



# Walsall Council

**Title of Meeting:** Bloxwich & Walsall Town Deal Board Meeting

**Date:** Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024 14:00 – 15:30pm

**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 (TS) – The Midcounties Co-operative  
Robert Judson (RJ) – Homeserve  
Dave Brown – (DB) Walsall Council  
David Moore – (DM) Walsall Council  
David Bengé – (DBE) OneWalsall  
Rupert Fairfax – (RF) Fairfax Saddles / Chair of Bloxwich Advisory Board  
Karl Woodward – (KW) Reach All Ltd / Chair of Walsall Advisory Board  
Jatinder Sharma – (JS) Walsall College  
Ray Flynn – (RF) University of Wolverhampton  
Shaun Darcy – (SD) Walsall Council  
Mark Lavender – (ML) Walsall Council  
Kevin Davis – (KD) Chief Executive Vine Trust  
Leo Pollak – (LP) Combined Authority  
Eddie Hughes (EH)– Member of Parliament

## **MEMBERS – 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  
Liz Stuffins (LS) – 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  
Isabel Clark (IC) – Walsall Council  
Surinder Kaur (SK) – Walsall Council (Note taker)  
Phillipa Venables (PV) – Walsall Council  
Matthew Lloyd – Walsall Council

### **Apologies**

## **Recorded & Shared Meeting Session– FINAL VERSION**

Devid Benge, Alison Guerra, Leo Pollak

Manjit Jhooty stated this part of the meeting would be recorded. There were no objections to this.

Surinder Kaur started recording the meeting at 2:02pm

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The first part of this meeting will be in public session for agenda items 1- 6 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**

#### **SHARED SESSION**

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

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

None were declared.

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

Shared public minutes from the last meeting on 15 November 2023.

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

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

Rupert Fairfax provided an update:

Since the last Town Deal Board, the Bloxwich Advisory met on the 25 January 2024, latest 1 hour and 35 minutes.

#### **Project Updates**

**Marketing and Comms:** To raise the profile of the projects, such as The Bloxwich Launchpad, the allotments, the media reporter visited the Bloxwich area and had a full page in the Express & Star, Comms work taking place with all the projects, for example, signage for a number of sites; Guildhall, Connected Gateway, King George V and Bloxwich Launchpad to go out tender in February 2024, lots of interest.

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

**Incubation Centre:** key project the Bloxwich Launchpad, Works to get back to go out to tender this month.

**Active travel and connectivity** program progressing well, the Canal improvements had completed their first phase on time including the renewal of 8 1/2 kilometres of toe paths and associated entrances and these will be topped off and the installation of solar lighting in the spring.

**The highways** improvements being completed to Elmore Green and Croxdene Roads, including two new pedestrian crossings and cycle ways. Plans for the widening of the A34 bridge near to Homeserve are being developed and will hopefully start during the summer. Work to progress the new bus shelters between Bloxwich & Walsall are being progressed.

## **Recorded & Shared Meeting Session– FINAL VERSION**

**The construction skills through regeneration** program went out to open call recently to attract bids from registered social landlords in Bloxwich, with one application received and being assessed.

**Community Capital Programme** - 2 projects been approved and can move to the contracting stage with applicants also being assisted by the external funding team to secure additional resources. This aims to reduce the call on towns funding, freeing up funding for other applicants. All projects were progressing well and on target, with no concerns so far.

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

Since the last Town Deal Board, the Walsall Advisory Board met on the 16 January 2024, closed the actions from the previous meeting, time allowed as 1 ½ worked much better.

**Comms:** Credit to Natahsa Mann and Keith Beech lots of marketing and comms taking place. In terms of combination of media marketing and getting the messages out there in a multiple of different platforms from digital to local to press to more traditional methods.

**Active Public Spaces Programme:** RIBA 4 planning stage completed, regarding the expenditure, this is on budget.

**Creative Industries Centre:** Secured the Planning permission on 30th November 2023, project is now at the RIBA Stage 4.

**Adult Learning Centre:** In terms of the employment hub at 46 Park Street, this has been completed and named as ‘The Link’, opened to the public at the beginning of January 2024.

**Construction Skills Academy:** This is open and up and running, already had a visit from Andy Street with student numbers higher than expected, looking to secure someone from government to open the centre.

**Digital Skills Programme:** The contracts were completed in December 2023, the refurbishment work started on the 8th of January 2024 and is progressing.

**Power BI:** A brief update was given on Verto, the team are looking to provide project updates as dashboard reports, allowing all to see what was taking place with the projects.

**Finances** are being shared, nothing of concern at this time.

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

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

Working on delivering print material, linked with schools to promote the Regeneration program message to highlight in schools and colleges.

The Connected Gateway engagement project has moved forward, therefore working to have marketing coverage before the pre-election period and started to deliver print materials.

Arranged for in person briefing event for Town centre businesses which is taking place at the end of the month and organised an ambassador briefing on 15 March 2024, some of the Board members will be attending as part of our ambassador program.

## **Recorded & Shared Meeting Session– FINAL VERSION**

Recently linked with the Combined Authority they are an independent careers advisor for schools, and deal with all of Walsall schools.

Therefore, linking with them to make sure that our Regeneration and TownDeal messaging is promoted to schools, informing about how the projects will impact their future and the opportunities in terms of the job market.

### **Questions**

*EH: Can you tell me when the day that meeting is arranged with businesses and who will be invited?*

**NM:** The date that we have provisionally arranged is 26 February 2024, we are working towards inviting businesses next week and we will share that information with you as soon it is finalised.

**Date and time of Next Town Deal Board Meeting – 05.03.2024@14:30**

**Shared Session closed at: 14:25**

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