



ACTION NOTES

Title of Meeting: Bloxwich & Walsall Town Deal Board Meeting
Date: Thursday 8 December 2022 1.00pm – 2.00pm
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
Walsall Council – Shaun Darcy
Walsall Council – Mark Lavender
Fairfax Saddles / Chair of Bloxwich Town Deal Advisory Board – Rupert Fairfax
Reach All Ltd / Chair of Walsall Town Deal Advisory Board – Karl Woodward
OneWalsall – David Bengé
University of Wolverhampton – Ray Flynn
West Midlands Combined Authority – Patricia Willoughby
Walsall College - James Norris
Mercian Trust / BCLEP Board– Kevin Davis

MEMBERS – Via Teams

Walsall Council – Alison Guerra
Walsall Council – Kelly Valente
Walsall Council (Note taker) – Jayne Hadley
Walsall Council – Lucy Clarke

GUESTS – Via Teams

Walsall College – Deb Rajania
Walsall Council – Liz Stuffins

PUBLIC SESSION

Mark Lavender stated this part of the meeting would be recorded. There were no objections to this.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised the first part of this meeting will be in public session for agenda items 1-5, then the meeting moves into private session.

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

Apologies

Jat Sharma, James Norris, Doug Wright

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1. Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

ACTION - (22/TDB/046/All): Mark Lavender requested all to ensure Register of Interest forms are up to date and sent through to Lucy Clarke as required

2. Minutes (Public) of the previous meeting

Lucy Clarke shared public minutes from the last meeting on 8 September 2022.

The minutes were then accepted as an accurate record, Manjit Jhooty confirmed.

3. Bloxwich Advisory Board – Chair’s update

Rupert Fairfax provided an update:

All 5 projects are now moving onto the payment stage.

Mark Lavender advised – the Government are due to release funding in December / January.

Rupert Fairfax thanked all staff involved for their hard work of staff on these projects which was appreciated.

Rupert then provided an update on each project:

Incubation Space and Digital Access Centre – there is a property under consideration, purchase is being negotiated and progressing satisfactorily.

Construction Skills through Regeneration – a soft launch will be taking place soon, there is a £10m budget for the programme to bring forward brownfield sites, but the follow-on building works will result in the economic activity / private sector match funding multiplying at much greater values than this.

Community capital – The application process is being put in place and will be publicised.

Green Bloxwich – presentations have been delivered by Liz Stuffins and her team; a site visit took place in October which proved very useful with constructive feedback provided. Leamore Park is clearly a challenging site and it’s important that the spend is appreciated by the local community and not rejected. In terms of economic regeneration, the work there will provide a bedrock for the community.

Active Travel & Connectivity – Mark Lavender advised – there are 2 elements to this project - improvement of canal towpaths on which we are in the process of contracting with CRT together with Walsall Council, to deliver improvements to pavements, pedestrian crossings, and the provision of new Bus Stops in partnership with Transport for the West Midlands.

Questions/Comments

Eddie Hughes MP queried – how much money are we receiving for this programme? and regarding the Construction Skills soft launch - is there something I can see or get involved with?

Mark Lavender confirmed – we submitted a bid for £25m, we were awarded £21.3m and the Council have underwritten the balance to £25m. The Government pay the money in advance for each

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financial year, so we have the funds to sponsor the projects. An update on the Constructions Skills soft launch is later on the agenda.

Manjit Jhooty thanked Rupert Fairfax for his update and the Board echoed his comments.

4. Walsall Advisory Board – Chair’s update

Karl Woodward provided an update:

The Walsall Advisory Board last met on Thursday 1st December 2022

Creative Industries - a building for this is now confirmed, we are moving to Stage 3 design phase in January 2023, planning will be submitted in summer 2023, a contractor appointment will be made in October 2023 and start of construction will be November 2023 with opening due in 2024. We have recommended the business case to Board for approval

Performing Arts/Theatre – this project is currently on hold, we are awaiting confirmation of Levelling Up Funding, a decision to be made December 2022. In the meantime, Officers are working on a Plan B should this be required, what the options are and are engaging with stakeholders.

Active Spaces – the concept design went to Cabinet in October with the overarching programme being worked through.

Active Travel & Connectivity – progress has been made on this project, contractors should be appointed and signed off before Christmas, with work commencing in February 2023 jointly with Canal and River Trust. Progress has also been made with regards to the A34 bridge works in terms of planning and quotes for the work are being sought.

Community Capital programme – the communications plan is being drawn up and worked through to hopefully go out before Christmas. Events are being planned for January/February 2023 to engage with the community on how to get involved.

To summarise -most of the project plans are in place, generally progress is good, however, there is a note of concern on timing and risk of increase in inflation.

At the last Walsall Advisory Board held, attendance was down but it was still quorate.

Manjit Jhooty thanked Karl Woodward for his update.

5. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Provisionally the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 18 January 3.30pm. Lucy Clarke advised dates were circulated to check availability. However, Jayne Hadley clarified that an earlier timeslot of 2.30pm has now since been requested which availability was now sought.

ACTIONS:

22/TDB/047/ALL - Board members to confirm their availability for dates circulated and earlier start time of 2.30pm to Lucy Clarke or Jayne Hadley.

22/TDB/048/JEH - Jayne Hadley to then circulate invites for Town Deal Boards 2023/24 once availability confirmed.

Recording was stopped at 1.20pm

Public Session closed at 1.20pm

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

The meeting continued in private session the notes of which are not published.