

# TODMORDEN TOWN DEAL

## TODMORDEN TOWN DEAL BOARD MEETING

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022  
Zoom Meeting

### MINUTES

#### Present:

- Pam Warhurst (Chair)
- Tony Lawson
- Stephen Curry
- Councillor Silvia Dacre
- Amna Nisah
- Gareth Marshall
- Jim Duffy
- Amanda Bloxome
- Councillor Brundell

#### In attendance:

- Kate McNicholas
- Rob Shipway

#### 1. Apologies

Craig Whittaker MP, Councillor Denis Skelton, Councillor Mary Carrigan, Councillor Jane Scullion, Richard Thorpe.

#### 2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest declared.

#### 3. Board membership

The Chair confirmed the resignation of Tim Benjamin from the Board. The Chair and Board expressed their gratitude for Tim's contribution to the Board.

It was noted that this left two vacancies, one for the voluntary sector, one a private sector representative.

#### 4. Minutes of the meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> August 2022

The Chair presented the minutes of the meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> August.

#### Matters arising

Regarding item 8 (Active Todmorden Business Case Review), the minutes should be amended to show water refill points, rather than bottle banks.

- **Action:** RS to update minutes

Further to item 8, officers reported that the Council Highways Team were in discussion with the Community Rail Partnership, regarding step access to the railway station. The Board discussed the impact of the TransPennine Upgrade on the Calder Line, and the potential to use its strategic importance during construction works to push for line and station improvements. To date, there has been little feedback from Network Rail or Train Operators regarding the impact on Calder Line stations and passengers. It was agreed that a letter should be drafted on behalf of the Board and submitted via the Chair to Network Rail, Northern, and TransPennine Express, citing the

importance to link Town Deal and other sub-regional Levelling Up Funding to stronger transport infrastructure. It was suggested this should be copied into the West Yorkshire Mayor.

- **Action:** Officers to work with the Chair to discuss engaging Network Rail.

Regarding Item 9, officers reported that CMBC had procured expert legal advice to explore any potential subsidy issues which might impact on the proposals for the Enterprise Centre. Early feedback was positive, and the focus is on expanding our work to demonstrate market failure in the provision of modern, flexible office space in Todmorden. To this end CMBC had procured further business support advice and this work will be completed within the next 2 to 3 weeks.

The Board was alerted to a petition which has been circulating in the town regarding the proposals for public realm improvements and their perceived impact on the market. Cllr Dacre suggested the Markets Manager should be asked to secure the petition to understand the nature and phrasing of the questions.

- **Action:** Markets Manager to find out more about the petition.

## **5. Communications and Open Day**

Introducing the item, the Chair explained her desire to hold the Open Day as an information sharing opportunity. It was a chance to demonstrate how 8 projects were part of an overall strategy to maximise impact.

The Board was informed that the Communications Manager, Programme Manager and Project Sponsors group have worked together to develop a programme brochure and stage the Open Day at Todmorden College on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> November. The event would be funded from the Communications budget. The joint working was positive and will be followed up by monthly meetings of the Project Sponsor Group throughout the programme.

It was stressed that the aim was information sharing, and though questions will be asked, this was not a formal consultation. On the day, project sponsors will attend to talk about their projects, supported by consultants to talk through the Public Places and Active Todmorden schemes.

As this is a Board programme, it was noted that the event should have a Board presence throughout the event. The Chair and officers will work with the Board to ensure there were at least two Board members available across the two half days. Asked about information on projects, Board members were pointed to the website and to contact the Programme Manager for any information on specific projects.

Asked about using the Open Day to promote recruitment to the Panels, the Chair felt this should be kept separate but accepted the need to return to Panel membership as a matter of urgency.

It was agreed that in future the term 'project sponsor' should be changed to 'partner'.

Regarding social media, it was noted that there was an important role for the Communications Manager to counter misinformation. Some projects such as Riverside, had encountered the negative impact of incorrect assertions on social media. It was agreed not to use Facebook, but the programme will use the Open Day to raise awareness and consider appropriate routes to use social media. This might include consultancy support.

## **6. Business plan update**

The Board was informed that the remaining Business Plans had been submitted in September and that all projects were now being appraised by DLUHC. The submissions were among items discussed with DLUHC civil servants who visited the Council on 4<sup>th</sup> October to view projects in Brighouse (Town Deal), Halifax (FHSF) and Todmorden. No timescale could be given on approval although no issues had been highlighted.

The Board was asked what would be its position post Open Day should funding not be approved? The Chair answered that the Open Day was setting out our vision for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Market Town. Any funding decision does not change that vision and failure to fund the proposals would be for the Government to explain, not the Board.

## 7. Governance

A report was presented setting out the changing role of the Board moving forward. The TIP and Business Plans were the result of 17 years of consultation and the dedicated work of the Board in turning the vision into a series of projects. Moving forward, this role would change to one of monitoring and interrogation of programme and projects, and as champions of the Town Deal Programme.

This change of role would inevitably bring a change in skill sets and structure, such as a growing importance for the Panels to ensure issues such as sustainability and social value played a prominent role in delivery. This in turn raised questions about capacity, and how panels would be serviced.

It was noted that Tim Benjamin and Frankie Mullen have both stood down and that the changing role of the Board may mean others consider their position, using their expertise to bear on Panels for instance. The Chair urged any Board members who wished to discuss the future of the Board, or their role in Governance, to contact her for a chat.

It was noted there are now vacancies for 1 private and 1 voluntary sector representative. The Board agreed the recruitment should await clarification of skills gaps on the Board as it assumes its new role. The Board agreed Panel membership might also benefit from awaiting the decision on funding from DLUHC.

Regarding capacity, the Board agreed to a recommendation we move to bi-monthly meetings, as its monitoring role did not necessitate monthly meetings and would benefit from a more measured assessment of progress. The Programme Team will introduce a dashboard for reporting, highlighting RAG status, key issues, and financial and output data succinctly as a basis for discussion.

It was agreed that Panels would also meet bi-monthly, on the intermittent months between Boards. This would mean Panels can realise their potential by having stronger terms of reference and holding more structured meetings, reporting to the Board. The Chair again stressed the need to find a way of servicing or supporting the Panels as volunteers have limited capacity.

- **Action:** It was agreed that the Chair and Programme Manager should meet to discuss options to develop the Panels with Panel Chairs.

**Action:** The proposed Investment Panel should be chaired by a Board member or someone with a lot of experience in securing public and / or private investment.

Regarding the hosting of future meetings, it was suggested that options be explored to encourage more face-to-face work, whilst recognising the time restraints on working Board members.

- **Action:** Programme Manager to explore options for a hybrid approach to future meetings.

## 8. Any other business

The Board noted that there was consultation underway regarding the Calderdale Climate Action Plan.

- **Action:** Kate McNicholas to present an overview of the Climate Action Plan to Panel members

### Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December at 6pm by Zoom