

Meeting minutes

PROJECT	Town Deal		
DATE	16th August 2021	LOCATION	Virtual meeting using Zoom

Attendees	
Board Members	
Dr Nik Kotecha (Co-Chair)	Morningside Pharmaceuticals
Cllr Jonathan Morgan (Co-Chair)	Charnwood Borough Council
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 CCEG
Prof. Chris Rielly	Loughborough University
Cllr Deborah Taylor, CC	Leicestershire County Council
Martin Traynor	Economy & Skills Group
Officer Attendees	
Rob Mitchell	Charnwood Borough Council
Eileen Mallon	Charnwood Borough Council
Sylvia Wright	Charnwood Borough Council
Mal Hussain	Charnwood Borough Council
Mike Roberts	Charnwood Borough Council
Chris Grace	Charnwood Borough Council
Tom Purnell	Leicestershire County Council
Nicky Conway	Minute Taker (Charnwood Borough Council)

Apologies
Andy Reed (LLEP), Mandip Rai (LLEP), Peter McClaren, Sarah Rudkin and Helen Harris (LCC)
Meeting Type (Team, Board or other)
Board Meeting
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2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising
The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.
It was noted that item 6, recommendation 1 (<i>that project prioritisation methodology option c is the preferred approach to be deployed</i>) was a correct record of the decision taken at the Board

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meeting but that during discussions of the Sub-group a hybrid approach including ranking as recommended in option a was chosen as the preferred approach.

3. Declarations of Interest

Jo Maher (Loughborough College) and Chris Rielly (Loughborough University) declared interests during agenda item 4 with regard to discussions of specific projects.

4. Project Prioritisation - Update

Eileen Mallon introduced this report and drew the Board's attention to the following:

- that a Sub-group consisting of independent members, had been nominated by the Board and had met to consider the project prioritisation methodology. The agreed scheme had been circulated to the Board and as no comments had been received, the Sub-group and officers proceeded to evaluate the projects in accordance with the agreed methodology.
- an explanation of the process followed was given. It was noted that the officer scoring was completed by independent officers who did not have an interest in any of the projects being scored.
- there was consistency between the Sub-group and officer scores with the same top five projects and bottom three projects identified, although in a slightly different priority order.
- the recommendations in the report to fund the Hope Bell as a standalone project and to use the remaining £418K as capacity funding to help ensure that each of the projects were delivered to the timescale and quality standards that were required.

Summary of Board discussion:

- whether the identified £414K to support projects in their delivery would be sufficient to support all 10 projects. It could be advisable to delay funding the Hope Bell until it was confirmed that the prioritised projects requiring support could be funded. It was noted that at present no funding or resources beyond the officer team and the Project Manager was available. It was unclear how much funding might be required but it was expected that the smaller organisations were likely to require support; this would become clearer when projects submitted detailed project costings.
- some of the larger projects were likely to have factored in project management support. Any project management requirements were likely to be around coordination and delivery of the project.
- whether match funding had been identified in total across the 10 projects to review against the Town Deal funding. It was noted that this had been one of the key criteria in prioritising the projects.
- that the Hope Bell was important for Loughborough and it could be worthwhile keeping the project in the Town Deal if possible. However it was noted that the funding would be balanced against what was required for project support and it could be advisable to inform the Hope Bell Project lead that it would be funded on a conditional basis.
- that up to 5% of the funding could be allocated for programme management costs and this would be approximately £800K. This could be allocated as a support fund but it would be disappointing to not fund the Hope Bell by being over cautious.

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- that the costs for each project could fluctuate significantly, particularly in the current climate. The recent pandemic and other international events were influencing the construction industry in terms of competitiveness, availability, and willingness to work with smaller projects. The contingency fund was likely to be required at the point of going out to tender as costs could spiral at this point. The 10 prioritised projects were chosen for their robustness of business cases and had confirmed their confidence in the accuracy of their project cost structures.

Board members thanked the Sub-group and officers for the work carried out to prioritise the projects within time pressure.

The Project Manager explained that the submission of project summary documents could be staggered up to August 2022. At this stage the Board was required to agree the chosen projects to be submitted to MHCLG for the funding allocated. The next stage would include more detailed costings and identification of project management requirements.

The Sub-group members present stated that they considered the process followed to prioritise the projects put before the Board today had been transparent and fair, and a cautious approach should be taken.

Recommendations Agreed:

1. That the Board considers and approves the projects selected and move them on to the next stage of delivery.
2. That the Board approves the rescoping of the Links and Lanes project to the amount of approximately £400k. Subject to the Project Lead developing the full scope and budget.
3. That the Board approves the retention of the remainder of the MHCLG funding of approximately £414 k for the costs towards supporting the projects for the development of Business Case and the Public Sector Equalities Duties (PSED) and towards other costs related to the management of the Town Deal Programme.
4. That a further report is presented at a future Board meeting which sets out how the £414k may be spent.
5. That the Board considers keeping the projects not selected to move forward as reserves for either new funding opportunities or if the selected projects are not able to move forward.
6. That the Board authorises the project team to confirm the preferred options with MHCLG, as the basis of the final Town Deal Heads of Terms Agreement.

5. Next Steps

The Town Deal Project Manager introduced this report and explained the next steps to be taken. He confirmed that the Project Leads were already completing the three documents required by MHCLG and noted that the time taken by MHCLG once the summary documents had been submitted was still undetermined. He advised that the Board should consider which projects

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could be fast tracked, that a Project Assurance Framework and Programme Management Structure was required, and external expertise could be beneficial in progressing the projects.

Summary of Board discussion:

- that the best approach for developing a programme management structure could involve a sub-group as previously identified, or a new sub-group to be formed, potentially focusing on investment, consisting of three or four independent members supported by officers.
- the level of commitment that could be required if Board members sponsored a project and the challenges this could pose in relation to conflicts of interest of board members linked to some of the projects. A sub-group could consider the roles and responsibilities and identify areas where there could be closer involvement.
- whether the use of an independent third party specialist consultant to assist projects in developing business cases and PSED assessments was required. An overall consultant could provide consistency across the projects, but larger organisations were likely to have already identified project management support (e.g. Generator Project) and others might not require support (e.g. Flood Mitigation Project). It could be advantageous to have synergy across the projects by employing consultants already engaged with the bigger projects to minimise confusing advice. It was critical to meet the MHCLG deadlines and the use of consultancy support could expedite this. However, in managing associated risks it could be acceptable to employ a consultant only if a project was at risk of not delivering. If project management was left to individual projects to arrange, a certain level of assessment would be required to ensure the projects met MHCLG requirements.
- what the role of the Community Consultation and Engagement Group (CCEG) and Member Reference Group (MRG) would be going forward. It was important that engagement and communication with the wider community and customers was transparent and that the Group members felt involved in the decision making.
- that fast tracking as many projects as possible could be beneficial, and could be submitted successively in October, January and August. Government funding could become available, particularly in relation to underspends in its capital programme.
- what support was available from ARUP. Officers could meet with ARUP to understand the different approaches being taken at this stage by other Town Deals in relation to transparency and good governance.

The Chief Executive stated that he considered the Prioritisation Sub-group had worked well and that an investment sub-group could be preferable. The amount of support required by smaller projects would become clearer once the cost analyses had been completed and some projects would already have engaged consultants. With regard to the role of CCEG and MRG going forward this would need to be carefully reviewed to ensure clear communication of the Board's decisions.

The Strategic Director, Community Planning and Housing stated that the majority of projects, when challenged, were confident in their costs and ability to deliver and may have included their own project management requirements. However some projects had indicated project management support would be welcome. It was important to be mindful of ensuring that the next step in the process was transparent and that decisions made were coherent and adhered to good governance. As part of the BID submission, post-bid community engagement and

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consultation was a requirement of MHCLG and this would continue with further clarification on the roles of CCEG and MRG.

Jane Hunt MP joined the meeting.

One minutes' silence was held by the Board at 11am following the tragic events in Plymouth on Thursday evening, as a mark of respect to those who lost their lives.

The Co-chair noted that during discussions at the regional Town Deal Chairs meetings, communication with communities was recognised as important, in particular for ARUP and MHCLG.

Recommendations Agreed:

1. That Project leads to complete and return the MHCLG documents on or before 23rd August 2021 to the Town Deal Project Manager.
2. That the Board and the S151 Officer set a date of no later than 25th August 2021 to sign off the MHCLG documents.
3. That the Board advise the Town Deal Project Team to:
 - i. develop proposals for the completion of Business Cases and PSED assessments.
 - ii. set a meeting(s) to develop the Programme Management Structure ahead of the next proposed Town Deal Board meeting in September 2021.
 - iii. develop templates to capture and record project information.
 - iv. identify the projects that can be fast tracked for earlier submission of the Summary Document to MHCLG
 - v. set out proposals for the expenditure of up to £414k (MHCLG payment) towards costs for programme management.
 - vi. develop proposals for the development of a Project Assurance Framework.
4. That the Board considers the Member roles and responsibilities in the delivery stage of the programme (point 6.5).

The Board agreed the following further recommendations:

5. That the four independent Board Members continue with its Sub-group and meet before the next Board meeting to consider the programme management structure, Project Assurance Framework and next steps, including appropriate processes for managing transparency and good governance.

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6. That independent third-party specialist consultants are employed as required, but to allow Project leads confident in this aspect to proceed. To ensure projects are completed within MHCLG deadlines and criteria, consultants should be employed if necessary.
7. That where possible, projects are fast tracked.
8. That communication with CCEG, MRG and the wider community was very important and that this is progressed promptly.

6. AOB

Dr Kotecha thanked the prioritisation Sub-group and the officers for their work particularly as the prioritisation had to be completed within a tight deadline. He noted that there was further work to be done and the Board was available to support officers in this.

Date of Future Meetings

A future meeting of the Board to be arranged for mid to late September. Minute Taker to confirm options with the Co-chairs after the meeting.

Follow up actions

	<p><u>ITEM 4</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. That the Town Deal Project Manager provides the Board with the total of the match funding required across all 10 projects.
1	<p><u>ITEM 5</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. That Dr Kotecha to contact Andy Reed to confirm his availability to participate in the sub-group. b. That officers arrange a meeting with ARUP to review the formation of the sub-group and discuss approaches to ensure transparency and good governance. c. That the Comms team progress with external communications of the Board's decision regarding chosen projects.