynolds, Senior Planning Regeneration Officer
- Hayley Insley, Planning Regeneration Team Leader
- Tariq Karim, Area Manager Youth Service
- Santokh Singh, Neighbourhood Engagement Manager
- Chloe King, Planning Regeneration Support Officer
- Clinton Felicio, Planning Regeneration Support Officer
- Lesley Hagger, Director- Childrens Services

Also present: Aaron Toussaint, Cities and Local Growth

27/21 **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting of the Sandwell Towns Fund Superboard.

28/21 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from the following Superboard members:
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Karen Woolley, Federation of Small Businesses
Dilip Awtani, Liberty Group
Alan Taylor, Local Board Chair- Smethwick
Cllr Maria Crompton, Sandwell MBC
Tammy Stokes, Sandwell MBC (Officer)

29/21 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

30/21 **Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interests were made at the meeting:

Nicola Richards MP- Trustee of the Albion Foundation

In addition to the existing and continued declarations from previous meetings:

Alan Taylor – in relation to any matters relating to Sandwell College;
Tom Hawley – as Homes England was sometimes asked by other Government Departments for feedback on applications and submissions.
Geoff Layer – in relation to any matters relating to University of Wolverhampton;
Graham Pennington – in relation to any matters relating to Sandwell College;

31/21 **Approval of Heads of Terms for a Town Deal for Rowley Regis, Smethwick and West Bromwich**

Rebecca Jenkins introduced the tabled HoT report circulated to Superboard members within the meeting documentation and provided an overview of the offers received for each of the three towns (£25m West Bromwich, £23.5m Smethwick and £19m Rowley Regis). Further information was given as to the contents of each of the HoTs.

Cllr Danny Millard advised that a report seeking an onward recommendation to the Towns Fund Superboard for the approval of the HoTs was taken to SMBC Cabinet on 17/03/21 and was subsequently agreed.

Local board chairs were invited to comment on the receipt of HoTs.

Adrian Eggington reported that Local Board members were pleased with the outcome of £19m of funding for the area, despite being disappointed to learn that £6m funding was not approved for the Air Source Heat Pump project. Alternative delivery mechanisms are being explored to deliver this scheme separately to the Towns Fund.

Chris Hinson advised that West Bromwich members were pleased with the results of the funding and look forward to commencing project delivery of the full £25m. Chris raised the importance of, and connection with, the emerging West Bromwich Masterplan which will provide an up-to-date policy framework for delivery of the projects outlined in the Town Investment Plan (TIP).

Jude Thompson spoke on behalf of Alan Taylor and acknowledged the achievements of the Smethwick Local Board in securing £23.5m of funding for the area.

All chairs thanked Local Board members, officers and wider stakeholders for contributions to this point. The floor was opened to comments or discussion from board members.

James Morris MP thanked and congratulated members for the achievements to date. Raised a question with regards the Air Source Heat Pump scheme and whether any feedback had been received as to why this project was not funded.

Aaron Toussaint, CLGU, advised that this particular project was not funded given that the specific skills outputs/outcomes were not viewed by Government as favourable compared with other asks across both Sandwell and external TIPs for similar levels of financial commitment. This project was confirmed as being the sole reason for the £6m reduction within the Rowley Regis HoT.

Jude Thompson made comment that this project has potential for private investment and it would be prudent to seek views from the local business community, in partnership with central Government, on this.

Nicola Richards MP thanks and congratulated members. Reaffirmed a desire to be involved on a more granular level with proposals for the Indoor Market, West Bromwich, and asked about timescales for stakeholder engagement.

Rebecca Jenkins advised that there is due to be discussions at future Superboard meetings with regards stakeholder engagement and further information will be circulated to members in due course.

James Morris MP pointed to the fact that Rowley Regis was mentioned in the recent budget speech which will further help to establish the area.

Aaron Toussaint confirmed that following confirmation of HoTs there is 12 months to confirm projects with central government through the full business case process.

Agreed to receive and agree the Heads of Terms for Town Deals for Rowley Regis, Smethwick and West Bromwich; and approve that the Chair of the Superboard alongside the Chair of the relevant Local Board sign the Heads of Terms.

32/21 **Update on Towns Fund Timelines**

Rebecca Jenkins provided an update on the Timelines for phase two of the Towns Fund programme. The next steps and key milestones are outlined in the appended report '**Towns Fund Programme Timeline**', which can be found in the meeting documentation.

33/21 **Closing Comments**

Aaron Toussaint advised that there should be an announcement coming shortly with regards the capacity building funding and money should be with LA's in the coming weeks where applicable.

Graham Pennington asked about potential communication strategy and would like to promote the success of the programme to date. Rebecca Jenkins advised that there is a draft publicity protocol and will arrange for SMBC communications to make contact with counterparts at Sandwell College separately to this meeting in order to arrange.

Jude Thompson reflected positively on the achievements across the three TIPs thus far, thanked board members and officers for their input and assistance respectively.

Meeting ended at 2.33pm.