

DARWEN TOWN DEAL BOARD MEETING

ACTION MINUTES

THURSDAY 8th FEBRUARY 2024

@Junction 4 Skatepark

Present: Board Members	Support Officers:	Also Present:
Wayne Wild, Chair of the Board	Clare Turner	Paul Evans
Cllr Phil Riley, Leader of Blackburn with Darwen BC	Andrew Barrow	
Glenda Brindle, Chair of Governors, Aldridge Academy	Natalie Banks	
Kevin Connor, Darwen Town Council	Martin Kelly	
Fazal Dad, Principal, Blackburn College	Phil Llewellyn	
John Sturgess		

Agenda Item		Key Action
1	Welcome, Introduction and Apologies The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, apologies were noted from: Cllr John Slater, John Wilkinson, Gary Aspden, Miranda Barker, and Sir Jake Berry MP. The Chair commented on the Olympic Standard facilities at the Skatepark, which had benefited from Town Deal funding of £250k amongst other funding received, including from British	NOTED

		<p>Cycling.</p> <p>The Chair also referenced the need to review/refresh membership of the Board, which would be highlighted further under Agenda Item 5.</p>	
2	Minutes of the last meeting held on 28th September 2023	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record.	APPROVED
3	Declarations of Interest	There were no Declarations of Interest received	NOTED
4	Chairman's Report	The Chair provided an update on news and developments since the last meeting, highlighting the breaking ground planned for April for the Darwen Youth Centre and gave a preview of some of the items being covered under Agenda Item 6.	NOTED
5	Longer Term Plan for Darwen Opportunity	<p>Martin Kelly reported on a Levelling Up Government announcement in December 2023, where 55 towns, including Darwen, would be able to secure up to £20M of new Government funding.</p> <p>There were 3 key investment themes – Safety & Security; High Streets, Heritage & Regeneration; and Transport & Connectivity. An opportunity existed to integrate LTPFT objectives and funding with established Town Deal Board arrangements, where this applied, as was the case in Darwen.</p> <p>An Informal meeting had been held on 26 January with Adam Huckabee, the Government's interim Chair of the LTPFT programme, to explain proposed approach and understand early local thinking.</p> <p>Required changes in Darwen Town Deal Board's governance arrangements had to be agreed with Government by 1 April 2024, with the Board needing to submit an agreed (or in the case of Darwen, a revised) 10-year vision with an initial 3-year LTPFT investment plan, set within a 10-year timeframe, underpinned by robust community engagement, to Government by 1 August 2024.</p>	

		<p>Confirmation was pending on whether LTPFT programme funding could be spent in 2024/25.</p> <p>The Board were asked to consider the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Government’s defined LTPFT investment area is revised to be at least coterminous with our Town Deal boundary • Note the LTPFT is described by Government as an “endowment” fund, but awaiting further clarification on whether we can use as a “revolving investment fund” over the 10-year timeframe for this initiative • Requirement for a senior local representative from Lancashire Police to comply with Government guidance • Opportunity to refresh current Board membership, further underlined by need for strong community involvement in the development of LTPFT programme. • Establish a joint Town Deal / LTPFT Board, with delivery sub-groups to be considered • Agree to re-engage Genecon to provide consultancy to support the Board’s development of a revised 10-year Vision and 3-year investment plan, with Deco Publique undertaking community engagement work • Early investment priorities, aligned to our Town Deal Investment Plan, to focus on improving the quality & safety of key public parks & spaces; realising environmental and connectivity improvements; strengthen town centre, parks, and moor linkages; culture, leisure and learning opportunities for young and old people; and “high street” and heritage interventions; these priorities and others will need to be informed by wider community engagement • The Council, as the Board’s accountable body, to consider changes in governance, in consultation with the Chair and Board, with aim of reporting to the Council’s Executive Board meeting in April 2024. • Bring a further report to the Board in mid-March to confirm key changes. 	<p>APPROVED</p>
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6	Programmes and Project Update	<p>Clare Turner & Andrew Barrow provided an update on the Darwen Town Deal Programme, sharing milestones on the Project Plans, with several projects having completed planning phases, and now moving to construction phases.</p> <p>A few of the projects were proving unviable, in particular, Project 2 – Market Annexe Apartments, and Project 7 – Golf Driving Range, and it was likely approval from DLUHC would be required to remove these from the Deal with a proposal to re-invest the funding. The Ultrafast Broadband project might need to be diversified to make it more achievable.</p> <p>Board Members discussed the Town Centre Core Project, noting that the Youth Centre improvements would lead to the loss of 60 car parking spaces at Knott Street, although around 25 would come back, and that other car parking options were available and would be promoted accordingly.</p> <p>Work on Darwen Library Theatre is planned to commence in September, with Planning anticipated in March.</p> <p>Work on the refurbishment of the Market Hall would commence in January 2025 (confidential to the Board prior to an agreed communications strategy.)</p>	NOTED
6	Communications Update	The Board received a Communications update from Natalie Banks on behalf of BwD, who advised that most of her update had been covered already via other items on the agenda.	NOTED
7	AOB	None	

