

Minutes of Smethwick Town Deal Board

Tuesday, 28 June 2022 at 4.00 pm
This meeting was held online

Present: A Taylor (Chair)
J Thompson (Vice-Chair), Cllr P Hughes, J Spellar MP,
D Holden, J Singh and L Bird

Also present: E Parkes, R Rahim, H Insley and T McGovern

01/22 Welcome and Opening Remarks

The chair welcomed board members to the first meeting as the Smethwick Town Deal Board following the submission of project summary documentation to government in March 2022.

The chair outlined the items for discussion as per the agenda, of which focused on the governance arrangements for Phase 3 - Delivery, review of board membership, code of conduct and declaration of interest requirements and programme progress, including the proposed reporting arrangements.

02/22 Apologies

Apologies were received by: -

- Jennifer Harrison, Brasshouse Community Centre
- Rob Lake, The Albion Foundation
- John Wood, Liberty Engineering
- Councillor Bob Piper, SMBC Cabinet Member
- Councillor Farut Shaeen, SMBC Town Lead Member
- Councillor Kerrie Carmichael, SMBC Leader

03/22 Minutes of the last meeting

Board members agreed minutes of the Local Board meeting held on 14 February 2022 were a correct record.

The chair requested to adopt the 'Action Log Tracker' used for the historic Local Board to ensure actions agreed during Town Deal boards are being actioned/ reviewed on a regular basis

04/22 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.

05/22 Governance Arrangements

Terms of Reference

Following submission of project summary documentation to government in March 2022, the Towns Fund Programme Management Office reviewed the Terms of Reference for Town Deal Boards. This was to ensure they were fit for purpose for Towns Fund Programme Phase 3 - Delivery and that they met the governance responsibilities set out by government.

A Towns Fund Phase 3 Governance Proposals document was circulated to the Sandwell Superboard Chair, Local Board Chairs and Board Members for consultation in April 2022. In May 2022, SMBC Cabinet approved the Governance Arrangements for Phase 3 and as a result, the Sandwell Superboard (Town Deal Board) structure was replaced by the three Local Boards who inherit Superboard responsibilities, each becoming Town Deal Boards. This also meant Superboard members would transfer to the new Town Deal Boards.

A list of responsibilities set out by government and updates made to the Terms of Reference were presented to board members.

Board Membership

In addition to approving Terms of Reference in May 2022, SMBC Cabinet approved the Town Deal Boards membership structure. This included the addition of one additional Ward Member.

The Programme Management Office reviewed board member attendance over 2021/22 and identified where board members had low attendance, details of which were presented to board members.

A discussion took place around the importance of having committed board members who attend meetings and have a keen interest in project delivery. Where representatives do not wish to continue as a Board Member, alternative representatives/ organisations would be identified and approached. In addition, the existing approach taken to appoint young person representatives was discussed and a suggestion was put forward that other routes should be considered including liaising with local schools. Board members were supportive of this.

In regard to frequency of meetings, the proposal is for the Town Deal Board to meet in November 2022 to review April - September claim and reporting period and then on a quarterly basis.

Board members requested that the Terms of Reference include the expectations of board members and that they should attend 50% of annual meetings.

Action: PMO to contact board members to confirm their interest to continue as a board member.

Action: Terms of Reference to be updated to include 50% attendance annually is mandatory and would trigger individual board member review.

06/22

Code of Conduct and Register of Interests

As the Accountable Body for the Towns Fund Programme, Sandwell Council has a statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. The code of conduct sets out the expectations placed on all members of the Town Deal Board.

Board members were informed the Code of Conduct and Register of Interest Forms were updated following SMBC Cabinet approval of governance arrangements. Updates included the removal of 'Superboard' reference and updated Title of Town Deal Boards.

Following completion, the Programme Management Office would forward documentation to the council's Monitoring Officer. Documentation would also be published in the public domain on the council's committee management system.

A query was raised if the Code of Conduct includes reference to the number of meetings expected to attend annually and if there is a quorum attached to the Board. Members were informed the code of conduct does not include this detail however Terms of Reference can be updated to include this. In regard to a quorum, the board is not required to have this.

A suggestion was put forward to include board member attendance expectations within the Terms of Reference, for example outlining that board members must attend 50% of annual meetings.

A comment was made regarding the importance of attending the board meetings to prevent delay to decisions should meetings not go ahead if membership is not at full capacity.

07/22

Programme Updates

Since the submission of project Summary Documentation in March 2022, officers have completed a number of activities to ensure governance and delivery arrangements are in place whilst awaiting government approval. An overview of activities undertaken were shared with the board.

In May 2022, government approved all 5 Smethwick Towns Fund projects. A press release to announce this milestone was published on 24 May 2022. Funding for 2022/23 is expected in August 2022.

In June 2022, government requested Monitoring and Evaluation Returns. This primarily focused on projects approved prior 31 March 2022, which was not applicable to Smethwick Towns Fund.

Board Members received an overview of outputs including number of FTE temporary jobs, jobs created and safeguarded as a result of the project. All outputs will be verified by SMBC finance/accountable body and will be submitted as evidence to government against Monitoring and Evaluation plans.

As the programme progresses through Delivery Phase, board members will receive updates against funding profiles (spent and forecasted spend), details of risks, progress against outputs and outcomes, key milestones and social value. This information will be provided by project leads directly using a template that includes government reporting requirements in addition to the accountable body local reporting (social value, procurement contracts etc).

A discussion took place regarding social value and local spend and the approach taken to record targets. The chair emphasised the importance of local spend and board members agreed this holds significant importance to the successful delivery in Smethwick.

The proposed approach throughout the Delivery Phase includes quarterly board meetings from November 2022 to receive project progress updates prior to submitting reports back to government. A proposed forward plan was shared with board members.

It was agreed an online form would be circulated to board members to capture board member preference of a specific day and time for board meetings.

Action: PMO to circulate short survey to capture board member preference on board meeting day/ time.

08/22 Any other Business

The Chair invited board members to raise any other business. No comments were forthcoming.

09/22 Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked board members for their attendance and summarised the actions agreed during the meeting.

Meeting ended at 5.02 pm

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

Smethwick Town Deal Board Action Log

Open Actions

Date	Description	Responsible Officer(s)	Update
28.06.22	PMO to contact board members to confirm their interest to continue as a board member.	R Rahim/ E Parkes	
28.06.22	Terms of Reference to be updated to include 50% attendance annually is mandatory and would trigger individual board member review.	R Rahim/ E Parkes	
28.06.22	PMO to circulate short survey to capture board member preference on board meeting day/ time.	R Rahim/ E Parkes	