

**Minutes of The Bishop Auckland Stronger Towns Board Meeting
Friday 31st July 2020, 12:30 – 14:30, No 42 Market Place**

Attendees:		
David Land (<i>Chair</i>)	DL	Chair
Jonathan Ruffer	JR	The Auckland Project, Founder
David Maddan	DM	The Auckland Project, Chief Executive Officer
Susie Doyle	SD	The Auckland Project, Head of Development
Cllr Brian Stephens	BS	Portfolio Lead for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships
Amy Harhoff	AH	Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth, DCC
Graham Wood	GW	Economic Development Manager, DCC
Natalie Davison-Terranova	ND-T	Principle - Bishop Auckland College
Bishop Paul Butler	PB	Chair of the Brighter BA Partnership Board
Mike Matthews	MM	Private Sector Member
Cllr Shirley Quinn	SQ	Councillor
Cllr Joy Allen	JA	Councillor
Margaret Coates	MC	Cities and Local Growth Team
Jonathan Gilroy	JG	Local Growth and Policy Advisor
Graeme Collinge	GC	Director, Genecon
Della Amenyeanu	DA	Genecon
Dehenna Davidson	DD	MP for Bishop Auckland
Amie Glass (<i>Minutes</i>)	AG	The Auckland Project, Project Coordinator
Apologies:		
Helen Golightly	HG	CE, North East LEP
Paul Robson	PR	
Shelia Horner	SH	
Nik Turner	NT	Believe Housing
Rob Yorke	RY	Private Sector Representative - Teescraft

Item		Action
1.0	Welcome & Introductions	
	N/A	
2.0	Review of Previous Minutes	
2.1	AH clarifies in relation to item 8.2, final approval of use of capacity funding for CGI is subject to today's conversation.	
2.2	JA notes the misspelling of councillor.	
2.3	AG to amend and re-issue in line with the above.	AG
3.0	Declarations of Interest	

	N/A	
4.0	Economic Backdrop	
4.1	There is an emphasises within the guidance that MHGLC have published that Town Investment Plans (TIP) need to focus on economic growth interventions.	
4.2	GC presented results of initial economic baseline analysis. Presentation attached to minutes. Key notes and comments highlighted below:	
4.2.1	Decision to be made regarding scale of bid the Board submits. To make a case for the larger investment of £50m, the economic baseline rationale needs to be clear and the projects chosen need to show ability to contribute to local economic growth.	
4.2.2	GC advises of difficulty with access to some information as it is only available at parliamentary constituency level. This potentially masks some figures and messages for the TIP boundary area. The TIP boundary area comprises of 17 LSOA's (Lower Super Output Areas).	
4.2.3	GC comments that analysis of IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) data for the LSOA's shows that 15 out of the 17 in are in the bottom 40% of the country for employment. This is a key message to highlight - there is an employment problem that the Board's vision should try to resolve.	
4.2.4	DL queries if this data takes into account impact of Covid-19 on the area. GC advises that it does not and therefore figures are likely to worsen.	
4.2.5	Centre for Cities analysis has looked nationally at sectors most likely to be affected by Covid-19. 50% of jobs in Bishop Auckland fall into sectors that are categorised as vulnerable/very vulnerable.	
4.2.6	Within the TIP Boundary, regarding skills and education, 13 of the 17 LSOA's rank in the bottom 40%. GC flags particular concern in the category of children and young people. This is a key message to highlight in terms of rationale for intervention in this area.	
4.2.7	GC reports a negative jobs growth position. The TIP boundary area lost approximately 12,000 jobs from 2015 to 2018, which is significant. Local stories that inform these job losses would be helpful to Genecon to deepen the narrative.	
4.2.8	In terms of multiple deprivation, 15 of the 17 LSOA's ranked in bottom 40% for deprivation generally.	
4.2.9	There are around 12,000 local businesses in the TIP boundary area. Business count data shows some growth for micro businesses and business density per 10,000 residents is high in comparison to County Durham and North East generally. Local	

	stories of successful start-up businesses would be helpful and the Board should consider ways to support entrepreneurship in the TIP.	
4.2.10	GC confirms that there is a strong needs case that can be demonstrated in the TIP. The vision for Bishop Auckland should try to resolve the issues highlighted.	
4.2.11	JA / GC note that the town is busy with many shopping more locally. Within 2/3 weeks' footfall has returned to pre-Covid levels. Investment should focus on building capacity in the town to cope with locals plus visitor numbers, hotels/accommodation in particular would be beneficial.	
4.2.12	AH comments that although the TIP boundary is direct to Bishop Auckland, the demand and benefit to the wider area should be highlighted. Proposal to use capacity funding to do more bespoke surveys regarding movement and travel into Bishop Auckland.	
4.2.13	JR has committed £15m into the area every year for 10 years - this stands as a crucial differentiator for the town and plays a part in its success in shortlisting for government funding. The statistics outlined are the exact reason JR has come to Bishop Auckland. JR therefore asks that his thoughts are taken into account during discussions regarding projects to take forward for the TIP.	
4.2.14	Genecon will be writing up a summary report and encourage further feedback from the Board on issue.	
5.0	Stronger Town Spatial Strategy / Vision	
5.1	The Board must identify key strengths and opportunities to progress the town, in order to set an agreed ambitious vision.	
5.2	The economic baseline data highlights that there is a clear jobs deficit and skills mismatch within the TIP boundary area. The Board should consider how the vision can resolve these issues and ensure that the community feel the benefit as soon as possible.	
5.3	DL comments that in creating job opportunities it is important to sell the area to encourage movement to the area for employment.	
5.4	The Board need to define a vision that delivers transformational change and future proofs the town for 2030.	
6.0	Working Groups – Membership / Operation	
6.1	A series of working groups and leads have been identified. Clarity is required regarding which Board Members participate in these. To add value to these groups it is essential that there is interaction with external stakeholders beyond the Board Members themselves.	

6.2	DL asks for suggestions regarding working group membership. GW to circulate a list confirming groups and leads.	GW
6.3	BS notes that the Board need to know where Bishop Auckland fits within Durham County Council's overall vision. AH responds that this is taken as a clear task.	
6.4	DL proposes approaching Darlington to understand more about the shape and direction of their Stronger Towns bid. Both Darlington and Bishop Auckland have interest in investment into their railways. MC and GW concur with the proposal to approach Darlington's Board. BS expresses concern.	
7.0	Quick Wins	
7.1	GW completed Quick Win assessment to identify schemes to maximise the £750k on offer.	
7.2	The Board need to state a definitive proposal for which scheme to take forward for Quick Wins funding by the 14 th August 2020.	
7.3	GW notes the guidance confirms that the scheme needs to be in line with vision for the Stronger Towns Fund and need to be financially complete by 31 March 2021.	
7.4	DD confirms that the £750k is accelerated funding rather than additional funding to the Stronger Towns Fund.	
7.5	Issue raised regarding the shortlist process - several projects have not been costed and therefore proper consideration of their suitability cannot be made.	
7.6	PB states preference that the Canny Hill Sculpture is shortlisted. JA concurs. This project is community lead and presents the opportunity to work with schools and young people. It sets a good visual signal for the intention of the Stronger Towns Bid and engages with the skills agenda. It requires a small proportion of the total funding available.	
7.7	JR states preference that the Kingsway Carpark is shortlisted. This project presents a physical benefit to the community and is an affordable way to improve high street accessibility for locals. DD to confirm if putting this project forward would be to the detriment of the Future High Street Bid, which it is currently part of.	DD
7.8	DL/GW to liaise regarding finalising the shortlisting of the Quick Wins projects and re-circulate in advance of the next Board Meeting in order that a final decision can be made on 14 th July 2020.	DL/GW

8.0	Capacity Funding	
8.1	GW tabled position statement on capacity funding for review by the Board.	
8.2	Genecon are now commissioned to lead on the TIP bid. The wider consultancy team including Ryder and Arcadis are not yet appointed. DL requests clarity on the extent of their input and programme for Board approval.	
8.3	BS queries if GW can share with the Board the council's table top exercise.	GW
8.4	Once the Board's vision for Bishop Auckland is defined and a project list is developed, consultants can be engaged to get the bid written up and presented in a successful format. Clarity on service/support required and timeline for engagement to be refined by DL/GW/GC.	DL/GW/GC
9.0	AOB	
	N/A	
10.0	Date of Next Meeting	
	The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Friday 14 th August 2020.	
	Meeting Closed.	