

Meeting minutes

PROJECT	Town Deal		
DATE	27th September 2021	LOCATION	Virtual meeting using Zoom

Attendees	
Board Members	
Dr Nik Kotecha (Co-Chair – in the 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
David Pagett-Wright	Chair of CCEG
Andy Reed	LLEP
Prof. Chris Rielly	Loughborough University
Martin Traynor	Economy & Skills Group
Officer Attendees	
Eileen Mallon	Charnwood Borough Council
Sylvia Wright	Charnwood Borough Council
Richard Bennett	Charnwood Borough Council
Mal Hussain	Charnwood Borough Council
Mike Roberts	Charnwood Borough Council
Simon Lawrence	Leicestershire County Council
Nicky Conway	Minute Taker (Charnwood Borough Council)

Apologies
<p>Jo Maher (Loughborough College), Deborah Taylor CC (Leicestershire County Council)</p> <p>Peter McClaren and Helen Harris (LCC), Mandip Rai (LLEP), Rob Mitchell (Charnwood Borough Council).</p> <p>It was noted that the S151 Officer would not be attending as his role would be defined at this meeting.</p>
Meeting Type (Team, Board or other)
Board Meeting
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<p>2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.</p>

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3. Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

4. Revisions to the Town Deal Board Terms of Reference and Delivery Sub-Group

Richard Bennett introduced this report and summarised the position with the Board's Terms of Reference, the creation of the Delivery Sub-Group and the requirement for a scheme of delegation including the possible delegated authority to the Co-chairs for matters of urgency.

Jane Hunt MP joined the meeting.

He noted that the Terms of Reference in Appendix 2 of the report reflected discussions of members at the Sub-Group meeting held on 7th September 2021 and drew the Board's attention to suggested options; section 5.6 of the report, page 10 of the agenda.

Summary of Board discussion:

- That the Co-Chairs had already taken some urgent decisions regarding minor amendments and that this could continue to be beneficial, particularly when swift action was required.
- The number of projects working at different paces and requiring different levels of support could make the decision making complex.
- That enabling the Sub-Group to make project amendments that affected cost up to a maximum of 10% of the total Town Deal offer was not perceived as acceptable. This could be a significant amount of a project budget particularly for the larger projects. For smaller funded projects this could potentially result in the termination of a project which should be a decision of the Board.
- Whether proposing a financial limit to the funding decisions that the Sub-Group could make would be preferable. This had worked effectively for sub-committees of the LLEP, with a cap of £250K for the Programme Board and £500K for the Investment Panel, any decisions made above these amounts were considered by the main LLEP Board.
- Decisions above a proposed funding limit could be circulated to all Board Members either electronically or at a Board meeting if the meeting was scheduled within the time frame for the decision requiring to be made. It was suggested the Co-chairs could consider all views of Board members and then make the final decision under their delegated authority for urgent matters within the Board Terms of reference.
- It was important to achieve a balance between allowing the Sub-Group and Co-chairs to make decisions quickly if required but not to compromise the governance framework of the Town Deal. It was anticipated that the Sub-Group would bring any significant concerns to the Board.
- Whether the Sub-Group should have the authority to invoke clauses within the Grant Funding Agreement.
- The need to be able to make decisions quickly was an important factor and it could be easier to bring a smaller number of members (Sub-Group) together to make the decision.
- It could be more appropriate for the Sub-Group to have the authority to suspend a project where there were red-rated issues rather than halt the project.

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- that it would be more appropriate for the Board to amend the Terms of Reference for the Sub-Group (see section 7 of Appendix 2).
- That the amendments to the Board's Terms of Reference were acceptable.

It was explained that when the funding was released by the Government that the accountable body (the Council) would put in place funding agreements with the Project Leads. This would set out the rules for the project to be funded, delivered and monitored in a consistent manner and the funding would be transferred to the Project.

Eileen Mallon noted that the practicalities of delegating authority to the Delivery Sub-Group and when decisions should be made by the Board should be considered to enable decisions to be made with deadlines. If suspending a project required a Board decision this could result in a delay for that project depending on when the next Board meeting was scheduled. Although flexibility in decision making was advantageous a practical mechanism for decision making was advised.

Recommendations Agreed:

1. That the revisions to the Town Deal Board Terms of Reference be approved as indicated in Appendix 1 of this report and subject to the scheme of delegation agreed in point 2 below;
2. That the scheme of delegation for the Delivery Sub-Group is based on Option 3 in the report with amendments as follows:
 - a. Approval of projects for submission to MHCLG.
 - b. Make project amendments that affect cost up to a maximum of £500K of the individual Town Deal Projects.
 - c. That any proposed project amendments that affect cost above £500K is decided by the Board unless an urgent decision is required, in which case the proposal to be circulated to all Board members for their views and that on receiving all responses the Co-chairs to make the final decision if a Board meeting is not convened.
 - d. Approval of allocation of programme support funding.
 - e. Approval of monitoring reports for submission to MHCLG.
 - f. Suspend projects where there are Red rated issues such as potential for significant overspend and or project delay leading to late completion.
 - g. When a project is suspended, to report to the Board for it to consider halting the project unless urgent action is required, in which case to circulate to the Board for their views and that on receiving all responses the Co-chairs make the final decision if the Board is not convened.
3. That the Board approve the Delivery Sub Group Terms of Reference (as attached in Appendix 2 of this report), subject to the following amendments:
 - a. on page 18 of the appendix, that it is the Board that may amend the Terms of Reference of the Sub-Group at any time, not the Sub-Group.
 - b. any changes required because of decisions made under 2 above.

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5. Programme Management

Mal Hussain introduced this report and explained that processes to ensure that all projects were managed consistently would follow the seven principles of the Prince 2 Project management methodology. Key to getting projects started was to have a succinct project initiation document (PID) for all projects to complete, setting out objectives to deliver, how the project would be managed and risk assessments. This would be helpful for the officer team and for reporting back to the Board.

Members considered the use of Prince 2 Project management methodology and the suggested templates were satisfactory.

Recommendations Agreed:

- 1) That the programme management process detailed in section 3 of this report be approved,
- 2) That the completion of a Project Initiation Document by each project by 1st November 2021 be approved,
- 3) That the usage of the council's project templates by the project leads to manage, monitor, record and report on their projects be approved,
- 4) That the format of the Board reports set out in section 6 of this report be approved.

6. Draft Project Assurance Framework

Richard Bennett introduced this report and explained that it had been proposed to submit the Project Assurance Framework to the Board at its meeting scheduled on 21st October 2021. However, as the submission date had been brought forward by MHCLG to 15th October 2021 for fast track projects it was necessary to ensure that the Framework was approved promptly via options suggested in the report to ensure its availability for this new submission date. A draft had been prepared but it was currently undergoing due diligence by the Council's Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer.

Board members considered the options available to approve the Framework in time to support the first fast tracked submissions and agreed the second option was most appropriate.

Recommendation Agreed: That the Board advised the Project Team of its preferred option for approving the local assurance framework as: 'that the Board delegates authority to the Co-Chairs to consider the Framework and approve the final version with Board endorsement in retrospect'.

7. Project Update

Mal Hussain introduced this report and noted that the submission to MHCLG proceeded on 27th August, but prior to that date, the funding had been adjusted due to an overallocation of funding to the GCR project. This had resulted in a further £700K of funding available which

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was allocated to the 11th project, 'Lanes and Links' and to the Programme management support budget.

He provided a verbal update that the Generator Project had responded after the agenda was published confirming its intention to provide a business case within the week to be considered for submission in October 2021.

Summary of Board discussion:

- whether the increase of £431K to the Programme Support budget could be better used to support the Rectory Place Wildlife Project. The project had been seeking financial support for a number of years, had no funding source of its own and played an important part in the Town's heritage. It was confirmed that during the prioritisation process the 11th project was the Lanes and Links project and the Rectory Place project had been prioritised lower in the ranking process. However, its importance was recognised and it was unfortunate that three of the projects submitted to MHCLG as part of the Town Investment Plan could not be funded. Once the total amount of funds required for programme support became clear, other projects could be considered for further funding.
- The provision of funding for programme support was important and costs difficult to predict due to the volume of work and officer time required. The allocated budget for programme support was in line with MHCLG guidance of 5% allowance but it was acknowledged that the costs were likely to vary dependent on the individual Project Lead's experience and requirements in developing business cases.
- It was noted that the Lanes and Links Project funding had been scaled down from its original bid and it was important be fair and transparent in the funding of projects in accordance with the prioritisation process.
- Discussions with third party consultants were being held to set in place support and guidance for Project Leads with drafting business cases and to ensure they met the project assurance framework. The Consultants would also be procured to give assurance to the Delivery Sub-Group and the S151 officer that the business cases were robust and funding be drawn down.
- The proportionality tool was being used by Project Leads to inform the level of detail required in business cases. Five projects were hoping their projects could be considered by the Delivery Group for submission to the 15th October funding deadline. It was confirmed that the Healthy and Innovative Loughborough project was aiming to submit their business case for approve to access the 14th January 2022 funding window. The Flood Mitigation Project would be submitted in Summer 2022. Board members suggested it would be beneficial for the Board to see a list of all projects and when they would be submitted to MHCLG.
- Engaging with stakeholders had been identified by the Board previously as important and it was pleasing to see that this had continued to be progressed.

The Chair of the Community Engagement and Consultation Group stated that to support the officer team in meeting the MHCLG submission deadline of 15th October, he considered it would not be disadvantageous to the CEC Group if the meeting currently scheduled for 5th October was rearranged for later in the month.

Recommendations Agreed:

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1. That the Board endorsed the reallocation of funding to the Lanes and Links project, with a reduced scope of works within a budget of £669k and to include it as one of the projects selected for delivery,
2. That the Board endorsed the amendment of the Programme Support budget from £414k to £845k.

8. AOB

It was confirmed that the Terms of Reference could be signed using the Board members e-signature.

It was confirmed that the Generator Project was seeking to submit its business case for submission on 15th October 2021.

The Co-chairs thanked everyone for their hard work and noted there would be more work to follow in the next few months. Any significant decisions would be brought back to the Board

Post meeting note: since the meeting MHCLG has changed its name to DLUHC (department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities).

Date of Future Meetings

21st October 2021

Follow up actions

ITEM 7

- a. That project team provide a summary of submission dates to MHCLG for all projects to the Board.