



Walsall Council

ACTION NOTES

Title of Meeting: Bloxwich & Walsall Town Deal Board Meeting
Date: Wednesday 22 March 2023 2.30pm – 3.45pm
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 - Manjit Jhooty (Chair)
Fairfax Saddles - Rupert Fairfax (Bloxwich Advisory Board Chair)
Reach All Limited - Karl Woodward (Walsall Advisory Board Chair)
Member of Parliament (Walsall North) - Eddie Hughes
West Midlands Combined Authority - Patricia Willoughby
HomeServe - Robert Judson
University of Wolverhampton - Ray Flynn
Mercian Trust / BC LEP - Kevin Davis
Walsall College - Jatinder Sharma
Walsall Council - Shaun Darcy
Walsall Council – Philippa Venables
Walsall Council - Mark Lavender

BOARD INVITEES / ADVISORS

Walsall College - Deb Rajania
Walsall Council - Alison Guerra
Walsall Council - Kelly Valente
Walsall Council - Keith Beech
Walsall Council – Claire Wills
Walsall Council – Dean Stephens
Walsall Council – Lucy Clarke
Walsall Council - Jayne Hadley

APOLOGIES

Walsall Council - Councillor Adrian Andrew (Vice Chair)
OneWalsall – David Bengé
Mid-Counties Coop - Tarra Simmons
Walsall College - James Norris

Bloxwich & Walsall Town Deal Board Meeting - PUBLIC SESSION

The Chair opened the meeting, asking members to note that the meeting would be recorded for the public section covering items 1-5, then moving into the private session.

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

PUBLIC MINUTES (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 16 February 2023, which were accepted as a true record.

3. Bloxwich Advisory Board – Chair’s update

Rupert Fairfax provided the following update:

Monthly meetings of Bloxwich Advisory Board have taken place, the last one being 20th March 2023.

A financial update was provided at the last meeting, detailing current projected spend levels as we approach the end of this 2022/23 financial year. This is satisfactory and all projects are on track.

Project updates:

Promotion of Construction Skills through Regeneration – discussion took place around the legality of imposing local sourcing conditions, legal advice is being sought on this, to inform the next steps of development.

Incubation Space & Digital Access Centre – this is progressing well including aspects around the future building.

Community Capital Programme – this projects is progressing well.

Active Travel & Connectivity Programme, consists of two elements;

Improvements to the canals through the Canals & River Trust (CRT) has now commenced, with around 14kms of towpaths being improved.

Improvements to elements of the road networks, with survey work commenced by Walsall Council, which includes improvements will to 17 bus shelters, 12 digital bus information boards installed, and new pedestrian crossing points.

Green Bloxwich – this project is slightly behind schedule due to the active involvement of Board members in the content and direction of the project, otherwise on track. A photo opportunity took place last week with Councillor Andrew and staff involved, together with a radio interview on Radio WM. A community event for ‘friends’ of King George V Park is to be organised in the Spring/Summer. A new communications officer will be recruited by Walsall Council soon and will ensure the community are kept up to date with developments.

4. Walsall Advisory Board – Chair’s update

Karl Woodward provided the following update:

The last Walsall Advisory Board met on the 15th March 2023. An update was provided on the financial position of each project and the overall programme, with officers monitoring projects and

PUBLIC MINUTES (Final version)

reviewing projected spend levels as we approach the end of this 2022/23 financial. Karl thanked Alison Guerra, her team and project leads for this work, which was noted.

Project Updates

Active Public Spaces – this project is at the design and development stage, ensuring it is aligned with other projects in the area to avoid duplication. The project is on budget, will be in Stage 3 shortly, with target to be onsite January 2024.

Construction Skills Academy – this project is on target, there have been some challenges around costs and inflation, but the financing issues have been resolved.

Advanced Electric Vehicle Technology Centre – this project is on track;

Digital Skills Hub – a planning issue has been resolved, so is now progressing well.

Creative Industries Enterprise Centre – design works continuing, planning to be on site with construction works in November 2023, with handover of the building planned for September 2024. The business plans are developing and will continue to evolve.

Joint projects – Bloxwich and Walsall

Active Travel & Connectivity – progressing well, works have now started on the Canals as mentioned previously, together with survey work by the council on proposed highway improvements, further detail has been shared as to what it will provide.

Community Capital – comms has been issued providing residents with information, with soft and hard launches planned.

Adult Learning Campus – the challenge has been around the change of project from the Theatre to the Adult Learning Campus – college and officer teams have accommodated the tight deadlines so thanks to officers/leads for their work on this, this was noted. There has been positive feedback from the Advisory Board, who support this project.

Keith Beech attended the advisory board to provide details on the Marketing and Communication plans for the programme, which was welcomed.

5. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Lucy Clarke confirmed that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 3 May 2023 at 2.30pm.

Recording was stopped and public session closed at 14.49.