NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Newark Towns Fund Board Meeting held on Thursday, 22 April 2021 at 8.00 am.

PRESENT: Board

Councillor D.J. Lloyd – Leader of NSDC – Co-Chairman
Tom Cartledge – Co-Chairman
Steff Wright, Chief Executive, Gusto UK
Tom Marsden, Lincoln College Group
John Latham, Director of DVC Projects, University of Lincoln
Tony Aspbury, Chairman of Development Committee, Newark Showground
Alan Mellor – Town Clerk of Newark Town Council
Darren Burke – Director of Masdings
Simon Shaw – Newark Business Club
Richard Gelsthorpe – Pratt & Gelsthorpe
Michael Baker – Farndon Parish Council
Matt Colbourne – East Midlands Digital Media
Fiona Anderson – NTU
Gary Headland – Lincoln College Group
Johanne Thomas – Urban & Civic

Others

Matt Lamb – Director – Planning & Growth (NSDC)
Neil Cuttell – Business Manager – Economic Growth (NSDC)
Jane Hutchinson – Town Centre Development Manager (NSDC)
Cllr. Keith Girling – Deputy Leader of NSDC
Sanjiv Kohli – Deputy CX/Director – Resources/S151 Officer (NSDC)
Sandya Ward – Homes England
Tim Brown – DWP
Clive Fletcher – Historic England
Will Temple - Hatch Regenris

28.0 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Simon Witts – Aviation 360
Richard Coppell – Urban & Civic
David Jones – Timico
Karl Tupling – Homes England
Linny Beaumont – Canal River Trust
Lorna Masey – DWP
Cllr. Ronnie White – Chairman of Balderton Parish Council

29.0 Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 February 2021

AGREED, that subject to the apology from Fiona Anderson – Head of Civic Engagement (NTU) being recorded, the minutes be accepted.

30.0 Declarations of Interest

None

Prior to the commencement of the business listed on the Agenda, TC advised the meeting that the Heads of Terms had been signed. He stated that a meeting had taken place with himself, John Robinson (CX of NSDC) and Matt Lamb with Kazco, a smart fleet business, who were looking to recruit up to 250 locals. He noted that they were not represented on the board but the generation of jobs was welcome news.

TC also advised of the recent passing of board member, John Coles, expressing his condolences. John has done much for the town, its residents, community groups, and businesses over many years. John was an advocate for the town, including backing for what we are seeking to achieve with the Towns Fund.

TC stated that it was now time to establish the correct teams to forge ahead with the projects. DJL added his thanks to all those involved with securing the funding and paid tribute to John Coles noting his contribution that will continue in legacy.

31.0 The Newark Town 'Deal' and Next Steps

ML advised that the Heads of Terms had now been signed by all parties so progress on the projects was now possible. He added that the Southern Link Road (SLR) had been included in the Heads of Terms but had not been listed in the priority projects for the Government, in accordance with the previous resolution of the Board. Rather, it was recommended that the SLR be subject to a separate funding submission to Government as part of the Levelling Up Fund (considered under the Funding Opportunities item). Paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 of the report recaptured the Towns Fund priority projects together with the various project confirmation activities which had to be submitted to Government no later than 21 May 2021.

ML provided the Board with details of the two independent consultants appointed to assist with: the assessment of submitted Green Book Business Cases for the projects; and also to support or write Full Green Book Business Cases with and for each of the Project Sponsors. It was noted that the consultants appointed were Quod and Hatch. Details of the funding arrangements for their appointments were provided at paragraph 3.2 of the report.

TC stated that the intention was to spend the minimum amount possible on necessary beauracracy to ensure that as much of the funds awarded were spent on the projects to improve the town.

TC stated that should a new project come to the Board's attention it should be captured and recorded on an alternative list, as should any known projects that did not receive funding, noting the comments of Gary Headland and possible student accommodate for those attending the IASTI.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

(a) the contents of the report be noted;

(b) the priority projects for Towns Fund Grant (subject to Assurance and Full Business Case approval) and Project Sponsors be agreed;

(c) the submission by Newark & Sherwood District Council of a Levelling Up Fund bid for the delivery of the Newark Southern Link Road be supported;

(d) the identified accelerated projects for submission to Government be:

YMCA Community & Activity Village;
32 Stodman Street; and
IASTI

as detailed in paragraph 2.7 be agreed; and

(e) support be given to the principle of ring-fencing no more than 2% (£500,000) of Town Deal grant to cover management and monitoring of the program for the lifetime of the fund, subject to District Council and Government support.

32.0 Project Updates & Accelerated Fund Spend

NC presented an update on progress of various projects within the TIP, providing specific reference to the Accelerated Fund Projects that had required defrayment of spend by March 2021. The report provided details of the three projects identified to have met the criteria and the redistribution of allocated funding from the '20 Minute Town' project to the IASTI project. A table providing a project update was detailed in paragraph 2.4 of the report.

Construction College

GH stated that the development of the construction college was progressing well and would provide a modern facility for students. Recruitment on educations packages had commenced. TM added that work was ongoing with local business and it was likely that apprentices would be in place by June 2021. Further students would commence their courses in September to fit in with the education timetable e.g. plumbers; apprentice plumbers; bricklayers; and apprentice bricklayers. Work was also ongoing in relation to the provision of courses for adult students. He added that it was hoped that some 500 'learners' would have gone through the college in 5 years' time.

IASTI

It was noted that development of the project was progressing at pace. Core programmes were being developed but also a vision for the future was being established. An interim facility would be operational in September with students being visible within the town centre (with branded uniforms).

NC offered his thanks to GH and TM stating that Newark was one of a few areas that had proven their ability to deliver and had spent the monies on the priority projects within the set timescales.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

33.0 Town Centre Project Updates

NC presented the report which provided an update on the various initiatives that were being undertaken in Newark Town Centre. These were listed as: Reopening High Streets Safely/Welcome Back Fund; Heritage Action Zone; Business Resilience Programme; High Street Diversification Fund Grant; Kickstart; and Footfall with a brief update of the latest position for each initiative being provided.

TC stated that more work needed to be done to understand what would create increased footfall in the town centre. In response NC agreed that more work was required, much of which would form part of the Cultural heart of Newark proposals. He noted that someone had raised the question of whether free parking would assist retail businesses. He stated that this tended not to be an incentive but it would be kept under review. DJL noted the previous comments adding that an experience needed to be created for visitors and that all day parking was already available in the edge of town car parks.

AGREED (unanimously) that the ongoing initiatives being rolled out in the town centre be supported

34.0 New Funding Opportunities

ML presented to the Board a report on new revenue and capital funding opportunities that had been announced in the March 2021 budget. These were noted as the Community Renewal Fund (CRF) and the Levelling Up Fund (LUF). The CRF was largely revenue grant aimed as programs and interventions which could drive innovation and transformative change. Newark & Sherwood had been identified as Priority 1 place for investment based on an index of economic resilience. The LUF was a capital fund that invited proposals from local authorities for individual projects or a package bid (similar to the Towns Fund) which consisted of multiple projects. For this fund District Councils within two-tier areas were eligible to bid as were County Council with transport powers (eligible to submit one transport bid).

ML sought support for the funding of the Newark Southern Link Road (SLR) as the Round One LUF bid for the Newark Constituency area. He advised that that any Sherwood LUF bid should not be made in Round 1 as it would not be able to meet the 'shovel ready' criteria. It is proposed that this be subject to a Round 2 bid, which should be developed via a "Sherwood Levelling Up Fund Board'.

NC advised that 107 bids had been submitted for adjudication to Nottinghamshire County Council for the CRF and that a submission would be made by NSDC also. GH stated that it could also potentially assist with existing projects, noting that the IASTI was 'revenue hungry'.

DJL noted that the new funding opportunities were being released in large numbers but with short timescales for the bidding process, thereby reinforcing the need to keep the list of potential projects updated.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

(a) the identified funding opportunities be noted and welcomed and that the necessary support in preparation of the bids be approved; and

(b) full support be given for any Newark Levelling Up Fund bid which sought grant to deliver the Newark Southern Link Road.

35.0 <u>Future Governance and Associated Draft Newark Towns Fund Assurance Framework</u>

ML presented to the Board a report which set out the governance and assurance frameworks for the Newark Towns Board for the delivery of Newark Town Investment Plan.

The Board's current governance and structure was noted and that it was now time to review them as it entered the next phase in its programme. Details of the proposed new structure of the Board, together with an outline of principles were provided in paragraph 3 of the report. In presenting the report ML advised that assurance to the public and Government as to how the funds would be spent was required and that the proposed new structure would consist of: the Main Board; an Executive Board; and Sub Groups as appropriate.

TC suggested that progress of the projects be set by the following 3 levels:

Why To promote and to better the town;
What 9 Projects to be delivered
How Good Governance and Framework

AGREED (unanimously) that:

(a) the draft Local Assurance Framework, appended to the report, be supported; and

(b) the Local Assurance Framework be finalised, adopted and procedures put in place by the next proposed Towns Fund Board Meeting.

36.0 AOB

ML advised that he would recirculate the TIP prior to its publication to seek approval from all Board members. He noted that the Plan dated from 2020 but no changes could be made prior to its publication. A supporting document would also be published alongside it to reflect what developments and progress had been made since then. DJL sort to reinforce that the Plan had been set following consultation with the public and had not just been produced by the Council. He encouraged all Board members to reiterate this fact.

SW advised that the Newark Business Club were working towards setting a net zero carbon target and were looking to bring on board businesses who wished to achieve zero carbon output. TC advised that a number of businesses were now making such statements of interest and that he could offer an employee from his organisation who had relevant experience to assist a Business Club briefing.

The meeting closed at 9.35am.