

# Public Document Pack

## Darwen Town Deal Board

Friday, 10th July, 2020  
Teams Meeting  
2.00 pm

---

### AGENDA

1. **Welcome, Introduction and Apologies**
2. **Minutes and Matters Arising from Board Meeting on 26th June 2020**  
**Darwen Town Deal Board Action Minutes** **2 - 6**
3. **Update on the development of the Darwen Town Investment Plan**
4. **Update on Town Deal Accelerated Capital Funds**  
**Darwen Town Deal Board - Chairman's Update - 10 July 2020 - final** **7 - 10**
5. **Items for Next Board Meeting**
6. **Any Other Business**
7. **Date of next meeting - 2pm Friday 24th July 2020**

Date Published: 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020

**DARWEN TOWN DEAL BOARD**

**ACTION MINUTES**

**FRIDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2020**

**VIRTUAL MEETING USING MS TEAMS**

**PRESENT: Board Members:**

Wayne Wild, Group Commercial Director of WEC Group Ltd (Chair of Darwen Deal Board); Rt. Hon. Jake Berry MP; Phil Riley, Executive Member for Growth and Development BwDBC; Cllr John East, Leader of Darwen Town Council; Miranda Barker, Chief Executive of East Lancashire Chamber and Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board Director; John Wilkinson, Regional Director of Suez Recycling and Recovery UK; Janet Pearce, Chair of Keep Darwen Tidy; Glenda Brindle, Chair of Governors Aldridge Academy; Dr Fazal Dad, Chief Executive and Principal of Blackburn College, and Gary Aspden, Global Brand and Design Consultant, Adidas.

**Support Officers**

Martin Kelly, Director of Growth and Development, BwDBC; Clare Turner, Town Centre and Markets Manager, BwD BC; Natalie Banks, Digital Communications Team Leader, BwD BC; Phil Llewellyn, Governance and Democratic Manager, BwD BC; Suzanne Jones, Assistant Director, Cities and Local Growth Unit, BEIS/DHCLG.

Page 2

	ITEM		Key Action
1.	<b>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</b>	<p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, apologies had been received from Cllr John Slater, Leader of the Conservative Group, BwD BC; John Sturgess, Chair of Darwen Town Centre Partnership and Steve Waggot, Chief Executive; Blackburn Rovers FC.</p> <p>Martin Kelly introduced Phil Llewellyn who would supporting the Board going forwards in terms of agendas and minutes and related</p>	<b>Noted</b>

Agenda Item 2

		governance matters. Martin noted that for future meetings, agendas would be published and available on the Council's website and in the short term, meetings would be held using MS Teams Live, until meetings in person could recommence, and a protocol for public speaking would be submitted to the next meeting.	
2.	<b>Minutes of the last meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February, Key Actions and Matters Arising</b>	<p>The Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record, with the amendment of Glenda Brindle's title, Chair of Governors, rather than Chair of Darwen Aldridge Academy.</p> <p>The Boundaries for the Deal area had been confirmed by the Government, with the majority of the parliamentary constituency included, up to the M65 boundary with Blackburn (not including Fernhurst area and Rossendale).</p> <p>Media and Communications Plan and related matters to be discussed at future meetings.</p>	<p><b>Approved</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>
3.	<b>Update on Town Fund Prospectus</b>	<p>Suzanne Jones delivered a presentation which summarised the Town Fund Prospectus.</p> <p>There were three cohorts in July, October and January, with the opportunity to apply for more than £25 million. Bids would need to factor in the impact of Covid-19 on the local economy and evidence if the Town Deal was part of their recovery plans. Bids for more than £25M would be subject to additional scrutiny, with two opportunities to submit Town Investment Plans.</p> <p>Support was available via the Towns Hub, which included a number of partners, with Arup &amp; Co available to assist to provide specialist support.</p>	<b>Noted</b>

		<p>Members of the Board debated the best timeline to submit a bid, and it was felt that the bid should be submitted in the October to January window. There was also discussion on the impact of the Covid-19 on local businesses, with the view that the bid should not be Covid-19 based, as other support was available, and it would also be too late to help by the time funding was received.</p> <p>The general view of the Board was that progress was required as soon as possible, and that the detail of the Town Investment Plan (TIP) would be developed in due course.</p>	
4	<b>Chairman's Update</b>	<p>The Chair introduced his report, stating the need for progress as soon as possible.</p> <p>Given the delay generated by Covid-19 on progressing the TIP, and the urgent need to develop greater momentum, the Chair had taken the initiative, with support from Jake Berry MP and Cllr Phil Riley, to identify additional consultancy support to enable the Board to make swifter progress.</p> <p>Subject to Board confirmation, and the finalisation of formal contracting arrangements by Blackburn with Darwen Council, the accountable body, the Chair recommended to the Board the appointment of Genecon, a specialist economic consultancy with a strong track record in preparing business-cases like TIPs for Government.</p> <p>The Chair also proposed that the Board engage Feria-Urbanists / Urban ETC, a specialist urban design practice, to provide additional support to the Board in developing the vision for the TIP. This input was estimated at a maximum cost of £10,000.</p> <p>The development and delivery of a strong TIP was expected to cost up to £160,000, an upper range cost figure which included scope to</p>	

secure additional professional service inputs should these be required. The Board had been allocated £161,000 by Government to undertake this task.

The Chair advised that he would like to introduce the Genecon and Feria / Urban ETC teams to the Board at the next meeting on 10 July, with a view to starting our work on scoping and agreeing the work programme, consistent with new Government guidance.

The Board discussed the proposal and all were in agreement that this was the best solution to kick start progress.

Suzanne Jones confirmed that support was also available from Arup & Co and her Department, once projects had been identified, and also confirmed that in terms of revenue support, there was up to 10% leeway within Capital Infrastructure projects.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Board:

1. Note the content of this report;
2. Given the need for urgency, endorse the appointment of Genecon and Urban ETC to support the development of the Darwen Town Investment Plan, subject to Blackburn with Darwen Council, the Board's accountable body, finalising contract arrangements; and
3. Request a further Board update on finalised on costs and contracting arrangements.

**Noted**

**Approved**

**Approved**

5	<b>Items for Next Board Meeting</b>	Presentations by Genecon and Feria / URBAN ETC and Public Speaking Protocol.	<b>Noted</b>
6	<b>Any Other Business</b>	None.	
7	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> July at 2pm and then every two weeks at 2pm on a Friday or as arranged following consultation with the Chair.	<b>Noted</b>

## **Chairman's Report**

### **Update on Town Deal Accelerated Capital Projects**

#### **Darwen Town Deal Board**

**10 July 2020**

---

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this report is two-fold. Firstly, to share the welcome news that Government intends to provide a grant of £750,000 to enable the Darwen Town Deal Board to accelerate the delivery of key projects. Secondly, to seek Board approval to develop three “accelerated” project proposals for consideration by Government by the deadline of 14 August.

#### **Context**

Government has made a number of announcements regarding national investment plans, including £5 Billion in new infrastructure developments, with an additional £100M for the Town Deal programme.

Darwen is one of 101 Town Deal initiatives in England and has been allocated £750,000 in grant funding to enable the Board to accelerate the delivery of key projects – projects that can be further developed within our Town Investment Plan (TIP).

The Government's unexpected grant funding offer must be spent by 31 March 2021. As discussed at our last Board meeting, we intend to submit our TIP no later than January 2021, therefore, in our case, we are likely to be advancing the delivery of projects before the formal agreement of our overarching TIP, which is positive in many ways.

However, given the need to spend this funding by the end of this financial year, Government requires the Board's confirmation by 14 August of its project delivery priorities. As the Town Deal's accountable body, Blackburn with Darwen Council is also required to confirm to Government that these accelerated project proposals provide good value for money and are consistent with the national Town Deal investment framework.

#### **Project Proposals**

Given the need for urgency in securing this welcome funding support, I recommend the Board focuses on project proposals that can:

- Meet Government spending requirements;
- Meet the VFM and assurance requirements of Blackburn with Darwen Council, as the Board's accountable body;
- Evidence a significant level of commitment from project sponsors, including financial support for their project proposal;

- Deliver strategic outcomes that will support the early delivery of our TIP – its objectives priorities and outcomes – with the potential to be further developed in our TIP over the coming years; and
- Signal the early ambition and relevance of the Town Deal initiative to improving the long-term prospects of Darwen.

With the above in mind, I recommend we focus on three key projects, which can meet the tests outlined above, though they will require a deeper level of assessment by the Board before submission to Government. The three project proposals are:

### **Darwen Tower**

The Tower was built in 1898 by public subscription to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The Tower is a grade 2 listed building.

There is a highly developed project proposal to repair and upgrade the Tower, the emblem of Darwen, and a landmark of regional significance, with strong connectivity to the town centre.

Darwen Rotary has led community fund raising activities that have helped to secure £60,000 in support for this project. A maximum Town Deal funding contribution of £250,000 would secure the improvement of this cherished local monument and visitor landmark, with the potential to deliver additional upgrades, including environmentally friendly illumination.

There is also the opportunity to establish whether further local funding support can be secured to enhance this proposal.

The Tower is the responsibility of Blackburn with Darwen Council and they would be the lead project sponsor with the support of community partners.

### **J4 Skate Park**

The Skate Park is a regional facility, based in Darwen, located next to Darwen Vale School, and serves over 5,000 active BMX, skateboard and scooter users.

The proposal would create a new Urban Sports Village, which would increase the current capacity of the facility by 300% by adding a new outdoor, all-weather arena that meets Olympic (and COVID secure) standards. There is the potential to establish Darwen as the Northern-base of the British Olympic BMX and skateboard teams.

The enhanced venue would have the capability and capacity to host Olympic trials, national and world championships.

The venue and its provision is capable of delivering inclusive and high quality alternative education and apprenticeship / employment opportunities to some of our most disadvantaged young people.

The proposal also intends to deliver new business premises and employment opportunities in support services, and retail and food concessions, located in designer freight containers, pioneered in Box Park, Shoreditch, London, and many leading European cities.

The proposal offers the opportunity for a further phase of development, including the provision of a hotel to support extended training camps of GB teams and provide



summer camp / holiday experiences for enthusiasts / new starters and their families and friends.

The first phase of this project is seeking £250,000 in Town Deal funding which would be matched with a similar level of funding secured from Sports England, British Cycling and business sponsors.

The project sponsor is J4 Skate Park CIC.

### **AFC Darwen**

The AFC Darwen was formed in 1870. The club is one of the oldest established football teams in the world, but has endeavoured to evolve, compete and continue to serve the local community.

Unlike most amateur and professional clubs, AFC Darwen is debt free but resources are limited in delivering a step-change in existing facilities.

However, a private investment programme valued at £550,000 has recently delivered a new 3G pitch and upgraded the club's changing facilities. The ground is owned by Blackburn with Darwen Council on a 75-year lease to AFC Darwen.

Proposals are in development to bring forward new and complementary sporting and community facilities with income generating potential.

It is proposed that the Town Deal provides £250,000 to match private investment support to accelerate the provision and upgrade of new sporting and community facilities.

The project applicant is AFC Darwen.

### **Conclusion**

The project proposals set out in this report both celebrate the illustrious history of Darwen and look forward to a new future. The projects are well embedded and highly regarded by the local communities, users and stakeholders they serve.

The Tower is central to defining and shaping the cultural identity of Darwen and plays a key role in promoting the area as a place to live, visit and enjoy.

The Skate Park and AFC Darwen proposals alone are strong, but perhaps more importantly when combined they could create a sporting and leisure spatial cluster of regional significance while serving local needs.

At this stage, I anticipate the three proposals would fully utilise the £750,000 made available by Government.

The development of our TIP will create further opportunities to strengthen these assets and cross-linkages. Our TIP will allow other cultural and sporting opportunities to come forward as part of a compelling investment programme that drives growth and supports a healthy, creative and happy Darwen.

Government timescales are very demanding but we must respond positively to the opportunity provided. To make progress, I suggest project sponsors are invited to present their proposals to the next Board meeting with the accountable body providing an assessment of each proposal.

I welcome the views of the Board on seizing this unexpected opportunity to make an early and positive difference in Darwin and to signal the Board's intentions more widely, with further transformational change delivered by our TIP in the coming years.

### **Recommendations**

The Board is asked to:

1. Note and comment on the contents of this report;
2. Agree that the three projects set out in this report - Darwin Tower, J4 Skate Park and AFC Darwin - form the basis of the Board's accelerated capital projects submission to Government by the deadline of 14 August;
3. In support of the above, request further details on each project proposal for consideration by the Board at its next meeting, with a presentation from each project sponsor; and
4. Request an assessment of each project by the accountable body, consistent with the requirements of Government.