

Meeting Minutes

PROJECT	Town Deal – Community Engagement and Consultation Group		
DATE	1 February 2024	LOCATION	Virtual meeting using MS Teams

Attendees	
David Pagett-Wright	Chair
Kathy Phillips	Loughborough Heritage Forum
Jill Vincent	Generator Loughborough
Jonathan Hale	Generator Loughborough
Christian Allen-Clay	Kinch Bus
Claire Smith	Youth Sport Trust
Richard Erwin-Jones	Canal and River Trust
Peter Dadswell	Environment Agency
John Byrne	Active Together
Chris Grace	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration (CBC)
Maria Curran	Loughborough Town Deal Project Manager
Mike Roberts	Communications Manager (CBC)
Sally Watson	Minute Taker (CBC)

Apologies	
Alison Oliver	Youth Sports Trust
Alan Leather	Canal and River Trust
David Ellard	Great Central Railway
Ross Ingham	Bellfoundry Trust
Gary Brebner	Loughborough Building Society
Justin Henry	Charnwood Borough Council

Meeting Type (Team, Board or other)
Community Engagement and Consultation Group
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<p>1. Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Attendees introduced themselves and apologies were read out.</p>
<p>2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd November 2022 were confirmed as a correct record. Kathy Phillips stated that the ‘History of the Boat People’ exhibition was scheduled to open on Tuesday 6th February 2024 for three months.</p>

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3. Generator Project

Jonathan Hale delivered a presentation on the development of the Generator Project. The following summarises the points made;

- i. A private sector partner (Our Neighbourhood) was identified to support the Generator Loughborough project in purchasing the freehold of the entire building.
- ii. The café on the ground floor ('Public') was open and had been successful in attracting customers from the artistic community. There were 18 local businesses operating from the upper floors.
- iii. The remainder of the building had previously housed the electricity generator powering the Loughborough College buildings around the area. The original features were to be preserved as much as possible and the industrial theme retained. There were no toilet facilities, stairs or lifts in the hall area, and these would need to be installed. A new mezzanine floor was to be installed for further space.
- iv. There had been some issues with the building, such as asbestos and lead in paint, that had been dealt with.
- v. Funding had been identified from a number of sources, in addition to £1.6m in Town Deal funding. This included Community Ownership Funding, National Lottery Heritage Funding, Arts Council England, Architectural Heritage Funding, Crowdfunding and Charnwood Borough Council Community Grant. Early support was provided by LLEP, Charnwood Borough Council and SIB.
- vi. Building cost inflation had caused work prices to increase. The project's funding gap had increased which caused some difficulties. To overcome these issues, the project was split into two stages; the building works stage and the kit and equipment stage. This shall enable the project to open to the public in order to generate some income.
- vii. The building works stage would involve the use of secured funds to make the building safe and usable. This will include roof work, the building of the mezzanine, toilet installation, fire escapes and resolving basement flooding issues.
- viii. The contract for building works was to be signed imminently and it was likely that the venue would open in Spring 2025. There would be an opportunity for communications on the project during the period leading towards the opening of the venue.
- ix. There was a significant amount of work to undertake over the next six months, which includes the recruitment of a Venue Manager, a Deputy Venue Manager and an Advisory Board.
- x. There was a Loughborough Heritage weekend planned for September which would

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include guided walks in and around Loughborough. This would be another good opportunity for communications.

- xi. There would be numerous employment opportunities for young people in the area, such as hospitality roles and sound and lighting support. The project leads had been in contact with Loughborough College to engage some young people in the operations of the venue. In addition, there would be volunteering and work experience opportunities available.

AGREED that the group notes the information.

4. Project Update

The Town Deal Project Manager provided a presentation on the progression of projects.

The following summarises the points made:

- i. The Town Deal overarching aim was to drive economic regeneration and productivity across the UK. The work of the Town Deal was required to be complete by March 2026.
- ii. The Town Investment Plan was submitted in early 2021. This was devised following a review of the individual risks and opportunities identified and was focussed on five key themes:
 - Town Centre Hollowing
 - Securing Regeneration
 - Improving Connectivity
 - Protecting Heritage
 - Improving Opportunities
- iii. There was £16.9m awarded to the Loughborough Town Deal, which would fund 11 projects with a total investment value of over £40m.
- iv. Stage one (Town Investment Plan) and stage two (business case approvals) were complete and the programme was currently in stage three (delivery).
- v. There were a number of completed projects including the Bedford Square Gateway Project, the Careers and Enterprise Hub and the Canal tow path and improvements. Some projects were partly completed, such as the fourth pavilion of the Sports Park, the incubator hub, as part of the Loughborough University campus, the casting of the Hope Bell, the augmented reality heritage trail and the free wi-fi extension in Loughborough Town Centre. The total investment value of all of the completed elements of the Town Deal Programme was worth approximately £14m.
- vi. Some projects were moving towards completion, including the Bell Foundry project, which was due for completion in Spring 2024 and the Digital Skills hub was expected to be completed in early 2025.
- vii. Work was continuing on the Great Central Railway and Woodbrook projects.

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- viii. Overall there was good progress being made despite the difficulties associated with rising costs.

AGREED that the group notes the information.

5. Communications Update

The Council's Communications Manager delivered a presentation updating on the approach to Town Deal communications. The following summarises the points made:

- i. There had been a significant amount of communications regarding the programme and individual projects, which included video interviews, a video summary of projects called 'Delivering the Deal', infographics and press releases.
- ii. The most recent communications work has been on the official opening of the Sport Park Pavilion 4, the completion of the canal project and the promotion of the Delivering the Deal event.
- iii. There would be round up of the Town Deal achievements so far, which would include the accomplishment of £14m in investment value and the support of the Town Deal Board Chair, Dr Nik Kotecha, as his period as Chair comes to an end.
- iv. Social media and other digital communications have been used to update the Town Deal account and website, 20,000 impressions across social media channels and over 10,000 views for Delivering the Deal: Bell Foundry, Canal projects and others.
- v. There were two events planned to update the public and local businesses on the work on the Town Deal. The first event for businesses and organisations was to be held at the Sport Park Pavilion 4 in March 2024, and the public facing event would take place at Loughborough Town Hall in late March/early April 2024.
- vi. John Byrne asked whether contact details for project leads could be made available. Maria Curran was able to provide this information.
- vii. Richard Erwin Jones of the Canal and River Trust stated appreciation for the Town Deal funding provided to the Canal and River Trust and highlighted that the works completed on the tow path had been beneficial during the recent flooding events in Loughborough, as the reinforced path had remained intact despite being flooded.

AGREED

1. That the group notes the information.
2. That Maria Curran provides contact information for project leads to all attendees.

6. Date of Next Meeting

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It was confirmed that a further meeting of the group would be scheduled in due course.