

Public Document Pack

Darwen Town Deal Board

Friday, 24th July, 2020

2.00 pm

MS Teams Meeting

AGENDA

1. **Welcome, Introduction and Apologies**
2. **Minutes and Matters Arising from Board Meeting on 10th July 2020**
Darwen Town Deal Board Action Minutes - 10th July 2020 - mk **3 - 9**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
Any Board Member with an interest on any agenda item should declare this at the meeting, and seek advice as appropriate before taking part in discussions and voting on that item.
4. **Update on Town Investment Plan Work Programme**
Presentation by Graeme Collinge (Genecon), Richard Eastham (Feria Urbanism) and Philip Thornton (The Chase).
5. **Draft Communications Strategy 2020**
Darwen Town Deal Board - Draft Communications Strategy 2020 - covering report - 24 July 2020 - final **10 - 21**
Darwen Town Deal Board -Draft Communications Strategy 2020 Paper - final July 2020
Darwen Town Deal Board - Media Protocol - July 2020
Darwen Deal - Comms Partners and Channels NB - July 2020
6. **Update on Accelerated Town Deal Capital Projects**
Darwen Town Deal Board - Accelerated Projects Update - 24 July 2020 - final **22 - 26**
7. **Items for Next Board Meeting**

8. Any Other Business

9. Date of Next Meeting - Friday 7th August 2020

Date Published: 21st July 2020

DARWEN TOWN DEAL BOARD

ACTION MINUTES

FRIDAY 10TH JULY, 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;; 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.

Also Present

Consultants - Graham Collinge; Richard Eastham and Philip Thornton.

	ITEM		Key Action
1.	Welcome, Introduction and Apologies	Cllr Phil Riley, the Vice 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	Noted

		<p>FC, and John Wilkinson, Regional Director of Suez Recycling and Recovery UK.</p> <p>The Vice Chair made reference to the recent £750k funding to fast track progress, which had to be allocated by mid-August.</p> <p>Martin Kelly advised that he had received notification from DHCLG that meetings did not have to be broadcast live and therefore until meetings could be held in public they would continue to be held as ordinary Teams meetings. However, agendas and papers will continue to be made publically available, consistent with the Board's agreed terms of reference.</p>	
2.	Minutes of the last meeting held on 26th June, Key Actions and Matters Arising	<p>The Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record.</p> <p>Phil Llewellyn advised that an agenda item for Declarations of Interest would on all agendas going forward and asked Board Members to advise if they had anything to declare.</p>	<p>Approved</p> <p>Noted</p>
3.	Update on the development of the Darwen Town Investment Plan	<p>Martin Kelly introduced Graeme Collinge from Genecon, Richard Eastham from Feria Urbanism and Philip Thornton from The Chase, who were the consultants referred to at the last meeting, and who would be working together on the development of the Darwen Town Investment Plan.</p> <p>Graham, Richard and Philip delivered a presentation (attached) which gave details of their companies and recent projects and bids. It was stated that there was no advantage in submitting an early bid and that a January submission date was recommended, with the opportunity to submit earlier if the TIP was ready.</p> <p>The process to develop the TIP was outlined, with engagement with</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p> Darwen TIP - Board Presentation 1 10.07.2</p>

		<p>local businesses and the community very important, and the methods to achieve this were outlined.</p> <p>A more detailed Work Plan would be submitted to the next meeting for the Board to consider.</p> <p>Some members of the Board expressed concerns about the management of public expectation and perceptions, given some community stakeholders may already assume Darwen has secured its Town Deal allocation of £25M. Securing the maximum allocation will be subject to submitting the strongest possible Town Investment Plan. The consultants and Jake Berry MP confirmed the importance of ensuring the public were part of the process, with local support being crucial to successful bids. As part of this process, the public would also need to understand that project proposals will need to be prioritised against agreed objectives and evidence with (potentially) many projects unlikely to be funded from the Towns Fund. The Board needs to ensure communications and engagement activities keep expectations grounded, whilst encouraging residents to get involved in a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform Darwen.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Chairman’s Update on Town Deal Accelerated Capital Funds</p>	<p>The Chairman referred to his Update, with the welcome news that Government intended to provide a grant of £750,000 to enable the Darwen Town Deal Board to accelerate the delivery of key projects, which Suzanne Jones advised was additional to the up to £25M that would be bid for.</p> <p>The Chair also sought Board approval to develop three “accelerated” project proposals for consideration by Government by the deadline of 14 August.</p> <p>The Government had made a number of announcements regarding national investment plans, including £5 Billion in new infrastructure</p>	

developments, with an additional £100M for the Town Deal programme.

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

The Government's unexpected grant funding offer had to be spent by 31 March 2021.

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

Given the need for urgency in securing the welcome funding support, the Chair recommended the Board focus on three key projects, which could meet the relevant criteria and tests, though they will required a deeper level of assessment by the Board before submission to Government. The three project proposals were:

Darwen Tower

J4 Skate Park

AFC Darwen

The report set out further details of the proposed projects and the benefits that they would deliver.

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

The Skate Park and AFC Darwen proposals alone were 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, it was anticipated the three proposals would fully utilise the £750,000 made available by Government.

To make progress, the Chair suggested project sponsors be invited to present their proposals to the next Board meeting with the accountable body providing an assessment of each proposal.

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 - Darwen Tower, J4 Skate Park and AFC Darwen - 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.

Noted

Approved

Approved

Approved

7	Date of Next Meeting	Friday 24 th July at 2pm and then every two weeks at 2pm on a Friday or as arranged following consultation with the Chair.	Noted
---	-----------------------------	---	--------------

Darwen Town Deal Board

Draft Communications Strategy 2020

Digital Communications Team Leader, Blackburn with Darwen Council

24 July 2020

Summary

The Board has previously considered and agreed a media protocol and terms of reference which define specific responsibilities, behaviours and expectations with regard to communications by Board members.

Moving forward, the enclosed draft Communication Strategy 2020 is presented for consideration and approval. The proposed Strategy aims to advance a more proactive communications approach in support of the Board and the Town Deal.

Subject to comment and approval, the proposed Strategy would be regularly reviewed and adapted to reflect the progress made in developing the Town Investment Plan, which also includes significant opportunities for stakeholder engagement, as well as the need to manage the communication challenges and constraints generated by COVID-19.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

1. Note the contents of this report; and
2. Approve the draft Communications Strategy 2020, as set out at Appendix 1.

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION
Darwen Town Deal Board
Communications Strategy 2020

The Darwen Town Deal is described as a once in a generation opportunity to make a real difference to the town and surrounding areas.

Up to £25m is available and the Darwen Town Deal Board - which is made up of private and public sector members - is developing a strong Town Investment Plan to secure maximum investment support from Government.

The aim is to develop a robust long-term plan, with Town Deal investment supporting prioritised projects that will shift the dial on economic growth and improve the lives of residents and their life chances.

Board members have been selected with the skills and expertise needed to develop the strongest strategic business case possible to secure and leverage the public and private funding needed – this is fundamental as the full amount of Town Deal funding is not guaranteed.

Experienced consultants have also been appointed to support the board in developing the long-term plan, which is focused on the ambitions for the area over the next 10 to 15 years and beyond.

The key task for the board is to prepare and submit the Darwen Investment Plan, consistent with Government guidance, by no later than 31 January, 2021.

This Communications Strategy aims to support this key task by setting out how the Board will clearly, positively and regularly engage with the key stakeholders who they are working to represent – including residents, businesses partners and community groups.

This approach will be developed further in conjunction with the specialist consultancy team supporting the development of the Board's Investment Plan, as targeted public and business engagement is a key element in developing the Plan.

Given on-going COVID-19 impacts, and the evolving management of the situation, the Board's communication and engagement approach will need to be regularly reviewed and adapted.

Context

In September 2019, the Government invited 101 towns to develop proposals for a new Town Deal Fund with more than £3bn being made available across the country.

The Darwen Town Deal Board has been formed to drive forward a Town Investment Plan - a place-focused investment plan with the opportunity to secure up to £25m in Government funding to transform the area.

(By exception, Town Investment Plans can secure up to £50M in investment support from Government but such plans would need to demonstrate their ability to deliver impacts of regional importance).

The plan needs to be ambitious and develop new growth and prosperity opportunities over the next 10/15 years.

It also needs to articulate a vision that reflects the priorities of community and business stakeholders.

Using Government capacity funding to support the development of the plan, the Board has now appointed highly-respected consultants Genecon, Feria Urbanisation and Chase Architecture.

The consultants are all locally-based with knowledge of the area – indeed architect Philip Thornton was born in the town – and they have been involved in projects involving Darwen so already have a good understanding of the area.

A work plan is being prepared to ensure the submission of the Darwen Investment Plan by the deadline of 31 January, 2021.

Their work will help shape the key themes identified for the Investment Plan and therefore the key messaging for this Communications Strategy, which will remain a working document to complement the work of the Board.

Early themes highlighted at the first Board meeting of the Darwen Town Deal included:

- Darwen Town Centre Transformation Programme
- Darwen Employment and Housing Growth Programme
- Connected Town and Communities Programme
- A *Future First* Business Growth Programme
- Darwen Clean Energy Programme
- Greener Darwen Programme
- Darwen Icons and Creativity Programme
- Darwen Youth Programme
- Darwen Social Infrastructure Programme

These initial high level themes will be reviewed and refined in light of the economic and spatial analysis undertaken in support of the plan.

Objectives

The three primary objectives of this Communications Strategy are:

1. To ensure a consistent approach to all external communications activity relating to the work of the Board and the Darwen Town Deal;
2. To effectively engage with all appropriate stakeholder groups; and
3. To raise the profile of the Board and develop and promote an ambitious vision and plan for Darwen.

Board Members

The Darwen Town Deal Board has 13 members who can act as positive Comms Ambassadors.

In terms of media relations, a clear protocol has been agreed by all members naming the Chair as key spokesperson for the group as well as lead for signing off all proactive and reactive communications.

It is important that this protocol is strictly adhered to in order to ensure a consistent and cohesive approach to sharing key messages.

The Board will be supported with communications activity and media relations by Blackburn with Darwen Council's Communications Team.

Currently, Natalie Banks, Digital Communications Team Leader, has been assigned as the lead and primary contact.

A copy of the full protocol is included as **Appendix 2**.

Full list of members:

Name	Board Position	Role/Organisation
Wayne Wild	Chair	Group Commercial Director of WEC Group Ltd
Cllr Phil Riley	Vice Chair	Executive Member for Growth and Development for Blackburn with Darwen Council
Jake Berry		MP for Rossendale and Darwen
Cllr John Slater		Leader of the Conservative Group for Blackburn with Darwen Council
Cllr John East		Leader of Darwen Town Council
John Sturgess		Chair of Darwen Town Centre Partnership
Gary Aspden		Adidas Global Brand and Design Consultant
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 at Aldridge Academy
Dr Fazal Dad		Principal at Blackburn College

Steve Waggott		Chief Executive of Blackburn Rovers
---------------	--	-------------------------------------

A new email address is to be created as a single point of contact for board members to forward on any contacts from stakeholders.

This will be closely monitored by the lead officers at Blackburn with Darwen Council to ensure consistency in responses.

Audience

The revised boundary for the Darwen Town Deal includes Darwen, Lower Darwen, Darwen Tower, Tockholes, Belmont, Hoddlesden, Edgworth and Turton.

The current area is home to an estimated population of 32,000 people with almost 800 businesses providing 8,000 jobs.

Audience	Channels
Residents (inc. interested community groups)	<p>Dedicated website – with contact form – this could be developed to include latest news section TBC</p> <p>Social media – dedicated Darwen Town Deal Board page on Facebook/Twitter – TBC</p> <p>Email bulletin – directly updating residents who have registered their interest</p> <p>Prominent signage – if budget allows.</p> <p>BwD Council channels (including Shuttle news page, website and established social media pages).</p> <p>Channels available to Board members – please see Appendix 2.</p> <p>Local media outlets – including Lancashire Telegraph, Lancashire Live and BBC Radio Lancashire. Close links already established through BwD Council Comms Team.</p> <p>Regional media – including BBC North West Tonight and Granada Reports for major announcements.</p> <p>Shuttle magazine – annual publication distributed by Blackburn with Darwen Council.</p>

Audience	Channels
	<p>Local social media forums – including Darwen Then and Now.</p> <p>Notice boards in the market and town centre.</p>
Businesses	<p>Full list of local businesses to be compiled using Business Rates data.</p> <p>The dedicated Darwen Town Deal website – this could be developed to include a section specific to businesses TBC</p> <p>Social media content targeted at the business audience</p> <p>Business email bulletin – directly updating businesses which have registered their interest</p> <p>Prominent signage – if budget allows.</p> <p>BwD Council channels (including Shuttle news page, website, established social media pages – particularly Twitter and The Hive network).</p> <p>Channels available to Board members – please see Appendix 3 – particular focus on the East Lancashire Chamber audience.</p> <p>Local business media outlets – including Lancashire Business View, business pages in the Lancashire Telegraph, Lancashire Live and BBC Radio Lancashire. Close links already established through BwD Council Comms Team.</p> <p>Regional media – including BBC North West Tonight and Granada Reports for major announcements.</p> <p>Business networking events – local and regional.</p>
Community partners	To be developed further with the Board and project consultants.

Audience	Channels
Investors and developers	Again, to be fully developed further with Board and project consultants in-line with the proposed Town Investment Plan.

As the key themes of the Darwen Investment Plan are agreed, a more detailed work plan for how to best communicate and engage with each stakeholder will be drafted and agreed with the Board.

Initially, the updates will be generated from the outcomes of the regular Board meetings – in a bid to be open and transparent the agenda and minutes will be available online at blackburn.gov.uk.

Where possible, reports should be made available to the Comms Lead to be able to prepare updates that can be signed off and shared in a timely manner.

The focus should always be on proactive rather than reactive.

Key Messages

The primary task of the Board is to develop and submit an ambitious Darwen Investment Plan by 31 January 2021.

This needs to be consistent with Government guidance - to deliver new growth opportunities for the area.

Darwen can secure up to £25m of Government funding as part of the Town Deal initiative, though the final funding allocation will be subject to the quality of the Darwen Investment Plan.

Town Deal investment alone will not deliver long-term transformational change. It is important the Board align and leverage the investment plans of other key public and private sector partners in support of the Darwen Investment Plan.

The Board is chaired by Wayne Wild – Group Commercial Director of WEC Group – the town’s largest private sector employer.

It is a strategic board made up of business and community leaders,

The Board has the skills and expertise needed to be able to develop a strong Darwen Investment Plan.

The Board will work with residents, businesses and community partners to develop the Darwen investment Plan.

It is one of 101 towns across the country invited to apply for £3.6 billion of Government funding.

An extra £750,000 has been made available to the Board to accelerate projects it has identified. Initial proposals include the restoration of Darwen Tower, investment in the

facilities at AFC Darwen and the development of the Junction4 Skate Park as part of a wider Darwen “sports village” opportunity.

The Darwen Town Deal funding is a once in a generation opportunity to transform the town.

It is for strategic projects that will shift the dial on economic growth and improve the lives of residents and their life chances.

The Board is representing the views of those it serves – including residents, businesses, partners and community groups.

It will actively engage with those groups and listen to their views as it develops the investment plan.

The Plan will articulate an ambitious vision and growth priorities for Darwen for the next 10 to 15 years and beyond.

Evaluation

In order to ensure the Communications Strategy is effective and meeting the proposed objectives, it will be regularly reviewed and the impact evaluated.

Key indicators for success will include:

- The number of residents who know about the Darwen Town Deal and the Darwen Town Deal Board
- The turnout for engagement events where participation is encouraged
- The response to online engagement activity
- The number of interactions with residents – through the dedicated website and those then signing up for regular email updates
- The reach of social media activity across the platforms
- Positive coverage in the local press and regional news outlets

A baseline and target to be achieved will need to be agreed for each indicator.

Darwen Town Deal Board

Media Relations Protocol

Media relations will play an important role in updating local residents and businesses on the work of the Darwen Town Deal Board and the development of the Darwen Investment Plan for Government.

It will also help inform stakeholders about public consultation events – actively encouraging interested parties to have their say on key themes for potential funding.

The Communications Team at Blackburn with Darwen Council will help provide support to the Board with a communications plan to be developed and agreed with members. It will include a multi-channel approach with media relations forming just one part of the strategy.

This protocol will help to ensure a seamless approach to clearly communicating key messages externally.

Media Relations Framework:

- All media enquiries should be directed to the Blackburn with Darwen Communications Team.
- A response will be drafted with the Chair, who will be the key spokesperson and will have final sign-off on all statements and press releases.
- In the event that the Chair of the Board is unavailable for comment, the Vice Chair will become the nominated key spokesperson.
- Other Board members will be quoted to reflect the theme and expertise within the Board. These statements will be co-ordinated by the Communications Team and signed-off by the Chair.
- A communications plan agreed by the Board will identify milestones and opportunities to share key messaging and information with the media with the option of press briefings, where appropriate.

As part of the framework, Board members are reminded of the need to respect confidential and sensitive information, as outlined in the Darwen Town Deal Board Code of Conduct.

Darwen Town Deal Board

Media Relations Protocol

Media relations will play an important role in updating local residents and businesses on the work of the Darwen Town Deal Board and the development of the Darwen Investment Plan for Government.

It will also help inform stakeholders about public consultation events – actively encouraging interested parties to have their say on key themes for potential funding.

The Communications Team at Blackburn with Darwen Council will help provide support to the Board with a communications plan to be developed and agreed with members. It will include a multi-channel approach with media relations forming just one part of the strategy.

This protocol will help to ensure a seamless approach to clearly communicating key messages externally.

Media Relations Framework:

- All media enquiries should be directed to the Blackburn with Darwen Communications Team.
- A response will be drafted with the Chair, who will be the key spokesperson and will have final sign-off on all statements and press releases.
- In the event that the Chair of the Board is unavailable for comment, the Vice Chair will become the nominated key spokesperson.
- Other Board members will be quoted to reflect the theme and expertise within the Board. These statements will be co-ordinated by the Communications Team and signed-off by the Chair.
- A communications plan agreed by the Board will identify milestones and opportunities to share key messaging and information with the media with the option of press briefings, where appropriate.

As part of the framework, Board members are reminded of the need to respect confidential and sensitive information, as outlined in the Darwen Town Deal Board Code of Conduct.

The contact number for the Darwen Town Deal Comms Lead, Natalie Banks is: 01254 588677 – email: Natalie.banks@blackburn.gov.uk

Appendix 3 – Darwen Town Deal Comms partners and available channels

Organisation/group	Website	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
WEC Group Ltd	https://www.wec-group.com/	https://www.facebook.com/wecgroupLtd	https://twitter.com/wecgroupLtd	https://www.instagram.com/wecgroupLtd/
BwD Council	www.blackburn.gov.uk	https://www.facebook.com/BlackburnDarwenCouncil	https://twitter.com/blackburndarwen	https://www.instagram.com/bwdcouncil/
BwD - Darwen Town Centre	https://darwentowncentre.co.uk/	https://www.facebook.com/DarwenTC		
BwD -Darwen Market	https://darwentowncentre.co.uk/market/	https://www.facebook.com/DarwenMarkets	https://www.facebook.com/DarwenMarkets	https://www.instagram.com/darwenmarkets/
MP - Jake Berry	https://www.jakeberry.org/	https://www.facebook.com/jakeberryofficial	https://twitter.com/JakeBerry	https://www.instagram.com/jakeberrymp/
Darwen Town Council	https://www.darwencouncil.co.uk/	https://www.facebook.com/DarwenTownCouncil	https://twitter.com/DarwenCouncil	
East Lancashire Chamber of Trade	https://www.chamberelancs.co.uk/	https://www.facebook.com/elancschamber	https://twitter.com/elancschamber	

Appendix 3 – Darwen Town Deal Comms partners and available channels

Suez UK	https://www.suez.co.uk/en-gb	https://www.facebook.com/suezukofficial	https://twitter.com/suezUK	https://www.instagram.com/suez_group/
Keep Darwen Tidy		https://www.facebook.com/groups/586233661717212	https://twitter.com/DarwenTidy	https://www.instagram.com/keepdarwentidy/
Aldridge Academy	http://www.daca.uk.com/	https://www.facebook.com/DarwenAldridgeCommunityAcademy	https://twitter.com/DarwenAcademy	
Blackburn College	https://www.blackburn.ac.uk/	https://www.facebook.com/BBCol	https://twitter.com/bbcollege	https://www.instagram.com/blackburncollege/
Blackburn Rovers	https://www.rovers.co.uk/	https://www.facebook.com/1Rovers	https://twitter.com/Rovers	https://www.instagram.com/rovers/

Darwen Town Deal Board

Update on Town Deal Accelerated Capital Projects

Director of Growth & Development, Blackburn with Darwen Council

24 July 2020

Introduction

The Board meeting on 10 July considered and approved three project proposals - Darwen Tower, J4 Skate Park and AFC Darwen - to benefit from the Government's early award of an additional £750,000 to accelerate their delivery.

The Government's funding contribution is additional to the final funding allocation the Darwen Deal will secure, which is ultimately dependent on the submission of the strongest possible Town Investment Plan by 31 January, 2021.

This report provides further detail on the three project proposals and an additional request for feasibility funding support for an emerging project proposal - ANCA, Aldridge North Cricket Academy - which complements the emerging development of a Darwen Sports Village opportunity of both scale and quality.

Project Proposals

The Board recognised the need to move quickly to seize the additional funding opportunity provided by Government. It was also recognised that the three projects considered and agreed by the Board can:

- Meet Government spending requirements;
- Comply with the financial assurance requirements of Blackburn with Darwen Council, as the Board's accountable body;
- Evidence a significant level of commitment from project sponsors, including the ability to secure additional financial support for their project proposal;
- Deliver strategic outcomes that will support the early delivery of the Board's Town Investment Plan - its objectives priorities and outcomes - with the potential for projects to be further developed over the coming years; and
- Signal the ambition and relevance of the Town Deal initiative to improving the long-term prospects of Darwen.

The three project proposals and feasibility analysis are set out in more detail below.

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.

This project would repair the Tower and ensure its long-term sustainability and allow this landmark to remain open to the public. The Tower is currently in very poor

condition and supported by scaffolding. The project sponsor, Blackburn with Darwen Council, would work with volunteers, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, walking groups, and other landowners, including United Utilities and Mr David Livesey, to improve paths and physical access to the Tower and across the Moors.

The project would explore opportunities to illuminate the Tower by using sustainable technologies while ensuring no adverse impacts on wildlife, consistent with planning regulations. CCTV security would also be a feature of this proposal.

This is well-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. The walk to the Tower was named as one of UK's top 10 in the Guardian's Great Winter Walks 2018.

The project proposal is costed at c. £310,000. Community fundraising activities, led by Darwen Rotary, have secured £70,000. Darwen Town Council is intending to contribute £15,000, subject to formal approval.

It is proposed that a maximum contribution of up to £225,000 be provided by the Town Deal's accelerated projects fund.

There is also the opportunity to secure further public funding from national funding bodies, including the Heritage Lottery Fund, for future phases of development.

Given the listed status of the Tower, there is requirement to use Lime Mortar to re-point walls to ensure they are weatherproof and watertight. These works will need to be undertaken in dry weather with ambient temperatures above 5°C, therefore the main works will start in March 2021 and complete September 2021.

The specialist building contractor would be in place by January 2021 with Town Deal funding committed by 31 March 2021.

Work to improve paths and access to the Tower would commence in March 2021 and complete by July 2021. These works would be undertaken by Blackburn with Darwen Council.

Required building consents and planning permissions would be secured by autumn / winter 2020.

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 project proposal is costed at £500,000. The first development phase of this project requires £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.

Future phases of development would be set within the emerging Town Investment Plan.

Agreement has been reached in principle with Darwen Vale (Aldridge Academy Group) regarding a lease for the additional land required to support the expansion of the Skate Park. This position will be formalised in the coming weeks.

Required planning permissions would be secured by autumn / winter 2020 with construction works commencing in early 2021.

The new facility would aim to open by the end of summer 2021.

The project sponsor is J4 Skate Park CIC.

AFC Darwen – Project Legend

The AFC Darwen was formed in 1870. The Club is one of the oldest established football teams in the world and 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.

Project Legend is designed to ensure the Club remains viable and at the heart of the local community. The project proposal would deliver a new two-storey multi-functional building that will include a new function room/bar, offices, and classroom and boardroom facilities. The Club have a 75-year lease and the ground is ultimately owned by BwD Council.

The project proposal is costed at £250,000 and leverage private investments and national competition funding of c. £550,000 that has already helped to deliver a new world class 3G pitch and changing room facilities. As a not-for-profit organisation there is no other funding available from the Club. Other national sport funding schemes do not cover these facility requirements.

The project proposal would be complementary and add significant value to the emerging Darwen Sports Village development opportunity.

Further phases of development and opportunities for co-location with other sporting assets could be considered as part of the emerging Town Investment Plan.

Planning permission would be required in autumn / winter 2020. Once planning has been secured, the design, contracting and construction is estimated to complete within 6/7 months.

The project applicant is AFC Darwen.

ANCA - Aldridge North Cricket Academy

Since the last Board meeting, in developing the Skate Park proposal, it has become clear there is the additional prospect of developing a complementary, high quality, publically accessible new sporting facility at Darwen Vale School – ANCA, the Aldridge North Cricket Academy.

There is potential to develop an elite cricket academy (including state-of-the-art indoor bowling and batting lanes with a Premier League standard square and outfield) for local boys and girls, hosted and operated by the Aldridge Education Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), supported by the coaching and development programmes of Lancashire County Cricket Club and the English Cricket Board, with links to Darwen Cricket Club. There is also the opportunity to make this facility the permanent home of Lancashire County Cricket Club's women's team.

A similar facility (BACA) costing £2M has been recently established by the Aldridge Education MAT in Brighton with Sussex County Cricket Club and the English Cricket Board.

It is proposed the Town Deal provides up to £25,000 to match an in-kind contribution of the Aldridge Education MAT to undertake a feasibility analysis to assess the planning and delivery implications in bringing forward this proposal while setting an overarching vision for ANCA and the Skate Park at the Darwen Vale site.

Subject to Board approval, this feasibility analysis would accelerate consideration of ANCA as a priority project within the Town Investment Plan.

The project sponsor is the Aldridge Education Multi-Academy Trust.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The three projects and the feasibility analysis would fully utilise the £750,000 made available by Government.

The development of the Town Investment Plan will create further opportunities to strengthen these assets and cross-linkages. The Board's Plan will allow other cultural and sporting opportunities to come forward as part of a compelling investment programme that drives new growth opportunities and supports a healthy, creative and dynamic Darwen.

The Board's decision to accelerate the delivery of these three projects and feasibility analysis proposal will be notified to Government by the deadline of 14 August. A letter of assurance will also be provided by Blackburn with Darwen Council, as the Board's accountable body.

Following receipt of the Government's additional funding, Blackburn with Darwen Council, as the Board's accountable body, will finalise funding agreements, including clawback provisions, key milestones and draw-down arrangements with scheme applicants, consistent with Government guidance and the Council's financial assurance framework.

The Board is asked to:

1. Note the contents of this report;
2. Request the Chair confirms to Government by the deadline of 14 August the Board's intention to allocate the additional funding support of £750,000 to accelerate the delivery of three projects (Darwen Tower, J4 Skate Park and AFC Darwen) and undertake a feasibility analysis (ANCA), as outlined in this report;
3. Note the Chief Executive of Blackburn with Darwen Council will provide a letter of assurance to Government in support of the Board's three projects and feasibility analysis;
4. Authorise the Director of Growth and Development and Chief Executive of Blackburn with Darwen Council, the Board's accountable body, to finalise funding agreements with the sponsors of the three projects and feasibility analysis, based on the information set out in this report, consistent with Government guidance and the Council's assurance framework; and
5. Request regular update reports on the progress made by the three projects and the feasibility analysis.