

Minutes of Smethwick Town Deal Board

Thursday, 7 September 2023 at 3.00 pm
This meeting will be held online.

Present: A Taylor (Chair), J Thompson (Vice-Chair), Councillor A Lewis, Councillor B Piper, Councillor F Shaeen, Councillor J Uddin, Councillor P Hughes, D Holden, G Brown, J Wood and L Bird

Also present: A Bell, C Archer, C Felicio, E Parkes, H Insley, J Dolphin, J Langford, R Rahim, S Veal

11 Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed board members to the meeting and outlined the agenda items for discussion before welcoming guests attending the meeting: -

- Jas Dolphin - DLUHC Advisor
- Austin Bell - Midland Met Project Lead
- Chris Archer - Midland Met Project Team
- Samantha Veal - Midland Met Project Team

12 Apologies

Apologies were received from the following board members: -

- S Shingadia – Transport for West Midlands
- S Partridge – West Midlands Police
- P Mallon – West Midlands Police
- M Wildman – Sandwell Leisure Trust
- B Arnold – Interim S151 Officer



13 Minutes and Action Log

Minutes of the last board

Board members agreed minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2023 were a correct record.

Action Log

Updates recorded on the attached Action Log.

14 Declarations of Interests

The Chair asked board members to raise any declarations of interests. Declarations on record include: -

- Alan Taylor - Interest as an independent governor for Sandwell College, given their participation with the Midland Met Learning Campus project.
- Councillor Jalal Uddin - Interest as an independent governor for Sandwell College, given their participation with the Midland Met Learning Campus project.

The chair asked board members to raise any declarations during discussions should they need to and reminded members that they can contact the PMO at any time to raise comments, queries and seek clarification on discussions.

15 Governance Arrangements

Following the discussion at the last Town Deal Board, the Terms of Reference was updated and recirculated to board members as part of the agenda pack for the meeting. The chair confirmed the changes made to the Scheme of Delegation is now implemented.

In addition, the Smethwick Town Deal Board Membership list was updated to reflect new members of the board.

Board members were informed the representative for Barnardos has requested they return as a board member once projects are constructed and in the delivery of outputs phase.

The chair and board members agreed for the representative to be removed from the board.

16 Project Adjustment Request

Midland Met Learning Campus - The Programme Management Team received a request from the Midland Met Learning Campus Project Team to reduce the sqm of the education facility, including a note that additional co-funding is required to deliver the projects full ambitions. Details of the change request was circulated to board members in advance of the meeting, forming part of the agenda pack.

The original project scope included the delivery of 3792sqm floorspace, an ask of £12.9m from Towns Fund and further match £TBC subject to WMCA approval.

When developing the Town Investment Plan and Full Business Case, the project team did not have the level of detail to confirm financial costings. As the project has progressed and as a result of RIBA stages (design), a change request is required to reflect findings.

The Chair invited the project lead to present the change request to board members. This included: -

- A summary of the change request; an increased co-funding request and reduction in sqm
- Notification that a condition of their co-funding application is that WMCA cannot fund the same outputs that DLUHC fund.
- A recap of the objectives of the project, vision, commitments and benefits
- Risks that the NHS Trust are accountable for in relation to unseen costs, revenue and operation of the facility
- Background information, including the timeline to the changes requested to the sqm and co-funding costs
- Project governance and assurance including details of the project board, sub-committees and WMCA due diligence.
- Current status and next steps including the planning committee decision date, procurement timeline for contractor and build commencement date.

Board members were informed of the process to approve the change request as the Town Deal Board and Local Authority have delegated authority where changes are within a 30% threshold, as per the latest guidance set by DLUHC. Regular meetings take place with Sandwells DLUHC advisor so they are aware of the changes proposed and a formal change request form will be submitted to DLUHC for transparency.

The project team advised an updated Full Business Case has been developed where the BCR has increased to 4.23 as a result of including additional outputs subject to additional co-funding being secured.

The chair emphasised it's important to note the # of learners supported output has not reduced, as the education and learning space will remain the same and the change relates to communal areas.

Confirmation was provided of the funding amounts and providers for the project and that the application is currently being reviewed by WMCA. Board members were also informed of some conditions for the WMCA funding.

The chair asked board members to raise comments, queries or concerns. The discussion included: -

A discussion took place regarding the lease arrangements with partners and learning providers and how local providers are expressing interest in the education facility. Recent work undertaken by Sandwell College also provided insight of interest in the

Health and Social Care sector and advised there are both young people and adult provision interests.

The project team were asked if the project would proceed if match funding was not secured. Board members were advised the project would proceed, however elements e.g. Net zero would be removed.

The project team were asked to confirm their key risks, specifically around inflation and if contracts would be fixed. Board members were informed the tender process has commenced and the aim is to secure a fixed cost contract in principle by the end of this year.

A question was raised if the recent news of Birmingham Council financial constraints would impact the delivery of the project. Board members were advised the project delivery is not dependant on this. A further discussion took place regarding the transport element that would surround the project and how the contribution from Birmingham Council should remain as this would be capital funding secured for Active Travel.

A compliment was made to the project team for their flexibility to adjust plans whilst ensuring outputs are kept the same, emphasised the benefits of the project and how this will support Smethwick residents and the wider population.

A question was raised if the project team knew of the active travel delivery plans and their timescales to deliver these. The programme management office agreed to look into this and report back to the board.

The Chair thanked the project team for attending the board meeting, presenting their proposal and for their continued hard work to find solutions where challenges are presented.

The chair asked board members if they wish to raise any objections for the change request. No objections were raised.

Agreed: Programme Management Office and NHS Trust to complete a Project Adjustment Request to include reduction of sqm and notification of additional funding required.

Agreed: Programme Management Office to submit a Project Adjustment Request to DLUHC for their records.

Action: Programme Management Office to look into Birmingham's Active Travel (cycle) delivery plans that link to the new Hospital and timescales and report this back to the board.

17 Project Reporting

Board members received Item 6 - Smethwick Town Deal Board Reporting April – June 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: -

Regarding Rolfe Street Canalside Regeneration, the project team were asked if contact has been made with heritage groups to see if there are any volunteers who would like to support the project. The project lead advised no contact has been made to date, but communication would begin later in the programme once demolition is complete.

Given the inflation risks that projects have raised and project timescales have shifted to future financial years due to a number of challenges, the Chair asked if this is a cause of concern for DLUHC and if there is a benchmark the board could draw upon.

The Programme Management Office confirmed meetings take place fortnightly with Sandwell's DLUHC advisor where updates are provided on project delivery, including any concerns of slippage and reasons why. Board members were informed other Towns have reported slippage of projects and experience the same concerns regarding inflation.

Recent guidance issued by DLUHC includes thresholds for slippage for both delivery and spend, so there is comfort that whilst this isn't beneficial, discussions can be had to mitigate risks and ensure projects are deliverable within the programme's timescales.

Board members were updated on the progress and delays experienced for West Bromwich and Rowley Regis due to a number of factors.

Jas, DLUHC Advisor for Sandwell, praised Sandwell for the continued communication and progress updates that are provided on a regular basis. Board members were informed that inflation is impacting towns across the country and is flagged regularly to DLUHC Towns Fund Central Team. In regard to Smethwick Towns Fund, it was noted that the central team are happy with the progress being made despite slight slippage.

A discussion took place around footfall baseline requirements and the need to secure equipment as soon as possible to monitor cycle lanes.

A question was raised regarding the funding spent on the Midland Met Learning Campus design works and if the funding spent to date is consistent with the Full Business Case submission. The board were informed costs have changed since the submission of the Full Business Case and an exercise is currently underway to review this, as part of the quarterly updates from project leads. It was agreed this information would be shared with board members.

Action: Programme Management Office to collate original FBC costs and costs to date for Midland Met Learning Campus design works and share this with board members.

18 Forward Plans

Ron Davis Centre Visit

Following the completion of the Ron Davis Centre project in October, board members will be invited to attend an open day to see the improvements made to the SAFL Centre.

DLUHC Site Visit

A site visit was held in August for Board Members to see works completed to date for the Smethwick Connected project. No further project site visits are planned due to projects not being on site.

Press Release Forward Plan

The Press release forward plan schedule was shared with board members in the meeting's agenda pack and discussed with board members. No comments were forthcoming.

A comment was raised regarding discussions that took place during the Smethwick Connected site visit around how the board and councillors could develop a campaign to encourage local people to use the new cycle lanes.

A conversation was had regarding bike hire trials in Sandwell and how these were unsuccessful in certain locations due to low take up and the reasons why there may have been low interest/ use.

A wider discussion then took place regarding contacts who have supported active travel campaigns in the past and how they could support this work. It was agreed for Councillor Hughes to circulate an email to key contacts and board members to see who can support this and next steps.

Action: Councillor Hughes to email key contacts and board members to seek interest and support for an active travel campaign, to promote the Smethwick Connected project.

19 Any Other Business

No other business to raise.

20 Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked board members for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.

The next meeting scheduled for November 2023 will focus on the claim returns for the period of July - September 2023. It was agreed project leads would be invited to attend the November meeting if there are any significant concerns to discuss or specific support required from board members.

Meeting closed at 4:45pm

21 Smethwick Town Deal Action Log

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

Contact: town_deal@sandwell.gov.uk

Smethwick Town Deal Board Action Log

Open Actions

Date	Description	Responsible Officer(s)	Update
07.09.23	Programme Management Office to look into Birmingham's Active Travel (cycle) delivery plans that link to the new Hospital and timescales and report this back to the board.	R Rahim	
07.09.23	Programme Management Office to collate original FBC costs and costs to date for Midland Met Learning Campus design works and share this with board members.	R Rahim	
07.09.23	Councillor Hughes to email key contacts and board members to seek interest and support for an active travel campaign, to promote the Smethwick Connected project.	Cllr P Hughes	
28.2.23	PMO to circulate baseline footfall data for Smethwick Connected	R Rahim/ M Farid	Baseline data emailed to members. Ongoing footfall data will be shared once all phases complete

Closed Actions

Date Raised	Date Closed	Description	Responsible Officer(s)	Update
23.5.23	07.09.23	PMO to add forward planning of the next meeting to the end of the Agenda so it can be decided who is to be invited for the next meeting.	PMO	Completed – on Agenda for 7 September 2022 and ongoing
23.5.23	07.09.23	Introduce A Ali to Ron Davis Centre Project Lead.	PMO	Completed
23.5.23	07.09.23	PMO to confirm whether Smethwick Connected Phase 2 formal completion of works or whether it is to be moved to align with the milestones.	PMO/Rina Rahim	Completed – milestone changed to formal completion June 2023
23.5.23	07.09.23	PMO to organise a site visit for Smethwick Connected.	PMO	Completed – undertaken on 11 th August
23.5.23	07.09.23	PMO to share concerns/comments with Project Manager for Smethwick Connected.	PMO/Rina Rahim	Completed – updated Project Lead with concerns

Closed Actions

Date Raised	Date Closed	Description	Responsible Officer(s)	Update
28.2.23	23.5.23	MMLC to provide further information pertaining to costs to board members.	Project Lead – Austin Bell via PMO	Circulated to Board Members.
28.2.23	23.5.23	PMO to look at assurance and come forward with a proposal regarding lowering threshold for board approval.	Rina Rahim	Update provided at Board Meeting 23.5.23
28.2.23	23.5.23	PMO to approach WMCA for Board representative.	Rina Rahim/ Maaria Farid	WMCA will attend Board as when required. Forward planning to be picked up at the end of each meeting to decide who is to be invited at the next meeting.
29.11.22	23.5.23	PMO to request detailed activities against spend for the Midland Met Learning Campus project and report back to Town Deal Board members.	Rina Rahim/ Maaria Farid	Update provided at Board meeting 23.5.23.
29.11.22	28.2.23	PMO to feedback concerns regarding the absence of director/ executive officers and ensure at least one executive officer is in attendance at future meetings.	Rina Rahim/ Emma Parkes	Raised concern to director/executive officers
29.11.22	28.2.23	Cllr Peter Hughes to feedback comments raised by Board Members to SMBC Procurement Services and to seek input regarding what can/ cannot be done in regard to penalising contractors should social value not be met.	Cllr P Hughes	Updated provided at Board meeting 28.2.23
29.11.22	28.2.23	PMO to request detailed activities against spend for the Midland Met Learning Campus project and report back to Town Deal Board members.	Rina Rahim/ Emma Parkes	Response emailed separately. Project update to be provided at Board meeting.
29.11.22	28.2.23	PMO to invite Midland Met Learning Campus project lead to attend the next Town Deal Board meeting.	Emma Parkes	Completed
29.11.22	28.2.23	PMO to update future meeting appointments to a duration of two hours.	Emma Parkes	Completed
28.06.22	29.11.22	PMO to contact board members to confirm their interest to continue as a board member.	R Rahim/ E Parkes	Complete
28.06.22	29.11.22	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
28.06.22	29.11.22	PMO to circulate short survey to capture board member preference on board meeting day/ time.	R Rahim/ E Parkes	Complete