

Crawley Town Deal Board

Wednesday, 19th July 2023

Meeting Notes

ITEM	ACTION
<p>1. Welcome, apologies and minutes of the previous meeting Chris Maidment (CM) welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies received from Suzanne Holloway, Louise Blackwell, Henry Smith, Wendy Bell, Suzanne Carey, Paul Rolfe, Peter Rainier, Neil Cooper, Steve Sawyer, Simon Cuckow and Tony Middleton.</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting (7th June 2023) were approved with all actions either completed or to be discussed at today's meeting.</p>	
<p>2. Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) update Emma Smith (ES) reported there are likely to be several announcements from Government before the summer recess including updates on the future of Local Enterprise Partnerships and the next round of Levelling Up funding. ES stands ready to support partners, as required.</p> <p>At a recent LGA conference, Michael Gove stated that he is keen to improve the approach towards the next round of funding bids, moving away from a competitive process. As part of a broader simplification plan, DLUHC is also trying to improve the way they use local governance structures and procedures e.g. Project Adjustment Requests will only be required for changes over a 30% threshold. More information can be found at Simplifying the funding landscape for local authorities - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>ES has recently visited the area including a pre-meet stakeholder event ahead of the Gatwick Economic Summit in November, a visit to see regeneration plans in Burgess Hill and a presentation on SussExport which included representation from businesses based in Manor Royal. ES reminded the Board of the services available from the Department for Business & Trade should we require them.</p> <p>ES referred to the recent Towns Fund Conference which Clem Smith and Nigel Tidy attended on behalf of the Board, reporting that Crawley is in 'really good shape' and ES is looking forward to seeing our projects coming forward.</p> <p>The Government has pledged to grow the economy and investment in skills forms a significant part of the plan. Crawley has a key role to play, particularly by championing projects such as the Innovation Centre and Invest in Skills.</p> <p>CM thanked ES for her update, reflecting that procurement issues and inflationary costs continue to impact funding programmes. CM also stated that the difficulty is not <i>delivering</i> skills training but is in reaching the people who need it the most. ES acknowledged that increasing costs are affecting every part of the UK, confirming that once projects have been value engineered and outputs reduced, there is no more funding available. Town Deal Boards are having to reconsider project scope and decide whether to deliver less or reallocate the funds elsewhere. Government recognises these pressures and challenges and is doing what it can to help.</p> <p>Nick Burrell (NB) asked if the Levelling Up announcements will include timelines for decisions and funding allocations. ES understands that the Secretary of State is keen to move away from the previous structure but does not yet know what that means in practice.</p>	

3. UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)

Georgina Bouette (GB) introduced herself as the Head of Community Services for Crawley BC and referred to the [briefing paper](#) which had been circulated before the meeting. The report provides an update on the UK SPF for Crawley and makes recommendations for the proposed governance model moving forward. Key points include:

- Crawley received £1m over three years, up to March 2025
- Previous discussions agreed to focus activity in three geographical areas: Broadfield, Bewbush and West Green
- Activity in year 1 resulted in a detailed community engagement exercise to provide the evidence base for a delivery plan in years 2 and 3
- Summary of grant allocations awarded to six local community organisations in Year 1, to the total value of £62,548.
- Neighbourhood Action Teams (NATs) established in each area to identify and inform local needs and submit proposals to the SPF fund, managed by Crawley BC as the accountable body, on behalf of the Town Deal Board.
- Proposals will be considered by the UK SPF Steering Group and Town Deal Board Partnership Sub-Group who will make recommendations to the Town Deal Board.
- Community organisations will be invited to submit applications for the next round of SPF funding during August.

CM thanked GB for her presentation, referring to the findings of the community engagement exercise which highlight the diverse needs in each area. On this basis, it will be a challenge for the Town Deal Board to ensure funding reaches the whole community.

Jeremy Taylor asked if St John's Church are included in the NATs; Kathryn Ripley confirmed that they are.

Daran Bennett asked about the timescales for delivery. GB confirmed that we are keen to move forward as quickly as possible and recommendations will come back to the Town Deal Board in October/November for approval.

4. Towns Fund Project Updates

Innovation Centre – Clem Smith (CS) presented an update on the Innovation Centre project highlighting:

- Morgan Sindall and the design team have concluded Stage 4 designs to convert the innovation space ahead of the preliminary construction phase.
- Indicative floor plans comprising 24,500ft² include laboratory and workshop space, collaborative work space, meeting and study space supported by kitchen facilities and breakout space. The building exterior will remain largely unchanged.
- The original cost estimate was £3.595m against a budget of £4.239m.
- A revised cost plan to the end of Stage 3 required an additional outlay of £1.6m as a result of needing to replace the mechanical and engineering infrastructure.
- Morgan Sindall were asked to identify options for value engineering reductions and this resulted in a new cost estimate of £4.66m – leaving a deficit of £428k.
- In order to address this and enable the scheme to proceed to construction, CS is proposing to reallocate £2m funding from another Towns Fund scheme (see next agenda item) to the Innovation Centre. This would deliver a surplus of £246k.
- If accepted, this would see the total budget for the Innovation Centre increased to £5.682m with contingency at the Stage 4 costings.
- Proposed timeline will see initial enabling works starting by the end of July 2023, main construction from October 2023 to June 2024 and completion in July 2024. First tenants expected August 2024.

CM thanked CS for the update and asked, with reference to ES's earlier comments that there is no additional funding available, how confident we are that we will get to the

end of the project. CS is confident that it can be delivered within the new budget and there is a longer list of value engineering options available, if required.

Ana Christie asked if the local supply chain can be involved with the project. CS confirmed that Morgan Sindall is committed to engaging with sub-contractors on a local and regional basis.

Town Centre to Manor Royal Cycle Route – CS presented a proposal to cancel the Town Centre to Manor Royal cycle route project and reallocate the £2m funding to the Innovation Centre. This proposal follows a number of recent discussions with key stakeholders which have concluded that it is not possible to unlock the additional funding required from Active Travel England to complete the full route as proposed in the Towns Fund business case, at this time.

CM responded that whilst it is disappointing not to be able to deliver the cycle route at this time, the project is not feasible and in order to make best use of the funding, it should be reallocated to the Innovation Centre.

The Town Deal Board endorsed the proposal to cancel the cycle route and reallocate the £2m funding to the Innovation Centre. The Board are keen however for discussions about future cycle route connectivity to continue, beyond the remit of the Towns Fund.

NT will submit two Project Adjustment Request forms to DLUHC, requesting that the cycle route project is cancelled and the funding re-allocated to the Innovation Centre.

NT

Commercial Eastern Gateway – Lynn Hainge (LH) referred to the previous meeting where the Town Deal Board agreed to allocate £100,000 of the funding for the Commercial Eastern Gateway scheme to combine it with WSCC/OPE funds to enable delivery of a feasibility study and development appraisal for the County Buildings site.

Since that meeting, the proposal was considered by Crawley BC's Corporate Projects Assurance Group (CPAG) which oversees governance of the Towns Fund on behalf of Crawley BC as the accountable body. CPAG recommended the transfer of £75,000 funding from the Commercial Eastern Gateway to support Towns Fund Programme Management beyond October 2023 and the remaining £75,000 funding being used to support the feasibility study and development appraisal for the County Buildings site. It was also recommended that the scope of feasibility study be extended to include the former Town Hall site on The Boulevard, in order to achieve value for money for the work. LH will progress this work with WSCC and report back to the Town Deal Board with an update.

The Town Deal Board approved the recommendation from CPAG to transfer £75,000 from the Commercial Eastern Gateway project to Programme Management. NT will submit a Project Adjustment Request for DLUHC.

NT

Town Centre Cultural Quarter – Daran Bennett presented an update, highlighting:

- Paul Ackerley appointed as programme director in March 2023, working 2 days a week, supporting the Cultural Quarter Steering Group.
- Programme was slow to start but a number of activities are now being delivered including Wordfest, International Dance Day in April, Make Music Day (in partnership with the TC BID who recorded a 2.7% increase in footfall) and the banner project in Memorial Gardens. The Steering group is keen to promote local talent where possible. Paul will provide a full update to the Steering Group in August.
- DB highlighted the need for developing a new Strategy for Arts & Culture in Crawley, working with the Arts Council, Creative Crawley and the Cultural Quarter Steering Group.
- DB suggested the need to progress different strands of work concurrently in order to maintain momentum: Phase 1 pop-up programme of events, Phase 2 feasibility work on physical spaces within the cultural quarter, supported by development of a Strategy.

<p>5. Towns Fund programme update – Nigel Tidy presented an update on the Towns Fund programme including feedback from the recent Towns Fund conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £2.2bn Town Deals shared between 101 towns; • 684 project business case summary documents submitted to DLUHC; • Challenges across other towns include rising costs, funding shortfalls, procurement, supply chain issues, governance, capacity, subsidy control and time delays; • Summary status and financial forecasts were presented for each of Crawley’s Towns Fund projects. 	
<p>6. Any Other Business None</p> <p>Date of the next meetings – 13th September and 1st November 2023</p>	LH