

**DARWEN TOWN DEAL BOARD**

**ACTION MINUTES**

**FRIDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> 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.

	<b>ITEM</b>		<b>Key Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</b>	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	<b>Noted</b>

		<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.	<b>Minutes of the last meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June, Key Actions and Matters Arising</b>	<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><b>Approved</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>
3.	<b>Update on the development of the Darwen Town Investment Plan</b>	<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><b>Noted</b></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>	<b>Noted</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Chairman’s Update on Town Deal Accelerated Capital Funds</b>	<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**



<b>7</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	Friday 24 <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>
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