

Meeting Minutes

PROJECT	Town Deal – Member Reference Group		
DATE	22 March 2023	LOCATION	Virtual meeting using Zoom

Attendees	
Councillor Bokor (Chair)	Lead Member for Loughborough
County Councillor Betty Newton	Loughborough North
County Councillor Ted Parton	Loughborough South
Councillor Geoff Parsons	Loughborough Nanpantan
Councillor Colin Hamilton	Loughborough Hastings
Councillor Sandie Forrest	Loughborough Storer
Councillor Christine Harris	Loughborough Lemyngton
Justin Henry	Director of Commercial and Economic Development
Chris Grace	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration
Maria Curran	Town Deal Project Manager
Mike Roberts	Communications Manager
Nicky Conway	Minute Taker (Charnwood Borough Council)
Apologies	
County Councillor Max Hunt	Loughborough North West
County Councillor Jewel Miah	Loughborough East
County Councillor Jonathan Morgan	Loughborough South West
Councillor Richard Bailey	Loughborough Outwoods
Councillor Roy Campsall	Loughborough Garendon
Councillor Kat Goddard	Loughborough Ashby
Councillor Beverley Gray	Loughborough Shelthorpe
Councillor Paul Mercer	Loughborough Southfields
Councillor Emma Ward	Dishley and Hathern

Meeting Type (Team, Board or other)
Member Reference Group
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<p>1. Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Attendees confirmed that they were able to see and hear the meeting and apologies were given as outlined above.</p> <p><i>Betty Newton CC had connectivity issues during the meeting.</i></p>

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2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th November 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and there were no matters arising.

3. Progress Update

The Town Deal Programme Manager and the Communications Manager provided a presentation on the progression of projects.

The Town Deal Programme Manager summarised the current position with 11 projects, benefitting from £16.9million funding which had attracted £46.5million investment into the Town. In addition to the information presented, she provided further details of each project as follows:

Bedford Square Gateway Project – the project was almost complete, with the final phase of adding banners to lampposts to be completed by mid-May. Snagging and defects were likely to be completed by August 2023 when Leicestershire County Council would re-adopt the highway.

Riverside Regeneration – work was being carried out on 2km of towpaths. The mooring bollards were anticipated to take some time to install.

Bell Foundry – the building was on the ‘at risk’ register and it was hoped that by completing the project the building would be removed from the register. The time taken to tender for a contractor had been protracted and required some value engineering of the specifications of materials, but main works were anticipated to start in April.

Generator – early enabling works were being carried out, including the removal of lead in paint and asbestos, and a soft strip. There had been a slight delay to its construction start date due to receiving confirmation of match funding, but this was in progress.

Healthy and Innovative Loughborough – this project was multi-faceted and was likely to be ongoing to the end of the Town Deal project deadline but progress with the Sports Park Pavilion 4 and research activities were noted.

Careers & Enterprise Hub – improvements to external fabric was anticipated to be completed by May 2023.

Great Central Railway – there had been changes to its design to provide teaching and visitor facilities and reorganise the space to be more efficiently utilised. A planning application had been submitted but not yet determined and the date for this was to be confirmed.

Lanes & Links / Living Loughborough – both projects were still at an early stage, but some work had been progressed such as the casting of the Hope Bell, extension to free Wi-Fi and CCTV installations in the Queens Park.

Digital Skills Hub – there had been some changes to the design, but construction was anticipated to start soon and tendering for the contractor was in progress.

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Wood Brook Flood Management – preparatory work still required before the Environment Agency could begin on site but the project still on track to deliver by the end of the Town Deal Project.

Communications - the Communications Manager presented highlights of the communications since the last meeting and future steps. He particularly noted the success of some of the social media posts and coverage received for the casting of the Hope Bell.

Summary of discussion:

- with regard to the Bedford Square project, any snags or defects identified by Councillors or residents could be forwarded to the Town Deal Programme Manager or the Project Lead.
- with regard to the Generator project, some funds were still required to complete the project. Match funding had always been part of its business case and the Project Lead was in the process of obtaining this. There were conditions in the grant agreement which required the project to demonstrate it had all the funding in place before it could proceed with construction.
- with regard to the Woodbrook Flood Mitigation project, whether the deadline for completion could go beyond the end of the Town Deal project deadline and would the money be therefore clawed back by DLUHC. The work was on track to be completed in 2024/25 with the snagging and defects phase to run to the end of March 2026 (the end of the Town Deal project). DLUHC had been clear that all projects were required to finish by March 2026 and there was a risk that any funding not spent could be clawed back although there had been no indication by DLUHC that they would do this. The risk register for all projects held by the accountable body was closely monitored and refreshed and any red flags would be identified promptly and considered by the Delivery Sub-Group.
- it was possible that the recent fire in Loughborough town centre could delay the implementation of the Lanes & Links and Living Loughborough projects, but the Council were working closely with the relevant third parties to minimise the impact on the town centre and any associated projects. Noted that the Living Loughborough project was due for completion in 2025 so the risk of delay was considered minimal for this project at present.
- once the projects were completed if the businesses failed after the end of the Town Deal project, the Council as the accountable body would not be liable. Funding was provided by DLUHC, and the Council was simply the pipeline through which the money was distributed. With reference to the Careers and Enterprise Hub and Generator projects, any assets owned by the Council would be returned to its portfolio for re-letting and the Council, if it wished, could take an independent decision regarding any failing businesses if it considered it important for the economy of the town. This would go through the usual democratic processes as a separate resolution.

AGREED that the group noted the information.

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4. Date of Next Meeting

It was confirmed that a further meeting of the group would be scheduled in due course. Noted that its Terms of Reference had been recently updated to align with the meeting dates of the Town Deal Board (meeting on 13th June 2023).