

## PUBLIC MEETING – FINAL VERSION



# Walsall Council

### **ACTION NOTES**

- Title of Meeting:** Bloxwich & Walsall Town Deal Board Meeting
- Date:** Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023 14:30 – 16:00pm
- 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**

#### **Present:**

Manjit Jhooty – Jhoots Pharmacy (Chair)  
Tarra Simmons – The Midcounties Co-operative  
Robert Judson – Homeserve  
Dave Brown – Walsall Council  
David Moore – Walsall Council  
David Bengel – OneWalsall  
Rupert Fairfax – Fairfax Saddles / Chair of Bloxwich Advisory Board  
Jatinder Sharma (JS) – Walsall College  
Ray Flynn – University of Wolverhampton  
Shaun Darcy – Walsall Council  
Mark Lavender – Walsall Council  
James Norris – Walsall College

### **MEMBERS / ADVISORS – Via Teams**

Alison Guerra (AG) – Walsall Council  
Richard Ackerley (RA) – Walsall Council  
Kelly Valente (KV) – Walsall Council  
Keith Beech (KB) – Walsall Council  
Natasha Mann (NM) – Walsall Council  
Claire Wills (CW) – Walsall Council  
Dean Stephens (DS) – Walsall Council  
Helen Kirk (HK) – Walsall Council  
Deb Rajania (DR) – Walsall College  
Eleanor Cooper (EC) – Walsall Council  
James Dennison (JD) – Canal & River Trust  
Kaye Davies (KD) – Walsall Council  
Richard McVittie (RM) – Walsall Council  
Lucy Clarke (LC) – Walsall Council – Actions/Minutes  
Surinder Kaur (SK) – Walsall Council (Note taker)

#### **Apologies**

James Norris, Sharlene Smith, Liz Stuffins, Matt Lloyd

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Manjit Jhooty stated this part of the meeting would be recorded. There were no objections to this. Lucy Clarke started recording the meeting at 2:32pm

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

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

### **Town Deal Board Meeting**

#### **PUBLIC SESSION**

##### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

##### **2. Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

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

Lucy Clarke shared public minutes from the last meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record by Manjit Jhooty and Rupert Fairfax seconded this.

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

Rupert Fairfax provided an update:

Since the last Town Deal Board, the Bloxwich Advisory met on the 5 October 2023. It’s been agreed to allocate 1.5 hours for future meetings.

**ACTION: We agreed will allocate 1 ½ for future meetings 23/TDB/065/SK**

Updates /presentations had been provided on all Bloxwich projects within the programme which were all progressing well with no current concerns. This included two technical presentations which would be shown to the board later the agenda. All good, no concerns, diligent work taking place.

##### **Project Updates**

**Marketing and Comms:** There would be a press release for Canals on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

**Power BI:** A brief update was given on Verto, would convert to dashboards, allowing all to see what was taking place with projects.

**Highways:** Budgets were being managed, there was a surplus on one of the projects, the surplus funding was approved to be used for road improvements.

**Green Bloxwich:** The sports project was making satisfactory progress, planning applications were progressing well, all positive for The Lodge and Pavilion.

**Incubation Centre:** This was on track, all projects were progressing well, and the board members were pleased with the outcomes for all the projects.

**Active Travel:** work had stated on junction improvements including road crossings and associated cycling and walking routes. Work had recommenced at the Bloxwich canal improvements.

All projects were progressing well and on target, with no concerns so far.

##### **5. Walsall Advisory Board – Chair’s update:**

DEFERRED UNTIL NEXT MEETING.

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### **6. Marketing & Communications – Update**

NM/Colleagues to update Board members briefly on progress and coverage.

An update had been circulated with papers and Natasha talked through this providing an overview of activity over the past month.

NM Updated: A final workshop was coming up at the end of the week, but key messages that had been agreed now were: Transforming the borough, creating opportunities, £1.5 billion of investment, 4000 new jobs and more than 1000 new homes, those numbers would grow over time.

The 2040 business event; over 100 people attended, local and regional businesses attended. At the event, the Economic Forum was launched, some comms work had been undertaken and had some positive media coverage, targeting Walsall.

One of the big pieces of work that the comms team were going to be working on between now and early 2024 was the Walsall invest branding. Work would take place with the web team to rewrite the Walsall Invest section of the website.

In addition to this The Incubation Centre work would start on 23rd October 2023, with the brainstorming session, some partners and Board members had been invited to be involved in that process, aiming for a soft launch end of November 2023 and there was a need to develop a long-term comms and marketing plan to run alongside the opening in September next year and beyond.

The other upcoming event was for the official opening of the Hatherton Medical Centre, press and PR which would take place on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

#### **Comments/Questions:**

**JS:** *I have posted into the chat a Combined Authority update from last week's Business Growth West Midlands meeting designed to talk about business and issues around grants and sustainability, linked to the green agenda, as well as talking to local providers in terms of training etc. There is £42 million available for the West Midlands region, and we currently have coordinators in Walsall helping Walsall businesses.*

**Chair:** Can you just confirm what the message was that came from some of the audience at the Walsall 2040 meeting as this is important?

**JS:** *it was a useful exercise to engage with the business community, the Council, I understand Councillor Andrew was seeking business leaders to sit on that board for the new Economic Forum. Supporting residents, engage in the health agenda, making sure sounds careers pieces communicated into schools and colleges, businesses helped, joint selling, keeping the pound in Walsall, working together. There are lots of events taking place and money going into Spark over by junction 10 and the building work that is going on. There is a vibrancy, particularly the work this Board has been doing, with the levelling up piece happening quite visibly; however more needs to be done to raise the profile of what we were doing / plaining to do to improve the town.*

**Date and time of Next Town Deal Board Meeting – 15.11.23 @14:30**  
**Public Session closed at: 14:50**

**PUBLIC MEETING – FINAL VERSION**



**Town Deal Board - Private Session**

**PRIVATE SESSION**

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