

Todmorden Town Deal Board

26th August 2021

Meeting notes

In attendance:

Members

- Pam Warhurst (Interim Chair)
- Tony Lawson (Interim Co-Chair)
- Cllr Dacre
- Cllr Press
- Cllr Carrigan
- Craig Whittaker MP
- Stephen Curry
- James Duffy
- Andrew Kim
- Barbara Jones
- Tim Benjamin

CMBC Officers

- Karen Houghton, Programme Manager
- Sarah Richardson, Assistant Director of Customer Services
- Shelagh O'Neill, Director of Regeneration and Strategy
- Daisy Wilde, Neighbourhood Coordinator

In Attendance

- Cllr Scullion, CMBC Member (Deputy Leader and Cabinet member and Portfolio holder for Regeneration and Strategy)
- Marc Watterson – Arup
- Maria Vitale – Arup

Apologies:

- Rebecca Greenwood (WYCA observer)
- Daniel Barrett (WYCA observer)
- Frankie Mullen

Welcome:

Pam Warhurst welcomed all.

Marc and Maria introduced themselves to the Board.

Chair informed that the purpose of the meeting was for Marc and Maria to guide the Board around prioritisation criteria.

Declaration of Interests (relating to agenda items)

None declared for this meeting.

Substantive item – workshop to develop criteria for prioritisation

Marc and Maria – Arup.

Maria introduced the agenda for the presentation:

- Introduction to the Project Re-prioritisation process
- Reminder of local needs/baseline
- Vision and objectives
- Values
- Discussion on criteria
- Agreement on re-prioritisation process and timeline

- Local needs discussed
- Vision and objects to be considered
- Values considered
- Strategic objectives – which are most important and which ones should be weighted more heavily

Questions:

Q. There is already detail of the outcome of a project evaluation/prioritisation process included in the appendix of the TIP - can I ask what status that will have in the process from this point on?

A. Prioritisation process can inform this, and the previous prioritisation process is informing the current one. At this stage the Board need to review all projects to make sure prioritisation still applicable as some aspects may have change i.e., deliverability and/or affordability. This exercise doing now will help Board prioritise further.

Q. What is Arup and what's their role in this process?

A. Part of the consortium called the town fund delivery partner – lead consultants as part of that. Help enable Board Members and officers progress through process –can support for 18 months. Arup is an international firm made up of consultants, placemakers, engineers etc. Marc and Maria work in teams focused on placemaking. FutureGov (government and organisational change), Grant Thornton (financial advisor), Nichols (project managers), Copper, and Savills (property advisors) also make up the consortium.

Q. Is this the standard process?

A. Arups have a reprioritisation team assisting various towns – process tweaked depending on the towns circumstances i.e., number of projects, money required to save etc.

Q. Is it only Board Members who are doing this exercise?

A. Yes, only Board Members voting.

Q. So did some members receive this table before the meeting?

A. No.

Marc explained the Board needed to consider the vision strategy and alignment to the needs identified, problems and issues, value for money, affordability and deliverability, stakeholder support and alignment to the Towns Fund criteria and values. Marc also summarised some ways that other towns reprioritised.

Q. At what stage do we have conversations, and start to look at the projects in more detail?

A. Board has until the 5th October.

Q. At what time do we start to talk projects and not criteria?

A. This will follow after this meeting.

Prioritisation exercise completed by the 11 Board Members in attendance.

Top Priorities following exercise completed:

1. Redevelop the heart of the town centre to create a vibrant destination which is attractive to visitors and residents alike. It will have high quality, public spaces and facilities, a more diverse range of uses and activity.
2. Deliver environmentally sustainable projects and reduce carbon emissions.
3. Provide high quality opportunities in education and training as a foundation for a creative, prosperous, and more sustainable future.

The other strategic objectives came in with broadly similar lower ratings.

Post covid recovery was at the bottom.

Maria explained the reprioritisation process detail and next steps.

Next steps include:

- Gathering project information
- Complete reprioritisation tool
- Create options
- Present, project summaries, tool results and options to the Board
- Agree preferred option

Q. Can I ask that there are conversations with project owners rather than just a desk exercise?

A. Yes absolutely. Would continue having conversations with project owners.

Q. Can we have an update on Karen's capacity? Where are we up to in recruiting her team?

A. We are in the process of recruiting project managers and project assistants.

Q. Discussion about possible descoping, amalgamation, reprioritisation – is that information going to be sought before the Board decides?

A. Yes absolutely, we will do this.

Q. Is it worth considering getting a specialist consultant in to assess viability and sustainability? What we do not know at this stage is whether some of the projects are viable and sustainable.

A. Interesting question – I think the suggestion is probably a good one.

Q. Are we going to have a discussion on criteria this evening?

A. Yes.

Maria summarised where the following criteria had come from:

- Alignment to vision and strategy
- Alignment to needs
- Value for Money
- Affordability
- Deliverability
- Stakeholder support
- Alignment to Towns Fund criteria
- Alignment to values

Value for money, affordability and deliverability have all come from the green book.

Stakeholder support is key to capture local community support.

The other criteria has come from the specific and original prioritisation for the TIP.

Questions:

Q. What are we going to do for revised projects, that may result from combining existing projects. They may not have existing community support. Will they get support?

A. Could consider this under deliverability – alternatively could give help to a specific project, for example, to develop their business case etc – can pull on the delivery partner to do this.

Q. Is the cost of the consultants coming out of the £17.5 million?

A. Cost of Arup coming out of central pot. We have been allocated 5% of 17.5 million on either securing pieces of land and/or using for consultant support.

Q. Can we limit that to 5%?

A. 5% is the offer which isn't negotiable as far as I am aware.

Q. Do we need to agree the secondary list? How is that secondary list used in the process?

A. Those are extra considerations, no particular weightings required.

Q. Is there anything else the Board want to add or are we happy with secondary list?

Action: Board Members to email Karen, Marc, or Maria with any additional suggestions for criteria.

Marc summarised next steps to conclude this agenda item.

Comms Subgroup Update

Stephen Curry.

We have been clarifying the stages that Board are at, including next steps, on the website.

Comms main focus has been on youth engagement and the official opening of the wheels park. Jim has been arranging for videoing to be done Sunday to show short films of the skatepark.

Comms had discussion about how we promote visitor economy. We're looking at the idea of having a follow up to the UCVR survey. We have contacted a company who have come back with a proposal for us – one is a visitor survey and the other destination potential – would need some money for this.

- Estimate for visitor survey would be £9,000 +VAT
- Estimate for the destination potential would be £5,000 - £7,000

Karen informed there was some money left in the capacity funding pot.

Board agreed for some funding to be allocated to this.

Q. How much is left?

A. Somewhere in region of £100,000

Q. Can we use money for environmental and feasibility studies, and to shape proposals?

A. We haven't recruited anyone for diversity and inclusivity etc – but could use capacity funding for this.

Marc suggested that the Board may also want to consider using some of the capacity funding for the business case stage.

The 5% is capital funding in theory, some flexibility – does come off the projects.

Youth Engagement Subgroup Update

Tony Lawson.

- Shannon more available starting September
- Engagement in projects – waiting for reprioritisation to be completed
- Weir to support with employment contracts

Update on Chairs Appointment.

Karen Houghton.

- CMBC HR will assist but have suggested not to start recruitment until the second week in September due to staff booked leave
- HR are putting together a person specification based on specifications of Chairs from other town boards elsewhere and they also have the ToR.

- Board Members can come forward to be part of the recruitment panel, obviously not those wanting to apply

Other

Question raised about holding meetings in public.

Daisy summarised zoom webinars and how this could work.

Marc informed that some other towns are considering public meetings, but that the Board has not no obligation to make meetings public, particularly as more of the meetings may become commercially sensitive.

Question asked about hybrid meetings?

Shelagh informed that IT are testing options – to make meetings manageable and functional.

Action: Shelagh will look into timelines for shared document storage and hybrid meetings.

Concerned raised by board member about the Strawbale Hotel not being considered fairly by the Board. Group would like the chance to speak to the Board about this.

Chair confirmed this would come next in the process.

Date of next meeting

Thursday 9th September 2021.