

**Bolton Towns Fund Board**  
**4 pm, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022**  
**Paderborn Room, Bolton Town Hall**

**Attendees**

|                      |     |  |
|----------------------|-----|--|
| Belinda Beaver       | BB  | Chamber of Commerce (Chair)                    |
| Sue Johnson          | SJ  | Chief Executive, Bolton Council                |
| Cllr Adele Warren    | AW  | Executive Cabinet Member Regen, Bolton Council |
| Jon Dyson            | JD  | Director of Place, Bolton Council              |
| Guy Darragh          | GD  | Head of Economic Development, Bolton Council   |
| Paula Connor-Bennett | PCB | Project Officer, Bolton Council                |
| Damian Cross         | PW  | Strategic Director Regeneration & Property     |
| Tim Vaughan          | TV  | Moorgarth                                      |
| Dawn Yates-Obe       | DYO | Bolton CVS                                     |
| Phil Lamb            | PL  | Principal Project Officer, Bolton Council      |
| Keith Questel-Lewis  | KQL | Programme Manager, Bolton Council              |
| Eamon Boylan         | EB  | Chief Executive, GMCA                          |

**Apologies**

|                     |     |  |
|---------------------|-----|--|
| Pete Courtie        | PCo | Arts Council (Observer)                              |
| Amanda Halford      | AH  | GM LEP   |
| Baroness Newlove    | BN  | University of Bolton and Bolton College (Vice Chair) |
| Cllr. Martyn Cox    | MC  | Leader, Bolton Council                               |
| Carl Moore          | CM  | Homes England  |
| James Gordon        | JG  | Gordon Moon Properties                               |
| Janet Pollard       | JP  | Bolton Council                                       |
| Noel Sharpe         | NS  | Chief Executive, Bolton at Home                      |
| Amanda Halford      | AH  | GM LEP   |
| Jesse Garrick       | JG  | DLUHC, Town Deal Co-ordinator                        |
| Roddy Gauld         | RD  | Arts Council   |
| Carl Moore          | CM  | Homes England  |
| Nirubhan Ratnarajah | NR  | Integrated Care Service                              |
| Chris Green MP      | CG  | Bolton West  |
| Paul Whittingham    | PW  | Bolton Council                                       |

**Notes of the Meeting**

**1. Welcome & Purpose of Today's Meeting**

The Chair welcomed all to the first face to face meeting and asked each of the persons present to introduce themselves. The Chair explained the purpose of the meeting and advised that meetings going forward would be face-to-face. She also advised that at the last meeting a review of Board Membership had been mentioned and that this would be discussed at this meeting.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies noted above.

### 3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

TV stated at the last meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022 it had been minuted that the Levelling up fund bid was to repurpose the former Debenhams site to create a music venue and relocate Primark. He highlighted that the relocation of Primark did not form part of the bid but that the bid was to repurpose the former Debenhams unit which included the creation of a performing arts venue. Other than this amendment the minutes were approved as an accurate account of the meeting.

**ACTION:- PCB to amend the minutes accordingly.**

### 4. Projects Update

#### 4.1 Recap

PCB gave an overview of progression to date on the overall governance and monitoring of Towns Fund projects.

#### 4.2 Wellsprings

DC provided an overview of how the Wellsprings project was progressing advising the Board that this was the most challenging project. The concept for the Wellsprings is to create a 60,000 sq.ft innovation hub for businesses in the cultural and digital sectors. It is a prominent building within the Civic and Cultural quarter which justified the funding outlined in the Town Investment Plan (TIP). The original costings for the TIP were undertaken March/February 2021. The building had one tenant (who has now vacated) but was mainly derelict. DC explained that intrusive surveys that have since been undertaken have unearthed significant challenges. A value engineering exercise is currently underway to see if there are any areas where costs can be reduced.

DC outlined that the original budget was £6.9 million however with inflation and new regulations around M and E the projected costs have increased significantly. The scheme is now likely to cost in the region of £8.5-£9.5 million, creating a significant gap in fund required to deliver the scheme. To help plug the funding gap Council Officers have submitted a bid to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for £1.5-£1.9 million.

Changes to Part L and Part F Building Regulations came into force in June 2022 which required higher performance targets in terms of reducing carbon emission by 27% and an emphasis on low carbon heating systems, improved air tightness in buildings, etc. Given that the original costings were put together in September 2021 this has had significant implications on the costs of Mechanical and Engineering (M & E) aspects of the refurbishment in terms of heating, ventilation, etc. DC went on to explain that even with a successful UKSPF bid there would likely still be a shortfall in terms of funding.

EB mentioned that in terms of UKSPF grant funding DLUHC had only confirmed the first year's allocation to Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). He advised that GMCA are not in a position to provide details as yet.

DC went on to inform the Board that the project consists of 6 floors which will be refurbished to Categories A, B and C. With two category A floors to be let to an Anchor Tenant.

DYO asked if there was an option to just refurbish five floors instead of six. DC explained that this was not possible as there would still be a requirement to bring all floors up to current building regulation standards.

DYO also asked whether there would be opportunities for community enterprises to take space in the building. DC advised that there potentially was as there are plans for two floors of plug and play. PCB and PW are noting expressions of interest from those wishing to occupy the building.

#### **4.3 Bolton Market Upgrade**

DC informed the Board that the project was progressing well, and the unsightly waste compactor had been relocated. Highways works have also been undertaken as part of the project to accommodate the new housing development on the former Moor Lane Bus Station site. The main construction works have commenced, the total project cost is £5.59 million. There were some challenges earlier in the project in terms of obtaining Network Rail permission to relocate the waste compactor.

Some value engineering was undertaken on the project to keep to the affordability cap. During this process a decision was made not to install new flooring as there would be a need to close the market resulting in substantial compensation payments to the existing market traders.

EB asked if there was an operator for the Food Hall. DC advised not yet. He explained there is a Market Manager on site and that he will be responsible for attracting new stallholders to the market. DC advised that it is anticipated that 50-60% of take up will be from existing stallholders.

#### **4.4 Library and Museum Upgrades**

DC explained that this project originally had a budget of £3.73 million to upgrade the library, and create a social space (café, etc). There has been a slight delay to this project starting on site which was due to planning and building requirements in terms of heritage buildings, fire regulations and an increase in project scope. DC went on to advise the Board that due to this there had been a need to seek additional co-funding of £700k. This funding has been secured through the Council's capital programme and revenue from the service. The total project cost is now £4.3 million.

Works started on site in November and are due to complete early December 2023. DC highlighted that the most challenging aspect of the project was decanting the library to its new temporary location in Crompton Place.

BB asked why it was difficult to attract operators for all the commercial opportunities the Towns Fund projects will create. DC explained that in terms of Wellsprings the Council had gone out to the open market, there was some interest however no one bid for the opportunity. He explained that PW and PCB are in discussions with parties who are interested in becoming the managing operator and that there will be a need to negotiations with regard to the terms and conditions under which the operator will manage the building. With regards to the Market DC explained that there was an on-site Market Manager, and the Council will continue to be the operator for the Market.

BB asked what the café experience would be like. DC advised the café would be more of a social space with a coffee vending machine. The tender opportunity will be going out shortly to attract an operator.

DYO asked whether there was an opportunity for a social enterprise to operate the café. She advised that CVS could support a social enterprise with a grant and support to run it. DC advised that there was potentially an opportunity for a Social Enterprise.

#### **4.5 Public Realm**

PL gave a presentation to the Board with regards to the progress of the public realm scheme. He advised that improvements are to be made to Cheadle Square, four new pocket parks to be constructed, and new lighting and wayfinding installed, etc. PL advised that works to Blackhorse Street are almost complete with just snagging works to be undertaken. The main issues encountered include the quality of materials, delivery timescales, reliance on utilities companies to relocate services, and suppliers only holding prices for a week. PL went on to inform the Board that challenges encountered included phasing around other town centre developments, unforeseen costs associated with underground works, rising costs and availability of materials.

PL also advised the Board what works had been undertaken with the Accelerated funding of £1million that was received. Outdoor seating has been installed adjacent to the Octagon and the public realm improved. The Octagon are very happy with the works that have been undertaken. Works to Elizabeth Park, on the former Odeon site are due to commence XX and these will complete July 2023.

#### **5. Links to Other Funding Pots**

GD advised the Board that through UKSPF Community and Places strand a bid had been submitted in October to install public Wi-Fi in the town centre and water fountains. GD further advised that a further UKSPF funding bid had been submitted that was focussed on enhancing the visitor experience to Victoria Square and improving the Albert Halls.. A bid has also been submitted to provide business support locally prior to Wellsprings completing, again through UKSPF. A changing places bid has also been submitted to provide two changing places facilities in the Library & Museum and Crompton Place.

In addition three levelling up funding bids have been submitted to DLUHC for improvements to De-Haviland Way, Crompton Place and Market Place. It is anticipated the outcomes of these bids will be known towards the end of this year.

TV asked if any ministerial visits had been planned. GD advised he was not aware of any currently.

#### **6. Review of Board: Membership and role for the future**

A review of the Board Membership and role for the future was discussed now that we have moved into the delivery phase of the majority of the projects. The current membership of the Board stands at almost 40 members which is deemed too large when viewed against other Towns Deal Boards of this nature. The following points and way forward was proposed:

- All three MP's will continue to sit on the Board as it is a requirement of the DLUHC's guidance for Town Boards.

- It was noted that there is currently a lack of private sector representation on the Board.
- It was noted that following the last meeting existing members of the Board were asked if they wanted to stand their membership down but no one tendered their resignation.
- It was suggested that members of the Board who have not attended a meeting would be asked to step down but would be asked if they would still like to be involved in another capacity – the Chair will contact all individual Board Members and a template letter will be circulated for those members wishing to resign.
- With meetings being held face-to-face, Board members unable to attend would be asked not to send substitutes.
- The Chair requested Board members commit to attending as many Board meetings as possible and dates of meetings will be sent out well in advance.

The Chair asked Board Members for their feelings with regard to the process? No questions were raised and all those present at the meeting were happy to remain Board Members. The Chair asked Board Members if they were happy to progress with the review. All Board Members present were happy for the review to progress. SJ asked if a record would be made. PCB advised that the decision would be minuted and circulated to all existing Board Members.

DYO asked if a social value update could be given to the Board. PCB advised that this could be done in future meetings as there is a requirement to report on this to DLUHC i.e. temporary jobs created as part of projects, number of local contractors appointed, etc.

The Chair asked EB about his experience of other Town boards. EB advised that they are all very different and it is dependent on the place. Other places such as Rochdale their Town Deal is private sector led by Rochdale Development Agency rather than through the Council.

The Chair will have some discussions with potential private sector members and invite them to join the Board between this meeting and the next with the next meeting being a 'Get to Know You' session and to understand the purpose of the Board going forwards.

SJ pointed out that the meeting does not need to always be hosted in the Town Hall. It can be held at Board Members venues also. The Chair asked if anyone would like to host the next meeting to let her or PCB know.

## 7. Process to Change the future Terms of Reference for the Board

The Chair highlighted that as part of the process of the Board Review the Terms of Reference would also need to be revisited. The Chair asked Board Members if they were happy for the Terms of Reference to be reviewed in conjunction with the review of the Board. All present were happy to proceed with the review of the Terms of Reference.

## 8. Monitoring & Evaluation 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022

PCB advised the Board Members that the 2<sup>nd</sup> monitoring and evaluation return was due to be submitted on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022. There is a requirement that it is shared with Board Members prior to submission to DLUHC. PCB advised Board members that they would be receiving the draft soon and that if they had anything to comment or input to let her know.

## 9. Any Other Business

There was no other business for discussion.

## 10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 16h February 2023. The Chair advised that the meeting dates had been set for the year and that these were included on the agenda that was circulated. Future dates for Board Members to note are:

- 16<sup>th</sup> February 2023. **Please note this will now be changed suggested date is 23<sup>rd</sup> February and a meeting invitation will be sent in due course.**
- 9<sup>th</sup> June 2023
- 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023
- 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023

The Chair thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.