**Dudley Town Deal Board  
  
Friday 19th June 2020 – 11 am until 1 pm  
via Conference Call**

**Invitees**

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| Lowell Williams (Chair) | Neil Thomas | Vicky Smith | Rob Ellis |
| Helen Martin | Jose Lopes | Pete Bond | Richard Tasker |
| Marco Longhi MP | Andrew Lovett | Nathan Conway |  |
| Nick Mallinson | Paul Brothwood | Andrew Barrett |  |
| Stuart Everton | Hugh Burton | Jeremy Knight-Adams |  |
| Bill Kirk | James Pearson | Martin Gorick |  |
| Corin Crane | Sarah Middleton | Phil Thomas |  |
| Jim Cunningham | Traci Dix-Williams | Clare Marshall |  |
| Derek Grove | Steve Johnson | Samantha Bright |  |

**MINUTES**

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| 1 | **Minutes of the last meeting on 24th April 2020**  Agreed. |  |
| 2 | **Update on actions from previous meeting** – see tracker. | All |
| 3 | **Update on guidance and timetable**    Guidance published on 15th June. Acknowledges COVID impacts but confirms government has not changed focus of TF or the types of interventions they expect to support. TF may take on additional purpose for some towns in the effort to recover and rebound. The Towns Fund will enable the agreement of strategic investments by the end of the financial year, tailored to each town’s circumstances and the localised impacts of Covid-19.  Government has pushed back the deadlines for submitting Town Investment Plans to reflect the ongoing uncertainty and the pressures on all partners on Town Deal Boards.  Government would like all towns to outline in their Town Investment Plan how Covid-19 is impacting their local economy, and how this is reflected in their strategy and prioritisation.  There may be other opportunities to make decisive changes for the long term, such as investing in sustainable modes of transport to take advantage of behaviour changes caused by lockdown. TIPs must include a wider spatial strategy, setting out why targeted areas have been chosen, what is being done to support other key areas of their town, and how this will support the town centre.  Towns should flag if they want to use their Town Deal as a key part of their recovery plans and set out how their proposed projects fit with other recovery measures. Towns in this position should highlight projects they believe are ‘shovel ready’ and the potential to tie in multiple lines of support to one deal.  Given the uncertainties, towns may wish to set out scenarios and hypotheses to underpin plans and ensure plans are flexible to evolving contexts and guidance. We expect to see projects prioritised that will be valuable against a number of possible scenarios, rather than large, risky investments.  There are two phases, with a decision gateway at the end of each. First, towns will develop TIPs, which will be assessed by MHCLG and Heads of Terms offered to towns with submissions of a sufficient quality. Towns will then develop agreed projects and business cases in detail, and government will assess that information before releasing funding for implementation.  Should towns fail to submit a TIP of sufficient quality, they will be given one more opportunity to do so. If they fail a second time, they will no longer be eligible for a deal. Through the Towns Hub, Government will provide Town Deal Boards with the support they need to successfully complete the process.  The Town Deal should also be a ‘wrapper’ for other investments, whether from other government departments or private investors. Government would like the Towns Fund money to provide additionality, and help to bring in other funding.  Number of interventions themes; Local transport, Digital connectivity, Regeneration, Arts, culture and heritage, Skills and Enterprise Infrastructure.  Fund is for up to £25m over six years starting 2021/22 and 90% capital.  Guidance sets out roles and responsibilities of Board, governance arrangements.  Where possible, communities should be part of originating ideas, setting objectives and visions rather than just giving feedback on proposals that are already some way along. Government urges innovations in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.  The level and quality of community engagement – what has been done so far and what is planned in the future – will be a key factor when assessing and agreeing the Towns Deals. Every TIP should also include a stakeholder engagement plan.  Government will ask towns to confirm, within four weeks of the publication of this guidance, which cohort they would like to come forwards in – submitting their TIP by 31st July 2020 for cohort 1, by the end of October 2020 for cohort 2, or by the end of January 2021 for cohort 3. There is no advantage in coming first.  Bids assessed on Impact, Strategy and Partnerships.  Towns Hub have been established to support this process and consists of the central towns team within the Cities and Local Growth Unit (CLGU) in MHCLG, towns-focused colleagues in CLGU’s regional teams, and the Towns Fund Delivery Partnership led by Arup.  Each town has a named representative from the Hub in the CLGU regional team, and one in the Towns Fund Delivery Partnership.  NT outlined the work in TIP, which will approximately fall to the Council in section 1 and the college and HEI partner in section 2.      **ACTION**: Agreed to confirm to MHCLG intention not to submit in July round.  **ACTION**: Council to commence discussions with consultants to support narrative. | HM  HM/JC/  VS |
| 4 | **Regen project updates from Board Members**    • BCLM funding is still showing as red. We understand that the costs from Balfour Beatty exceed the budget by a significant amount. This will have an impact on the programme and therefore the spend of the LEP funding.  • HAZ funding now green as it has been approved but we are still embargoed on issuing any publicity about this piece of work by Historic England.  • Public Realm has been added as a programme of work to pick up the works associated with the Metro and the adoption of Zoological Way.  • The Interchange programme is in question as TfWM are reviewing it in response to the funding gap, the delay to the CPO process and the potential impact that COVID-19 will have on the patronage of public transport. This has also been highlighted as a risk.  • Also added to the risks is a concern expressed by the both Dudley Zoo & Castle and BCLM about the impact on their viability if they are not allowed to open soon so they can re-coup their losses.  Noted by visitor attraction partners the impact of lockdown on visitor numbers/income and the time it will take to break even let alone recoup for the losses. |  |
| 5 | **Funding Issues**  Increased level of activity via LA, LEP and CA requests for investment presenting an opportunity for Dudley’s priority projects.  Two opportunities presently:-   1. SoS MHCLG (Robert Jenrick), shovel ready schemes which can be delivered by Jan 2022. Submitted BC LEP pipeline including priority projects such as VLR, Interchange, Portersfield and IOTT. Expecting to hear outcome in july at the fiscal event. **ACTION**: SM to send ML a briefing note. 2. WMCA – invitation form No. 10 to submit a broader CCOVID recovery plan. Andy Street has provided a supporting letter with the submission and this specifically references VLR.   Work in hand to join up the shorter term and longer term, projects and need to ensure profile of Dudley projects in submissions.  Expecting further funding opportunities particularly around skills agenda. | SM |
| 6 | **Communications**  Need to scale up the draft communications plan and confirm timescales. | HM/SB/  CM |
| 7 | **Any other business**  LW to stand down as chair as project moving to next phase. Agreed that Andrew Lovett take on the role.  Request for ward members representation. **ACTON**: agreed and HM to contact ward members.  Discussion around wider involvement such as leader and other MPs tabled. **ACTION**: council consider how this might best be ensured and an agenda item for next meeting.  Next meeting to be arranged for September time when there has been progress on the project. A written update will be provided in the interim end July/Early August. | HM  HM/JC/  VS  HM |

**ACTIONS**

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| Ref | Subject | Detail | Action |
| 1 | Towns Fund Decision Sheet | Timetable to take from Decision Sheet approval to bid submission to be drafted for tabling at this meeting. COMPLETED | HM/NT/SB |
| 2 | Communications Plan | Plan to be circulated and all to provide comments back to SB and tabling at this meeting. NO COMMENTS RECEIVED SO TAKEN AS AGREED | HM/VS/JC/SB |
| 3 | IOTT | Amend funding RAG rating to Amber as still looking to secure last element of funding following LEP bid withdrawal. Currently being underwritten by college but still seeking alternative sources. TO BE AMENDED | ALL |