

Bolton Towns Fund Board 1.00 pm, Monday 6th June 2022 Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Attendees

Belinda Beaver	BB	Chamber of Commerce (Chair)
Cllr Adele Warren	AW	Executive Cabinet Member Regen, Bolton Council
Gerry Brough	GB	Director of Place, Bolton Council
Michelle Horrocks	MH	Head of Economic Development, Bolton Council
Paula Connor-Bennett	PCB	Project Officer, Bolton Council
Paul Whittingham	PW	Assistant Director Economic Development, Bolton Council
Maya Roberts	MR	On behalf of Bolton North East MP Mark Logan
Mark Head	MHe	Bolton & District Civic Trust
Jon Lord	JL	Bolton at Home
Alison Stewart	AS	Moorgarth
Holly Harrow	HH	Homes England
Dawn Yates-Obe	DYO	Bolton CVS
Phil Lamb	PL	Principal Project Officer, Bolton Council
Keith Questel-Lewis	KQL	Programme Manager, Bolton Council
Danny Collins	DC	Savills
Jesse Garrick	JG	MHCLG
Graham Langley	GL	Bolton Council
David Shepherd	DS	Bolton Council
Ibrahim Ishmail	II	Bolton Solidarity
Damian Cross	DC	Bolton Council
Nirubhan Ratnaragh	NR	Bolton CCG
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
Tony Oakman	TO	Chief Executive, Bolton Council
Carl Moore	CM	Homes England
James Gordon	JG	Gordon Moon Properties

Notes of the Meeting

1. Welcome

BB welcomed all to the meeting and reminded all of the virtual meeting protocols.

2. Apologies

Apologies noted above.

3. Bolton's Levelling Up Fund Bids

GB advised Board Members that the purpose of this agenda item was to provide an update on the Levelling Up Fund bids that Bolton is proposing to submit. GB advised that the Council was only advised that round two bids were being sought in March with the guidance for bids being issued in April. The deadline for submission is July meaning that a report approving the bids to be taken forward needs to be taken to the Council's Cabinet on 20th June. This only gives two weeks to complete the bids. GB advised that the Council has the ability to submit two further bids. These are De Haviland Way junction improvements and Bolton Town Centre (North) Regeneration project. One of Bolton's bids was successful last year – Bolton College of Medical Science. GB highlighted that Bolton is able to submit a bid for each MP's constituency. Part of the process is to have some consultation with key stakeholders. GB advised that today's Board meeting provides an opportunity to conduct this consultation as due to timescales there is not enough time to go and consult across the Borough. GB introduced Danny Collins (DCo) from Savills and Graham Langley (GL) who would deliver a presentation on the proposed bids.

DCo introduced himself. DCo gave a presentation outlining the process for Levelling up and an overview of the white paper. DCo advised the Board that it is an extremely competitive process and that a vast number of towns are eligible to submit bids therefore in order to attract funding bids need to be strong and robust. DCo highlighted the vicious cycle of decline that many towns such as Bolton face. Factors of the cycle of decline include economic decline, low skills, etc. This leads to worse outcomes such as lower productivity, poor quality of life, lack of local pride and belonging and lack of power to improve things. In order for Levelling Up to be successful the cycle needs to be broken and ensure long lasting sustainable growth in incomes, jobs, and well-being.

DCo gave an overview of the key dates. These are:

- The outcome of bids to be announced autumn 2022.
- Late April/early May 2022: Webinars were conducted by officials to provide an overview of the Fund
- Late April/early May 2022: FAQs published at GOV.UK
- 31 May 2022: Application window opened
- 15 June 2022 (12:00 noon): Deadline for applicants to submit questions to the Levelling Up Team
- **6 July 2022** (12:00 noon): Deadline for applicants to submit bids.

Capital bids can be made for individual projects or a group of up to three projects up to £20million per bid (£50 million for highways improvements). DC advised that there is no minimum Levelling UP Funding Grant that applicants can apply for. The second round of the fund is open to projects that can demonstrate spend from 2022- 23 financial year with funds to be spent by 31st March 2025. DCo went on to outline the main criteria that would be used to evaluate bids, characteristics of the place, deliverability, strategic fit and the bids economic case along with the index of priority for the place. DCo added that Bolton was in Tier One. DCo then passed the presentation over to GL.

GL introduced himself to the Board and went on to give a presentation on the proposed De Haviland Way Junction Improvement bid. He advised that he had been working with Aecom

and Savills to develop the bid. As DCo had alluded to in the earlier part of the presentation highway improvement bids can be for up to £50 million however GL added that this bid would be for up to £20 million due to the level of scrutiny required to attract £50 million. GL advised that the key aim of the bid was to reduce congestion on De Havilland way as well as surrounding highways such as Chorley New Road. GL gave an overview of each of the improvements to be undertaken. These include creating an additional land northbound junction 6 M61/De Havilland Way, conversion of Beehive Roundabout to a traffic light junction, Junction 1 A6/De Havilland Way conversion of roundabout to traffic light junction, Junction 3/Spirit of Sport conversion of roundabout to a traffic light junction. GL highlighted that the latter would require the relocation of the Spirit of Sport statue and he advised that discussions are currently underway with Bolton Wanderers and the Whites Hotel and where this could be potentially relocated. In terms of scoring criteria the De Havilland way bid scores high on all aspects and is a strong bid. GL advised that the scheme in total will cost £23 million with a £20 million ask from the Levelling Up Fund. GL advised that public consultation was being undertaken today 06/06/22 with local residents and Highways England. GL then passed the presentation back to DCo.

DCo gave the Board an overview of the Bolton Town Centre (North) Regeneration Bid explaining some of the key challenges and opportunities. The preferred options are:

Project 1 - the repurposing of Market Place to create a music venue and relocate Primark too. The total cost of the scheme is £13 million with a £9.5 million ask from Levelling Up fund and Primark investing £3.5 million.

Project 2 – creation of Town Hall Event, Conference and Hotel Complex in the former Le Mans Crescent Building. There has also been discussion around installation of a digital screen on Victoria Square to assist with events, etc. Total project cost is £30 million with a £9.5 million ask from Levelling up fund, £10 million private sector investment and £10 million Bolton Council contribution.

Project 3 – Crompton Place South Periphery, repurposing of No. 1 Newport Street, demolition of NHS building to open up views onto Exchange Street/views of Bridgeman building plus the creation of a pocket park and wall mural. Total Project cost is £3 million with an ask of £1 million from Levelling Up fund and £2 million of investment by Bolton Council.

DCo highlighted that the public realm schemes were not included as part of the project ask and these schemes will be brought forward with future investment and that the linked projects were part of a bigger picture for the town centre. All projects score well against the characteristics of place and strategic fit. However more work needs to be done in terms of the economic case and deliverability. The bids need to be completed within the next two weeks.

BB thanked GB/DCo and GL for their presentation and asked the Board whether there were any questions. MHe asked whether consideration had been given to building in storm wall technology into the Cheadle Square/Deansgate area given the risk of flooding in this area. DCo advised that this was the first he had been made aware of this issue and that works of this nature had not been factored into the project costings for the hotel and conference centre.

MHe also asked why digital walls were being supported rather than green walls. DCo explained that a digital wall was the preferred option as it can be used interactively in events, etc.

GB advised that in terms of flood prevention in the town centre there have been discussions with United Utilities as this is their remit. GB also advised that despite the Town Centre being at risk of flood there has never been an issue to date and no businesses have advised that their basements have been flooded.

GB also advised that a digital wall would enable the Town Centre to become an all-year-round event space with interactive screens. There are no plans for green walls in the levelling up bids however there are future plans for community space in the town centre which will come to fruition in the future and may include green walls.

GB advised that with regards for the plans for Crompton Place planning consent will be required and the Council has yet to get agreement from the occupiers to vacate the premises. Negotiations are underway however some tenants are in long leases. Until such a time as the Council can get vacant possession there is little that can be done.

DYO asked in terms of social value whether there were any plans to include incubation space for community and voluntary groups, whether the procurement process had robust plans in place to ensure investment back into the community and whether any thought had been given to support the social enterprise sector to be able to commission for any of the works.

GB responded that there would be some incubator space but that this had not been specifically identified for social enterprises or voluntary and community groups. Wellsprings will provide circa 60,000 sq. ft. of incubator space where community enterprises may be able to take some space. GB advised in terms of procurement contractors are obliged to use as many local suppliers and employ as many local residents as possible. Business Bolton has an online contact centre which businesses can access in order to get access to public contracts with any business advice given by CVS.

Il asked what types of music the proposed music venue would accommodate and what the timeframes would be if the bid is successful. AS advised that the music venue would be designed to be a space to accommodate all genres of music and to supplement the evening economy. She advised it will be managed by a new operator but that it would be available for performances, the music service, etc.

Dco went through the time frames leading to submission for the Board and reiterated that there are two weeks to complete the bids and get Cabinet approval to submit. Bids then need to be submitted early July 2022.

4. Recap on Progression to date

MH gave a presentation outlining the process we have gone through to date to get to the delivery stage of the Towns fund schemes. The business cases have been submitted and formal sign off was given by DLUHC in February of this year. MH reminded the Board that £25million of funding had been requested and that we had been offered £22.9million. A reprofiling exercise was undertaken across the projects and as a result there was a reduction in funding to the Library and Museum project. We received our first payment in March 2022 with the next one due August 2022. MH advised that payments are made subject to the town undergoing an annual assurance check and submetering quarterly monitoring returns to highlight how we are moving towards achieving outcomes, spend, etc. The first return is due to be submitted 10th June.

5. Projects Update

DC gave the Board an overview of progress against the Bolton Market, Library and Museum and Wellsprings projects. DC advised that due to rising costs and inflation the Wellsprings project costs were now significantly higher than those submitted within the TIP. He explained that the design process for this project had been paused whilst a deep dive into costings was undertaken. Three options for delivery of the scheme were considered with a hybrid scheme being considered to be the best way forward. However the costs to deliver this are now £8.5 million. An additional £1.5 million will need to be found by the Council to ensure delivery of the scheme and that the outputs and outcomes of the project are delivered.

DCr advised that the investment in Bolton market will see investment in the food hall which will support the evening economy. Investment of £5.59 million into the project. Start date for the scheme is October 2022 with completion October 2023. The Museum and Library works are due to commence on site September 2022 with a completion date of October 2023.

PL gave an update on progress of the Accelerated Funding scheme and Public Realm Scheme. PL explained that the Council is working closely with Step Places who are the developers of the former Moor Lane Bus Station site. PL went on to advise the Board that the Accelerated Funding had been used to fund the public realm improvements on Howell Croft South and Ashburner Street. PL advised that these works were almost complete. A planning application has been submitted for the park on the former Odeon Cinema site. A decision on planning permission is anticipated in 2/3 weeks' time and works should commence on site soon after a planning decision is received.

MH gave an overview of the next steps. She advised that annual quality assurance checks would need to be conducted and quarterly monitoring returns completed to DHULC to report on progress, spend, etc. These need to be signed off by the Councils Section 151 officer and Senior Responsible Officer. There would also be a need to conduct an evaluation of each project this will likely be carried out internally and externally.

BB thanked DC/PL for their presentation and asked if there were any questions. EB advised that in terms of Wellsprings there may be an opportunity to attract funding from GMCA. He advised that he had put a link to the application process in the chat.

7. Review of the Board: Membership and Role

BB advised that the Board is moving into a different phase now that the projects are at delivery stage. The Board's role had previously been to establish the strategic direction and to be a consultative forum on the development of the TIP and the projects. As a result and appreciating the commitment involved by members, it is an appropriate time to review the membership of the Board and to allow anyone who feels they can no longer dedicate the time or may have a conflict of interest to step down. However BB advised that we are more than happy to continue as is also. In addition, if anyone feels that they would like more involvement in taking the projects forward, please let BB/PCB know.

8. Any Other Business

BB advised the Board that MH was leaving Bolton Council on 10th June 2022. She expressed her thanks for all MHs hard work over the past couple of years and wished her well in her new role at Lancaster City Council.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place in December 21/January 22. PCB to arrange. It is hoped to hold this one on a face-to-face basis.

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