

Meeting minutes

PROJECT	Town Deal		
DATE	12 June 2020	LOCATION	Virtual meeting using Zoom

Attendees	
Board Members	
Dr Nik Kotecha (Co-Chair)	Morningside Pharmaceuticals
Cllr Jonathan Morgan (Co-Chair)	Charnwood Borough Council
Professor Tracy Bhamra	Loughborough University
Cllr Jenny Bokor	Chair of MRG
Lez Cope Newman	Loughborough BID
Jane Hunt MP	MP for Loughborough
Jo Maher	Loughborough College
David Pagett-Wright	Chair of CECG
Cllr TJ Pendleton, CC	Leicestershire County Council
Andy Reed	LLEP
Martin Traynor	Economy & Skills Group
Officer Attendees	
Rob Mitchell	Charnwood Borough Council
Eileen Mallon	Charnwood Borough Council
Richard Bennett	Charnwood Borough Council
Sylvia Wright	Charnwood Borough Council
Mike Roberts	Charnwood Borough Council
Chris Grace	Charnwood Borough Council
Helen Harris	Leicestershire County Council
Mandip Rai	LLEP
Peter Sutton	BEIS/Communities
David Marlow	Third Life Economics (Consultant)
Nicky Conway	Minute Taker (Charnwood Borough Council)

Apologies	
Tom Purnell <i>(Helen Harris acting as substitute)</i>	Leicestershire County Council

Meeting Type (Team, Board or other)
Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising
The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a correct record and there were no matters arising.

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3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest. It was noted that of the 11 board members only 7 completed register of declaration forms had been received so far. Members were encouraged to complete their forms by the next meeting.

4. Project Overview Update

Chris Grace (TD Project Manager) presented this update. He noted that the project was on schedule, although some of the programme deadlines had been shortened in view of the pandemic situation.

Key areas of action completed included the appointing of a consultant (David Marlow from Third Life Economics), the arrangement of meetings for the Member Reference Group and Community Engagement and Consultation Group and the initial development of a draft investment plan proposition. Future actions included working with the Consultant to bring together views from all of the consultation feedback.

Recommendation Agreed: That the Board notes the content of this report and that the project is on schedule to produce an Investment Plan by the end of July 2020.

5. Online Public Survey Outcomes (February 2020)

Chris Grace (TD Project Manager) presented this report. He stated that the public engagement exercise had been completed in February 2020 and was a 'starter for 10' rather than seeking feedback on specific project details, further in depth consultation was planned. A good response had been received and he highlighted to the Board the key outcomes as stated in the report.

Members of the Board discussed the outcomes. It was considered that the data could be skewed by responses from more local businesses than residents and that the sample size was small. It was noted it was a good test of public opinion but not the grounds for driving policy.

Board Members raised the following points:

- it was surprising that sports/fitness/leisure facilities had not scored higher, considering that the town had a sports university and was strongly associated with sports excellence. It was possible that sports and health was not evident in the themes put forward. It was noted that sports participation in Loughborough was relatively similar to other boroughs across the country in spite of the sports university.
- it would be interesting to compare the survey outcomes with further consultation responses from focus groups and different sections of the community. It would be vital to ensure all communities were encouraged to take part.
- it was noted that the survey was pre-COVID pandemic and that views may have shifted in relation to sports connectivity and skills.
- feedback on local media websites could be taken into account as the views shared were different to the survey outcomes.

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Officers highlighted that the Government had identified specific thematic areas to focus on and although there was some local discretion, they would mainly inform the project going forward.

Recommendation Agreed: The outcomes of the survey are noted and used as part of the overall evidence base that informs the development of the town deal investment plan.

6. Communications and Public Engagements Update

Mike Roberts, Communications Manager presented this update. He stated that the consultation strategy had been revised to enable adherence to the current social distancing rules and that less face-to-face sessions and more online activities would be arranged. The Town Deal website was live and all council communication channels would be utilised to reach as many areas of the community as possible, including BAME and Disabled groups. It was anticipated that MEL Research would deliver the consultation analyses by 6th July.

Martin Traynor left the meeting.

Board Members raised the following points:

- it was important to obtain views of visitors to the town – the online survey would be shared with the Council's partners outside the borough and Board Members were encouraged to share the link with their members/colleagues,
- Market traders could be asked to signpost the survey to their customers and signage could be displayed in the town. A market stall could be hired to invite responses to the survey.
- the voluntary sector should be included in the consultation – this would be through the Community Engagement and Consultation Group and with direct communication to individual groups.

Recommendation Agreed: That the Board approves the consultation plan.

7. Town Deal Investment Plan, Proposition Draft

Eileen Mallon introduced this report and stated that as no indication had been received from the Government that the timetable would be shifting, the investment plan was sticking to its current schedule. Further guidance was expected soon and it was anticipated to include reference to the recovery from the pandemic - this had been included in the proposition draft and David Marlow had been tasked to look at the impact of COVID to the Borough.

David Marlow showed a presentation to highlight the salient points of the proposition draft (attached to these minutes). He noted that this was not a final draft, it would be subject to further development and consultation, more field work, input from the Government and require further approval by the Board.

Peter Sutton (BEIS) provided an update of the Government's position, explaining that further guidance was expected in the next few days, but it was unlikely to change the content of this proposition draft. However, he noted that although the types of intervention the fund could support wouldn't necessarily alter, the strategic objectives and prioritisation could change due to the COVID impact. The Government would be expecting to see evidence of mitigating this

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in the plan. If the Project kept to its July submission date this was likely to put Loughborough towards the front of Town Deal submissions.

Board Members were asked to consider if the proposition draft had positioned Loughborough correctly and that the themes targeted for investment were appropriate.

Martin Traynor re-joined the meeting.

Board Members raised the following points:

- that they welcomed the proposition draft and considered it to be a great plan with many exciting opportunities for the town. Areas highlighted were the smart green agenda and innovation focus, provision of re-skilling hubs, accelerating the transformation of high street, and the importance of the Tri-city zone, which was perceived as a great advantage but also raised concerns with leakage to the cities of employment and resources.
- it was a great opportunity for inward investment particularly in technology and skilled people, to create a real destination to bring money and business into the town and be a centre for excellence. Students could be encouraged to use the town centre more, particularly in relation to the night-time economy, and to stay in the town after graduating.
- there was a need to change lives fundamentally for all Loughborough residents, including those who felt 'left behind'. There were significant areas of deprivation in Loughborough to be considered.
- that the provision of affordable housing and improved transport infrastructure should be considered to maximise on attracting people to Loughborough.
- that a few minor adjustments were required; in particular that Loughborough College should be mentioned as an asset and included in the investment plan, and that it stated the University closed over the summer, but all staff were in the office and most post-graduates were still in attendance during this time.
- that the Midlands Engine Vulnerability Index had identified Loughborough as vulnerable, but this could strengthen its funding position and it was noted the town was also strong in some areas.
- that as a result of the COVID pandemic, the improvement of transport services provision and cycle paths/storage facilities could increase in priority. It was important to remember that the town had challenges to resolve prior to the recent pandemic.
- whether the town should be identified as a county town, innovation city or market town. It was noted that there was a conflict in words used, and that the town should be thought of as a leader in Leicestershire, a centre of knowledge and innovation, as a market town with a university, and a high technological centre of the midlands. It was important to ensure the same message was being presented across all platforms.
- that it was vital to use the town deal funding smartly to unlock bigger projects. The Government would be publishing its 3-year economic recovery plan in July and there would be opportunities for 'shovel ready' projects to be funded / part funded using the town deal funding flexibly alongside. It was noted that board members' organisations already had portfolios of 'shovel ready' projects and it was necessary to pull these together.

Eileen Mallon and Rob Mitchell concluded the discussion by stating it was a great opportunity to develop a new shared ambition for Loughborough, to coordinate all strategies across all agencies and to use the Town Deal as a catalyst. In the short term it was necessary to identify shovel ready schemes.

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David Marlow thanked the Board for their positive feedback and noted that it would be collated with other consultation responses to progress to the next stage.

Recommendations Agreed:

- 1) That the Board considered the vision for Loughborough contained within the town deal investment plan proposition document and the ambition for the town as being a place of distinctive national significance and quality.
- 2) That the Board considered the town deal investment plan proposition document and agrees the key themes for projects investment, namely:
 - a) Physical regeneration and how Loughborough functions as a place
 - b) Equipping people, communities and businesses for the future
 - c) A smart, green Loughborough
 - d) Loughborough – innovation ‘city’; a global, national and regional destination.
- 3) That the Board asks officers of the Council and the retained consultants to undertake consultation on the document and its content.

8. Date of Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for 31st July 2020 and will be a virtual meeting.

9. AOB

It was noted that holding events in the town centre was a great way to bring visitors into the town.

Follow up actions

1	<p><u>ITEM 6 - Communications and Public Engagements Update</u></p> <p>Board Members to share the online survey with their colleagues, students, members. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof Tracy Bhamra to circulate online survey to the President of the Students Union, • Jo Maher to circulate online survey to college students.
2	<p><u>ITEM 6 - Communications and Public Engagements Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rob Mitchell to investigate arranging signage around the town to publicise the online survey, • Mike Roberts to investigate hiring a market stall to publicise the online survey to residents and visitors.
3	<p><u>ITEM 7- Town Deal Investment Plan, Proposition Draft</u></p> <p>Peter Sutton to liaise with officers and Town Deal Board members regarding further Government Guidance (when published).</p>