

Rowley Regis Town Deal Local Board Meeting Notes

Details: Thursday 10 February 2022 | 16:30 | Microsoft Teams Meeting

Local Board Member Attendees:

Adrian Eggington - Black Country Housing Group (Chair)
Councillor Thabiso Mabena – SMBC Deputy Town Lead

Councillor Lorraine Ashman - SMBC Town Lead
Manjula Patel - Murray Hall Community Trust

Superboard Members and SMBC Local Cabinet Member Attendees:

Councillor Danny Millard - SMBC Cabinet Member

Local Board Guests

James Dennison - Canal and River Trust
Jane Bailey - Sandwell College
Simon Griffiths - Sandwell College

James Morris, MP Halesowen and Rowley Constituency

Attending in Support:

Alan Reynolds – SMBC Regeneration Lead
Andy Miller - SMBC Strategic Transportation and Planning
Manager
Emma Parkes - SMBC Towns Fund Project Officer
Jenna Langford - SMBC Regeneration Manager
John Satchwell - SMBC Project Officer

Tariq Karim - SMBC Youth Services
Tony McGovern - SMBC Director Regeneration & Growth
Rina Rahim, SMBC Towns Fund Programme Manager
Santokh Singh - SMBC Neighbourhood Engagement
Officer

Apologies Received:

Councillor Maria Crompton - SMBC Cabinet Member
Deborah Harrold - Agewell
Jude Thompson – Chair of Sandwell Superboard

Councillor Ann Shackleton - SMBC Town Lead
Harvey Katarina - Young People’s Representative
Leona Bird – SVCO

Absent:

Alecia Baker - Cradley Heath Community Link
Andrew Lawley - Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG
Ann Sheridan - Sandwell College
Chris Hilton - SMBC Interim Service Manager for Assets and
Land
Helen Trueman - Grace Mary to Lion Farm Big Local
Jane Lillystone - SMBC Service Manager for Culture and
Tourism

Kelly Thomas - SMBC Employment and Skills
Lesley Jones - West Midlands Police
Sgt Cheryl Reed - West Midlands Police
Wayne Edwards - Business Representative and Local
Resident
Mohammed Asif - Cradley Heath Central Mosque

Please note where the meeting notes make reference to commercially sensitive material this will be specifically indicated. A version of the minutes with commercially sensitive content redacted can be made available.

Ref.	Description	Officer to Action
<p>1.0</p> <p>1.1</p> <p>1.2</p> <p>1.3</p>	<p>Welcome, Opening Remarks and Declarations of Interests The Chair will welcome attendees to the meeting, make opening remarks and ask board members to declare any interests.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting and outlined the agenda items for discussion, of which focused on the Full Business Cases for Britannia Park Community Hub and Greenspace Improvements and Rowley Regis Connected Project and to receive an update on the Blackheath Bus Interchange and Public Realm project.</p> <p>The Chair asked Local Board Members to use the raise hand function within MS Teams and encouraged members to use the Chat function.</p> <p>Apologies for the meeting were announced. James Morris MP informed the Chair that he must leave the meeting early at 5.15pm.</p>	<p>Adrian Eggington</p>
<p>2.0</p> <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p>	<p>Minutes and Action Log To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2021 as a correct record and to review the outstanding actions recorded on the action log.</p> <p><u>Minutes of the previous meeting</u> Local Board Members agreed minutes are of an accurate record.</p> <p><u>Action Log</u> Updates recorded on the attached action log.</p>	<p>Adrian Eggington</p>
<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p>Assurance Panel Feedback To receive feedback from the Towns Fund Assurance Panel held 24 January 2022 and 8 February 2022.</p> <p><u>Programme Update</u> An update on overall programme progress was shared with Local Board Members. The key points included: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rina Rahim, Towns Fund Programme Manager appointed in October 2021 has started employment with Sandwell Council • Towns Fund Programme Support Officer appointed in January 2022 • Two projects were presented and agreed by the Assurance Panel • The Britannia Park Community Hub and Greenspace Full Business Case and Rowley Regis Connected Full Business Case were submitted to PMO in January 2022. A review is underway as per the assurance process • VAT advice sought from VAT specialists • Required Change Requests drafted and being finalised in conjunction with project leads • Subsidy Advice received for all projects. Advice raised no concerns • Cost Centres for all projects have been set up • Advanced Funding Requests agreed and allocated to cost centres • Risk Register trajectory is down and forecasted to be 6 (green) overall by March 2022 	<p>Jenna Langford</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No project level risks escalated since last Local Board meeting. 	
3.2	<p><u>Assurance Panel Feedback - 24 January 2022</u> The Rowley Regis Satellite Education Hub Project was presented and agreed by the Assurance Panel on 24 January 2022. As a result, the project summary document will be prepared and proceed for submission to DLUHC by 24 March 2022.</p>	
3.3	<p>The recommendations agreed by the Assurance Panel were presented to Local Board Members. Recommendations included: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That the Partnership Agreement between Sandwell MBC and Sandwell College formally transfers the full financial risk of delivery and operation of the project to Sandwell College 2) That external VAT advice is sought to confirm that VAT costs will be considered eligible spend 3) That prior to entering into a funding agreement with the DLUHC, Strategic Finance review the terms and conditions of funding to assess the level of risk to the council. 4) That the agreement between Sandwell Council and Sandwell College includes a provision for payments to Sandwell College to be made in arrears, following evidence of defrayed expenditure to reduce the financial risk to Sandwell MBC. 5) That the terms of the lease agreement are reviewed and confirmed as adequate prior to the commencement of the project. 6) Project Change Request to be submitted to DLUHC to capture revised number of learners assisted and value of project Towns Fund Ask. 	
3.4	<p><u>Assurance Panel Feedback - 8 February 2022</u> The Canal Network Connectivity Project was presented and agreed by the Assurance Panel on 8 February 2022. As a result, the project summary document will be prepared and proceed for submission to DLUHC by 24 March 2022.</p>	
3.5	<p>The recommendations agreed by the Assurance Panel were presented to Local Board Members. Recommendations included: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That prior to entering into a funding agreement with the DLUHC, Strategic Finance review the terms and conditions of funding to assess the level of risk to the council; 2) That the Partnership Agreement between Sandwell MBC and CRT formally transfers the full financial risk of delivery and operation of the project to CRT; 3) That the Partnership Agreement includes a provision for payments to CRT in arrears, following evidence of defrayed expenditure to reduce the financial risk to Sandwell MBC; 4) That the Financial Case includes a full breakdown of the capital costs and a narrative confirming that soft market testing has been undertaken to demonstrate robustness in the cost estimates; 5) That the Commercial Case captures the Design, Consent, Construction, Financing and Operational (revenue) Risk allocation between CRT and the contractor. 	

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3.6	<p><u>VAT Implications</u> Sandwell Council have recently appointed Deloitte for VAT advice, specifically for the Smethwick Midland Met Learning Campus, Rowley Regis Satellite Education Hub and West Bromwich Sandwell MEC projects.</p>	
3.7	<p>Deloitte have reviewed Towns Fund Guidance and are unable to directly confirm the grant would cover VAT, however based on their experience of other Government funding, it is expected the grant would cover uncoverable VAT.</p>	
3.8	<p>The Rowley Regis Satellite Education Hub project costs incorporates VAT. Sandwell College are exploring options on how to recover VAT and any VAT saved would be reinvested back into the project.</p>	
3.9	<p>The Chair asked Local Board Members to raise any queries and make comment. No queries or comments were forthcoming.</p>	
4.0	<p>Britannia Park Greenspace and Community Hub Full Business Case To receive final draft of Full Business Case. Local Board to make any final input / comment and make recommendation to Superboard to agree FBC.</p>	<p>Alan Reynolds/ John Satchwell</p>
4.1	<p>The Britannia Park Community Hub Full Business Case and supporting documentation were circulated prior to the meeting. A high-level summary of each of the 5 cases were presented to Local Board Members. The key points included: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategic aim of the project is to improve the infrastructure, facilities and environmental quality of Britannia Park, promoting and enabling greater usage for a variety of purposes, and to improve the health and wellbeing of residents across Rowley Regis • The project will provide local people with new facilities for all ages and inclusive groups ensuring that the people of Rowley Regis will be able to enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits of a high standard accessible greenspace. • Engagement has demonstrated clear demand for this project • The project links to the wider strategic objectives of from Sandwell's Inclusive Economy Deal and Sandwell Vision 2030; Raising aspirations and resilience; Healthier for longer and safer; Lowering crime and ASB and Create environments in the 6 towns where people chose to live. • The Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) calculation for this project is underway, however the project team foresee this project to offer good value for money. • Project risks have been identified are being proactively managed through regular risk review and escalation. The key risks were outlined to Local Board Members. • The total project value is £2.478m consisting £2.45m Towns Fund and £0.028m match funding from Sandwell Council (S106). Long term running 	

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	<p>costs will be met by Sandwell Council and the project will be maintained using existing Parks maintenance revenue budgets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project management is resourced through Sandwell Council and will be overseen by the Project Manager who will report frequently to the Programme Management Office, Rowley Regis Local Board and Sandwell Superboard. A Project Board has been established and will have the overall responsibility for key decisions, strategic steer and lead for the overall project. This project will be delivered via existing framework contractor(s) that have been procured in compliance with procurement regulations. Separate tender exercises may be required for some specialist items; however, this will be done in line with Sandwell Council's Procurement Policy. <p>4.2 As part of the Assurance process, SIU are required to review the Strategic and Management Cases and Mott MacDonald Consultants required to review the Financial, Economic and Commercial Cases. Comments that were recently received by Mott MacDonald were shared with Local Board Members. Following SIU feedback, the Full Business Case is to be updated to address suggestions.</p> <p>4.3 Local Board Members were asked to provide comments. The discussion included:</p> <p>-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During previous Local Board Meetings, reference of a café facility was included within the project scope, however was not referenced specifically within the Full Business Case. Clarification was sought if this element was within scope of the project. Local Board Members were advised whilst not a direct output of the Towns Fund, there is a wider objective for Britannia Park, which aims to include community organisations to deliver more activities within the park and provide a café facility. Expression of Interests have been received and Sandwell Council are keen to work with partners to increase the opportunities available to the park and local residents/ community. A question was raised regarding public toilets and if these are part of Towns Fund. Local Board Members were advised the building within the Towns Fund project will provide changing rooms and public toilets. However, toilets will be closed to members of the public when changing rooms are not in use. <p>4.4 Agreed. Britannia Park Greenspace and Community Hub Full Business Case agreed and recommended to Superboard for agreement.</p>	
5.0	<p>Rowley Regis Connected Full Business Case To receive final draft of Full Business Case. Local Board to make any final input / comment and make recommendation to Superboard to agree FBC.</p>	Andy Miller
5.1	<p>The Rowley Regis Connected Full Business Case and supporting documentation were circulated prior to the meeting. A high-level summary of each of the 5 cases were presented to Local Board Members. The key points included: -</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Rowley Regis Connected project will generate a multi phased set of multi-modal infrastructure improvements to link transport (rail, bus) and employment hubs in Blackheath, Cradley Heath and Oldbury. The project will deliver new pedestrian and cycle routes including segregated cycle routes, resurface and widen footpaths, upgrade crossing facilities, introduce traffic calming, upgrade lighting, improve signage and road markings. The Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) calculation for this project is 2.41, meaning this scheme offers high value for money. Local Board Members were asked to note this BCR doesn't take into account transport benefits. Project risks have been identified are being proactively managed through regular risk review and escalation. The key risks were outlined to Local Board Members. The total project value is £1.5m consisting 100% Towns Fund. Long term running costs will be met by Sandwell Council and the project will be maintained using existing Highway Maintenance Revenue budgets. A Project Board has been established and it is primarily the decision-making body for the Rowley Regis Connected project. <p>5.2 The Full Business Case review is underway and due to conclude on 14 February 2022. Comments received so far included detailed Gantt Chart and detailed costings. Local Board Members were informed detailed costings may change during the delivery period as some phases aren't for delivery until 2023/24.</p> <p>5.3 Local Board Members were asked to provide comments. No comments were forthcoming.</p> <p>5.4 <i>Agreed. Rowley Regis Connected Full Business Case agreed and recommended to Superboard for agreement.</i></p>	
6.0	<p>Blackheath Bus Interchange and Public Realm Update To receive an update on the Blackheath Bus Interchange and Public Realm project and revised submission timescales.</p> <p>6.1 <u>Full Business Case Development</u> Local Board Members were presented with an update on progress: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial project design in place Consultation Plan produced and aim to consult in June/ July 2022 The Transport Benefit element of the project has completed and project team have received this work on 10 February 2022 to incorporate within the Full Business Case Further input to define the BCR and Value for money is required Discussion held with Mott MacDonald regarding the wider economic impact of the project. The project includes the proposal to create a public space within Blackheath Town Centre. Local Board Members were advised this 	Andy Miller

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	work is likely to proceed throughout February, therefore will not be available for Superboard on 17 February 2022.	
6.2	In regard to consultation, discussions had taken place at previous Board Meetings regarding locations to hold consultation events. Local Board Members were advised a consultation activity for another active travel project would be taking place in Blackheath Library. The project lead advised they would report back on how successful this venue is.	
6.3	Local Board Members were asked to provide comments. No comments were forthcoming.	
6.4	<p><u>Revised Timescales</u></p> <p>As per the above, a final draft of the Full Business Case would not be available for the 17 February 2022 Superboard. As a result, a discussion took place on the 10 February 2022 with the Chair of Local Board, Chair of Superboard and Director of Regeneration and Growth to identify an approach moving forward.</p>	
6.5	A proposal was put forward to Local Board Members for consideration in that delegated authority was given to the Chair of Rowley Regis Local Board to oversee the project going through the Assurance Panel. This would mean that the Chair of Rowley Regis Local Board would sit on the Assurance Panel to provide assurance on behalf of the Local Board and ensure all outstanding actions are delivered. Local Board Members would then receive feedback from the Local Board Chair.	
6.6	As this project would not meet existing timescales set for the remaining Towns Fund projects, an additional Assurance Panel has been arranged for March 2022.	
6.7	The project Lead offered to hold 1-1 discussions with Local Board Members regarding the detail of this project.	
6.8	Local Board Members were asked to raise their hand/ use chat function to object to the proposal of delegation. No objections were received.	
6.9	<i>Agreed. Delegated authority given to Chair of Rowley Regis Local Board to oversee Blackheath Bus Interchange and Public Realm project going through the Assurance Panel.</i>	
7.0	Any Other Business	All
7.1	No other business was forthcoming.	
8.0	Date of Next Meeting To be arranged	For Information