

**Sandwell Towns Fund Superboard
Rowley Regis Local Board Meeting Minutes**

Please note where the meeting notes make reference to commercially sensitive material this will be indicated next to the agenda item. A version of the minutes with commercially sensitive content redacted can be made available.

Details: Monday 7 June 2021 | 16:30 | Microsoft Teams Meeting

Attendees: Adrian Eggington - (Chair - Black Country Housing Group)
Councillor Lorraine Ashman - Town Lead Member
Emma Heatherley - West Midlands Police
Harvey Katarina - Young People's Representative
Manjula Patel - Murray Hall Community Trust
Mohammed Asif - Cradley Heath Central Mosque

Superboard Members and SMBC Cabinet Members

Councillor Danny Millard - SMBC Cabinet Member
Councillor Maria Crompton - SMBC Cabinet Member
Jude Thompson - Superboard Chair
Samantha Hadley - attending on behalf of James Morris MP

In Support:

Andy Miller - Lead for Cycling and Walking Project (SMBC Strategic Transportation and Planning Manager)
James Dennison - Lead for Canal Connectivity Project (Canal and River Trust)
Alan Reynolds - Regeneration Lead
Rebecca Jenkins - SMBC Towns Fund Programme Manager
Santokh Singh - SMBC Neighbourhood Engagement
Tariq Karim - SMBC Youth Services
Emma Parkes - SMBC Project Support
Jenny Bakewell - SMBC Note Taker
Kashmir Singh - SMBC Equalities Representative
Alan Reynolds - SMBC Regeneration Lead
Chad Smallman - SMBC Planning and Transport
Chloe King - SMBC Regeneration Lead

Apologies: Alecia Baker - Cradley Heath Community Link, Andrew Lawley - Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG, Ann Sheridan - Sandwell College, Deborah Harrold - Agewell, Helen Trueman - Grace Mary to Lion Farm Big Local, Matt Andrews - Black Country Touring, Sgt Cheryl Reed, Wayne Edwards - Business Representative and Local Resident

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Ref.	Description	Officer to Action
1.0	Welcome, Opening Remarks and Declarations of Interests	Adrian Eggington
1.1	Chair welcomed Rowley Regis Town Deal Board to today's meeting.	
1.2	No Declarations of Interest were forthcoming.	
2.0	Minutes and Action Log	Adrian Eggington
2.1	Minutes of the last meeting (13 May 2021), were declared a true and accurate record.	
2.2	Rebecca Jenkins gave apologies for the action log not being circulated prior to today's meeting.	
2.3	Alan Reynolds – Action Log Update Re: Disability Centre. The building is quite forbidding from the outside but is in relatively good condition and fit for purpose	

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2.4	<p>on the inside. Potential synergies e.g. between allotments and disabilities etc. need to be looked at.</p> <p>Rebecca Jenkins – Action Log Update Re: Satellite Hub Projects. Performance monitoring is to be captured within summary and has not been forgotten about.</p>	
<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p>	<p>Governance Review Update</p> <p>Chair welcomed Jude Thompson, Chair of Superboard to today’s meeting.</p> <p>Chair provided an update Re: Review of Governance Arrangements:</p> <p>The role of Superboard is to oversee the detailed work of the Local Board. The governance review has considered that Superboard Members want to have more involvement in project development so that they are not handed a ‘fait accompli’ and wish to be more involved.</p> <p>The remit of Local Board is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support project delivery • Provide views through engagement • Carry out stakeholder engagement in a timely manner • Champion projects • Act as a critical friend • Make recommendation to Superboard • Act as residents voice • Influence direction • Operate good governance <p>No decision making will be carried out by Local Board but will continue to make recommendations to Superboard.</p> <p>Standard invitation will be submitted to Superboard to join Local Board meetings.</p> <p>Rebecca Jenkins confirmed the Governance Paper was circulated to Local Board Members for comment and will now go before Cabinet on 16 June for formal consideration.</p> <p>Jude Thompson - Agreed governance arrangements are to help and support Superboard. Superboard members did not understand for example, that they could join Local Board meetings. They are in no way prevented from doing so. There is no point in having Local Boards if they are unable to contribute. Superboard need to be furnished with all available information from Local Board and need to ensure minutes are read. Superboard need to be in possession of full project details, in order to fully understand the projects which are put before them. This is not a tick box exercise and good governance is essential. Local Board have Superboard’s full respect.</p> <p>Chair – The process can be a little confusing and it is essential that roles are defined and understood.</p>	<p>Adrian Eggington & Rebecca Jenkins</p>

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3.10	Jude Thompson – We need to bear in mind that Local Board is more important than Superboard. Local Board are on the ground and better placed to understand local business and community needs. Jude stressed that Local Boards have his full support.	
4.0	<p>Tranche 2 Projects Focus Session</p> <p>4.1 James Dennison presented an overview of the Canal Connectivity Project for board member input and discussion, and a draft Consultation and Engagement Plan which would be used in the consultation.</p> <p>4.2 The project overview reminded board members about the location of the project on two stretches of towpath and the type of surface improvement and widening planned.</p> <p>4.3 CANAL CONNECTIVITY Town funds amount = 2.3m Match funding amount = 0 Overall project value = 2.3m Project description: Dudley No2 - Tow path improvements along Dudley No.2 Canal (between Windmill Edge Bridge and access to Old Hill Train Station) to improve walking and cycling along this route and access improvements to estate areas. Old Mainline - Tow path improvements along Old Mainline and Gower Branch canal from Tivdale Aqueduct (Netherton Tunnel) to High Bridge (Rounds Green Road) to improve walking and cycling along this route and access improvements to estate areas. This includes Rose Lane and John's Lane tunnels and building connections to Rattlechain TIP development site. Outputs and outcomes: 7.13km new or upgraded cycle or walking paths Increased provision for cycling and walking More journeys made on foot and/or by bike on canal towpaths Improved perception of place Benefits: Health benefits for residents (exercise and air quality), improved connectivity between communities and the natural environment Link to town vision: Connectivity within and between communities Draft monitoring and evaluation measures: Total length of pedestrian paths improved Total length of new cycle ways Increase in cycling journeys on canal towpath & increase in overall visitor numbers to canal</p> <p>4.4 The Chair opened the floor to questions:</p> <p>4.5 Cllr. Lorraine Ashman – Will the installation of security lighting be considered along tow paths?</p>	<p>James Dennison – Canal and River Trust</p> <p>Andy Miller - SMBC</p>

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4.6	<p>James Dennison – Wolverhampton have plans to include solar lighting. However, solar lighting is not included in our plans at the moment. This could be considered but would be subject to additional funding. Solar lighting would suit a marina environment rather than this area. Lighting would need to be bat friendly. We will need to see if this requirement comes out of the consultation. Street light would not be considered due to the cost, infrastructure and disruption to wildlife, especially bats.</p>	
4.7	<p>Emma Heatherley – Re: off road biking. Tividale canal backs onto open land where this is a problem. If tow paths are upgraded to tar and chip, it will make open land more easily accessible for bikers. Are there any measures being considered to prevent off road biking?</p>	
4.8	<p>James Dennison - This is difficult to crack. There are motorcycle barriers, but these can also block legitimate user access. Police are currently using drones to tackle off road biking. This will need to be picked up in the consultation as we don't have a solution at present.</p>	
4.9	<p>Emma Heatherley - By the time drones are involved it is usually too late as residents have already been affected and open areas damaged.</p>	
4.10	<p>James Dennison – An increase in tow path users will hopefully discourage anti-social use. It will be more off putting for bikers if more people are using the area.</p>	
4.11	<p>Alan Reynolds – Rattlechain issue has been on-going for some time. Canals are stuck in the middle Re: motor bike use. Open land is appealing, and the canal is used to access this. Trying to secure the re-development of land will be a long-term scheme. Improving tow paths will not encourage motor bike access to this area as bike users will get onto the land by whatever means necessary.</p>	
4.12	<p>Chair – How will the link between the Sandwell and Dudley border be handled?</p>	
4.13	<p>James Dennison – There are no joined up plans at the moment. Aspirations are to improve all the towpaths. There will be a line between Sandwell and Dudley but towpaths in that area are not too bad. We hope for wider improvements over the next few years.</p>	
4.14	<p>Chair – declared his organisation's involvement in a Housing Scheme in Netherton adjacent to the Sandwell border (Black Country Housing), and that there might be an opportunity for James to work with BCHG to extend the canal improvements onto the Dudley side of the towpath as part of this development.</p>	
4.15	<p>Chad Smallman – Commented on the plans to improve the canal bridge adjacent to Dacro Environmental e.g. gradient of the bridge</p>	
4.16	<p>James Dennison - Consultation includes heritage and engineers so this is very much in their hands. Totnall Bridge is probably a heritage structure. We may be able to add ramps and will get the design team involved. There are a couple of</p>	

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	other accesses which look challenging and we hope to stretch the funding. All ideas are welcome.	
4.17	Cllr. Danny Millard - Re: Signage? We will have new visitors / tow path users who are unfamiliar with the area. Will signage be installed?	
4.18	James Dennison - Signage will be included in the scheme and local people will be consulted. Good signage is essential and local intelligence is key. Links could be made with other travel corridors for a joined-up approach.	
4.19	Andy Miller – Work is underway on a signage strategy. This piece of work does not sit in isolation in Rowley but with the whole of the cycle network.	
4.20	James Dennison - Technology based approaches are also being looked at e.g. Google / Satellite Navigation etc.	
4.21	In relation to the draft consultation and engagement plan, James referred to the document that had been circulated and introduced the planned activities.	
4.22	<p>Discussion points in the meeting and through the chat function included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve the disability centre as representatives of people with disabilities • Involvement of any volunteers that are associated with the canals • Young people’s engagement to be considered through the group established at St Michael’s as part of the TIP development • Litter was one of the issues that young people at St Michael’s raised - suggestion was made that a group called WASUP (World Against Single Use Plastic) of which Harvey is a member, might be interested in a litter picking campaign to clean up the canals as part of the project 	Santokh Singh
4.23	<p>In relation to Ward Member engagement</p> <p>General conversation took place between Cllr. Lorraine Ashman and Cllr. Danny Millard Re: inviting James Dennison to the Rowley Town meeting. It was hoped this could be picked up through Ward Meetings rather than setting up separately - Santokh Singh to action.</p>	Santokh Singh / James Dennison
4.24	Draft Consultation and Engagement Plan to be updated following comments and discussion at the meeting. Santokh Singh and James Dennison to action.	
4.25	Chair – Thanked James for his presentation and Local Board Members for the useful debate. James Dennison’s e-mail is logged on this Teams call, and Local Board members should feel free contact him.	
4.26	Andy Miller shared a presentation to provide an update on the Walking and Cycling Project. The draft Consultation and Engagement Plan was circulated to Board Members.	
4.27	Project Summary presentation was shared with Local Board. Key points included:	
4.28	WALKING AND CYCLING NETWORK	

Ref.	Description	Officer to Action
	<p>Town funds amount = 1.5m Match funding amount = 0 Overall project value = 1.5m</p> <p>Project description: Improvement of walking and cycling routes within Blackheath, Cradley Heath and Oldbury improving pedestrian mobility via sustainable modes of transport.</p> <p>Outputs and outcomes: New and upgraded walking and cycling infrastructure New or upgraded road infrastructure 2420m new or upgraded cycle or walking paths Improved perceptions of the place by residents/ businesses/ visitors Increased number of visitors to arts, cultural and heritage events and venues</p> <p>Benefits: Improving transport infrastructure will ensure all residents from across the town can access any new development. Provide residents with a better and healthier environment and encourage exercise. Improving quality of life; better air quality leading to better life expectancy.</p> <p>Link to town vision: Connectivity within and between communities</p> <p>Draft monitoring and evaluation measures: Total length of resurfaced/improved road Total length of new cycleways Total length of new pedestrian paths Usage of new walking and cycling routes</p>	
4.29	<p>General conversation took place around the project and the planned engagement.</p>	
4.30	<p>In relation to elected Member workshops. It was felt that as a lot of the information shared would be duplicated it would be worthwhile combining Member sessions with Andy Miller and James Dennison. Santokh to action.</p>	
4.31	<p>Jude Thompson – Enquired if anyone has engaged with bikemap.net? Over 1,000 users are registered from Rowley alone. It would be a good idea to engage with their 1,000 users directly. People sign up and detail the area where they live which includes the local community, walkers, cyclists etc. The website works with Google and Apple. All three cycle path projects across the Town Funds could be brought together. Bike Map themselves may be interested in talking to us direct. Jude will forward details onto Rebecca Jenkins tomorrow.</p>	<p>Jude Thompson</p>
4.32	<p>Andy Miller - Welcomed Jude's suggestion and thought this contact could also be useful for post scheme monitoring.</p>	
4.33	<p>Chair – Agreed that we need to think about links to Smethwick and West Bromwich projects to ensure boroughwide coverage. People's experiences need to be captured in the consultation e.g. disability access.</p>	

Ref.	Description	Officer to Action
5.0	Draft Town Level Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	Rebecca Jenkins
5.1	Rebecca Jenkins provided update Re: Town Level Equality Impact Assessment which has been circulated to Local Board Members. Rebecca is joined by Kashmir Singh who will field any questions. The purpose of today is for board to comment on the circulated paper:	
5.2	Purpose of Item To receive a draft Equality Impact Assessment for Rowley Regis Town Deal and for Board Members to make any input to the assessment, including follow up actions requested of the Rowley Regis Town Deal projects.	
5.3	Context The December Towns Fund Guidance outlined that an Equality Impact Assessment should be conducted at Town Level for the Towns Fund Programme, along with an assessment undertaken for each project as part of the Full Business Case Process.	
5.4	Producing a draft Town-level EIA now enables discussion to take place at Local Board and Superboard for consideration to be given to any follow up actions required ahead of Full Business Cases being produced, and plans to be amended, as required.	
5.5	Considerations This draft equality impact assessment has been produced based on information to date around the 5 Towns Fund projects in Rowley Regis.	
5.6	The assessment will be updated to reflect the project-level equality impact assessments as these become available when individual Full Business Cases become available.	
5.7	Summary This draft assessment has identified that the Rowley Regis Town Deal projects, subject to FBC finalisation, will create positive impacts for the following groups with protected characteristics: Age (older and younger), and disability.	
5.8	The Town Deal projects are intended to bring economic benefits to all groups through improvements being made to connectivity, the local skills offer, maintaining a vibrant High Street in Blackheath and improvements to a local green space. This has been marked as 'no impact' in this assessment as the impact felt is anticipated to benefit all groups and the interventions are not specifically targeted/ tailored to other groups with protected characteristics.	
5.9	Rebecca confirmed this draft document will be revisited in October / November and each individual project will be reflected in the town level plan.	
5.10	Kashmir Singh – It is important for consultation to feed back into each individual project / business model. It is important to acknowledge consultation if change is proposed. The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment is to ensure there is no adverse impact on people with protected characteristic. Need to consider	

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	mitigation if it is identified that groups are affected. There is a legal duty to discharge. Kashmir confirmed he will fully support Local Board as projects progress.	
<p>6.0</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p> <p>6.6</p> <p>6.7</p> <p>6.8</p>	<p>Britannia Park Project</p> <p>Alan Reynolds provided a short update on the Britannia Park Project – Details were provided around the two available options for the building planned as part of the Britannia Park Project:</p> <p>Option A (preferred option) consists of: Larger, wider ranging building Toilet facilities Kitchen facilities Café Space to promote women’s football etc.</p> <p>Council cannot manage a project of this size alone and a partner would be required. Currently in the process of drawing up an expression of interest to go out to soft market test whether there are any partners willing to work with the Council on this and what they might be able to bring to the table This option could turn the project from being good to being great and very worthwhile.</p> <p>Option B Would consist of: Six changing rooms Bringing pitches back into use Facility would be council run Revenue budget would be funded by use of pitches</p> <p>Option A is a risk. Local Board need to consider what will happens to the building in in 4 years’ time and ensure the building created is sustainable.</p> <p>Board Members raised issues in relation to the quality of current football pitches (e.g. waterlogged leading to matches cancelled) and the need for all weather sports facilities. Existing pitches are not great, and it would be good to upgrade them to 4g with illumination (possibly in the middle of the park).</p> <p>We’re hoping to get something out to see if any partners are interested in running a facility by the end of the month. If no interest is received, then we need to stick to option B for the Full Business Case.</p> <p>Young people are currently being consulted about the inclusion of a skate park which would be exciting.</p>	<p>Alan Reynolds</p>
<p>7.0</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p>Accelerated Funding Update</p> <p>Alan Reynolds provided an update of the accelerated funding programme.</p> <p>Cycling / walking project in Oldbury is now complete. We did have a tired ring road but with the new improvements pedestrian access is much easier.</p>	<p>Alan Reynolds</p>

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7.3	Blackheath - Archer Way is complete.	
7.4	Cardale Street – An objection was received to the scheme (and although invalid, we will have to go through the process.	
7.5	Haden Hill - Planters and benches are in. The tarmac was barely dry when visitors started using it as a picnic area. The loss of the bowling green turned into positive. Local Board were encouraged to visit Haden Hill to see the improvements.	
7.6	Bearnmore playing fields - Installation of play equipment was completed last week. This looks spectacular.	
7.7	Britannia Park - Changing rooms have been demolished.	
7.8	Warrens Hall – Work is scheduled for completion in 2 weeks.	
7.9	Tividale Park - Car park is complete with major work on the changing rooms ongoing. This should be completed by the end of the month.	
7.10	Chair enquired if post work surveys are completed and these would be useful for lessons learnt, to be taken forward to next projects? Alan agreed this needs to be done.	
7.11	Chair – Thanked all concerned, the projects are coming to life and this has been a brilliant meeting.	
8.0	Any Other Business	All
8.1	No other business was forthcoming.	
9.0	Date of next meeting	N/A - Information
9.1	Thursday 8 July 2021 at 4:30pm	