

DEWSBURY TOWN BOARD DEAL

Thursday 5 August 2021

Present:

Keith Ramsay (Chair)
Councillor Shabir Pandor
Mark Eastwood MP
Heather Waddington
Martin Hathaway
Paul Burnett
Peter Mason
Martyn Broadest
Bruce Bird
Palvinder Singh

Observers:

Joanne Bartholomew – Kirklees Council
Michelle Illingworth – Kirklees Council
Simon Taylor – Kirklees Council
Peter R Thompson – Kirklees Council

Apologies:

Martin Walsh
Iqbal Bhana

1 **Membership of Dewsbury Town Deal Board**

Apologies for absence were received from Martin Walsh and Iqbal Bhana. The Board welcomed Palvinder Singh, Principal and Chief Executive of Kirklees College as a new Member to the Board. The Board also thanked Charles Smith who had stepped down as Board Member but agreed that he could continue to contribute meetings as an observer.

2 **Declarations of Interests**

No interests were declared. The register of Board Members is reviewed annually by Kirklees Council.

3 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2021 were approved as a correct record.

4 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

5 **Chairs Update**

The chair thanked everyone for the warm welcome to the Board and confirmed that he would endeavour to meet each Board Member on an individual basis before the next meeting.

The Chair informed the Board that at future meetings, his update would be in written format. The Chair advised that meetings would be scheduled for the 1st Thursday of every month, with the acknowledgement that they may not need to take place. The Chair also advised that there would be occasions when decisions would need to be taken between meetings, with an acknowledgement that dialogue with Board Members on these decisions was important.

The Board discussed future meetings of the Board, and whether these should be held face to face, virtually or as a hybrid approach. The time of the meetings was also considered, and the Chair advised he would consider both issues and report back to the next meeting.

It was noted that there was a need to strengthen the Board, particularly to ensure gender balance, diversity, and inclusivity. Board Members were asked to provide nominations to the Board by the next meeting, but by October at the latest.

The Board noted that the focus, now the Heads of Terms had been signed, was for delivery of projects and understood that the appointment of Avison Young was important to assist in developing that delivery. The Board acknowledged the need to understand the financing, particularly the shortfall, and that there was the capacity and finance in place to support each project. The Board were assured that projects would be spread over time, to avoid all projects being completed at the same time.

The Board acknowledged that there may be differing risks associated with each project, and the production of a risk register would assist the Board in understanding the potential risks.

Communication with local people, politicians, stakeholders, and local businesses was important moving forward, and the Board heard that the communication strategy would be considered at the next Board meeting. It was noted that regular reports to local media would be included within the strategy.

RESOLVED –

- Nominations by Board Members should be given to the chair by October.
- That a risk register for each project to be provided to Board Members.
- The Communication Strategy would be considered at the next Board meeting.

6 Procedural Updates

Stage Two – project confirmation and development

The Board received a paper which outlined the next steps which included:

1. The Project Confirmation process for MHCLG

2. The Business Case Project Assurance process
3. Appointment of Consultant for Business Case development

The Board noted that the project confirmation had to be provided to the Government and sent by the 29 August 2021. This had to be signed by the Chair of the Board and the Council's Section 151 Officer. This document would include details of each project, the timeframe and the match funding being provided. The timeline for each project was contained within the report considered by the Board.

It was agreed that Board Members would have sight of the business cases for each project, completed by Aivson Young. The Government would see a summary of these business cases, but the Board were advised that the Government may call in the full business case for further scrutiny.

In understanding that any contractors would need to be procured through the Council's procurement rules, the Board agreed that the ambition for each of the projects being brought forward should be for local employers and employees to be involved.

The Board was made aware that the projects were, where possible, being spread out and that key projects had been identified which could be fast tracked. As the accountable body, the Council, by means of a Cabinet decision and delegation, would need to agree, and sign off the business cases, securing the money for each of the projects. A report would be considered at the meeting of Cabinet in September 2021.

The Board was mindful that, whilst acknowledging the tight timeframes and deadlines, Members should have sight of and engagement on business cases that made recommendations to Cabinet ensuring Board Members had the opportunity to comment.

The Board received clarification that the paper being considered was to sign off the project confirmation and was an administrative process which needed to be completed by 29 August 2021. The report was not to agree to the process of signing off business cases. The Chair agreed that the process for considering and signing off the business cases should be clear and agreed to bring that to the next meeting of the Board.

An amended resolution was suggested: -

'To give authority to the Town Board Chair to continue to work with Council officers on the project confirmation process to ensure that the Board has an opportunity to review the documents on completion and then to sign off the documents as required'.

RESOLVED –

- That the Town Board give authority to the Town Board Chair to continue to work with council officers on the Project Confirmation process and to sign off the documents once the processes are completed.
- Note the process of project assurance being proposed by the accountable body.
- Note the intention to appoint a preferred consultant for the delivery of Stage 2 Business Case Development.
- Consider the amended resolution.
- The process for considering business cases be considered at the next meeting of the Board.

7 Update on Market

The Board considered a presentation which updated Members on the progress being made in relation to the market which included the next steps.

The Board noted the importance of the market to the town centre, with a visible difference being experienced on market day. The market was crucial to the economic viability of the town centre.

The Board heard that the outcome of the project would see the current 400 stalls rationed down to 200 new and improved stalls totalling 9,000 sq. ft. The market would include upgraded community and social space, where people would be encouraged to meet and interact. The spaces would be flexible with a mix of uses being possible, and an introduction of a food court area would seek to attract people to both day and evening events.

The Board had previously approved the project in principle, and it was noted that Cabinet had approved and allocated funds to the project in March 2021.

The Board were informed that the planning application would be submitted by 23 August 2021 with the planning decision to be taken at the Strategic Planning Committee on 16 December 2021. The Board felt that it would be important for the Board to make representation at the planning committee.

The Board discussed the need for access and transport to be considered in relation to arriving, moving around the market, and departing the area, and further discussion would need to take place around the plan for better links to the area taking into consideration the Dewsbury Blueprint's aspiration for pedestrians and cyclists.

RESOLVED –

- That representation on behalf of the Board should be made to the planning committee on 16 December 2021 by the Chair.
- That further discussion take place at a future Board meeting in relation to an access and travel plan.

8 Transforming Cities Fund - Update on Bus Station

The Board received a written update from The West Yorkshire Combined Authority regarding the launch of the public consultation. The consultation launched on 12 July 2021 and the Board was advised that it closed on 12 September 2021.

The report advised that before construction works at the bus station could begin, the business case to support the proposals and securing of the required funding needs, along with obtaining planning approvals would be needed. Construction works were likely to be undertaken throughout 2023, with completion expected early 2024.

The Board noted that the further information regarding the bus station would be received to the October Board meeting. It was important to ensure that the bus station was fit for purpose now and into the future. The Board noted that there were some concerns around the taxi rank and the potential to review what this could look like, considering the sale of adjacent property and the Board agreed that a submission to the consultation should be made on behalf of the Board.

The Board acknowledged that the bus station project was just one of several transport projects in and around Dewsbury, linking to the WYCA Transport Plan which included a mass transit system.

RESOLVED –

- That a submission to the WYCA be drafted by the Chair.
- That a further discussion should take place, once the public consultation has closed, at the October Board meeting.

9 AOB

In future the Chair requested that Members provide items for AOB prior to the meeting. The Board requested the following items of business be scheduled for consideration: -

- The creation of working groups within the Board.
- The development of a 12-month programme of events and festivals (to be led by Bruce Bird).
- Branding and communication.
- Business development (Kirklees Top 100).
- A consideration of the make up of the Board, including its size, diversity, and inclusion.
- The Communication strategy will be considered at the next meeting.
- The Chair's meeting with the West Yorkshire Mayor all the chair of Town Boards, to consider and share best practice and draw further investment to the boards.
- Consideration of how to communicate between Board Members between meetings.

RESOLVED –

- That the Chair will consider the composition of the Board and with suggestions to be considered at the next meeting.
- That the Chair report to the Board, following the quarterly meeting with the West Yorkshire Mayor
- The Chair report back regarding facilitating communication with Board Members between meetings.

10 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 2 September 2021 at 5:30pm.