

Meeting minutes

PROJECT	Town Deal – Member Reference Group		
DATE	22 June 2020	LOCATION	Virtual meeting using Zoom

ATTENDEES	
Councillor Jenny Bokor	Chair and Cabinet Lead Member for Loughborough
County Councillor Max Hunt	Loughborough North West
County Councillor Jewel Miah	Loughborough East
County Councillor Betty Newton	Loughborough North
County Councillor Ted Parton	Loughborough South
Councillor Richard Bailey	Loughborough Outwoods
Councillor Paul Mercer	Loughborough Southfields
Councillor Alice Brennan	Loughborough Shelthorpe
Councillor Sandie Forrest	Loughborough Storer
Councillor Kat Goddard	Loughborough Ashby
Councillor Colin Hamilton	Loughborough Hastings
Councillor Geoff Parsons	Loughborough Nanpantan
Councillor Emma Ward	Dishley and Hathern
Eileen Mallon	Strategic Director of Housing, Planning, Regeneration and Regulatory Services
Christopher Grace	Town Deal Project Manager
David Marlow	Third Life Economics
Nicky Conway	Democratic Services Officer
Sally Watson	Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies	
County Councillor Jonathan Morgan	Loughborough South West
Councillor Christine Harris	Loughborough Lemyngton
Councillor Campsall	Loughborough Garendon
Richard Bennett	Head of Planning and Regeneration
Sylvia Wright	Head of Leisure and Culture
Mike Roberts	Communications Manager

Minutes
<p>2. Project Overview and Update</p> <p>County Councillor Betty Newton joined the meeting at 5:18pm.</p> <p>Chris Grace gave an overview of the project and the structures in place to support the bid. This included an explanation of the role of the Town Deal Board, which would consider the points made by the Member Reference Group, the Community Engagement and Consultation Group which consisted of more than 30 local stakeholders covering a variety of interests across Loughborough, and the recent updated Government guidance on bid</p>

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submission. It was highlighted that there had not been significant changes on emphasis in the guidance, although an additional criterion was to demonstrate and consider the impact of Covid-19 on the local economy.

It was stated that there would be significant engagement with many different groups and through various channels, including a public consultation on the proposition draft version of an Investment Plan.

The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The Government had not issued a consultation toolkit, as previously expected. However, further guidance on town deals did enable locations to conduct consultation based upon key areas of consideration and content for investment plans.
- ii. There had been a dedicated website developed to help facilitate the [Town Deal](#), which included agenda and reports, consultation documents and regular updates. The latest Government guidance would be uploaded to this site in due course.
- iii. The Government had specified three tranches which Town Deal Boards could choose to submit their bids within; July 2020, October 2020 and January 2021. Loughborough would aim for submission into the first tranche by the end of July 2020. This was because the Council and the Board had already been working towards this deadline prior to the updated Government guidance and considered the existing work to be strong and robust. In addition, it was considered that an early submission would be beneficial, as there would be an opportunity to improve the investment plan and resubmit in to a next tranche, should feedback from the Government require that. Some Councillors stated that they believed the bid should be submitted to a later tranche as the genuine impact of Covid-19 on the economy and local businesses and communities was currently unknown. They also stated that by not submitting an investment plan in the first tranche, it would be possible to learn from the experiences of other town deal locations. It was stated that the Town Deal Board would consider the views of the Member Reference Group.
- iv. There had been an initial town deal public survey undertaken in February 2020 but no other formal consultations with stakeholders prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, and scheduled meetings had to be cancelled.
- v. The Community Engagement and Consultation Group events held on 15th and 16th June had been considered successful and a number of projects had been highlighted as potential ideas for investment. Key themes identified were around connectivity and regeneration of existing areas. Some detail was included but most proposals and views were generic in nature. Collated notes from both sessions would be made available on the Loughborough [Town Deal](#) website. David Marlow was in the process of making contact with stakeholders in order to potentially develop their ideas further.

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- vi. The Council had proactively engaged different groups across Loughborough through a variety of activities, including formal and informal virtual focus groups. It was currently not possible to maintain a physical presence within communities due to social distancing, and the Government and its officials was aware of the implications of this.

Recommendation Agreed: The Member Reference Group noted the report and that the project was on schedule to produce an Investment Plan by the end of July 2020. The Group recommended that the Town Deal Board should be mindful of ensuring robustness of the investment plan being prepared and that if this was not achieved, then submission should instead be by the end of October 2020.

3. Town Deal Investment Plan Proposition Draft

Eileen Mallon introduced the Investment Plan Proposition Draft document, which was currently out for [consultation](#).

David Marlow provided a presentation on the proposition draft, including the vision for Loughborough and the ambition for the town as a place of distinctive national significance and quality, key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and ideas on where funding should be allocated.

Recommendation Agreed: The Member Reference Group noted 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, and then agreed to discuss that at Item 4 on the agenda.

Recommendation Agreed: The Member Reference Group considered the town deal investment plan proposition document and via discussion at Item 4 agreed to comment on 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.

Recommendation Agreed: The Member Reference Group’s views on the proposition document were taken into account by Third Life Economics and fed through to the Town Deal Board via officers and the Chair of this Group.

4. Discussion: Investment Plan Proposition Draft

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The following summarises the discussion on the Investment Plan Proposition Document:

Topic area A: Loughborough as a Place: our vision of the future.

A1. What are views of members of the group as to how Loughborough should position itself over the next few decades? How should it be seen regionally, nationally and internationally? How ambitious should we be?

- i. It was highlighted that although the draft Investment Plan referred to a 'smarter, greener Loughborough', it did not explore this in depth, and there was no mention of the Council's carbon footprint. This would be one specific area that could be strengthened in terms of ambition and reputation.
- ii. There was a risk that a plan for Loughborough could focus on the development of schemes and projects that would benefit more affluent communities, visitors and students, rather than the relatively disadvantaged existing communities in the Town Centre and surrounding areas. An opportunity to promote social mobility was important, as a number of Loughborough's communities featured in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation scale. It was suggested that in order to support local communities, procurement of services, labour and goods associated with the developments and works undertaken as a result of the Town Deal Investment Plan could be focussed in Loughborough.
- iii. The Investment Plan presented by David Marlow was original and unique to Loughborough, based on potential solutions that had been put forward by others. The Plan was entirely bespoke and adaptable in order to enable the Council to achieve the vision for Loughborough.

A2. What strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats does Loughborough have?

- i. Transport links into Loughborough in the evening were considered to be poor, which would not support the night-time economy.
- ii. It was suggested that the diversity in Loughborough should be protected and celebrated and that the Town Deal funding should be utilised to help facilitate this.
- iii. The innovative and technological reputation of Loughborough was considered to be a key strength.
- iv. Loughborough University and the educational reputation of Loughborough was considered to be a key strength.
- v. Loughborough had lost its identity in terms of engineering and this could be reinstated through project work.
- vi. The transformative nature of Loughborough was a key strength that should be acknowledged when identifying projects. For example, Loughborough is

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transformative between term time and breaks, on market days and non-market days and during the day and night-time.

Topic area B: Implementing Our Vision Through a Town Deal

B1. What are the views of members of the group as to what should be priority areas for intervention in order to achieve the vision of the town in the future? Are there any specific projects you think could be part of the Town Deal Investment Plan; which of these do group members should potentially prioritised?

- i. Locations within the town were proposed for regeneration, including Nottingham Road, Derby Road, Leicester Road. It was acknowledged that the Town Deal funding of £25m would not be sufficient to cover all of these redevelopment projects. However, it was anticipated that alternative funding streams may become available to support this work. Eileen Mallon advised Members that she and David Marlow had visited a number of key locations for possible development which could help attract higher footfall to the town.
- ii. It was acknowledged that the offer of the Town Centre required improvement and that this did not necessarily mean an increase in retail businesses. With online shopping becoming more prominent there was a need to include alternative attractions such as services, leisure and open spaces as opposed to the traditional shopping experience. It was also stated that following Covid-19 and as the town moved towards economic recovery, the Loughborough 'high street' could change significantly. It was likely that some businesses would not survive whilst new businesses may be established following redundancies.
- iii. The Generator project was considered to be valuable and had been proposed on several occasions over a number of years. This project was currently active as a concept but top-up funding could potentially be allocated to support its delivery.
- iv. It was suggested that there would be a benefit in attracting families and younger people into the Town Centre through activities such as bowling, soft play and areas specifically designed for socialising such as youth club facilities.
- v. The regeneration of existing buildings was suggested in order to reduce costs.
- vi. The primary focus would be on projects with established plans, as funds would need to be used within five years.
- vii. The private sector had been responsive in terms of potential for collaborative work. The Community Engagement and Consultation Group had allowed liaison with organisations on projects which could be supported by Town Deal funding and David Marlow was in the process of following these up.
- viii. David Marlow requested that Members send details of any specific projects

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with a business case for consideration:

Davidmarlow@thirdlifeconomics.co.uk.

B2. Does economic and social recovery from Covid-19 deserve to have prominence within the context of an ambitious, outward-looking investment plan?

- i. It was stated that the real impact of Covid-19 on Loughborough and its assets, communities and businesses remained unclear. It was anticipated that there would be significant changes to Loughborough in these areas but these would not be known for some time.
- ii. Some of the strengths and weaknesses outlined in the discussion could be compromised as a result of Covid-19 and therefore in the long term this should be considered.

Recommendation Agreed: That Third Life Economics take on board the points made in the discussion of this Item and that officers and the Chair feedback the consensus of the discussions and the notes of the meeting to the Town Deal Board.

5. Any Other Business

There was no other business to consider.