

Minutes of West Bromwich Town Deal Board

**Tuesday, 16 May 2023 at 1.00 pm
at This meeting is held online.**

Present: C Hinson (Chair), D Howe, G Tomlinson, J Thompson, Cllr K Millar, Cllr L Rollins, L Hill, K Harris, M Evans, M Stretton, Cllr P Hughes, Cllr R Randhawa, S Hartwell and W Brookfield.

Also present: A Oxley, J Singh, L Dove, M Farid, R Rahim and R Barrett-Price.

1 Welcome and Opening Remarks

The chair welcomed board members to the meeting before outlining the agenda items for discussion. The meeting was quorate.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from the following board members: -

- Jenna Langford – SMBC
- Sandeep Shingadia – WMCA
- Shokat Lal – SMBC
- Mark Wildman – SMBC
- Leona Bird – SCVO
- Tanya Derham – SIPS

3 Minutes of the last meeting and Action Log

Board members agreed minutes of the Local Board meeting held on 28 Feb 2023 were a correct record.

Action Log

Updates recorded on the attached Action Log.



4 Declarations of Interests

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.

5 Governance Arrangements

Changes to Board Membership

Once the elections take place, the full council meet to elect annual appointments. They will be meeting next week, and board members will be updated of any changes/additions. It's timely to review membership and update Register of Interest and to look at member attendance. If it was suggested last year that there would be an attendance expectation of 50%, so attending twice a year. MP's have made enquiries pertaining to updating their Register of Interest on an annual basis as they do this already for their MP duties. The advice from Democratic Services was for MP's and other Board Members to update their Register of Interest on an annual basis. This has been highlighted in the Terms of Reference which was being shared on screen with Board Members.

Another suggested change was regarding changes to budget as part of scheme of delegation. If project leads are incurring expenditure which isn't benefitting the project, to report back anything significant to PMO; £5000 or 10%. Members were asked for their comments and no objections were made so it was passed.

Suggested changes:

- To update Register of Interest on an annual basis
- Project leads to inform PMO of incurring expenditure - £5000 or 10%

It was queried whether MP's have to follow the same guidelines in having the same attendance expectation. PMO confirmed they would be expected to follow the same guidelines.

6 Project Reporting

Board members received Item 6 - West Bromwich Town Deal Board Reporting Jan – March 2023 prior to the board meeting. This appendix was shared on screen to provide an update on project progress.

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

Town Hall Quarter

Project Lead provided an update; shared a presentation on the screen with photos and introduced Luke Dove (project sponsor) to the board.

Since the last meeting, the project has been progressing and has been supported by photos which have been taken in the last two weeks. Scaffolding and hoarding were erected in late April so there's restricted access. Conversations have taken place with Multi-Story regarding using the hoarding for marketing and informing the public of the project. Planning and building consent been approved for new High St entrance and changing places facilities which will be disabled access for which a separate grant has been received from DLUHC.

Comments were made regarding the local population and ensuring local heritage is inclusive.

Project lead and Richard Amos arranged and attended meetings with tenants in late-March. Some very valid points were highlighted, particularly in relation to car parking spaces.

Discussions are ongoing with Morgan Sindall with works to begin in Sept 2023. Public access for town hall bookings stopped on 1st May due to safety access, but access to the library remains the same.

Comments were made regarding ensuring local spend is continued and emphasis given to contracting local suppliers. A further comment was made regarding the hoarding outside which is a blank canvas and can be utilised for marketing.

Sandwell Civil & Mechanical Engineering Centre

Project Lead provided an update on the progress of the project and shared his screen to show visual updates.

The centre is a modular build which will have a 40-year lifespan, but it all depends on maintenance. It was procured by taking on two contracts which was a risk, but it has worked out. A local contractor was appointed as one of them. The completion date is set to August. The main problem currently is getting a power on date from National Grid as they need to agree a date with a third party. Otherwise the project is on time and is making progress. The design is frozen so there will be no more changes. The floorplan was shared with board members.

It was asked if there is security presence on-site. The contractor has security on-site.

Chair expressed it would be useful to set up a meeting for project lead to do a presentation for Business Ambassadors. It was added it would be useful to extend this to all Sandwell members.

Action: Chair to arrange a meeting with Project Lead and Business Ambassadors.

It was asked how many students are expected annually. Project lead commented the centre has the capacity to accommodate 150 students and they currently have 40 students enrolled.

Retail Diversification Programme

Project lead provided an update.

The Retail Diversification Programme consists of 3 distinct areas: indoor markets, acquisitions, and demolitions.

Indoor markets

Project lead has been working with Morgan Sindall and their consortium since Nov 2022 to develop initial design proposals. A planning application was submitted at the end of March and currently awaiting the outcome. The design of the markets will be industrial softened with wood finish with greenery which is cost-effective. It will have modular units within the space to allow minor changes to be made as of when needed i.e. kitchen unit needing to be replaced.

There are two main issues at present. The condition of the building is worse than what was found in the feasibility study. The roof has a current lifespan of 1-2 years so SMBC will need to redo the roof which wasn't covered in the plans. Additionally, the current power capacity in the building is insufficient and a new electricity substation is required to deliver the project. Both issues have incurred costs to the project. However, additional funding has been identified and is awaiting cabinet approval in September. Consequently, this has impacted timescales. National Grid have said they will not be able to deliver the substation until Feb 2024 so practical completion is likely to be end of March/early April 2024; where it was originally expected for Dec 2023.

Acquisitions

A final offer has been submitted to Wilkos for acquisition

Demolition

This cannot take place until acquisitions have taken place.

Digital Den

Project has completed and PMO did a site visit recently. The project is reliant on DLUHC funding and are looking at alternative funding opportunities.

Urban Greening

Project is progressing on target with no overall concerns. There are regular photo updates on the Regenerating Sandwell website.

Project lead suggested a site visit for Board members.

Action: Project Lead/PMO to set a date for site visit and send invite to Board Members.

West Bromwich Connected

Project is progressing on target and is delivering within profile spend. Phase 2 is complete and phase 3 is due next financial year.

PMO had a catch-up with DLUHC and 22/23 funding allocations will be staggered.

7 Forward Plans

There is a proposed site visit for June with DLUHC to focus on West Bromwich projects. PMO will extend invitation to Board members once a date has been agreed

For publicity, work is underway with Digital Den to produce case studies. PMO will be working with Comms to utilise the hoarding at the Town Hall.

8 Any Other Business

Comms have produced an email signature banner promoting Regenerating Sandwell which will be shared with Board Members if they would like to add it to their signature strip or comms.

9 Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked board members for their attendance and contributions to the meeting. Meeting closed at 15:06

10 West Bromwich Town Deal Board Action Log

A record of open and closed actions agreed during West Bromwich Town Deal Board meeting.

Meeting ended at 3.06 pm

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk