Minutes

DATE 24th July 2020

MEETING **OLDHAM TOWN DEAL BOARD MEETING**

VENUE Virtual meeting held over Microsoft Teams TIME 13.30

**PRESENT**

**APOLOGIES**

Bailey, Jack Barton, Emma Beckett, Jessica Cox, Stephen

DaSilva, Anna

Fielding, Councillor Sean Firth, Nicola

Flanagan, Mike Frith, Roger

Holbrook, Peter Jones, Suzanne

Khan, Nawaz Lewis, Chris Lightfoot, Andrew

Lister, Graham Lockwood, Stuart Lovat, Bill Parker, Guy

Penn, Jennifer Wallin, Anna Wildman, Susan Wilkins, Dr. Carolyn

Windsor-Welsh, Liz

Abrahams, MP Debbie Bloor, Jon

Courtie, Pete Dawson, Beverley

Eastwood, Richard Francis, Alun Harris, Liam Hewitt, Sara Hodcroft, David

Hunt, Andrew

Representative, Office of MP Jim McMahon Director of Economy, Oldham Council Communications Manager, Oldham Council Head of Economic and Social Development, Mott MacDonald

Northern Roots Project Director, Oldham Council Leader, Oldham Council

Chief Officer, Northern Care Alliance (Royal Oldham Hospital)

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

Head of Regeneration and Development, Oldham Council

Chief Executive, Social Enterprise UK *(Chair)* Assistant Director, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Regeneration Team Leader, Oldham Council 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 Executive Policy and Research Officer, Oldham Council

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

MP for Oldham East and Saddleworth

Head of Lifelong Learning, Employment and Skills, Oldham Council

Relationship Manager, Arts Council England Senior Manager (Capital and Projects),

Arts Council England

Equity Partner, Pearson Solicitors

Principal and Chief Executive, Oldham College Member, Oldham Youth Council

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

Green Oldham Policy and Delivery Manager, Oldham Council

Jenkins, Rosie

Lockwood, Helen Maier, Juergen

McMahon, MP Jim Patterson, John Rahim, Fazal Rayner, MP Angela Riley, Michelle Sheperd, Christina

Yousaf, Adnan

Local Growth Policy Advisor, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Deputy Chief Executive, Oldham Council Board Member, Greater Manchester

Local Enterprise Partnership

MP for Oldham West and Royton

Chief Clinical Officer, NHS Oldham CCG 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

Real Estate Manager, The Cross Group

ITEM

# Welcome, introductions and apologies (Peter Holbrook)

* 1. The Chair opened the meeting and gave the apologies.

# 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 22nd May 2020 (Peter Holbrook)

* 1. When the Board meeting in June was cancelled, Board members were asked to review the draft minutes of the meeting in May by email. The minutes were approved and published at [www.oldham.gov.uk/towndeal.](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/towndeal)

# Town Investment Plan (Stephen Cox / Anna Wallin)

* 1. The Government has published further guidance about the Towns Fund (https://[www.gov.uk/government/publications/towns-fund-further-](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towns-fund-further-) guidance). It states that in exceptional circumstances, an allocation of more than £25m may be considered, up to a maximum of £50m. Awards of over £25m will, however, be limited to the most ambitious and credible Town Investment Plans (TIPs); towns should only bid for the full £25m or more if there is an objective rationale for doing so.
  2. If the Board opts to bid for over £25m, it will need to produce a TIP that credibly targets transformational impacts not only for Oldham but also for the wider region and/or country. The TIP will be subject to a greater level of scrutiny than if its value was capped at £25m; Oldham will face a challenge session with Ministers before receiving a Heads of Terms offer, and business cases will be approved centrally through the Ministry of

Housing, Communities and Local Government rather than the local authority assurance framework. The TIP overall will need to achieve the highest possible score of one, as will each of its individual projects.

* 1. As Lead Local Authority for the Towns Fund, Oldham Council has informed the Government that the TIP will be submitted by no later than 31st October, in the second of the three cohorts. The decision to delay submission beyond 31st July will give the Board enough time to align the TIP to the new guidance, which asks for evidence of how TIPs relate to towns’ spatial strategies and address the consequences of Covid-19 on local economies. All Boards must submit TIPs by January 2021 and will have a second chance to submit if they are unsuccessful the first time around.
  2. The TIP has a word limit of 10,000 (excluding the likes of infographics and maps). The team at Mott MacDonald is already working with Arup and the other delivery partners appointed by the Government to provide general support and bespoke advice in relation to progressing TIPs. The delivery partners and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will comment on the robustness of the TIP working draft to be issued by Mott MacDonald in early August. This will help the Board to make an informed decision about bidding for over £25m.
  3. When queried by Anna DaSilva, the Chair confirmed that the Board will make the final decision about the value of the TIP. Any funding requested above the £25m threshold is likely to relate to the four endorsed projects, on the basis that the Board is unlikely to receive, review and approve other credible ideas for transformational projects between now and TIP submission. Therefore, work is underway to establish if some or all of the four projects will deliver the regional and/or national impacts required to justify a bid for over £25m. Such impacts could include learning networks between similar projects e.g. district heat networks proposed for Oldham and the North East. The potential for regional and/or national impacts is perhaps greatest with the heat network and Northern Roots projects, although Susan Wildman has data and knowledge that could be used to demonstrate the regional significance of the flexible performance space.
  4. Emma Barton encouraged members to contribute to discussions during and between Board meetings, referencing the economic uncertainty created by the pandemic as an additional driver for taking a strategic, long-term approach to securing Towns Fund investment for Oldham. She advocated targeting cumulative impacts for Oldham and cautioned against allowing any single project to determine the overall direction of travel. She called for the Board to remain focused upon developing the four endorsed projects given the tight deadlines and need for projects to be well-developed and capable of transforming the local economy. The Chair concurred and added that the Board also needs to target private sector investment and community support for the four projects.

# Community engagement (Liz Windsor-Welsh)

* 1. Liz Windsor-Welsh shared the draft membership list and Terms of Reference (ToR) for the community engagement sub-group on screen (and agreed to email the documents to the Board after the meeting).

The suggested sub-group members have roles in Oldham relating to community engagement or equalities and are drawn from the Oldham Town Deal Board (specifically, members representing Action Together, Oldham Council, and Oldham Youth Council), Age UK Oldham and the GM Health and Social Care Partnership.

* 1. The sub-group will meet for the first time in late August or early September to review the ToR and engagement principles. It will work in partnership with Oldham’s Equality Advisory Group to ensure that the full range of protected characteristics and inequalities due to poverty or other factors is considered and designed out at all necessary stages of the Towns Fund programme of activity.
  2. The purpose of the sub-group has been drafted in accordance with the Towns Fund guidance. Importantly, the sub-group will monitor and evaluate the success of all engagement activity to promote continuous learning and foster positive relationships that last beyond the lifespan of the Towns Fund. Sub-group members and partners will need to collaborate and innovate to help sustain the capital infrastructure that the Towns Fund grant creates and/or safeguards for communities. Likewise, sub-group members should anticipate and welcome debate amongst themselves, and encourage project leads to use diverse engagement tools. The team at BEIS encourages the sub-group to factor the Theory of Change into its work.

# Capital Acceleration Grant (Roger Frith)

* 1. As outlined in the paper issued to the Board on 21st July, the Government is bringing forward some funding in the current financial year to support projects that will make an immediate impact in towns and support economic restart following the pandemic. Oldham will receive £1m to support capital spend within the intervention framework described in the Towns Fund guidance. The grant represents new funding as it is separate from the maximum allocation of £50m available through the Towns Fund. As the S151 officer, Oldham Council’s Director of Finance has until 14th August 2020 to confirm in writing the intended use of the

£1m, which is 100% capital and must be spent in full by 31st March 2021.

* 1. When Stuart Lockwood requested the grant criteria, Suzanne Jones stated that the Government is encouraging projects that align with TIPs and support towns in responding to immediate challenges towards economic recovery from the pandemic, including:
     + Improvement to or new parks and green spaces and sustainable transport links
     + Improvements to town centres including repurposing empty commercial properties
     + Demolition or site remediation where this will have an immediate benefit
  2. So long as the £1m is spent in full by 31st March 2021, the associated project(s) can conclude after that date. As time is limited and there is no potential for extra spend in 2020/21 on the four projects endorsed for the TIP, Oldham Council has already produced a shortlist of two or three project ideas from an internal longlist of a dozen alternatives. The Chair

encouraged Board members to get in touch with their own project suggestions at the earliest opportunity, to enable Oldham Council to consider adding additional ideas to its shortlist. The Chair asked Oldham Council to issue the final options paper for the grant to the Board by 7th August. Emma Barton supported this approach, calling for new suggestions for the £1m and alluding to future opportunities for Board members to influence strategic plans and funding bids.

* 1. Whilst happy with the decision to delegate project approval to Oldham Council on this occasion, Liz Windsor-Welsh called for clarity on how individuals and groups can get proposals onto future longlists. This is important to ensure fair access for all and make best use of existing networks. In the longer-term, there is a need for a clear rationale linked to processes. If there is enough time, Oldham Council should consider producing an Equalities Impact Assessment for each of the shortlisted options to reflect the importance of social infrastructure.
  2. The Chair commented that, whilst he continues to call on the Government to provide revenue funding to ensure the long-term sustainability of capital investments enabled by schemes like the Towns Fund, the Board must remember that this particular grant is 100% capital for spend in the current financial year.

# Recommendations and next steps (Peter Holbrook)

* 1. The Board agreed recommendations to:
     1. Review Oldham Council’s final options paper for the £1m capital acceleration grant (to be circulated offline to the Board by 7th August)
     2. Produce a Towns Fund Q&A document (see Agenda Item 9 – AOB)
     3. Accept the request from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) for Andrew McIntosh, Director of Place-making, to join the Oldham Town Deal Board (proposed by the Chair; seconded by the Vice- Chair and Liz Windsor-Welsh)

***Post-meeting note:*** Andrew Lightfoot, Deputy CEO, is to remain the GMCA representative for the Board. Board papers are to be copied to Andrew McIntosh for information only.

# AOB (Peter Holbrook)

* 1. The Chair and Vice-Chair have agreed to reschedule the virtual, monthly meetings of the Board where possible, based on member feedback that Muslim colleagues have prayer commitments on Friday afternoons.
  2. Roger Frith explained that a member of the public has shared a project proposal worth c.£1m. Although the project has not stemmed from a recommendation from the Board, it is being reviewed to assess all opportunities and support the applicant; Oldham Council and Mott MacDonald will report back to the Board in due course if the proposal aligns with the Towns Fund criteria. Accepting the project into the TIP has the potential to redirect funding packages allocated to the four

endorsed projects and there may be alternative opportunities to support the applicant through other funding mechanisms. If this is the case, the Chair and other members will be contacted to provide information/support outside the governance of the Board. The project is not one of those shortlisted for the £1m capital acceleration grant.

* 1. Liz Windsor-Welsh called for clarity about the process by which the public can submit proposals for the Towns Fund and other funding sources, to ensure the Board is aware of all opportunities and capable of managing expectations. The Chair responded by offering to produce a Q&A sheet with support from Action Together and Oldham Council (see Agenda Item 8 – Recommendations and Next Steps). The sheet will describe the processes used to assess funding requests against strategic frameworks and priorities, and act as an aide memoire for the Board.
  2. The Chair called for future communications to describe the Towns Fund accurately, as a time-limited scheme offering capital investment for transformational projects. Stephen Cox and Suzanne Jones added that rushed communications had already prompted the premature closure of the national MyTown campaign and caused one Board to receive over 100 project ideas from the public. Jessica Beckett responded that a press release in June had set out the Towns Fund criteria and referenced the Board’s four endorsed projects.
  3. Suzanne Jones encouraged the Board to align its projects with the Theory of Change and target a small number of large projects that will deliver transformational change and a benefits ripple effect. She added that the TIP cannot be altered to incorporate new/alternative projects once approved by the Government.

# Close of meeting (Peter Holbrook)

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

**Next meeting:** 10.00-12.00 on Friday, 2nd October 2020