

Minutes of the Boston Town Deal Board Meeting

**Date: 7 July 2020**

**Present: Board Members:** Neil Kempster (Chair) - Chestnut Homes, Jacqui Bunce - NHS, Alison Fairman, BEM - Community, David Fannin - CVS, Councillor Paul Goodale - Boston Borough Council, Councillor Paul Skinner, Boston Borough Council, Kingsley Taylor - CAB, Robert Barclay - Shodfriars, Simon Beardsley - Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce, Andy Lawrence - Port of Boston, Val Braybrooks, MBE - University of Lincoln, Clive Fletcher - Historic England, Norman Robinson - Environment Agency, John Harness - NHS, Greg Pickup - Heritage Lincolnshire and Peter Isaac - Oldrids

 **Observers:** Stephanie Dickens - Matt Warman's Office, Pete Holmes - Area Lead for Greater Lincolnshire and Midlands Engine Skills, Cities & Local Growth Unit, Jo Dexter - BEIS, Government Office, Warren Peppard - Lincolnshire County Council, Cathy Jones - GLLEP and Claire Foster - Boston College, Rob Barlow - BBC & ELDC, Hannah Thompson - Heritage Lincolnshire

 **Boston Town Deal Delivery Team**: Ivan Annibal (Rose Regeneration), Michelle Sacks, Clive Gibbon and Luisa Stanney

***THE MEETING WAS HELD IN PRIVATE AS ALL AGENDA ITEMS CONTAINED CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH CLAUSE 7.4 OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE. Due to COVID19, the meeting was held virtually via Zoom.***

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Received from: Sandra Dowson - One Public Estate, Nick Heath - Willmott Dixon, Mick Lazarus - BIES, Alice Olsson - METSA Wood, Donna Watton - Donna Comm Ltd and Nick Worboys - Longhurst Housing

**2 Welcome and Introductions**

IA reported that the Government guidance had been issued. The purpose of today's meeting was to consider the Technical Sub-Group's report and recommendation of an October submission of the Investment Plan.

MS introduced Rob Barlow to the Board. RB is the joint Chief Executive in terms of the strategic alliance between Boston Borough Council and East Lindsey District Council. ELDC also have a Town Deal and there will be some synergy between the two.

**3 Minutes of the Boston Town Deal Board Meeting held on 4 June 2020**

The minutes were agreed as a true record, proposed by AF, seconded by CF.

**4 Technical Sub-Group Report and Recommendations (from the meeting held on 3 July 2020**

The Technical Sub-Group report and minutes from the meeting on 3 July 2020 were circulated to the Board.

Since the last meeting there had been an enormous amount of activity with Officers working on each project strand to decide whether they had the ability to move forward at a pace, what the interventions were in terms of levelling up and what each project could deliver.

IA took the Board through the different clusters of projects to give an indication of the current position and the projects which the Technical Sub-Group had agreed to take forward. The other projects submitted had not been rejected, but did not match what the Board wanted to achieve. Dialogue will remain open with the project sponsors as other funding streams may be available.

The projects had been clustered into the following themes:-

* Skills & Enterprise - includes two projects from Boston College, Centre for fresh produce logistics and smarter homes. Officers are confident that these projects all could form part of the Investment Plan.
* Connectivity - includes projects from LCC and East Midlands Railways - whilst the projects require additional work, they would all still be in scope to include in the Investment Plan.
* Urban Regeneration - includes the PE21 and Quadrant Q2 projects.
* Tourism/Heritage - there were a cluster of tourism and heritage projects, which are fit for purpose, and Officers were relatively optimistic that they could be included in the Investment Plan. It was noted that heritage is a core component of Boston's offer.
* Community Facilities - the projects require further work and there are three potential areas of focus which could lead to two projects for inclusion in the Investment Plan.

There is still work to be done by Officers to shape these projects into an Investment Plan. ARUP will help with the technical aspects.

It was noted that whilst there was a long list of projects, the two key areas to promote as selling points would be the logistics and heritage projects. All the projects were worthwhile, but these would give a distinctive offer and would demonstrate the social value and make them attractive propositions.

In relation to the Technical Sub-Group's recommendation of an October submission for the Investment Plan (IP), it was noted that on balance, taking into account the amount of work to be done, the Board agreed this was a realistic date to submit the Plan to Government. The criteria for the projects would need agreeing to form the IP.

**5 Project Prioritisation Process**

IA produced a paper, which outlined the prioritisation process for the next phase and suggested that the detailed working up of a selection process was delegated to the Technical Sub-Group.

It was agreed that the following tests be applied to the projects:-

* Viability - a final assessment to complete a project proforma to ascertain if the project is deliverable and can be delivered within the 90/10 capital/revenue split which is indicated in the additional Town Fund guidance.
* Strategic Fit - an assessment of the fit of the project with the Transformation Plan and overall Theory of Change, which has been agreed for the town. COVID19 recovery should also be included. The projects need to be viable and refreshed and reflect value for money.
* Value for Money - an assessment of the value for money delivered by the project, in terms of overall costs outputs, leverage and longer term sustainability.

The formal options appraisal will be submitted to the next Board meeting to outline what is going to be included in the IP. IA advised that the Technical Sub-Group would set a deadline for the return of the pro-formas and by the end of August the Group would come back to the Board for the options appraisal in mid-September. Boston Borough Council is the financially accountable body and would need to agree the IP in terms of liability. Therefore a report will be submitted to Council at the end of September. Following on from that a further Board meeting will be held in early October to agree and refine the final IP to be submitted to Government at the end of October.

Following a short discussion, the following was noted:-

* The IP has to show the wider health and wellbeing benefits of the projects and expand on the value for money and resourcing in terms of the sustainability of investment.
* The projects need to help the demographic of Boston, including migrant workers, and should help to raise aspirations and get people back into the workplace.
* It was important that the projects/themes linked together - there are cross cutting themes but the clusters integrate well together and should strengthen the bid. The heritage projects should tell Boston's "story" - its past and future - that can be drawn out from the projects and reflected in the IP.
* The Port/logistics project also linked into the heritage theme - Boston has had an active Port for several hundred years. Work undertaken on the project creates a good narrative around what the future looks like.
* The PE21 project would repurpose the town centre and bring together a hub of services providing wrap around support and care and would bring people into the town centre. MS would be meeting Nick Heath from Willmott Dixon to move to the next stage and produce a feasibility study to evidence base the project, which would see a mixed use of buildings.

NK indicated that a presentation will be made to the Council at the end of September/early October. MS would consult with Members and the community on the projects so they can understand and see what ideas are being progressed through the Board.

MS referred to the Strategic Alliance between BBC and ELDC. ELDC were involved with the two Towns Funds for Skegness and Mablethorpe. MS would be taking over responsibility for all 3 town deals. This would potentially bring the opportunity to capitalise on the impact for the region and receive up to £75m of funding and would raise the profile of the East Coast.

Further Technical Group and Board meetings would be arranged and dates circulated.

**6 Early Release of up to £1m Towns Fund Resources**

MS circulated a copy of a letter sent to the Chief Executive of Boston Borough Council on 1 July which outlined the early release of £750,000 to fund capital projects that could be delivered from the financial year 2020/21. MS and CG met with Mick Lazarus and Pete Holmes from the Government office and took part in a live briefing to discuss what the accelerated funding meant. The early release of funding was linked to recovery. There is no requirement for the money to be spent on projects within the Investment Plan, but there would have to be a good reason if there is no link. The Council, as the accountable body, would have to submit details to the Government office by 14 August and outline which projects the grant would fund.

MS and CG had been looking at creating a redundancy hub within the Market Place which offered help and advice relating to a number of services, also linking to health and wellbeing and training opportunities to get back into the workplace. This would link to the skills agenda and also repurpose the high street. There was a lot of practical work to be done and the challenge would be obtaining planning permission.

MS was also talking to the Planning Manager at the Council about flexible planning consents over the next 2 years, to help recovery post COVID-19. This would assist with the heritage offer proposals.

It was agreed that Board members would contact MS if they had any projects they wished to see the funding spent on.

**7 Any Other Business**

Consultation/Publicity - CF explained that the vast majority of people looking at Boston's bid would not have visited Boston and will not appreciate how special it is, nor will they be familiar with its layout. Therefore it was important to develop a story board for each settlement/project and create a narrative about how they all link together. MS reported that ELDC were working with HETTA and would explore what options are available to BBC.

CF was happy to offer the services of students at Boston College to pull together a promotional video of Boston.

Lockdown due to COVID-19 had not helped with the Town Deal process and it was important to reengage with the consultation process and also involve the press. Board members were also encouraged to promote the Town Deal within their own organisations.