

Minutes of Smethwick Town Deal Board

Thursday, 29 February 2024 at 10.00 am
This meeting will be held online.

Present: A Taylor (Chair), J Thompson (Vice-Chair), Cllr A Lewis, Cllr B Piper, Cllr F Shaeen, Cllr J Uddin, D Holden, J Wood, L Bird and S Shingadia

Also present: A Bell, E Parkes, H Cashmore, J Dolphin, J Langford, K Harris, M Wragg, R Rahim and T Stokes

10 Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed board members to the meeting and outlined the agenda items for discussion. The Programme Management Office confirmed the meeting is quorate.

11 Apologies

Apologies were received by the following board members: -

- Councillor K Carmichael – Sandwell Council Leader
- G Brown - Raglan Road Christian Church
- S Howells - Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG
- K Willets - West Midlands Police
- R Flatley - Sandwell Visually Impaired



12 Minutes and Action Log

Minutes of the last meeting

Board members agreed minutes of the Town Deal Board held on 15 November 2023 were a correct record.

Action Log

Updates recorded on the attached Action Log.

13 Declaration 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.

14 Governance

As outlined in the Terms of Reference, Board Membership is reviewed annually. The approach to review membership is for the Programme Management Office to contact members to ask if they wish to remain as a member.

Smethwick Town Deal Board overall, has good attendance. Apologies have been received regularly by some board members due to meeting clashes. The Programme Management Office have advised they can send a representative, or email comments and queries to the Town Deal mailbox.

The review for the Smethwick Town Deal Board has been delayed, due to the announcement of the Smethwick Long Term Plan, as board membership will likely include some Town Deal Board members.

In regard to young person representatives, the Programme Management Office attend SHAPE Forum to discuss project progress and colleagues can feedback their comments to the Town Deal Board. The SHAPE Forum currently meet fortnightly.

In addition, discussions are being held with Sandwell College to explore consultation with their Student Forum. The Programme Management Office/ Project Leads can attend the Forum and feedback to the Town Deal Board.

Scrutiny

As part of governance requirements, the Towns Fund Programme report project progress to the council's Scrutiny Board. At the meeting held on 8 February, a report was presented providing detail of progress, project red rag rated risks and budget pressures.

Scrutiny members were understanding of issues resulting in progress delays and the budget pressures that were flagged due to cost inflation. Scrutiny Members asked the Programme Management Office to report at the next scrutiny, to confirm timescales of delivery and if they will be delivered within the Towns Fund delivery timeline, by March 2026.

15 Long Term Plan

Board members received information on the Long Term Plan as part of the agenda pack. A summary of the Long Term Plan was presented to members, which included: -

In October 2023, Government announced funding of £20m endowment style funding over a 10 year period. Funding would be issued to Local Authorities as the accountable body.

Funding is set to be 25% Revenue and 75% Capital. The funding has freedom and flexibilities, meaning funds can roll forward between financial years within the delivery period. Capacity Funding to assist the initial set up has been provided to the council.

The programme is focused around three investment themes: Security and Safety, High streets, heritage and regeneration interventions and Transport and Connectivity. DLUHC have worked up pre-approved interventions to refer to as 'on menu' which means a Business Case is not required to peruse pre-approved intervention under investment themes. If it is a more tailored project, this would be referred to an 'off menu' option and an Outline Business Case would be required to be submitted to DLUHC. Examples of pre-approved was provided to board members for each theme.

Timescales were shared with Board Members, including the requirement to establish a Long Term Plan Board by 1 April 2024. Draft Terms of Reference and governance arrangements would need to be in place. Governance would be based on the arrangements for the Towns Fund governance model. The Long Term Plan board would review and finalise the Terms of Reference. This would then be submitted to the Assistant Director of Legal, the council's S151 officer and Councillor P Hughes as cabinet member for sign off.

An update was provided on the Smethwick Boundary Map provided by DLUHC for the Long Term Plan, and how this does not translate to the Smethwick Ward Boundary. The council can present a revised boundary map to DLUHC. The deadline for this is 1 April. Details of the revised boundary map was shared with board members. Subject to Town Deal Board views and subsequent Cabinet approval, the revised boundary map would be submitted to DLUHC by 1 April for consideration and approval.

In regard to programme management, board members were informed the Towns Fund Programme Management Office would support the Long Term Plan Programme.

The proposed approach, of which is based on advice received from DLUHC, the council's Legal Team regarding the process as we enter Purdah period, was confirmed with Board Members. Proposals will be presented to Cabinet on 13 March, subject to the views of Town Deal Board members.

Subject to Cabinet approval, preparation will commence to develop the Long Term Plan that has a submission deadline to DLUHC of 1 August 2024. The plan will provide a 10-year vision with a 3-year investment plan. The council have been encouraged to submit the Smethwick Long Term Plan as soon as possible.

The role and responsibility of the Smethwick Long Term Plan Board was outlined to board members and a discussion was held regarding which representatives from the Town Deal Board would need to transfer to the Smethwick Long Term Plan board. This included the

Chair, Vice-Chair, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth, Local MP, Smethwick Town Lead Member.

In addition, the Police and Crime Commissioner and Community Group Representatives (Grass Roots) are required.

A number of community groups within the investment area had been identified and was shared with board members. However, guidance has outlined the Long Term Plan board should host a maximum of 15 members.

Progress to date was shared with board members that included activities undertaken since November 2023 and the discussions held at workshops, meetings and DLUHC.

The recommendations for the board were shared on screen, of which sought endorsement on the proposed approach to establish a board for the Smethwick Long Term Plan and to submit the Long Term Plan to DLUHC.

The Chair asked board members to raise their hand to make any comments or raise queries. The discussion included: -

A board member voiced his support for this programme and the proposed approach and asked for confirmation on the arrangements of board membership and how the Town Deal Board members would be selected to transfer.

Board members were advised discussions need to be had with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Town Deal Board on how this would work. As the maximum vacancies for the Long Term Plan is 15, it is crucial to ensure community organisations are represented as outlined by DLUHC guidance. There is opportunity to have subgroups of the Long Term Plan to include Town Deal Board members and community groups that cannot commit to the Long Term Plan Board to discuss projects or investment themes, similar to how the Towns Fund Programme was set up initially with the Superboard and three Local Boards.

Board members were asked to send contact details to the PMO of community groups they feel may be interested to put forward a project/ sit on the Long Term Plan Board.

A discussion took place regarding the representation of local councillors and how they are community representatives, therefore limiting to 2 may be challenging. Board members were reminded the proposal to have 2 x councillors as Long Term Plan board members has been set by DLUHC and not the Town Deal Board/ PMO. Discussions would be held to explore the flexibility of this.

Board members agreed it's important to engage with smaller community groups too, not just larger scale groups. This is opportunity to help smaller scale groups grow, expand and offer something to communities that they couldn't before.

The Chair and Vice-Chair acknowledged the process for setting up the Smethwick Local Board/ Town Deal Board and that a number of community groups were committed, until funding was not issued directly to fund their proposals, therefore any community groups that express an interest should ensure they are committed for the Smethwick Long Term Plan programme and not just for funding for their project proposal.

Board members were reminded the Terms of Reference for Towns Fund includes the process for elected member updates and consultation, which is via Smethwick Ward

Member Meetings. This approach would be adopted for Long Term Plan, with both Towns Fund and Smethwick Long Term Plan being a standing agenda item. This forum is then used to feedback into the boards.

A board member emphasised the need to ensure commitment is monitored and if board members are not attending meetings or engaging, they would be removed.

A question was asked if the upcoming elections would result in changes made to the funding announcement. Board members were advised the council were informed the funding has been agreed across parties.

A question was asked if the community groups list shared with board members were the same as the list shared for Towns Fund at the beginning of the programme in 2019. Board members were advised this is a recent list of community groups that have been identified by colleagues and community contacts. Board members were also informed Government have approached community groups directly to have discussions.

Board members commented on how the proposed boundary for investment is more representative of the Smethwick town.

The Chair thanked all for their input and asked board members if they support the proposed approach for the Smethwick Long Term Plan. No objections were forthcoming.

The Chair asked the secretary to record that all members in attendance were in agreement of the following recommendations: -

Agreed: The proposed Governance arrangements for the Smethwick Long Term Plan

Agreed: The proposed boundary for Smethwick Long Term Plan

Action: Board members to send contact details to the PMO of community groups they feel may be interested to put forward a project/ sit on the Long Term Plan Board.

Action: J Thompson to send contact details to the PMO of community groups they have spoken with to date.

16 Project Reporting

Board members received Item 7a - Smethwick Town Deal Board Reporting October 2023 – December 2023 prior to the board meeting.

Rolfe Street Canalside Regeneration

An update was provided by the project lead. This included: -

- An overview of progress to date and works completed since the last board meeting
- An update on the planning application status and current challenges associated with this, resulting in the withdrawal of the application
- The proposed approach to resolve the challenges, an overview of options to consider if they are not resolved promptly and detail subsequent changes to the delivery timescales

- A summary of project risks, budget and financial forecast

The project lead was asked if there was an alternative plan should works not progress. Board members were informed alternative options would need to be considered. Board members could discuss matters via email or call an urgent meeting where detailed discussion and decision and approval is required.

Board members were reminded new projects can no longer be submitted, therefore funding could be reallocated to other projects within the Town but this would require DLUHC approval. There would be discussions required with DLUHC where a project has already received the maximum funding offer limit set out in the Smethwick Heads of Terms.

A board member asked if the grant funding for Rolfe Street could be reallocated to the Midland Met Learning Campus project, if WMCA funding was not awarded. Board members were informed that if the WMCA co-funding was not awarded, the Midland Met Learning Campus would be delivered but not achieve net-zero ambition. Should Rolfe Street not proceed, discussions would take place to determine the options for funding.

Midland Met Learning Campus

An update was provided by the project lead. This included: -

- An update on the WMCA funding application and timescales associated with determination. An investment panel is scheduled for 18 March.
- Confirmation of arrangements between the council and NHS Trust in relation to the partnership agreement
- An update on the arrangements with training providers for the learning campus; Discussions are in place with Sandwell college regarding lease and training arrangements. A meeting would also take place with Aston University in due course.

A comment was made regarding the importance of ensuring social value is achieved for this project. Board members were reminded the project team have worked closely with the council's social value officers throughout the procurement process to ensure this is a key element and was incorporated into evaluation questions.

Board members were advised discussions with the successful contractor would take place in due course to tailor social value targets in more detail.

Ron Davis Centre Expansion

Board members were informed this project has now completed following the installation of the final IT equipment. The project has a slight underspend against the forecasted spend, however this is retention for snagging.

An award ceremony was held in November 2023 for learners who completed non-IT courses. This was attended by the Programme Management Office and Councillor P Hughes.

Moving forward, the project will report on outputs and outcomes that focus on number of learners enrolled.

Grove Lane Regeneration

Board members were reminded of the process being undertaken for this project and as a result, not much progress has been made since the last meeting. An overview of the timescales, risks and financial forecast were provided.

Smethwick Connected

Board members were informed this project is ahead of schedule, with phase 3 being completed and phase 5 works partially complete (CRT element). An update on project timescales, financial forecasts, risks, achievements of outputs and outcomes were presented.

Town Level Summary

A summary of the spend to date and forecasted spend for 2023/24 was shared with board members, based on the information submitted by project leads on 10 January 2024.

The Chair asked the Programme Management Office if the overall financial slippage was within the 40% threshold set by DLUHC. The Programme Management Office confirmed the town level financial slippage with 28% and a large amount of spend is forecasted for next financial year.

17 Forward Plans

Board members received the Press Release and Media forward plan within the agenda pack. Board members were informed of an additional entry, where the Programme Management Office would draft a Press Release for the Midland Met Learning Campus regarding co-funding from WMCA. This would then be published on 18/19 March, subject to the determination of the investment panel

18 Any other Business

Meet the Buyer Events - Social Value

Board members were informed two Meet the Buyer events taking place in March. The first being construction based and the second being NHS based.

19 Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked board members for their attendance and contributions to the meeting and closed the meeting at 11:59.

20 Action Log - Smethwick Town Deal Board

Contact: town_deal@sandwell.gov.uk

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Smethwick Town Deal Board Action Log

Open Actions

Date	Description	Responsible Officer(s)	Update
29.02.24	Board members to send contact details to the PMO of community groups they feel may be interested to put forward a project/ sit on the Long Term Plan Board.	Board Members	
29.02.24	J Thompson to send contact details to the PMO of community groups they have spoken with to date.	J Thompson	
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	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The Towns Fund PMO attended a meeting with the Active Travel Team in 2023. Further works to be undertaken to look at delivery plans and footfall monitoring.</p> <p>There is a requirement to monitor footfall for Town Fund transport projects and discussions are in place to implement this. The aim is to confirm requirements prior to the next active travel meeting.</p> <p>There is a black country wide scheme, so want to ensure coordinating work to make best effective use of resources and funding for monitoring transport schemes.</p>

Closed Actions

Date Raised	Date Closed	Description	Responsible Officer(s)	Update
15.11.23	29.02.24	PMO to forward Government Prospectus to Board Members	PMO	Complete
7.9.23	15.11.23	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	Complete
7.9.23	15.11.23	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	Completed – Cllr Hughes emailed Active Travel team with elected members now attending the working group
28.2.23	15.11.23	PMO to circulate baseline footfall data for Smethwick Connected	PMO	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
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

Closed Actions

Date Raised	Date Closed	Description	Responsible Officer(s)	Update
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

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