

Minutes of The Bishop Auckland Stronger Towns Board Meeting

Wednesday 28th April 2021, 09.00 – 10.00, Microsoft Teams

Attendees:		
David Land	DL	Chair
David Maddan	DM	The Auckland Project, CEO
Jonathan Ruffer	JR	The Auckland Project, Founder
Susie Doyle	SD	The Auckland Project, Head of Development
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 Joy Allen	JA	Councillor
Dehenna Davison	DD	Member of Parliament for Bishop Auckland
Nik Turner	NT	Believe Housing
Katy Severs	KS	Department for Work and Pensions
Geoff Paul	GP	
Jonathan Gilroy	JG	Local Growth Policy Advisor (North East)
Ian Conway	IC	Durham County Council

Apologies:		
Helen Golightly	HG	North East LEP, Executive Director
Bishop Paul Butler	PB	Bishop of Durham
Liz Fisher	LF	The Auckland Project, Place & Purpose Director
Cllr Brian Stephens	BS	Portfolio Lead for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships
Cllr Shirley Quinn	SQ	Councillor
Rob Yorke	RY	Teescraft, Private Sector Representative

	Item	Action
1.0	Welcome	
1.1	David Land welcomed board members.	
2.0	Review of Previous Minutes (28 Jan 2021)	
2.1	Previous minutes noted and approved.	
3.0	Declarations of Interest – if any	
3.1	ND-T issued a declaration of interest on behalf of Bishop Auckland College as a delivery partner and co-funder on a number of the skills projects.	

4.0	Stronger Towns MHCLG Challenge Session	
4.1	GW updated that given the value of the submission, the Bishop Auckland Board has been invited to a “Challenge Session” with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 10 th May 2021 for 90 minutes via Teams.	
4.2	In preparation, a presentation and background information is currently being prepared to highlight the exceptional nature of the bid, the national & international impact and deliverability.	
4.3	The session will likely also cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The TIP’s overall vision - How the town’s vision will benefit different social groups - Engagement with the public and private sectors - Questions relating to specific projects - Sustainability of Towns Fund investment - Engagement with other government departments - Risk and mitigations - Ongoing/forward looking plan for engagement and consultations 	
4.4	GW noted that representation at the Challenge Session from The Auckland Project would be welcomed.	
4.5	Following the challenge session, it is expected that a Heads of Terms funding offer will be received, starting the mobilisation period for the Stronger Towns Programme.	
4.6	An offer of an additional £40k capacity funding was received to assist DCC with completion of various studies including; an economic impact paper, visitor economy impact review, work on the wider benefits, traffic modelling, heritage landscape assessment and more. These studies will help inform the Challenge Session presentation as well as future work.	
4.7	DL queried if Graeme Collinge (Genecon) will be present at the Challenge Session. GW advised that this is in discussion.	
4.8	JG advised that MLHGC will want to see that, particularly with the larger scale projects, due consideration has been given to risk and deliverability. Interrogation of the fine detail is not expected at this stage.	
5.0	Programme Development Update	
5.1	With funding confirmed for the Future High Street programme and Stronger Towns funding anticipated, there has been a particular focus on sequencing to ensure that all programme commitments can be delivered within the short timescales associated. Attempts will be made	

	to package works so that disruption to the town is minimised during peak times/seasons.	
5.2	Resources are being deployed to develop a comprehensive programme, with a Programme Manager post now agreed.	
5.3	A plan is in development for stakeholder engagement to ensure regular progress updates and opportunities for pre planning consultation on major schemes. An accompanying Comms plan will also help maintain the profile of the works underway across the town and provide a useful reference point for local communities, businesses and potential investors.	
5.4	JA noted that regular positive communication about the developments and opportunities would be very welcomed within the town.	
6.0	Any Other Business	
6.1	GW advised of other opportunities in the area that are progressing such as the cabinet's approval of the report on leisure transformation. This represents a significant County Council investment into Bishop Auckland and work is ongoing around developing this programme.	
6.2	This project presents a further development opportunity in re-use of the existing leisure site within Woodhouse Close.	
6.3	GW updated on Quick Wins Funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design work for the pop up shop is complete and procurement is underway. Launch will be tied to Bishop Auckland Food Festival in October 2021. - Hardware and Software has been received by Bishop Auckland College, a comms opportunity is scheduled for June 2021. - Civils and utilities for a network of eleven roadside signs around the town have been installed ready for use. - Fundraising for the Statue is complete, a project manager is in place and procurement / fabrication has commenced. Date for completion is to be confirmed. 	
6.4	DJM recently met with the Railway Minister and advised that he seemed very positive about the proposals regarding investments into the railway and felt that they were consistent with emerging government policy.	
6.5	JG noted that invitation to a Challenge Session means the TIP was received well. Any announcement of funding awards may be grouped rather than given on an individual town basis. The Board will receive a Heads of Terms, which they will have three weeks to agree, sign and return. A two-month period is then provided to prioritise projects. There will then be twelve months of business case development work.	
	Meeting Closed.	