

Greater Grimsby Board

Minutes of Virtual Meeting 15th July, 2020

Attendance:

- Chair - David Ross (The David Ross Foundation)
- Beatrice Andrews (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy)
- Ruth Carver (Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership)
- Neale Coleman
- Darren Cunningham (Phillips66)
- Richard Di Cani (Arup)
- Clive Fletcher (representing Louise Brennan) (Historic England)
- Julian Free (University of Lincoln)
- Councillor Philip Jackson (North East Lincolnshire Council)
- Damien Jaines-White (North East Lincolnshire Council)
- Lord Kerlake
- Lia Nici (MP for Greater Grimsby)
- Martin Smithhurst (Engie)
- Kishor Tailor (Humber Local Enterprise Partnership)
- David Talbot (CATCH)
- Emma Toulson (Orsted)
- Clive Tritton (North East Lincolnshire Council)
- Martin Vickers (MP for Cleethorpes)
- Julie Walmsley (VCSE)
- Rob Walsh (North East Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group)
- Paul Windley (North East Lincolnshire Council)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from Simon Bird, Louise Brennan, Peter Campey and Dafydd Williams.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from any Board member in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the Greater Grimsby Project Board meeting held on 19th May, 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Governance and Board Membership

The Board considered a paper setting out Town Deal Board governance requirements from Government.

The Board agreed the principles set out in the paper and instructed officers to proceed to implement, seeking sign off from the Board as appropriate.

5. Future High Streets Funding

The Board received an update on the bid for Future High Street Funding.

Mr Jaines White reported that the bid was due to be submitted by the end of this month. It focused on providing a more balanced town centre economy with a mixed use, leisure-led development in Freshney Place. It would involve a reduced retail floor space with the provision of a new cinema, a new market in the former British Home Stores building, and new food and beverage units in Flottergate as well as a new public square and community space. This would be a joint venture with Freshney Place for an estimated £35m scheme. The bid would be for £25m and it was emphasised that the scheme would not progress if the bid was unsuccessful. Monies would need to be spent by March 2024. From early engagement, the scheme had been very well received although there had been some cynicism about whether it would happen. A decision on the bid was expected in Autumn 2020 and there would then be further consultation.

Ms Toulson enquired whether letters of support were required for the bid. Mr Jaines-White confirmed that they would be most welcome and officers would be in touch.

The Board enquired about the financial position of Freshney Place, control over capital flows, step in rights, State Aid implications, the difficulty with moving a market and whether cinema investment made sense in the current climate.

The Board welcomed the proposal, in principle, and the Chair confirmed that he would be happy to sign a letter of support on behalf of the Board.

6. Town Deal Progress

The Board received an update on progress with the Town Deal.

Mr Jaines White confirmed that two further mitigation sites had now been secured. The link road was progressing well, with a physical link now made and work continued to bring it to an adoptable standard. Infrastructure works had commenced at the Stallingborough site and a pre-let had been agreed, with building works underway. Consent had been received for a waste to jet fuel facility as part of the Enterprise Zone and this was now progressing to the detailed design stage. In terms of accelerated housing delivery, there

was a current focus on stalled sites to try to move them forward. Grimsby town centre remained to the main focus of the Town Deal and public realm and highways works continued to progress. Onside had also submitted the planning application for the youth zone.

7. Stronger Towns Fund

The Board received an update on the Stronger Towns Fund bid.

Mr Jaines White reported that £1m advanced funding had been successfully acquired for delivery this year and this would allow works at Riverhead Square to be advanced. A Master Plan was also being developed with Arup and Mr Di Cani updated the Board on its progress.

The Master Plan was being developed to guide the future development of Grimsby town centre over a ten year period. It would assist to identify priority projects to be delivered through the Stronger Towns Fund and provide a framework for all future investments. Mr DI Cani outlined the approach being taken and the principles that had been developed. Geographically, the focus would be on the civic heart of the town centre, the Alexandra dock side and St James Square. Engagement was under way via a virtual consultation event which was due to close on 22nd July. It was expected that the draft Master Plan would be completed by the end of this month.

The Board was supportive of the work being undertaken and there was a discussion around the timing of submission of the associated investment plan to Government. The Chair noted that Grimsby was seen as a trailblazer by the Government and he was keen to stay on the front foot. However, there was also an argument made for waiting on the outcome of the Future High Street Funding bid and perhaps looking to submit plans as part of the expected third tranche in November. Conversations on timing would continue and the Board would be updated on the outcome.

8. Skills

The Board received a presentation from Liz Wade, Interim Skills Lead, on the development of a strategic skills strategy.

Ms Wade explained that a review had been undertaken to inform the strategy. This had found there to be generally good skills provision in the area. However, the training offer to employers was complex and fragmented. Digital and the green sector were key areas for development but it was noted that employers were focused on upskilling of current employees at the moment. There was an opportunity to strengthen links with the education system. It was felt that there reasonably good retention of higher level skilled people, particularly in the public sector. At present it was felt that there was a need for more tailored shorter courses.

It was felt that more work was required on the adult skills agenda and there was an opportunity to accelerate digital skills through the Covid recovery process. Further partnership working was seen as key to the development to the strategy, particularly with the community sector.

The Chair thanked Ms Wade for the presentation and suggested that this issue be brought back for further consideration at the next meeting of this Board. He added that sharing our understanding of the local skills agenda with education providers was really important.

Mr Talbot added that, in terms of the green sector, Catch was well positioned as it was industry-led and would be very supportive of delivering something on the skills agenda in the town centre.

9. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would include updates on

- Skills and employment opportunities
- Cultural Development Fund
- Future High Street Funding
- Stronger Towns Fund