

TODMORDEN TOWN DEAL

TODMORDEN TOWN DEAL BOARD MEETING

Thursday 18th August 2022

Meeting held via Zoom

MINUTES

Present:

- Pam Warhurst (Chair)
- Craig Whittaker MP
- Tony Lawson
- Stephen Curry
- Councillor Silvia Dacre
- Councillor Denis Skelton
- Amna Nisah
- Gareth Marshall
- Jim Duffy
- Tim Benjamin
- Andrew Kim

- Councillor Helen Brundell

In Attendance:

- Councillor Sarah Courtney
- Kate McNicholas
- Rob Shipway
- Mark Dowson
- Nathan Canavan (Minutes)
- Catherine Bann
- Bill Waller (Turner & Townsend)
- Frankie Mullen (Comms timed item)

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed Board members and attendees to the meeting. Apologies were received from: Amanda Bloxsome, Councillor Mary Carrigan, Shelagh O'Neill, Sarah Richardson, and Andrew Rollins.

2. Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest made.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2022

Minutes of the meeting held 21st July 2022, circulated with the Board papers, were agreed as a true record.

4. Minutes of the meeting held 2nd August 2022

A special Board meeting was held on the 2nd of August 2022 to consider three business cases for submission to DLUHC. This 'first wave' of projects included:

- Centre Vale Park
- Todmorden Community Learning Hub
- Todmorden Town Hall

The Board approved the three projects subject to recording issues raised by Board members and setting out how these issues were resolved. An 'issues log' was circulated with the papers, which was noted and approved by the Board.

5. Purpose of the meeting

The Board was reminded that the meeting was a pre-arranged Board meeting dedicated to the review of the remaining five business cases. The deadline for submission is the 5th of September, and the Board would be asked to move to a vote on projects. If possible. To support the Board, full presentations were included in the agenda.

6. Communications and Consultations

The Board was informed that the communications sub-group, the Council, and project sponsors would be meeting to determine and agree a shared communications strategy for the programme.

In response to ongoing requests for more information about projects and consultation plans, officers agreed to bring a paper to the next meeting of the Board setting out proposals for consultation for approval by the Board. **Action: Frankie Mullen and Rob Shipway.**

7. Riverside Business Case Review and Decision

Board members reviewed the business case for Riverside.

Matters arising

It was noted that the business case now saw the formal merger of two previously separate projects, Riverside and All Ability Cycling. Officers were asked for reassurance this would be acceptable to DLUHC. Officers explained that the merger was conducted in discussion with project sponsors and DLUHC civil servants and no issues relating to the merging of the projects were anticipated.

Board decision

Board members were asked to move to a vote on the project and agreed unanimously to approve submission of the business case to DLUHC.

8. Active Todmorden Business Case Review and Decision

Board members received a presentation on the business case for Active Todmorden.

Matters arising

Officers were asked where the figure of 300 cycle parking bays had derived from. It was noted that the figure was taken from the original TIP proposals and from outline project proposals.

Concern was voiced regarding the provision of 3 digital apps in the project, seeking clarification that set up and maintenance costs had been fully considered. Officers reported that the costings had not been fully developed at this stage, and that the aim of the project was to build on existing apps rather than start from scratch. As the project was further developed the appropriate apps would be refined to meet then needs of the project and meet TIP outputs.

It was noted that the outputs for the project had been significantly reduced and officers were asked for feedback on the likely impact of this with DLUHC. Officers reported that the change to the project and outputs had been necessary as the original cost plan had proved optimistic and a project adjustment will be submitted for the project. The issue has been raised with DLUHC.

Officers were asked if the paving outside the dentist was included in the project. Officers suggested plans would focus on the entrance to and from the station to the town centre.

Regarding parking on or near the cycle lanes and cycle bays, officers reported that limited parking is included in the plans for people with mobility issues. Shared space and safety measures are included in the designs.

Officers were asked to consider including bottle banks in the proposals. Officers suggested this was perhaps better approached on a town wide basis and to explore how this might fit with other projects, such as Centre Vale Park.

Officers were asked to explore opportunities for linking the project with proposals for step free access at the station by Network Rail. Officers agreed to discuss with the Council's Highways team.

Action: Simon Liversage to speak internally to colleagues and report progress at the next meeting of the Board.

Board decision

Board members were asked to move to a vote on the project and agreed unanimously to approve submission of the business case to DLUHC.

9. Riverside Business Case Review and Decision

Board members were presented with the business case and independent assessor's comments for Riverside.

Matters arising

It was noted the project now incorporated the All Ability Cycling project and officers were asked if this would affect appraisal. Officers responded that this approach was endorsed by the Independent Assessor who felt this approach strengthened the business plan and initial approaches to DLUHC were positive.

Board decision

Board members were asked to move to a vote on the project and unanimously to submit the business case to DLUHC.

10. Hippodrome Business Case Review and Decision

Board members were presented with the business case and independent assessor's comments for Hippodrome.

Matters arising

The Independent Assessor's comments regarding potential underestimated rates of inflation built into the project were raised. It was noted that the inflation figures were developed by sector specialists and that alternative plans were in place should costs rise above projections.

Match funding was raised as a potential issue. Officers assured the Board that the match funding was identified in the business plan and was subject to application. This was identified as a risk, but it was noted that even without match funding the project would meet TIP outputs.

Board decision

Board members were asked to move to a vote on the project and agreed unanimously to approve submission of the business case to DLUHC.

11. Public Places Business Case Review and Decision

Board members were presented with the business case and independent assessor's comments for Public Places, and a presentation on the project.

Matters arising

Questions were asked about projected attendance figures for events of between 4,000 and 5,000. Doesn't see how the car park, market and the even space could all work alongside each other if an event was to go ahead with 4000/5000 people. Issues were raised in terms of the likelihood of

generating events and the space available to accommodate such a crowd. Officers reported ongoing discussions with event organisers to generate event activity. In terms of capacity, the projected figures are based on guidance provided by HC Crowd Density figures (Health and Safety guidance) and used prudent estimates.

Board decision

Board members were asked to move to a vote on the project. The Board agreed by a majority vote, 11 for and 1 against, to submit the business case to DLUHC.

12. The Enterprise Centre

Board members were presented with the business case and independent assessor's comments for the Enterprise Centre, and a presentation on the project.

Matters arising

Concern was raised that the business space provided by the Enterprise Centre may be used for purposes not envisaged in the current business plan, specifically shops, or not available for local small businesses. Officers reassured that the grant restricted use to small and micro business targeting local entrepreneurs and start-ups. Board members also felt it important to target young entrepreneurs.

Regarding concerns that proposed rent levels were unrealistic for Todmorden and expenses underestimated. In response, it was noted that the projections were provided by Creative Space Management, a leading provider of similar workspace in Northern England, and independently assessed and validated by ADE consultancy. Officers were confident these projections were robust.

Regarding design issues, it was noted that while some aspects of design had been raised as potentially contentious, the project design will be subject to formal consultation and planning processes. The opportunity to refine aspects of design was built into the process.

It was suggested that the proposed rents are comparable to large city centres and therefore not competitive. Officers reiterated that costs and proposed fees were developed by leading experts in this field and reflected rentals of similar office lettings in a similar development in Hebden Bridge that was fully let prior to completion.

Officers reported that concern had been raised about potential Subsidy (State Aid) issues which might impact on the project. Expert legal opinion had been sought and provisional advice suggests that whilst the grant is clearly a subsidy, it does address a market weakness and so at this stage can move forward. The Board agreed to accept initial opinion subject to further exploring the potential for Subsidy restrictions. **Action: Rob Shipway to continue to work with external legal expert to ensure any potential subsidy issue is resolved.**

It was noted that the project requires significant match funding and officers were asked how great a risk this posed. Officers confirmed match funding has been identified as a risk but that the bid process was well understood, and by drawing down Housing grant the project becomes more viable and offers opportunities for live / work as well as deliver core TIP outputs.

In relation to the proposed location, comments from the Independent Assessor were noted regarding the rationale for removing Pollination Street, perhaps moving the proposed location slightly to the East. The Board was pointed to related proposals in the Public Places project, which included additional greenspace and opportunities to bring forward similar public space for development and management by the voluntary sector. Officers also reported that maintaining Pollination Street might incur up to £200,000 additional costs. However, it was reaffirmed that the

current proposals are at a conceptual stage and that the opportunity for refinement, and further exploration of cost and development opportunities, would come following approval of the business case.

Board decision

Board members were asked to move to a vote on the project. The Board agreed by a majority vote, 11 for and 1 against, to submit the business case to DLUHC.

13. Closure and date of next meeting

The Chair thanked the Board, Officers, and consultancy support from Turner and Townsend for their work in getting the business cases to this stage. The next meeting was confirmed as 5pm 15th September 2022.

