

Meeting minutes

PROJECT	Town Deal		
DATE	28th February 2022	LOCATION	Virtual meeting using MS teams

Attendees	
Board Members	
Cllr Jonathan Morgan (Co-Chair – in the Chair)	Charnwood Borough Council
Dr Nik Kotecha	Morningside Pharmaceuticals
Cllr Jenny Bokor	Chair of MRG
Jo Maher	Loughborough College
Andy Reed	LLEP
Prof. Chris Rielly	Loughborough University
Deborah Taylor (CC)	Leicestershire County Council
Martin Traynor	Economy & Skills Group
Officer Attendees	
Rob Mitchell	Charnwood Borough Council
Simon Jackson	Charnwood Borough Council
Richard Bennett	Charnwood Borough Council
Chris Grace	Charnwood Borough Council
Mike Roberts	Charnwood Borough Council
Tom Purnell	Leicestershire County Council
Jo Dexter	BEIS
Maria Curran	Observer (new TD Programme Manager)
Simon Whelband	Observer (for Jane Hunt MP)
Nicky Conway	Minute Taker (Charnwood Borough Council)

Apologies
Jane Hunt MP (MP for Loughborough), David Pagett-Wright (Chair of CCEG), Lez Cope-Newman (Loughborough BID), Mandip Rai (LLEP), Eileen Mallon (Charnwood Borough 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. All matters arising were considered complete.

Meeting minutes

3. Declarations of Interest

Jo Maher declared an interest as the Loughborough College representative with a project included in the Town Deal.

Prof. Chris Rielly declared an interest as Project Lead for Healthy and Innovative Loughborough project.

4. Delivery Sub-Group Update

Chris Grace introduced this report and provided a summary. He noted that there were some aspects that would be covered in more detail in the following agenda item. He drew the Board's attention to the following:

- the Sub-Group had been very active since the last meeting of the Board, dealing with some urgent matters by email as well as meetings.
- the business cases submitted to the Board had been well written and of an excellent standard, all four submitted to DLUHC in January had been RAG rated green across all categories.
- £845K had been received from the Government for programme management costs. Although the budget was showing an underspend he advised this should be considered as contingency funding. The funds would be used over the lifetime of the Town Deal and in particular with respect to increased labour and raw materials costs and other inflationary pressures.

There were no questions from the Board.

Recommendation Agreed: that the content of the report is noted.

5. Programme and Projects Update

Chris Grace introduced this report and provided a comprehensive summary to the Board of the current position with all 11 projects. He noted that overall, the Town Deal was on schedule and brought to the Board's attention the following:

- Tables 1 and 2 highlighting the timetables for April and July submissions. All relevant parties were aware of these deadlines and that they were non-negotiable.
- Table 3 highlighting the status of business case preparation for submission in April 2022.
- the Lanes & Links Project had now drafted a PID (outstanding in the last update provided to the Board) and had indicated it would submit to DLUHC in Summer.
- the Government funding for the Bedford Square Gateway Project had been received at the end of last year and work was in progress to complete internal documentation for transfer of funds.
- the Grant Agreement for transfer of funds to the Bell Foundry was drafted, with some minor amendments awaited from the Project Lead before it could be finalised and signed.
- the Amber elements on Table 3 indicated areas where the projects were not expected to have completed tasks yet and did not indicate areas of concern.

Meeting minutes

- guidance was expected from DLUHC in April with respect to performance monitoring. Once received the Project team would put in place a formal monitoring process for reporting to the Delivery Sub-Group and Town Deal Board.

He wished to place on record his thanks to all Project Leads for their work, which was a great credit to them and Loughborough.

Maria Curran was welcomed as the new Town Deal Programme Manager and the outgoing Manager, Chris Grace, was thanked for his work.

The Co-chairs thanked Chris for his comprehensive summary, noted that the flow of information over the next few months would be intensive and thanked the Sub-Group, the S151 officer and Project team for their work so far.

Dr Nik Kotecha, as a member of the ARUP regional chairs meeting, assured the Board that the current position of the Loughborough Town Deal was comparable to other Town Deals. He noted that the majority had also identified a Sub-Group to progress projects, had allocated 5% programme management funding and that in some cases, Loughborough was ahead with its projects.

Recommendation Agreed: that the content of the report is noted.

6. Assurance and Performance Review 2021 / 22

Simon Jackson introduced this report and summarised the position. He noted that he had been comfortable signing the Assurance and Performance documentation for the projects where funding had already been released, as requested by DLUHC.

No questions were asked by the Board.

Recommendations Agreed:

1. That the content of the report be noted.
2. That a draft of the Co-Chairs' Assurance Statement is emailed to Board for information and comment before being submitted to DLUHC on 11th March 2022.

6. Communications Update

Mike Roberts introduced this report and provided a summary of recent communications activity. He noted that the 'infograph' had been shared across all social media channels and thanked Board members who had re-shared it. Future communications would include funding announcements should DLUHC release funding for the four projects approved in January and ongoing general project updates.

The infograph was welcomed and considered very helpful when Board members were discussing Town Deal projects with the media.

Recommendation Agreed: That the content of the report be noted.

Meeting minutes

7. AOB

Simon Jackson updated the Board that a request to see the business case for the Bedford Square Gateway Project had been received from a Borough Councillor shortly before this meeting. As this was a Town Deal document, he wished to seek the Board's views on whether the request could be granted. Legally there was a presumption that Town Deal documents should be made publicly available but that the Council's rules regarding exemption of commercially sensitive information and of national security would apply. He noted that the Council's Monitoring Officer had advised that as the documents had been processed by the Borough Council if a Freedom of Information request was received by the Council it would be obliged to release the information in accordance with FOI procedures.

Summary of Board discussion:

- that the request for the release of one business case indicated that it would be appropriate to consider the principle of releasing all business cases and identifying when it would be deemed safe to do so for commercial reasons.
- the importance of transparency, particularly as the funding being released was from the public purse.
- when it would be appropriate to release the business cases: this could be after the project had been approved and RAG rated green or after approval by DLUHC. Once submitted to DLUHC, it was possible that amendments could be requested or the business case rejected, so it could be more appropriate for the release trigger to be after DLUHC had approved the project.
- that a formal procedure should be prepared to ensure there was a consistent approach across all projects, that the trigger point for release was clearly identified and a standard reporting process be implemented.
- that although the request had been received from a Borough Councillor it was helpful to consider this as a request from a member of the public and to tailor the information accordingly.
- it was important to ensure that communications around the release of business cases emphasised that the information was not available to challenge and that the funding was provided by the Town Deal Fund and not the Borough Council.
- that relevant Project organisations be notified prior to the release of their business cases.

Jo Dexter left the meeting.

Recommendation agreed: that Simon Jackson, in consultation with the Town Deal Programme Manager and Comms Team prepare a draft process for the release of business cases and circulate to the Board by email for approval.

The Chief Executive stated that the Borough Council was expecting 'Levelling Up Round 2' funding in Spring, and that although it was not a Town Deal matter, he wished to bring it to the Board's attention as many of the Council's partners were represented. He invited interested parties to contact him to discuss potential partner projects.

It was noted that, in accordance with the Board Terms of Reference, the Co-Chairs had been re-elected unanimously for a second two-year term on 14th January 2022 by Board Members through an email poll.

Meeting minutes

The Chair formally thanked the Sub-Group members, Andy Reed, Dr Nik Kotecha, Jane Hunt and Martin Traynor for their critical work in ensuring the deadlines were being met.

Date of Future Meetings

It was noted that future meetings of the Board would be scheduled in line with appropriate deadlines and meetings of the Delivery Sub-Group.

Follow up actions

	NONE
--	------