



# Walsall Council

## ACTION NOTES

- Title of Meeting:** Bloxwich & Walsall Town Deal Board Meeting
- Date:** Thursday 16 February 2023 4.00pm – 5.00pm
- 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**

Walsall Council (**Vice Chair**) – Councillor Andrew  
Walsall Council – Shaun Darcy  
Walsall Council – Mark Lavender  
Walsall Council – Philippa Venables  
Fairfax Saddles / Chair of Bloxwich Town Deal Advisory Board – Rupert Fairfax  
OneWalsall – David Bengé  
University of Wolverhampton – Ray Flynn  
Mercian Trust / BCLEP Board – Kevin Davis  
Walsall MP – Eddie Hughes  
Walsall College – Deb Rajania

### **MEMBERS – Via Teams**

Walsall Council – Alison Guerra  
Walsall Council – Kelly Valente  
Walsall Council - Claire Wills  
Walsall Council – Dean Stephens  
Walsall Council (Note taker) – Lucy Clarke

### **PUBLIC SESSION**

Councillor Andrew stated this part of the meeting would be recorded. There were no objections to this.

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

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

### **Apologies**

Manjit Jhooty, Karl Woodward, Doug Wright, Patricia Willoughby, James Norris, Robert Judson, Tarra Simmons, Tim Kibble, Jatinder Sharma, Liz Stuffs, Bryte Legister and Jayne Hadley.

## **PUBLIC – FINAL VERSION**

### **1. Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

### **2. Minutes (Public) of the previous meeting and actions update**

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

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

### **3. Bloxwich Advisory Board – Chair’s update**

This update was deferred to the next meeting.

### **4. Walsall Advisory Board – Chair’s update**

This update was deferred to the next meeting.

### **5. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Lucy Clarke confirmed that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 22 March 2023 at 2.30pm.

**Recording was stopped at 16:05**

**Public Session closed at 16:05**

## **PRIVATE SESSION**

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

The meeting continued in private session - a summary of the discussion is below, the full notes are not published.

### **6. Minutes (Private) of the previous meeting and actions update**

Lucy Clarke shared the private minutes from the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022, these were accepted as an accurate record.

### **7. Walsall Town Deal Programme – Programme Development Updates**

Philippa Venables updated the Board on the following projects:

#### **Creative Industries Enterprise Centre**

The project was going well, within budget, on programme and no issues to identify.

#### **Active Public Spaces**

## **PUBLIC – FINAL VERSION**

Progress was going well, within budget and on programme. Currently at stage 2 concept design. Wider stakeholder meetings were taking place in the next couple of weeks.

Stage 3 was planned for sign off end of April / beginning of May. Delivery and completion dates would be known shortly.

### **Advanced Electric Vehicle Technology Centre & Construction Skills Academy**

Deb Rajania updated the Board on the two projects for Walsall College:

Both projects were on track in line with the planned programme, there were some budget and funding challenges, but the projects will be completed in line with the funding agreements with the Council.

### **Digital skills hub**

Kevin Davis updated the Board:

Planning permission has now been granted for the change of use for the units on George Street, adjacent to St Matthew's campus, to house the Digital Skills Hub.

A deal was in place with the owners of the units, once this was signed off, the team will push ahead.

### **8. Town Deal Business Cases for consideration and agreement**

Philippa Venables presented the business case for the Adult Learning Campus.

***RECOMMENDATION 23/TDB/012/R - Town Deal Board members agreed for the Adult Learning Centre documents to be submitted to Government, and the business case to proceed, subject to the recommendations being approved in the Cabinet report for March 2023.***

### **9. Town Deal submission to Government**

Mark Lavender discussed / presented the documents that are required to be submitted to Government, the board approved their submission in accordance with the timeframes agreed.

### **10. Bloxwich Town Deal Programme – Programme Development updates**

Mark Lavender updated the Board on some good news, that all 5 Bloxwich projects submitted to Government in September, were approved and have now entered the payment stage, so funding is now available to support the following projects:

### **The Community Capital Programme**

This programme offers the opportunity for local (eligible) Community and Voluntary Sector Organisations to apply for grants that can improve or expand their local offers and so increasing the levels of training & advice available. This aims to support their local community members into training or employment.

## **PUBLIC – FINAL VERSION**

The staff required to successfully deliver this programme are now in place and will draw upon their skills and experience gained from previous programmes. The application processes have been developed and are in place and ready to go. Stakeholder events are underway at a local level to raise awareness. Further work on the communication and promotion of this key project will be delivered to ensure that both residents and eligible organisations throughout Bloxwich are aware and can apply.

### **Bloxwich Active Travel Programme**

The Aims of this programme are to improve and widen the options for travel to and from work or training, together with improving access to Green (parks) and Blue (Canals) areas for recreation, wellbeing and health benefits etc. An update was available for the Board in the Teams folder.

Improvements to some highway junctions and road crossings and public paths will be made, together with the public transport infrastructure, to include the replacement of some bus stop shelters along the A34. Complimented by the Canals and River Trust, with the upgrading of Canal Towe paths and access points to the canals, which is starting on site soon in Walsall and then extending into Bloxwich.

### **Construction Skills through Regeneration Programme**

This programme aims to provide Gap Funding grants that enables derelict land to be bought back into use for housing, including the removal of unsightly buildings. Together with opportunities for the owners of social housing to apply for grants towards the improvements of existing stock, including proposals that reduce energy costs and carbon production levels.

To access the funding applications will be requested through a number of open calls, allowing applicants to set out their plans for developing derelict land for housing and for improvements to existing social housing stock. As a result, and as a condition of all grants awarded, applicants must set out what training and employment opportunities will be available for Bloxwich residents as part of these developments. This must also include proposals for the use of local labour / contractors and supply chains. Officers have stated developing the programmes contents, and will be warming up the local market in readiness for open calls, that will go out early in the new financial year.

### **Incubation Space and Digital Access Centre**

This programme will re-purpose, expand and refurbish an existing building within Bloxwich so that support can be provided to local people on two fronts. For those who wish to start a new business, or take an existing business to the next level, by joining the Bloxwich Incubation Centre, they will receive the support required to achieve this. For local people who require access to the internet, or support to secure employment or training, by joining the Digital Access Centre, they can access the help they need.

Staff to develop these centres are in place and working with stakeholders to develop the shape, feel and contents etc. Work on the design and construction will commence once the building has been purchased.

### **Green Bloxwich**

This programme aims to complete improvements to a number of Bloxwich Parks, including; King George the Fifth, Leamore Park and the Bloxwich Memorial Gardens. This will also include, where appropriate, bringing park buildings back into viable commercial use. To aid this, soft market testing will be commencing soon for the existing Lodge and Pavilion on KG5, and any available facilities on Leamore Park, so that any change of use is designed with long term sustainability in mind.

## **PUBLIC – FINAL VERSION**

Wherever possible the use of Local labour and supply chains etc. will be built in to the contracts awarded all of these projects, together with opportunities for local people to gain training and employment.

### **11. Forward Plan**

The Communications Plan is due to be discussed at the next meeting, scheduled for 22 March 2023.

### **12. Any Other Business**

None.

**Meeting ended at: 17:06**