

Loughborough Town Deal

Member Reference Group

19 January 2021

Agenda

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| 1. Welcome and Apologies | Cllr Bokor |
| 2. Notes of Previous Meeting (p2) | Cllr Bokor |
| 3. Loughborough Town Investment Plan (p7) | Eileen Mallon |
| 4. Date of Next Meeting | Cllr Bokor |

Meeting Minutes

PROJECT	Town Deal – Member Reference Group		
DATE	18 November 2020	LOCATION	Virtual meeting using Zoom

Attendees	
Councillor Bokor (Chair)	Lead Member Loughborough
County Councillor Betty Newton	Loughborough North
County Councillor Jewel Miah	Loughborough East
County Councillor Ted Parton	Loughborough South
County Richard Bailey	Loughborough Outwoods
Councillor Colin Hamilton	Loughborough Hastings
Councillor Christine Harris	Loughborough Lemyngton
Councillor Paul Mercer	Loughborough Southfields
Councillor Geoff Parsons	Loughborough Nanpantan
Councillor Emma Ward	Dishley and Hathern
Eileen Mallon	Strategic Director of Housing, Planning, Regeneration and Regulatory Services
Chris Grace	Town Deal Project Manager
Richard Bennett	Head of Planning and Regeneration
Sylvia Wright	Head of Leisure and Culture
Sally Watson	Minute Taker (Charnwood Borough Council)

Apologies	
County Councillor Jonathan Morgan	Loughborough South West
Councillor Alice Brennan	Loughborough Shelthorpe
Councillor Kat Goddard	Loughborough Ashby
Councillor Geoff Parsons	Loughborough Nanpantan
Mike Roberts	Communications Manager

Meeting Type (Team, Board or other)
Member Reference Group
Meeting Minutes
<p>1. Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Members confirmed that they were able to see and hear the proceedings and apologies were given as outlined above.</p>
<p>2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and there were no matters arising.</p>

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3. Cohort 1 Submissions and Outcomes

Chris Grace provided an overview of outcomes from Town Deal Cohort 1 submissions to date and the characteristics of those Town Investment Plans where the Government had announced in-principle funding allocations.

It was highlighted that there had been an additional cohort introduced by the Government (cohort 2a, deadline 11th December 2020) as a number of Towns had indicated that they would not meet the cohort 2 deadline.

Reviewing the submissions of other towns and also the feedback received by those towns would enable the Loughborough TIP to be strengthened further as it would provide an opportunity to better understand the requirements and preferences of Government.

The Loughborough bid was £31.7m and consultants had estimated that upon completion of a successful project in five years, the investment sum could be up to £110m.

The relationship between funding amounts received and match funding offered was not possible to specify as technical pro-formas submitted as part of the TIP, which would contain this information, were confidential. There was no government requirement for match funding for a town deal project.

Recommendation Agreed: That Members note the content of this report.

4. Loughborough Town Investment Plan

Eileen Mallon and Chris Grace updated members on the submission of the Loughborough Town Investment Plan.

The projects contained within the TIP were;

Transport & Digital Infrastructure - £3.6m

- Connected Loughborough
- Electric Loughborough

Urban regeneration, planning and land use - £14.6m

- Development Accelerator
- Living Loughborough
- Gateways to the Town Centre

Arts, Culture and Heritage - £3.6m

- Taylor's Bellfoundry and Great Central Railway
- Loughborough GeneratorHi there,
- Riverside Regeneration

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Skills & Employability - £3.8m

- Careers and Enterprise Hub
- Loughborough College Digital Skills Hub
- Generation Loughborough

Enterprise - £1.8m

- Sportpark Expansion and Wayfinder Scheme

Microprojects - £1.1m

- Community and Business Capital Grants Scheme

Foundation and cross-cutting interventions - £3.2m

- Loughborough University as an Anchor Institution
- Flood Defence Scheme

Members praised the work that had been undertaken to produce the Loughborough TIP and considered the report to be an excellent and accessible summary which reflected the criteria. In addition, feedback from other Town Deal locations had been positive. The acknowledgement of Loughborough as a unique town and the relevance of projects had also been praised.

It was expected that any issues or errors with the TIP would be communicated back to the Council shortly after submission, as was the case following TIP submissions from other Towns. There had been no communication of this nature from Government at present and so it was likely there were no issues to report.

It was highlighted that the Loughborough Generator project was associated with the creative sector, whereas the Careers and Enterprise Hub was more generic and was associated with many other sectors, but the projects had the potential to complement one another and strengthen the TIP.

Sites had been identified to potentially benefit from the Development Accelerator, mainly in the town centre and associated with the Town Centre Masterplan . Following a successful bid application, it was possible that restrictions and conditions could be attached to the release of funding, such as the development of a specific area. However, it was possible that no conditions would be attached to the offer and the Town Deal Board would then have the opportunity to agree and proceed with the work outlined in the TIP.

The Town Deal Board had strategic oversight of the entire Town Deal process and would exist until the completion of the plan. The accountable body and the financial controller was Charnwood Borough Council. The responsibility and leadership of undertaking project work would transfer when this started. Project leaders would be required to report into the Loughborough Town Deal Board and Charnwood Borough Council at this stage. A Deliverability Plan would be established in order to measure the progress of projects.

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The funds associated with the Loughborough Town Deal that the Council was responsible for would likely be referred to in the Capital Budget as 'External Funding'. Each project would develop a business case, which would be thoroughly scrutinised externally. The Town Deal Board would scrutinise allocations made. It was unclear how funds would be transferred to the Council, whether this be a lump sum or a specific allocation fund for each project and until this was more clear, it was difficult to confirm how the Council would handle and report on the budgets.

Recommendation Agreed: That the Member Reference Group notes the content of this report.

5. Town Deal Next Steps

Chris Grace provided an explanation of what was expected to happen now that the Town Investment Plan had been completed and described some of the next steps that the Town Deal Board and its supporting team will need to take.

The process which determined whether funding would be released to facilitate implementation of a Town Deal can be viewed as having 3 phases according to MHCLG guidance:

- Phase 1 - completion and submission of the Town Investment Plan (TIP)
- Phase 2 – appraisal of the TIP and agreement of Heads of Terms
- Phase 3 – development of full business cases leading to release of funding.

The Loughborough Town Deal was currently in phase 2 and it was difficult to determine time lines towards moving into phase 3. It was anticipated that the Head of Terms would be agreed between January and March 2021 but this was not certain. Heads of Terms were negotiable.

The Council was required to create an engagement plan which would outline the roles of the different groups involved within the Town Deal process, and the ways in which local communities could be involved.

At present there had been no Towns asked to resubmit their bids. It was anticipated that when a Heads of Terms was to be publicised, this would be communicated shortly before.

Recommendation Agreed: That the Member Reference Group notes the content of this report.

6. Up Front Funding Update

Eileen Mallon and Chris Grace provided an update on the use of £750,000 'upfront' Towns Fund which was awarded to Loughborough in order to 'kickstart' the town deal process.

The Careers and Enterprise Hub was selected to receive the full sum. It was stated that the Government could request funds back in the event that the project was not delivered by the March 2021 deadline. The Council had purchased a property within the Town Centre in order to develop the hub facility.

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The other projects suggested for use of the £750,000 upfront funding would still be included within the TIP but would not be supported by the upfront fund and therefore completion of these projects would not be required in March 2021.

The Careers and Enterprise Hub would be accessible to all communities within Loughborough, dependent on programme criteria, but would primarily target towards younger groups. The offer at the hub would complement similar hubs around the County.

Business initiatives supported by the Careers and Enterprise Hub would not be required to operate in Loughborough Town Centre only. Projects Borough-wide would have the opportunity to develop following support from the hub.

It was highlighted that the University and the College were experienced in developing new projects designed to improve the skills of people within the community and it was anticipated that the work of the hub would encourage employment and subsequently improve the lives of local people.

Recommendation Agreed: That the Member Reference Group notes the content of this report.

7. Any Other Business

The Chair recognised the hard work undertaken by officers in order to progress to this stage of the Town Deal.

Loughborough Town Deal Member Reference Group

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Item 3– Loughborough Town Investment Plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the initial appraisal of the Loughborough Town Investment Plan by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the implications of that appraisal.

Recommendation:

That the Group notes the content of this report and advises the Board, via the Chair, that it would welcome the opportunity to comment on a draft of the revised Town Investment Plan.

2. Background

- 2.1 MHCLG requires Town Deal locations to submit a Town Investment Plan (TIP) in accordance with its Guidance. Any town which does not submit a TIP will not be able to receive Town Deal funding from the Towns Fund.
- 2.2 Loughborough's TIP, produced by consultancy Third Life Economics Ltd and overseen and approved by the Town Deal Board, was submitted to MHCLG on 26th October 2020. It had been subject to a 'check and challenge' sessions led by consultants Arup and Grant Thornton and advice from MHCLG's town deal liaison official for Loughborough.
- 2.3 The TIP had been subject to public consultation and input from this Group and the Community Engagement Group.

3. MHCLG appraisal of the Town Investment Plan

- 3.1 MHCLG has undertaken an initial appraisal of the Loughborough TIP. MHCLG briefed the Town Deal Board when it met on 27th November 2020 (draft minutes of the meeting are published on the town deal website at <https://www.loughboroughtowndeal.co.uk/uploads/tdb-27-nov-2020-meeting-minutes-draft.pdf?v=1607510020>) and subsequently formal feedback was received in writing on 9th December.
- 3.2 The feedback from MHCLG was that whilst the Loughborough TIP had some strong elements to it, there were several areas where further 'points of clarification' and a strengthening of the narrative would be required if the TIP is to be eligible for a full appraisal. The feedback was as follows:

- a) Provide more quantifiable information about the impact and scale of your proposed interventions
- b) Explain and / or consider the 'active health living demonstrator' and how the proposed interventions [TIP projects] will help realise this element of the vision.
- c) Explain how your different timescales and frameworks relate to one another – for example 2033 or 2050.
- d) Provide detail of how you have considered spatial impact, including naming key sites and areas of the town on the map.
- e) Explain the document's golden thread, linking the vision through to the interventions
- f) Clarify which inputs/resources and specific outcomes are included in the Theory of Change.
- g) Explain how the TIP aligns to local and national strategies.
- h) Clarify which co-funding is projected and which is secured, and what you are doing to secure any that is not yet agreed
- i) Provide further detail on how you plan to maximise existing investment and future planned investment
- j) Provide further detail on how you plan to manage and oversee the delivery of the town deal, taking into account the range of different project leads.
- k) Use plain English for the TIP's narrative and simplify the presentation of the TIP's objectives.

3.5 MHCLG advised the Town Deal Board that it had the opportunity to address the points of clarification contained in the written feedback within 2 weeks. However, in that scenario the Loughborough TIP would achieve no more than an 'amber' rating which would mean that it would be impossible for the town to be granted funding anywhere near the £31.7 million being asked for.

3.6 The Board was also advised that, alternatively, a full re-submission of the TIP could be made in early 2021 and in that scenario the TIP would be subject to new appraisal and the potential opportunity to achieve the full amount of funding being asked for.

3.7 Based on the advice of MHCLG, the Board has decided to re-submit the TIP in February 2021.

4. Next Steps

4.1 The TIP is being redrafted to take account of the appraisal feedback received from MHCLG and, subject to Board approval, will be re-submitted to MHCLG in the final week of February 2021.

- 4.2 The Board is due to receive a first re-draft of the TIP for its consideration and comment on 22nd January. If Board agrees, that first re-draft will be sent by email to members of this Group for your comments. Your comments should then be emailed to your Chair, who will advise the Board of the views of this Group.
- 4.3 A 'check and challenge' session with Arup and MHCLG is scheduled for 5th February.
- 4.4 The Board will then meet again on 15th February and be asked to approve a second and final re-draft of the TIP.