

Minutes of Rowley Regis Town Deal Board

Thursday, 24 November 2022 at 12.30 pm
This meeting will be held online.

Present: J Thompson (Vice-Chair), A Pugh, Cllr K Carmichael, Cllr P Hughes, Cllr L Ashman, J Morris MP, D Harrold, L Bird, M Asif, M Wildman, R Barrett-Price, S Howells, S Rutter and T McGovern

Also present: A Miller, A Reynolds, C Smallman, E Parkes, K Thomas, M Farid, R Rahim,

11 Welcome and Opening Remarks

Jude Thompson, Vice Chair, welcomed board members to the meeting before outlining the agenda items for discussion.

Cllr Peter Hughes offered his condolences for Cllr Ann Shackleton, Ward Member for Cradley Heath and Old Hill, who had sadly passed away. Board members were informed of Cllr Shackleton's funeral arrangements.

12 Apologies

Apologies were received from the following board members: -

- Adrian Eggington (Chair)
- Debbie Downs - West Midlands Police
- Lesley Jones - West Midlands Police
- Simon Griffiths - Sandwell College
- Simone Hines - SMBC Section 151 Officer



13 Minutes from the last Board

Minutes of the last board

Board members agreed minutes of the Local Board meeting held on 18 July 2022 were a correct record.

Action Log

Updates recorded on the attached Action Log.

14 Declarations of Interest

The Chair asked board members to raise any declarations of interests. None were forthcoming. The chair asked board members to raise any declarations during discussions should they need to.

15 Governance Arrangements

At the previous board meeting, board members discussed the Terms of Reference and Board Membership and provided feedback for the Programme Management Office to action. Board members received Items 5a - Terms of Reference and 5b – Rowley Regis Town Deal Board Membership prior to the meeting.

Terms of Reference - Updates

- 4.2 – Updated process for elected members expressing interest to join the Town Deal Board
- 4.3 – Highlighting the Town Lead Member is responsible for feedback back into Ward Member meetings
- 10.4 – Board Membership would be feedback to Cabinet/ Council to ensure membership aligns with annual appointments
- 10.5 - The expectation of board members attending at least 50% of meetings per annum.

Following the passing of Cllr Shackleton, board members were informed there is now a vacancy for the Cradley Heath and Old Hill ward. The Programme Management Office would contact Ward Members in due course to seek who wishes to express an interest.

Since the circulation of the board papers, two new members have been appointed to join the Town Deal Board; Mark Wildman, Sandwell Leisure Trust and Sarah Rutter, Barnardo's.

There is a vacancy for a young person representative. Unfortunately, no appointments have been made to date with support from Sandwell Council's SHAPE Youth Forum and Sandwell College due to clashes with school lessons and college lectures. Board members were asked to put forward ideas on organisations to approach to secure young person representative.

The final vacancy is for WMCA/ LEP representative. A representative has been identified for the Smethwick Town Deal Board and the Programme Management Office are currently awaiting a representative for Rowley Regis and West Bromwich.

A suggestion was made to approach local schools to seek interest from six-form students. Board members were informed local schools have been approached, however timings of meetings make it difficult for students to attend due to lessons/ lectures.

The council's Employment and Skills representative shared details of the recent meeting held with the Chair of the Young Leavers Programme, who is keen to get young people involved. In addition, the council supports a number of apprentices who may be interested in joining the Town Deal Board. It was agreed that the Employment and Skills representative would lead on discussions and report back to the Chair and Programme Management Office.

A proposal was put forward to create an incentives package for young people to encourage their involvement. For example, if a young person joins a Town Deal Board they would have access to use a number of leisure facilities in exchange of giving up their time to support the Towns Fund Programme. This proposal was well received by board members and the Chair encourage all representatives to contribute to this package.

A suggestion was put forward to liaise with Councillor Singh, a key contact who can support consultation with traders located in Blackheath. Board members were informed Councillor Singh is on their key contacts list to engage with.

Action: Kelly Thomas to liaise with Chair of Young Leavers Programme and explore interests from Sandwell Council apprentices to see if they wish to join the Town Deal Board for Rowley Regis, West Bromwich and Smethwick.

Action: Board members to contact the Programme Management Office with details of incentives on offer to help create a package for young people to encourage their commitment to the Town Deal Board.

16 Social Value and Local Spend

At the previous board meeting, a discussion took place around Social Value and Local Spend and how the Towns Fund Programme is incorporating this.

The Programme Management Office reviewed Sandwell Council's definition of Local Spend and adapted the definition for the Towns Fund Programme so that board members have a clear understanding on how procurement and social value will be reported.

Board members received Item 6a - Draft proposal Social Value and Local Spend V2 prior to the board meeting. The document details guidance for projects on what Local Spend is, how it fits with the Social Value act, how the project leads are expected to support this and the proposal for the Towns Fund Programme.

Sandwell Council's Social Value/ Local Spend is reported by West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) areas. The report lists all local authority areas included.

The proposal put forward for the Towns Fund Programme is to have a tiered priority approach: -

- Priority 1: Sandwell
- Priority 2: Black Country and Birmingham
- Priority 3: WMCA Areas
- Priority 4: National

The report also includes questions project leads should consider when undertaking procurement activities (Annex B) to encourage local spend. The proposal was presented to West Bromwich Town Deal Board earlier this week, who were supportive of the proposal.

Board members were asked if they wish to raise any comments or questions. The discussion included: -

A board member commented the proposal is a good approach to take forward.

A board member enquired whether a Town Deal Board representative would attend tender evaluation meetings to see how this is marked against procurement requirements. Board members were informed there is no requirement for a board member to attend evaluation meetings. Procurement rules are followed as per the organisation's legislation and the Programme

Management Office meet with all project leads every 6 weeks where Procurement, Social Value and Local Spend is a standing agenda item.

Board members were also informed DLUHC may sample check procurement activities following 6-monthly Monitoring and Evaluation Returns.

A comment was raised on how buying local isn't always the most cost effective, particularly now cost inflation is a risk across all projects.

Board members were informed the Programme Management Office are working with the council's Business Growth Team to organise a 'Meet the Buyers' event in February 2023. This event will invite local businesses to attend and showcase upcoming opportunities for procurement, support on how they can sign up and submit applications.

17 Project Reporting

Board members received Item 7a - Rowley Regis Town Deal Board Reporting April - September 2022 prior to the board meeting. This appendix was shared on screen during the meeting and the following was presented: -

Town Level Reporting:

- A review of funding drawn down from Government to date and the spend profile against this including rationale for both advanced spend and any slippage
- Forecasted spend for the remaining 22/23 financial year (October 2022 - March 2023) and the rationale for any slippage
- Key deliverables across all projects that had been achieved in this reporting period and those forecasted for the remaining 22/23 financial year
- Confirmation was provided that despite some spend slippage, a Government Deep Dive is not applicable as the slippage is within the 40% threshold as set out in the LUF and Towns Fund Local Authority Assurance Framework issued in September 2022.

Project Level Reporting:

- A review of the overall progress including progress status (complete/ on track/ delayed) and RAG Ratings for delivery, spend, risk, resource, outputs and outcomes
- Activities undertaken within the reporting period including current challenges and challenges expected in the next 6/12 months
- Progress against key milestones
- Spend against funding drawn down profile (spend to date and forecasted) including rationale for any slippage

- Spend against match funding profile (spend to date and forecasted) including rationale for any slippage
- Top 3 project level risks
- Resource implications, if applicable
- Project specific outputs, outcomes and local measures
- Procurement activities including appointed contractor details and local spend considerations

To ensure the Accountable Body and Town Deal Boards receive reporting on a regular basis to monitor project progress, expenditure and risks, it is a requirement set by the Programme Management Office that project leads must submit Monitoring, Evaluation and Claim Returns on a quarterly basis, as a minimum. However, returns to Government are only required on a 6-monthly basis. The first return is due by 16 December 2022.

The following discussions were held as a result of the information presented: -

A question was raised if there is scope to invite a representative from the Britannia Park Friends Group to assist in consultation and engagement activities and mitigate the risks highlighted regarding wellbeing of park users where parts of the park would close during project delivery.

Board members were informed there were a number of consultation and engagement activities undertaken during Phase 1 - Town Investment Plan development stage and Phase 2 - Full Business Case Development stage. Moving forward for the Britannia Park project, consultation will consist of notifying the friends group, park users and residents of upcoming works and consult on designs for elements such as the play area and skate park.

A question was asked if projects were being promoted effectively to raise awareness of project progress and benefits each project bring to communities. Board members were informed a number of press releases will be issued during the next quarter to promote upcoming works, a new Regenerating Sandwell website has launched that include Towns Fund projects, project leads are encouraged to issue press releases in conjunction with Sandwell Council and board members are encouraged to update their websites and communicate with their networks.

In addition, all Rowley Regis projects would be reviewing their project level consultation and engagement plans and the Programme Management Office, Sandwell Council's Press Office and project leads would develop a new plan in line with any changes to delivery programmes and a news and media forward plan.

A discussion took place regarding the objections/ appeals process for projects. Board members were informed objections/ appeals received for Transport projects would follow the council's procedure, however all other projects would proceed as agreed. Project leads may engage with members of the public to tweak designs of elements, however this is not a requirement.

Board members were informed the Blackheath Bus Interchange and Public Realm project would be holding consultation and engagement events in the new year. Details would be circulated to board members in advance. For those not able to attend in person, an online survey would be published in due course.

18 Any other Business

Regenerating Sandwell Website

A new website called 'Regenerating Sandwell' has been developed to promote the proposed, planned and approved 66 pipeline projects totalling £1.8 billion investment. This includes the 16 Towns Fund projects across West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis. The website will be updated regularly and members can review project progress updates.

Councillor Peter Hughes thanked Rina Rahim and Emma Parkes for the continued hard work to help deliver the Towns Fund Programme and informed board members Emma would be breaking up for Maternity Leave in January 2023. Board members were informed Maaria Farid would support the Town Deal Board in Emma's absence.

19 Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked board members for their attendance and contributions to the meeting and closed the meeting at 14:01.

20 Rowley Regis Town Deal Board Action Log

A record of open and closed actions agreed during Rowley Regis Town Deal Board meetings.

Meeting ended at 2.01 pm

Contact: town_deal@sandwell.gov.uk

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Rowley Regis Town Deal Board Action Log

Open Actions

Date	Description	Responsible Officer(s)	Update
24.11.22	Kelly Thomas to liaise with Chair of Young Leavers Programme and explore interests from Sandwell Council apprentices to see if they wish to join the Town Deal Board for Rowley Regis, West Bromwich and Smethwick.	Kelly Thomas	
24.11.22	Board members to contact the Programme Management Office with details of incentives on offer to help create a package for young people to encourage their commitment to the Town Deal Board. (town_deal@sandwell.gov.uk)	All Board Members	

Closed Actions

Date Opened	Date Closed	Description	Responsible Officer(s)	Update
08.07.22	24.11.22	PMO to contact board members to confirm their interest to continue as a board member.	R Rahim/ E Parkes	Complete
08.07.22	24.11.22	Terms of Reference to be updated to include 50% attendance annually is mandatory and would trigger individual board member review.	R Rahim/ E Parkes	Complete
08.07.22	24.11.22	Jude Thompson to contact relevant individuals at BCC to explore potential membership suggestions.	J Thompson	Complete
08.07.22	24.11.22	Debbie Downs to also review from a WMP perspective to understand whether they have any local contacts.	D Downs	Complete
08.07.22	24.11.22	PMO to circulate short survey to capture board member preference on board meeting day/ time.	R Rahim/ E Parkes	Complete

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