Minutes

DATE 22nd May 2020

MEETING **OLDHAM TOWN DEAL BOARD MEETING**

VENUE Virtual meeting held over Microsoft Teams TIME 13.30

**PRESENT** Barrett, Suzanne

Barton, Emma Beckett, Jessica Bloor, Jon

Courtie, Pete Cox, Stephen

DaSilva, Anna Eastwood, Richard Fielding, Councillor Sean Flanagan, Mike

Frith, Roger

Harris, Liam Hewitt, Sara Hodcroft, David

Holbrook, Peter Hunt, Andrew

Jones, Suzanne

Khan, Nawaz Lambert, Matthew Lewis, Chris Lightfoot, Andrew

Lister, Graham Lockwood, Stuart Lovat, Bill McMahon, MP Jim Moore, Graeme Parker, Guy

Patterson, John Penn, Jennifer Tolan, James Wallin, Anna Wildman, Susan Wilkins, Dr. Carolyn

Windsor-Welsh, Liz Yousaf, Adnan

Regeneration Officer, Oldham Council Director of Economy, Oldham Council Communications Manager, Oldham Council

Head of Lifelong Learning, Employment and Skills, Oldham Council

Relationship Manager, Arts Council England Head of Economic and Social Development, Mott MacDonald

Northern Roots Project Director, Oldham Council Equity Partner, Pearson Solicitors

Leader, Oldham Council

Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre Manager, Kennedy Wilson *(Vice-Chair)*

Head of Regeneration and Development, Oldham Council

Member, Oldham Youth Council

Markets and Town Centre Manager, Oldham Council Principal (Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Chief Executive, Social Enterprise UK *(Chair)* Green Oldham Policy and Delivery Manager, Oldham Council

Assistant Director, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Regeneration Team Leader, Oldham Council Senior Consultant, Mott MacDonald

Lead Youth Worker, Oldham Council

Deputy Chief Executive, Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Arts and Cultural Adviser, Artbuilding Projects Chief Executive, Oldham Community Leisure Regional Director, The Regenda Group

MP for Oldham West and Royton Planning Officer, Oldham Council

Executive Policy and Research Officer, Oldham Council

Chief Clinical Officer, NHS Oldham CCG Regeneration Officer, Oldham Council

Principal Regeneration Officer, Oldham Council Senior Consultant, Mott MacDonald

Interim Chief Executive, Oldham Coliseum Theatre Chief Executive, Oldham Council and Accountable Officer, NHS Oldham CCG

Chief Executive, Action Together

Real Estate Manager, The Cross Group

**APOLOGIES** Abrahams, MP Debbie

Cumberland, Nick Dawson, Beverley

Dryden-Stuart, Elizabeth Firth, Nicola

Francis, Alun Jenkins, Rosie

Lockwood, Helen Nokes, Simon

Rahim, Fazal Rayner, MP Angela Riley, Michelle Sheperd, Christina

Tarbuck, Stuart

MP for Oldham East and Saddleworth Senior Specialist (Housing), Homes England

Senior Manager (Capital and Projects), Arts Council England

Planning Team Leader, Oldham Council Chief Officer, Northern Care Alliance (Royal Oldham Hospital)

Principal and Chief Executive, Oldham College Local Growth Policy Advisor, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Deputy Chief Executive, Oldham Council

Executive Director, Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Project Coordinator, Oldham Interfaith Forum MP for Ashton-under-Lyne

Owner, Cob and Coal Tap

Deputy Area Lead North West, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Interim Head of Communications and Research, Oldham Council

ITEM

# Welcome, introductions and apologies (Peter Holbrook)

* 1. The Chair led a minute’s silence in memory of those killed and affected by the Manchester Arena bombing on 22nd May 2017.

# Notice of urgent business to be accepted onto the agenda (Peter Holbrook)

* 1. None.

# Declarations of interest (Peter Holbrook)

* 1. None.

# Minutes of the previous meeting on 17th April 2020 (Peter Holbrook)

* 1. The Oldham Town Deal Board (‘the Board’) accepted Graham Lister’s request to amend paragraph 9.5 in order to distinguish the latest plans for a flexible performance space from the previous proposal for a new Coliseum Theatre.
  2. **Post-meeting note:** The Board accepted Anna DaSilva’s request to amend paragraph 8.2 in order to confirm that there is a proposal to work towards the Northern Roots charity taking a long lease on the land at Snipe Clough which can be used to leverage charitable investment.

# COVID-19 pandemic (Suzanne Jones)

* 1. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) will issue the Town Investment Plan (TIP) template and guidance in the next few weeks. The Board can submit its TIP during one of three waves: July, summer/autumn or late autumn/winter. The waves will enable the phased processing of TIPs from Boards around the North West by Suzanne Jones and her colleagues, Rosie Jenkins and Christina Sheperd. There is no political pressure to submit during any particular wave and no disadvantage to submitting during a later wave because the maximum allocation per area will remain fixed at up to £25 million.
  2. The TIP needs to describe the Board’s recent and proposed engagement activity and demonstrate project links with the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy (GM LIS) and pandemic recovery plans. Rather than include HM Treasury Green Book business cases, the TIP should set out project benefits such as a reduction in inequalities, in the context of programmes and agendas at the borough and city-region levels. For example, the town centre district heat network project should be described in relation to growing the green economy.
  3. Once Ministers have reviewed the TIP, the Board will receive a budget envelope and agree Heads of Terms. Thereafter, the Board will have 12 months to develop business cases for all projects approved for funding. The Government will release the funding allocation after reviewing and approving the final business cases in approximately 15 months’ time. Suzanne Jones will seek to confirm as a matter of urgency whether the Board can expect to receive revenue funding upfront in order to develop the business cases. Carolyn Wilkins will also raise the need for revenue funding in her role as chair of the GM pandemic recovery response group.

# Community engagement (Liz Windsor-Welsh)

* 1. The Chair thanked Liz Windsor-Welsh for supporting the Board during a very busy time for Action Together. Liz will chair the meetings of the new community engagement sub-group, supported by the Vice-Chair of the Board. The sub-group will play a quality assurance role by reviewing community engagement plans before they are implemented by the Board.
  2. Sub-group members will need to have communications, engagement and/or equalities expertise in order to amplify issues relating to the main protected characteristic groups in the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, members are set to include staff from Oldham Council (‘the Council’) with responsibilities for borough-wide engagement and consultation activity. Other contributors will be the lead officers for the four projects proposed for the TIP and interested Board members. Suzanne Barrett and Jennifer Penn will help Action Together to pull together the suggested Terms of Reference, membership list and engagement principles for review during the first meeting of the sub-group in mid-June (date TBC). Also during the first meeting, the sub-group will consider the need for a small budget which, subject to Board approval, could come from the revenue grant held by the Council as the Lead Local Authority for the Towns Fund.
  3. Graham Lister volunteered to join the sub-group and Stephen Cox requested a separate discussion with Action Together in order to dovetail the plans for the sub-group with the engagement information being drafted for the TIP. The Chair called for a pragmatic approach to engagement given the impacts of the pandemic upon resources.

# Town Investment Plan update (Stephen Cox and Anna Wallin)

* 1. Stephen Cox is the Project Principal and Anna Wallin is the Project Manager developing the TIP at Mott MacDonald. Senior Consultant Matthew Lambert is also involved, although his main focus is the separate bid to the Future High Streets Fund. There must be a clear rationale for each project in the TIP, underpinned by strong evidence/data. Although some projects are more developed than others, all four complement Oldham and GM policies and strategies, and satisfy at least one of the Towns Fund objectives.

\* Carolyn Wilkins left the call \*

* 1. The TIP has five sections:
     1. Section one provides context for the audience (BEIS / MHCLG). It explains how the four projects will build upon existing strengths, realise opportunities for growth and, as appropriate, complement the GM LIS and clean growth agenda.
     2. Section two consists of two sides of text including a headline statement for Oldham. It establishes links between the projects and strategic programmes such as Creating a Better Place and the green agenda. Importantly, it reflects the economic imperative of the Towns Fund to revive town centres and boost local economies. It sets out how the projects will seek to address the productivity gap between Oldham and the rest of GM (and, indeed, the rest of the country).
     3. Section three is a policy review with a focus upon place-making.
     4. Section four comprises one infographic per project to relay details such as project timescales, costs and links to Towns Fund objectives. The infographics will be suitable for use in future presentations and funding bids.
     5. Section five about community engagement will be developed in the next 2-3 weeks, in consultation with Action Together.
  2. Stephen Cox described how the pandemic will make it difficult to demonstrate market demand for some of the projects and to set out with any degree of certainty or confidence the delivery timescales. One proven backup strategy could be the development of ‘first follower’ and ‘pipeline’ projects, to be substituted for original projects which prove unviable during the development of the business cases.
  3. The Chair expressed his support for developing a list of alternative projects, commenting on the need for flexibility and envisaging future demand for projects generating employment opportunities. He called for the TIP to demonstrate clear outputs and benefits, including social value.
  4. Upon hearing about plans for the Board to comment on the draft TIP as early as mid-June, Suzanne Jones advised that the Board has longer than expected to submit its TIP, provisionally until the end of July. This is because, once the Government issues new guidance in June, Arup will be in touch to support the development of the TIP (and, in the longer term, the development of the business cases).
  5. When Adnan Yousaf requested an update on the office accommodation project, the Chair asked the Board to confirm its ongoing support for the project being funded through the Towns Fund by 2026. MP Jim McMahon responded with a comment that employment will undoubtedly be restructured following the pandemic, with implications for the local economy. He stated that, although Oldham is afforded opportunities as a member of GM, the area will need transitional capacity to recover from the pandemic. Therefore, he queried whether the Board should be focusing upon flexible, high-level spatial planning rather than specific projects for the likes of new office, residential or retail space.
  6. Suzanne Jones indicated that the Government guidance due next month will answer questions about the requirement to focus the TIP upon existing projects, and the potential to alter proposals during the development of the business cases, for example if any projects prove unviable because of the pandemic. She explained that Ministers are interested in reviewing first wave applications during the summer, from late July/early August. Although timescales are fluid, the Oldham bid is deemed to be at the appropriate stage of development.
  7. Councillor Sean Fielding expressed support for putting local spaces and opportunities at the heart of the TIP, commenting that the popularity of the local offer is likely to remain even once lockdown travel restrictions are eased. He commented that there remains a market for quality office space in Oldham. He referenced the Sharp Project in Newton Heath as a good example of quality workspace with superfast broadband in a less affluent area away from the city centre. He explained that Oldham has a young population profile which should help to revitalise the night-time economy and make the borough an attractive prospect for investors. He added that GCHQ’s recent move to Manchester was influenced in part by the city-region demographic.
  8. Anna Wallin and Roger Frith commented that quality office space is needed to complement the recent investment in skills and education, and that the TIP will set out the rationale for the project rather than the specifics of its delivery e.g. in terms of location. Adnan Yousaf added that much of the vacant office and commercial space in Oldham is lower quality than the Grade A space proposed. He works for two business centres housing a total of 150 small businesses, some 90% of which are accessing the Government’s furlough scheme. Roger Frith added that the Towns Fund aims to bridge the viability gap associated with build costs of £18-20/sq. ft. and rental values of £10-12/sq. ft. The demand for office space will become clearer as the pandemic unfolds.
  9. Roger Frith advised that a new project proposal from a member of the public will be shared with the Board in due course.

# Recommendations and next steps (Peter Holbrook)

* 1. The Board agreed three recommendations proposed by the Chair:
     1. Develop a list of ‘first-follower’ and ‘pipeline’ projects from which, subject to Government approval, alternatives and/or additions to the four project ideas can be selected should viability or other issues arise during the development of the final business cases;
     2. Review the request for a small revenue budget once received from the Board’s community engagement sub-group; and
     3. Approve the addition of a representative of the GM Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) onto the Board, as requested during a meeting of Board Chairs on 21st May.
  2. The Chair thanked the Vice-Chair for representing the Board during the meeting of Board Chairs the previous day.

# AOB (Peter Holbrook)

* 1. Jennifer Penn confirmed the Council’s intention to publish information about the Towns Fund through a press release and online at https://[www.oldham.gov.uk/towndeal](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/towndeal) by the end of May.

# Close of meeting (Peter Holbrook)

* 1. The Chair thanked the speakers for their presentations and the Board members for their attendance. The meeting closed at 14.40.

**Next meeting:** 13.30 on Friday, 19th June 2020 (details to follow).