

Minutes of The Bishop Auckland Stronger Towns Board Meeting

Friday 13th November, 12.30 – 14.30, Microsoft Teams

Attendees:		
David Land	DL	Chair
David Maddan	DJM	The Auckland Project, CEO
Jonathan Ruffer	JR	The Auckland Project, Founder
Susie Doyle	SD	The Auckland Project, Head of Development
Rob Yorke	RY	Teescraft, Private Sector Representative
Cllr Brian Stephens	BS	Portfolio Lead for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships
Graham Wood	GW	Durham County Council, Economic Development Manager
Natalie Davison-Terranova	ND-T	Bishop Auckland College, Principal/Chief Executive
Amy Harhoff	AH	Durham County Council, Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth
Mike Matthews	MM	Private Sector Member
Cllr Shirley Quinn	SQ	Councillor
Cllr Joy Allen	JA	Councillor
Jonathan Gilroy	JG	Cities and Local Growth Team
Margaret Coates	MC	Cities and Local Growth Team
Graeme Collinge	GC	Genecon, Director
Cathy Russell	RG	Ryder Architecture
Bishop Paul Butler	PB	Chair of the Brighter BA Partnership Board
Liz Fisher	LF	The Auckland Project, Place & Purpose Director
Paul Robson	PR	Department for Work & Pensions
Kim Cooper	KC	Arup
Nick Kealey	NK	Arcadis
Ellie Gair	EG	Ryder Architecture
Dehenna Davison	DD	Member of Parliament for Bishop Auckland

Apologies:		
Helen Golightly	HG	North East LEP, Executive Director

Item	Action
1.0	Welcome
1.1	DL notes that the purpose of today's meeting is for the Board to review the draft long list of projects and establish some consensus on priorities, so that a final priority list can be agreed by theme leads on 27 th November 2020 and ratified at the next Board Meeting on 11 th December 2020.
1.2	DL notes that project's included on the priority list should be ones that the local people see as having significant benefit. This perspective will be gained through community consultation – to be discussed further under item 5.0.

2.0	Review of Previous Minutes	
2.1	No comments.	
3.0	Declarations of Interest – if any	
3.1	No comments.	
4.0	Town Investment Plan – Project Prioritisation / Shortlisting	
4.1	DL, AH and GC all give thanks to the efforts of the theme leads over the past few months.	
4.2	GW advises on the project prioritisation journey taken to get from the long list to short list of projects. The established Arup project prioritisation tool has been used.	
4.3	GW confirms that all projects included align with the agreed vision of Bishop Auckland as; A world class heritage visitor destination, a 21 st century bustling Market Place, a Service Centre for South West Durham and a gateway to Durham Dales.	
4.4	AH/GC advise that timescales are tight and the Board needs to work at pace with agreeing the priority list. GC confirms that Genecon are proceeding with drafting the TIP Section One 10,000-word document for approval. We also need to complete the MHCLG spreadsheet pro-forma, and prepare more visual pro-formas for each project.	
4.5	DL as chair of the Bishop Auckland Stronger Towns Board will need to write a passionate forward.	
4.6	GC shares PowerPoint (attached to minutes). Slide one includes a table of the Stronger Town's Fund Round One awards. GC has had feedback that if any revenue funding is included within the bid, this is generally being struck out by the government.	
4.7	PowerPoint slides two and three detail the long list of projects set out in theme groups. A summary of comments arising per theme group are set out below (items 4.1 to 4.6).	
4.8	GC notes that we need to begin costing each project to shape up the bid total. We also need to agree the extent of match funding from other sources that will sit alongside the town deal to build up the total investment programme.	

4.1	Investment Theme 1: Regeneration & Land Use	
	Zone 1	
4.1.1	DJM clarified that TAP investment in this area is £31m (Kynren) and £2m (purchase of Binchester Farm). This totals £33m worth of retrospective costs. There is also a further £10m worth of future investment in developing an Eco Farm and Fort. TAP do not recognise the figures as detailed on the spreadsheet. GC to work with DJM to illustrate the correct figures. A meeting between TAP, Genecon and theme lead to be held on 16th November.	GC/DJM
4.1.2	RY requests clarification on whether retrospective costs for Zone One can be included within the bid and how far back they can go. GC clarifies that match funding is being sought towards the projects being brought forward only, starting from 2021 onwards. Previous investment can be brought into the narrative but cannot be presented as pure match.	
	Zone 2	
4.1.3	A discussion took place around the Newgate Centre.	
	Zone 3:	
4.1.4	DJM raises that TAP do not recognise any of the numbers included within the TAP/Council JV column of the spreadsheet. TAP have committed £200m already. GC and DJM undertook to review this off line.	GC/DJM
4.1.5	No further comments raised on Zone 3 proposals.	
4.2	Investment Theme 2: Skills and Enterprise	
4.2.1	This theme is made up of a series of inter related projects that address particular sectorial issues in the skills and labour market, ultimately focussed on getting people into employment.	
4.2.2	The venue for the skills and enterprise hub is still to be confirmed but NDT advises that costs for refurbishing a venue have been allowed for (approx. £500k).	
4.2.3	Proposals for venues include; a building at Dovecot, or repurpose part of the building that currently houses B&Q. Board agreed that venue must be in an accessible town centre location.	
4.2.4	NDT expressed a concern in relation to revenue costs being knocked out of some of the other bids. JG/MC commented that 10% of the overall bid figure can be revenue but it must be incorporated within / in support of capital projects. A project that is purely revenue will not be supported.	

4.3	Investment Theme 3: Arts, Culture & Leisure	
4.3.1	Projects within this theme are intended to complement the TAP investment projects that are already being developed.	
4.3.2	SQ queries the need for a new location for the table tennis club. PB responds that there is the opportunity to create a new purpose built centre that would also have training and teaching rooms. This project is already backed by Sport England and other national bodies and has planning permission. It would also be close to the college and could be used more widely to serve young people. SQ confirms her support.	
4.3.3	The Heritage Bus Museum would also complement the Locomotion Museum at Shildon. It is hoped that some heritage buses can be restored and put into regular use around the town to enhance visitor experience. DD strongly advocates for the Heritage Bus Museum to be made a priority project in the Town Deal. DD has received considerable correspondence from local people who are passionate about this project.	
4.4	Investment Theme 4: Connectivity	
4.4.1	GC tabled plan showing the proposed area for the new municipal data network, project cost is circa £7.5m. This would enable the potential for Bishop Auckland to develop as a digital / smart town of the future.	
4.4.2	GW adds that once the infrastructure upgrade is in place it could provide wider digital benefits such as; commercial buy-in to the network that would allow delivery of free broadband to residents of Bishop Auckland.	
4.4.3	PB queries why St. Helens is not included within the proposed area. GW responds that this is down to budget constraints but once in place, the infrastructure will be scalable and expandable dependant on resource.	
4.4.4	Heritage walking and cycling routes are not yet defined. If prioritised, this project needs further work to develop it into a £3m package.	
4.4.5	GW confirms that traffic modelling and detailed junction design work for item 4.3 on the spreadsheet (Tindale Triangle Infrastructure Improvements) are due in the next few weeks. This area is a recognised bottle neck and presents a constraint to further development. MC advises that connectivity is one of the key themes and this does include transport links, if this project can be shown to feedback to the overall vision then it could be supported by the Town Deal.	

4.5	Other: Future High Street Fund Do Max Projects	
4.5.1	Residual projects from the FHSF have been flagged under this heading on the spreadsheet for the Boards reference.	
4.5.2	GW confirms that 43 Market Place is being advanced through other means, that is Quick Wins Funding.	
4.5.3	DJM clarifies that the Kingsway buildings are for demolition rather than making into workspace pods.	
4.6	AOB	
4.6.1	DL raises that there is a big opportunity to create a development company for Bishop Auckland where revenue streams can be managed / come into and go out of. Clearly one of the main partners would be the local authority. DL asks for MC advice on this idea.	
4.6.2	MC comments that she believes there were proposals for a development company within the first cohort of towns, but she is not aware of the detail / benefits to this. MC to check and feedback.	
4.6.3	GC advises that he has seen development company proposals used to demonstrate deliverability.	
4.6.4	AH advises that the council's position is that there is a significant amount of work to do in setting this up and DCC will take it as an action to look into, although it will be challenging to align this with the Town Deal timescales. DL agrees to take item offline and continue discussion.	
5.0	Stronger Town Community Engagement Process	
5.1	GW tabled a paper on how to approach the issue of community engagement in the current climate. GW suggests that the Board can be comfortable with a scaled down consultation exercise for the reasons summarised within his report.	
5.2	<p>LF commented that we should consider a more extensive consultation than proposed since we have not yet engaged with the wider town on the discussions had within this Board. There is too large a gap between where we are now and the original masterplan that went out to consultation.</p> <p>LF suggests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeted zoom meetings with community groups and stakeholders. - Creation of a website with promotional videos to provide opportunity for the public to fully engage with the plans. 	

5.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For those not on social media or without internet, displays should be put up in shop windows with the ability to leave comments. LF can offer 43 Market Place but some of the vacant shop frontages around the town could also be considered. - A double page article on the project should be published in the Northern Echo. - A large scale leaflet drop. <p>GW welcomes the above suggestions and agrees to work together with LF to develop.</p>	
6.0	Feedback from Arup's Stronger Town Chairs Meeting	
6.1	DL met with Arup and other Stronger Town Chairs of the North East. Feedback from Arup and MHCLG is that some of the bid documents have been too 'boring.' Advice is that the document should be very visual and engaging, GC concurs. DL will be attending feedback meetings on a regular basis and will provide updates.	
7.0	Any Other Business	
7.1	No comments.	
8.0	Date of Next Meeting	
8.1	The next Board Meeting is Friday 11 th December 2020 at 12:30.	
	Meeting Closed.	