

## Sandwell Towns Fund Superboard

**22 July 2021 at 16:00 hours**

**Present:** Jude Thompson, Black Country Chamber of Commerce (Chair)  
Adrian Eggington, Local Board Chair – Rowley Regis  
Chris Hinson, Local Board Chair – West Bromwich  
Geoff Foster, SCVO  
James Morris, MP Halesowen and Rowley Regis  
Sandeep Shingadia, Transport for West Midlands

**SMBC Officers:** Alan Reynolds, Senior Planner  
Alex Goddard, Sandwell Council Governance Services  
Clinton Felicio, Planning Regeneration Support Officer  
Emma Parkes, Towns Fund Programme Management Office  
Joshua Singh, Planning Regeneration Officer  
Rebecca Jenkins, Towns Fund Programme Manager  
Santokh Singh, Neighbourhood Engagement Manager  
Tammy Stokes, Interim Director - Regeneration and Growth

**Also present:** Wendy Brookfield, Greets Green Community Enterprises  
Simon Griffiths, Sandwell College  
Jane Bailey, Sandwell College  
James Dennison, Canal and River Trust  
Samantha Hadley, James Morris MP's Office  
Shaun Hunt, Sandwell College  
Phil Asquith, West Midlands Police  
Richard Nicklin, Wolverhampton University  
Talvinder Sandhu, Sandwell Council  
Kashmir Singh, Sandwell Council

45/21 **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting of the Sandwell Towns Fund Superboard.

46/21 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from the following Superboard members: -

Alan Taylor, Chair of Smethwick Local Board  
Councillor Rajbir Singh, Sandwell Council Leader  
Councillor Iqbal Padda, Sandwell Council Cabinet Member  
Gareth Bradford, West Midlands Combined Authority  
Geoff Layer, Black Country LEP  
Graham Pennington, Sandwell College  
Jo Nugent, Homes England  
John Spellar, MP Warley  
Shaun Bailey, MP West Bromwich West  
Karen Woolley, Federation of Small Business  
Keeley Bevington, West Midlands Police  
Mark Davis, SCVO  
Nicola Richards, MP West Bromwich East

Apologies for absence were received from the following Supporting Officers: -

David Stevens, Sandwell Council Chief Executive  
Surjit Tour, Director - Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer  
Lesley Hagger, Sandwell Council's Executive Director Children's Services  
Tariq Karim, Area Manager Youth Service  
Hayley Insley, Planning Regeneration Team Leader  
Alex Oxley, Planning Regeneration Support Officer  
Jenna Langford, Planning Regeneration Manager

47/21 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

48/21 **Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interests were made at the meeting: -

Adrian Eggington - Interest in Shaftesbury House Site, therefore will refrain from discussion and voting regarding the Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering Centre project.

Shaun Hunt - Interest in any matters relating to Sandwell College, therefore will refrain from discussion and voting regarding the Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering Centre project.

49/21

### **Digital Den Full Business Case**

Superboard are being asked to receive and agree Full Business Case for the West Bromwich Digital Den Project. Jude Thompson invited Chris Hinson, Chair of West Bromwich Local Board, to introduce the item.

Superboard were provided with a reminder of the project description, outcomes and outputs before receiving a summary of the content included within the Digital Den Full Business Case. Chris Hinson outlined the support and appreciation from West Bromwich Local Board Members, who received the final draft of the Digital Den Full Business Case on 14 June 2021 for final input/ comments.

Recognition and special thanks were given to Wendy Brookfield, Project Lead for the Digital Den project, and supporting officers who helped with the development of the Full Business Case.

#### **Agreed: -**

- (1) to receive and agree the final Full Business Case for Digital Den, including the project equality impact assessment, environmental impact assessment and monitoring and evaluation plan;
- (2) to recommend the Full Business Case to Cabinet for approval subject to the outcome of the Capital Appraisal review;
- (3) to note that in the event that the Full Business Case appraisal leads to minor amends / points of clarity being required, these will be addressed by the Project Lead in conjunction with the Chair of the Local Board, the Chair of the Superboard and the Council's S151 Officer;
- (4) to note that in the event that the appraisal leads to a recommendation of substantial changes to the Full Business Case, that this will be reported to Superboard with a revised Full Business Case presented for consideration;
- (5) that subject to Cabinet's approval of the Full Business Case, that the Chair of the Superboard sign the Project Summary Document for submission to MHCLG in consultation with the S151 Officer.

50/21

### **Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering Centre**

Superboard are being asked to receive and agree Full Business Case for the Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering Project, including the project location change request. Jude Thompson invited Chris Hinson, Chair of West Bromwich Local Board, to introduce the item.

Superboard were provided with a reminder of the project description, outcomes and outputs before receiving a summary of the content included within the Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering Full Business Case.

Chris Hinson highlighted the change request regarding the project location, outlining the rationale and added outputs/ benefits.

West Bromwich Local Board Members received the final draft of the Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering project Full Business Case on 13 July 2021. Local Board members were satisfied with the development of the Full Business Case documentation and supported the change request for location.

Recognition and special thanks were given to Simon Griffiths and Jane Bailey, Sandwell College Project Leads for the Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering project and supporting offers who helped with the development of the Full Business Case.

**Agreed: -**

- (1) to agree that a change request be made to MHCLG to amend the project location from Phoenix Street to the former Shaftesbury House location;
- (2) to receive and agree the final Full Business Case for Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering Centre project including the project equality impact assessment, environmental impact assessment and monitoring and evaluation plan;
- (3) to recommend the Full Business Case to Cabinet for approval subject to the outcome of the Capital Appraisal review, and MHCLG consideration of the project location change request;
- (4) to note that in the event that the Full Business Case appraisal leads to minor amends / points of clarity being required, these will be addressed by the Project Lead in conjunction with the Chair of the Local Board, the Chair of the Superboard and the Council's S151 Officer;
- (5) to note that in the event that the appraisal leads to a recommendation of substantial changes to the Full Business Case, that this will be reported to Superboard with a revised Full Business Case presented for consideration;
- (6) that subject to Cabinet's approval of the Full Business Case, that the Chair of the Superboard sign the Project Summary Document for submission to MHCLG in consultation with the S151 Officer.

51/21

**Consultation and Engagement Plans for Tranche 2 and 3 Projects**

Superboard are being asked to consider and approve Consultation and Engagement Plans for Tranche 2 and 3 projects. Jude Thompson invited Rebecca Jenkins, Towns Fund Programme Manager, to introduce the item.

During the meeting held on 17 May 2021, Superboard considered and agreed the approach for Consultation and Engagement across the Towns Fund Programme. Superboard also agreed the approach to develop project specific Consultation and Engagement Plans to ensure consultation activities are tailored to meet individual project needs.

Tranche 2 and 3 Consultation and Engagement Plans are underpinned both by a Young Peoples workstream and Elected Members workstream and follow a set format outlining the main project stakeholders, beneficiaries, focus of consultation planned and methods that will be used. The plans include a timeline for activity, some of which is planned to take place following Full Business Case approval.

Local Boards have considered all Consultation and Engagement plans and will review them regularly to ensure consultation is robust. Comments raised by Local Board members are included in the covering report and will remain under review by Local Boards to ensure they are acted upon.

Superboard were provided with an overview of the Young Peoples workstream, led by Sandwell Councils Youth Service and the Elected Members workstream.

A series of meetings have been arranged with all elected members over the next three months to ensure discussions are timely and relevant in line with the decision and approval making process. Meetings will provide an opportunity for elected members to meet with project leads to discuss and input into projects.

Jude Thompson sought questions pertaining to the Consultation and Engagement Plans for Tranche 2 and 3 Projects.

James Morris MP acknowledged the importance of engaging with young people and that this group has been included within Consultation and Engagement Plans, however he queried if there has been consideration to consult with the older demographic within communities. For example, the Britannia Park Community Hub and Greenspace Towns Fund Project is heavily focused on younger people but will have benefits for the older demographic. James Morris MP expressed this community voice is equally important.

Superboard were informed there is no specific workstream for the older demographic at programme level, however there are some specific projects where engagement with this group has been identified. At Local Board level there are community organisations representing this group, for example Agewell. Officers advised they would welcome ideas around having a specific workstream and what this would look like.

The Britannia Park Community Hub and Greenspace Project will provide an inclusive facility for all groups. During Phase 1 of the Towns Fund Programme, young people had expressed that in addition to representing the younger demographic, feedback will be provided with other groups in mind, including the older demographic to ensure an inclusive design and environment.

Adrian Eggington, Chair of Rowley Regis Local Board, advised Agewell are actively involved in the Britannia Park project and key users of the park, e.g. dog walkers and allotment users, will be included in engagement activities.

A recommendation was raised by Santokh Singh, to include Agewell on the project steering group for Britannia Park. This is in addition to being a stakeholder and will enable discussions at a higher level.

Jude Thompson agreed that consideration regarding the interaction with the older demographic is important, particularly digital integration and how residents/ community gain access to information if they are not connected to digital services.

James Morris MP asked officers to clarify If there is a formalised role for MPs to be involved in the process of consultation and engagement within their communities.

Superboard were advised that a formalised role for MPs had not been considered to date, however it is something that can be developed. James Morris MP was asked if he would be happy to work with officers and guide this approach. Further conversations would need to take place to identify the desire for MPs involvement and at what level. James Morris MP agreed to support officers with the approach to ensure consultation works for the local community. Discussions will take place outside of Superboard.

**Agreed:** to receive and approve Consultation and Engagement Plans for Tranche 2 and 3 projects.

52/21

## **Full Business Cases for Tranche 2 Projects**

Jude Thompson introduced the item and the presenters for each of the three sub-items.

Talvinder Sandhu, Sandwell Council, presented an overview of the Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Projects for West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis. This included an overview of the project description, location, outcomes and delivery timeline.

Joshua Singh, Sandwell Council, presented an overview of the West Bromwich Urban Greening Project. The presentation included an overview of the context, vision, outcomes and proposed design ideas. Joshua Singh also provided Superboard with details of Local Board feedback, project related risks, issues and next steps.

James Dennison, Canal and River Trust, provided an overview of the Rowley Regis Canal Network Connectivity Project. The presentation included an overview of project details, outputs, outcomes and consultation feedback. James Dennison also provided Superboard with details of Local Board feedback, project related risks, issues and next steps.

Chris Hinson, Adrian Eggington and Rebecca Jenkins (in the absence of Alan Taylor) outlined the support from West Bromwich, Rowley Regis and Smethwick Local Board on the above projects.

Jude Thompson sought questions pertaining to the Tranche 2 Project Discussions.

James Morris MP asked if the infrastructure plans located around the Midland Met site is dependent on the success of its opening and their timeline.

Superboard were advised the aim is to implement the scheme ahead of the Midland Met opening, which will provide a provision ready for its opening. If Midland Met works are delayed, the provision will be there ready.

James Morris MP advised there is a new friends group set up for Rowley Regis Station who can assist with consultation and reach out to connections within the community for the Rowley Regis Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Project.

Talvinder confirmed connections have been made and Sandwell Council officers are members of the Rowley Regis Station Friends Group.

Geoff Foster raised a query regarding the long-term maintenance of the Walking and Cycle provisions that will be implemented.

Talvinder advised this is a regular topic of discussion with his colleagues. When Cycle lanes are located on roads there is more maintenance due to heavy vehicle/ road markings. By locating them off road and only cyclists use them, maintenance levels reduce significantly.

Phil Asquith, West Midlands Police, acknowledged the aims of the Walking and Cycling projects but asked if secure cycle parking/ locking stations have been considered throughout each of the three town level projects. Phil advised West Midlands Police Crime Advisors can assist the project team with this activity.

Talvinder confirmed secure cycle parking provisions are being considered, for example exploring the provision to implement a secure cycle hub and cycle hire as part of the public realm area outside Rolfe Street Station and cycle parking throughout different points of the cycle network. In addition to the cycle infrastructure works, the projects will include new and improved signage and path surfacing to encourage local use by residents.

No questions were received from board members for the Urban Greening and Canal Network Connectivity Project.

Following today's presentation, projects will proceed with Full Business Case finalisation and will be presented to Superboard at a later date for final sign off.

Jude Thompson expressed his support and thanks for the projects presented and encouraged Superboard members to contribute at any time going forward, including attendance at Local Board meetings.

53/21

### **Town Level Equality Impact Assessments**

Rebecca Jenkins outlined the purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment. The report shared as part of the meeting pack outlines the Equality Impact Assessment requirements of the Towns Fund Programme, individual projects and the outcomes following the completion of town level assessments.

Each Towns Fund Project will also conduct an individual Equality Impact Assessment which will be presented to Superboard alongside the project Full Business Case.

When all projects have completed their individual Equality Impact Assessments, the overarching Town Level Assessment will be reviewed and updated to reflect the expected cumulative impact of delivering the projects. This will provide further opportunity to amend plans, if required.

54/21

### **Town Deal Local Boards**

Rebecca Jenkins provided an update of Towns Fund timeline and major upcoming milestones. Superboard members were asked to specifically note the movement of two projects within tranches.

Details of three potential changes had been included in the covering report, all relating to the location of the projects. Rebecca Jenkins provided context around the rationale for the change requests.

The change relating to the Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering Centre had been agreed during item 2 of this agenda. Further discussion relating to Grove Lane Regeneration Project and Albion Family in the Park Project are underway.

55/21

### **Closing Comments**

Jude Thompson sought final comments or questions from Superboard members. No comments or questions were forthcoming.

Jude thanked members and project leads for their attendance and closed the meeting.

Meeting closed at 17:42