



# Walsall Council

## ACTION NOTES

- Title of Meeting:** Bloxwich & Walsall Town Deal Board Meeting
- Date:** Wednesday 3 March 2021: 13:00 – 14:30
- Venue:** Microsoft Teams 'Virtual' Meeting
- Quorum -** Minimum of 6 voting members, with at least one representative from: Private, Local Government and Communities membership categories, together with Walsall Council.

### **VOTING MEMBERS - via Teams**

Jhoots Pharmacy / Group (**Chair**) - Manjit Jhooty  
Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration – Councillor Adrian Andrew  
West Midlands Combined Authority – Adam Hawksbee  
OneWalsall – Davina Lytton  
Fairfax Saddles / Chair of Bloxwich Town Deal Advisory Board – Rupert Fairfax  
Barhale Construction / Chair of Walsall Town Deal Advisory Board – Karl Woodward  
The Vine Trust - Kevin Davis  
Homeserve NOW – Robert Judson  
Midcounties Co-operative – Tarra Simmons  
Walsall College – James Norris  
McDonalds Franchise – Doug Wright  
Walsall Together – Matthew Dodd  
Walsall Council – Mark Lavender  
Walsall Council – Neil Taylor  
Walsall Council - Philippa Venables

### **MEMBERS – via Teams**

Walsall Council – Zoey West  
Walsall Council – Simon Tranter  
Walsall Council (Note taker) - Abdul Raqib  
Walsall Council – Elizabeth Connolly  
Walsall Council – Jon King  
Walsall Council – Lucy Clarke  
Walsall Council – Alison Guerra

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, asked for live-streaming to commence and asked all to introduce themselves to the group.

James Norris was representing Walsall College on behalf of Jat Sharma and Matthew Dodd was representing Walsall Together.

Neil Taylor advised that this week would be his last in post and he was handing over to Philippa Venables. The Chair thanked Neil for his support and welcomed Philippa to the Board.

1. **Apologies**

Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Councillor Adrian Andrew  
Walsall Together, Daren Fradgley  
Walsall North – Eddie Hughes MP  
Walsall College – Jat Sharma  
University of Wolverhampton, Katharine Clough  
ZF Lemforder, Tim Kibble  
Arcadis, Brett Chambers

2. **Minutes and Actions from 15 December 2020 meeting**

The minutes from the public meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020 were agreed to be an accurate record.

Lucy Clarke took the Board through the actions:

Action Number 20/TDB/008/ML - Mark Lavender to update the Board on the acceleration projects after Christmas. Update: This item was on the agenda today. CLOSED

3. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations / conflicts of interest were raised. The Accountable Body kept a register of Members' interests; Philippa Venables' would be added.

**ACTION: Lucy Clarke to arrange for Philippa Venables' declaration of interests form to be completed and added to the register. Action Reference Number 21/TDB/015/LC**

4. **Town Deal Main and Acceleration Programmes**

Bloxwich

Introduction by Advisory Board Chair, Rupert Fairfax:

Rupert Fairfax (RF) updated the board that the Bloxwich Town Deal Advisory Board had met on 22 February and had been taken through the final Towns Investment Plan (TIP) submission. The document was impressive and reflected very well the content approved and recommended to the Town Deal Board. The Advisory Board were very happy with it. Thanks were extended to Arcadis and Council for the work put into it.

The Advisory Board also had an update on the Acceleration programme which is ongoing and meeting targets/deadlines.

Communications in relation to the work taking place were high on the Advisory Board's priorities, it was felt to be of the utmost importance to ensure the local community is aware of the work going on.

Main Programme Submission Update & Next Steps:

Mark Lavender shared the TIP submission onscreen and took the Board through the Bloxwich section. There was a good selection of visuals such as boundary maps, transport connections, comparisons of sectors in Bloxwich with the West Midlands and England as a whole, achievements to date and statistics.

It was not possible to share the project details publicly yet, but this would be added to the website when possible.

### Acceleration Programme Progress Update

Zoey West advised the Board that there were five Acceleration Fund projects delivering in the Bloxwich area. The Accountable Body had agreed with the department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy that as long as projects were contractually committed prior to the 31.3.21 that delivery could take place through to the end of June 21.

All projects were on time and delivering successfully, some delivery was expected after March, but all projects were expected to complete by June. King George V Park and the Community Safety (CCTV) projects were already on site delivering. All projects were delivering the agreed outputs and outcomes.

### Board Discussions / Questions

Doug Wright thought it was extremely important to communicate the good news as soon as possible. Getting locals to endorse the projects and highlight the difference they make was key.

Mark Lavender updated that this was a key point from the Bloxwich and Walsall Advisory Boards. Jon King was working on a communications plan for them and had agreed to work with Advisory Board members, Board members and locals to feed the information out. Officers within the Council needed to be mindful of the pre- election restrictions period and the need to comply with these requirements etc. . There were challenges, but the group would work together on them.

Tarra Simmons stressed the importance of also communicating to the younger generation. Target the communication in language and platforms that young people are using and listening to. The voices of the younger generation would add huge value.

### Walsall

Introduction by Advisory Board Chair, Karl Woodward:

The Walsall check and challenge meeting took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> January, following which, the feedback was circulated to Advisory Board members on the 16<sup>th</sup> February. The feedback was generally very positive and reinforced confidence in the Walsall TIP submission.

The Walsall Advisory Board met on the 24<sup>th</sup> February where, as with Bloxwich, Board members were updated on the Acceleration Programme and the TIP submission. The meeting followed a similar theme to that of the Bloxwich Board, regarding communications and methods to use.

### Main Programme Submission Update & Next Steps

Mark Lavender shared the Walsall TIP submission onscreen and took the Board through the document. As with the Bloxwich section, there were visuals such as boundary maps, transport connections, comparisons of sectors in Walsall with the West Midlands and England as a whole, achievements to date and statistics.

It was not possible to share the project details publicly yet, but this would be added to the website when possible.

### Acceleration Programme Progress Update

Zoey West summarised that for the Walsall Acceleration Programme it was a similar picture to that of Bloxwich. There were four projects overall, these would all be contractually committed by 31<sup>st</sup> March and would be able to continue works and spend until June.

The projects were on track and differences could already be seen via planting in Gallery Square and with CCTV, Speed Watch equipment and signs appearing. Projects were moving at pace and all would achieve the agreed outputs and outcomes.

### Board Discussions / Questions

The Chair, Manjit Jhooty queried if Communications was a key discussion at the Walsall Advisory Board also; Karl Woodward confirmed that it was.

The Chair requested that Karl and Rupert Fairfax take an active role in pulling the Board members together to roll out communications as a matter of priority.

**ACTION: Advisory Board and Town Deal Board members to be approached by Lucy Clarke for communications contacts to assist Jon King with rolling out the news on the Town Deal funding. Action Reference Number 21/TDB/016/LC**

## **5. Update on the High Street Funding application and fit with the Town Deal Programme**

Simon Tranter talked through a presentation, which detailed some of the wider plans for the Borough and tied in with the Town Deal activity. Over £500million of projects were in progress. The Town Centre Masterplan set the tone and vision for the next 20 years for the Town.

Walsall was awarded just under £11.5m of Future High Street Funds (FHSF), which fits in with Town Deal. The FHSF would be used to improve the connectivity between the Rail Station and St Pauls' Bus Station to improve the following for those unfamiliar with the area/town:

- The route between the Rail Station and St Pauls' Bus Station (and vice versa);
- Signposting;
- Prominent rail station visible on Park Street;
- Improvement of Public Realm on Park Street;
- Vista's from Rail to Bus Station; and
- Enhancing the experience prior to platform access to ensure a sense of arrival.

Current Town Centre development opportunities were as follows:

- Challenge Block - New medical facility and mixed use development opportunity;
- Station Street – Residential use with commercial opportunity;
- Waterfront Lex - Mixed use development opportunity;
- Former Police Station on Green Lane – Residential opportunity;
- Saddlers Quay – Residential scheme;
- Former Jabez Cliff – Mixed use development; and
- Ladder School – St Matthews Quarter

Future opportunities were also listed:

- Phoenix 10 Enterprise Zone;
- Parallel 113;
- Gasholders;
- Willenhall Masterplan;
- M6 Junction 10 works;
- Darlaston railway;
- Willenhall railway;
- Goscote Lane;
- Former Caparo site.

Work was actively taking place on a pipeline of projects to obtain funding and support businesses.

The Chair requested the presentation to be circulated to Board members.

**ACTION: Presentation on Future High Street Fund and future opportunities for the town to be circulated to Board members. Action Reference Number 21/TDB/017/LC**

**6. Any Other Business / Next Steps**

None.

Manjit Jhooty advised the public session had finished and asked for live-streaming to stop, so that the private session could then commence.

**PRIVATE SESSION**

**7. Approval of the Minutes from the PRIVATE Town Deal Board meeting on 14 January 2021 and Actions update**

**(Exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act, 1972) (as amended)**

The minutes from the private meeting on the 14 January 2021 were agreed to be an accurate record.

Lucy Clarke took the Board through action 20/TDB/010/BC from the private meeting in January, which could now be closed.

**8. Declarations of Interest**

None.

**9. Town Deal Main Programmes**

## PUBLIC

Board members discussed the timeframes for government announcing the funding allocations for Towns Fund projects, which is expected any time during the next 6 months and the work that will follow to secure the funding etc.

### **10. Any Other Business**

The board expressed the importance of active communications and marketing of the good work being delivered through the Acceleration programme, and the links to the main programme, this work will build pace over coming weeks.

A marketing plan / strategy will be required to support the main programme, there is time to progress this and the council has started this work, to continue over the coming months.

**Meeting closed at: 14:16**

### **11. Date of Next Meeting**

26 May 2021, 3:30pm – 5:00pm