

Minutes

Meeting Title: Truro Town Deal Board

Date: 21st April 2021

Time: 17.00 to 19.40

Location: Microsoft Teams

Chaired by: Carole Theobald (CT)

Attendees: Voting Members: CC Bert Biscoe (BB – left at 19.17), Roger Gazzard (RG), Rachel Hammond (RH – joined at 17.14), Cllr David Harris (DH – left at 19.25), Simon Hendra (SH), Alun Jones (AJ), Nigel King (NK), Nigel Knuckey (NKn – left at 18.11), Cherilyn Mackrory (CM), Harry Pickering (HP), CC Loic Rich (LR), Nick Seaton-Burridge (NB – left at 17.55), Alan Stanhope (AS), David Walrond (DW)
Officers: Beth Briggs (BBr), Mark O’Brien (MB), Glenn Caplin-Grey (GCG), Emily Kent (EK), Iain Mackelworth (IM), Louisa Philpott (LP, Arup), Phill Woods (PW)

Apologies: None received

1 Welcome and Apologies

- Apologies noted under Attendees above.
- CT welcomed Members and noted the excellent news regarding the successful award by Government of £23.6m for Truro Town Deal.

2 Declaration of Interest

- None

3 Minutes of the last Meeting

- It was proposed by AS, seconded by DH and agreed by the Board that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th January 2021 be adopted as an accurate record.

4 Matters arising not covered on the agenda

- Page 2, Item 6 – BB enquired as to the allocation of funding to support the Programme Management Office (PMO). He was concerned that the Board had not signed off on this allocation.
- CT advised that this would be discussed later in the meeting under items 6 and 7 and that the allocation had been included in the TIP.
- PW noted that this allocation had been included across all four Cornish towns and had been a requirement of the S151 Officer to sign off on the TIPs prior to submission.
- It was noted that the matter would be covered in more detail later in the meeting.

5 Arup presentation – support package for business case development

- LP introduced herself and outlined her role, and that of Arup, in supporting Town Deal Boards.
- LP shared a presentation which it was noted would be circulated to members following the meeting. The presentation provided an overview of the support available during business case development.
- LP encouraged Members to explore the Towns Fund website and sign up for newsletters.
- CT enquired as to whether this information was more aimed at officers since it was overwhelming to volunteer Board members. LP advised that it was helpful for Members to have an understanding of the process, particularly if they were directly involved with projects.
- BB raised the matter of overarching outcomes and whether it was Government's intention to equip towns to carry on beyond town deal with similar funding and project delivery in future.
- LP advised that a legacy body would be a desirable outcome, but noted that in terms of Towns Fund delivery the Board had the shorter-term resources of Arup and the PMO.

6 Confirmation of award of funding from Government and project prioritisation

- PW congratulated the Board on the success of their bid and noted the impressive award of 95% of original ask.
- PW shared a presentation with the Board outlining some options the Board might want to consider as to how to distribute the £23.6m award between their projects against their original total ask of £25m.
- PW outlined the process required prior to returning the signed letter to Government. The Board would need to decide on how the money would be distributed and also consider how to deal with the conditions set out on the letter. He noted the Board was not expected to satisfy the conditions, but to set out a plan. A revised financial profile, as set out by Government, would also need to be returned.
- PW advised that, two months after Heads of Terms (HoTs) were signed, a project confirmation exercise would be carried out to confirm the Board's approach to project delivery.
- PW outlined the two options he had set out, the first to reduce the delegated fund to bring the total down from £25m to £23.6m as this was the most scalable project.
- The second was to reduce all projects by 5.57% which would bring the overall total in line with the award. It was noted that match funding needed to be borne in mind as some projects would necessarily require additional match in order to reach total delivery cost.
- Members discussed the possibility of making changes to the project portfolio following signature of HoTs.
- LP advised that during full business case development, adjustments could be discussed with CLG and there would be a form to complete to make these adjustments.
- DH enquired as to the reference to 'Truro' in the letter from Government and who this referred to. PW advised that this referred to the Board and the Council as a collective.
- GCG confirmed that Cornwall Council would take responsibility for completing the financial profiling form but that it would be a collaborative process with the Board.

- Members discussed the best approach for considering the financial re-profiling options set out by PW.
- Members agreed that the 'Star Chamber' subgroup should reform in order to progress discussion, with their recommendations brought back to the next Board meeting.
- BB, RG, DH, NK and AS all indicated their willingness to be part of this group.
- PW noted that it would be helpful to link a member of IM's team into this meeting.
- BB requested that, in addition to considering the financial profiling options, this group should also discuss the PMO proposal in more detail.
- The level of investment in the PMO was discussed, with EK advising that responsibility and accountability rests with Cornwall Council as accountable body and that the risks associated with delivery and monitoring were not being underestimated.
- Members wanted to be clear on the resourcing of the PMO and how spend is tracked and audited by the Board.
- NK felt that the approach by Cornwall Council was a sensible one and that the Board should welcome the idea of Cornwall Council taking on the risk and the paperwork/detail involved in the delivery.
- It was noted that this matter would be discussed in more detail during the next agenda item.

7 Programme Management Office Presentation

- IM shared a presentation with the Board and outlined the considerations in setting up the PMO and the services it would deliver that were fundamental to the programme.
- DH requested receipt of presentations in advance of meetings.
- IM clarified that the 'applicant' referred to in the presentation was the lead body (the person/organisation who submitted an application to the Town Deal Board to seek funds for delivery of their project).
- Procurement rules were queried, with IM advising that UK Public Contract Regulations would apply to the lead bodies, who would be obligated to keep audit trails and demonstrate value for money. Rules vary under these regulations, dependant on value of contract.
- IM clarified that the lead body would be responsible for signing contracts with contractors and would apply to Cornwall Council, as accountable body, for release of funds.
- IM outlined the post submission assessment that was currently that Cornwall Council had commissioned, being conducted by Arcadis. He noted that this would inform the PMO and identify projects where additional support was required in terms of developing full business case.
- The primary role of this assessment was to offer assurance to Cornwall Council as accountable body. Arcadis have done similar work on Towns Fund nationally.
- IM advised that Arcadis was working with applicants (lead bodies) and that a report would be provided at the end of May.
- There was concern over the 1.5% allocation being adequate to cover the delivery of the programme.
- IM advised that delivery costs would vary year by year as the programme evolved and resource would likely need to be front loaded to support year 1, with a spike at the end when projects required completion/sign off.

- IM noted that Cornwall Council was working with MHCLG as to how funding would be released to support this.
- GCG noted that the Board could agree a higher % allocation if they felt that should be factored in.
- IM advised that the PMO Delivery Manager position would be the primary contact for Boards and that this position was currently being recruited. This senior role would report to IM. It was noted that a commissioning specialist was also being recruited and that both jobs were available on website for Members to view details.
- Members considered the role of a dedicated Coordinator for Truro and whether there were any alternative ways of Truro Town Deal Board delivering the TIP without engaging in the PMO.
- IM commented that a Coordinator had provided the right kind of support for stage one to take the Board to TIP submission, but that the skill sets were different in this stage two, and therefore the resource requirement was different.
- If there were to be a dedicated officer, what are they doing that the PMO won't do. Or Arup aren't doing. If there is a gap in support between what Arup can offer and the PMO, it would need to be considered as to whether a dedicated Board support was the best approach, or for a wider approach by the PMO to buy in dedicated support for individual projects, where required.
- Members requested sight of an organisational chart in advance of the next Board meeting.
- Members were concerned about the capacity of lead bodies to undertake project development. GCG advised that these lead bodies had come forward and applied to be beneficiaries of this fund.
- Members enquired as to how to raise queries with LP. She advised that queries should be coordinated and directed to her via AS or RG, and that PW and BBr should be copied in.
- GCG noted that stage two and PMO implementation was a collaborative process and that the information the Board had requested would be available for the next meeting.

8 **Any other Business**

- CT advised that she was proposing to step down as Chair at the next meeting. However, given the timeframe of the next meeting and Heads of Terms being finalised she offered to stay on as Chair to take the Board through the HoT process and step down in June instead.
- Members were supportive of this approach and agreed to extend the term of the current Chair until at least June when a new Chair would be elected.

9 **Date of Next Meeting**

- Week commencing 24th May, 5pm start time – BB to coordinate availability/invitation.