

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of the MK: BLETCHLEY/FENNY STRATFORD TOWN DEAL BOARD held on THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2020 at 3.30 pm.

**Present:** J Cove (Chair & Chair - MK Dons SET), Councillor P Marland (Deputy Chair & Leader of Milton Keynes Council), I Stewart (MP for Milton Keynes South), C Butt (Vicar of St Frideswides), Dr V Cathanboo (Westfield Road GP Surgery), H Chipping (Chief Executive - SEMLEP), H Hupton (Clerk – West Bletchley Council), J Mills (CEO - MK College), J Pickering (Business Development Manager - Network Rail), A Ravn-Aagaard (Vice Chair – Consortium of Bletchley Resident Associations), I Revell (CEO - MK Community Foundation), M Green (Property Development Director - Milton Keynes Development Partnership), D Shephard (Clerk - Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council) and D Wetton (Commercial and Business Director - Network Rail).

**Also Present:** T Aldworth (Deputy Chief Executive - Milton Keynes Council), L Guyon (Consultant - Hatch Regeneris), P Hammond (Area Manager MK Land and Tariff - Milton Keynes Council), A Rolfe (Assistant to I Stewart MP), M Smith (Infrastructure Programme and Broadband Manager - Milton Keynes Council), M Todman (Area Lead - BEIS), S Rosevear (Director – Hatch Regeneris), R Smith (Director – Hyas Associates), D Webber (Associate – Hyas Associates) and P Brown (Head of Democratic Services - Milton Keynes Council).

**Apologies:** S Beggs (Senior Policy Advisor - MHCLG), O Mytton (Deputy Director for Public Health - Milton Keynes Council), and C Macdonald (Chief Executive - Milton Keynes Development Partnership)

#### **TDB17 MINUTES OF THE MEETING 3 JULY 2020 AND MATTERS ARISING**

The Chair welcomed members of the Board to the meeting and introduced Stephen Rosevear from Hatch Regeneris and Robert Smith from Hyas Associates. The Board also heard that Dr Vann Cathanboo from Westfield Road GP Surgery, had joined the Board and that Angie Ravn-Aagaard had replaced Liz Rawlinson as the Board representative for the Consortium of Bletchley Resident Associations.

The Chair invited comments on the draft minutes of the Board meeting on 30 July 2020. A request was made for page numbers to be included on future Board minutes.

Noting the reference to the Former Bletchley Fire Station site and the funding submission for repurposing/redevelopment/remediation, Helen Hupton asked that it be noted that the West Bletchley Neighbourhood Plan (Policy BS3) designated the 'station quarter' for mixed development and therefore that the Town Council's position would be that the site should have a comprehensive and balanced mix of uses.

RESOLVED:

1. That the minutes of the Board's meeting on 30 July 2020 be approved as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of page numbers.
2. That Angie Ravn-Aagaard formally join the Board as the representative for the Consortium of Bletchley Resident Associations.
3. That Dr Vann Cathanboo from Westfield Road GP Surgery formally join the Board.

#### **TDB18 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

The Board heard that a very small number of Code of Conduct and Register of Interest forms remained outstanding from Board Members.

No declarations of interest were received.

RESOLVED:

That the Head of Democratic Services contact the remaining Board Members who had not submitted a Code of Conduct and Register of Interest form to arrange for submission.

#### **TDB19 TOWN PLAN VISION**

The Chair introduced the item noting the importance of agreeing a vision as a key milestone for the project.

The Board received a presentation from Rob Smith and Dianne Webber of Hyas Associates, who underlined the importance of a vision as the foundation of the TIP and the broader, longer term ambitions for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford. The Board heard that there were various ways of presenting a vision and that there was a balance to be struck between brevity and sufficient detail to reflect the diversity of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford. In addition to the draft vision, a strapline was also proposed to convey the message succinctly and to reinforce messages through the various communication channels.

The Board received the draft vision and strapline, alongside the three draft objectives for the bid, which were:

- Urban Regeneration, Planning and Land Use (a successful place and living/working environment)
- Connectivity (movement, accessibility and digital connectivity)
- Skills and Enterprise (investment, employment and life prospects)

Noting the various communities and neighbourhoods within the totality of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford and their different identities, the Board felt it was felt important that the vision be detailed enough to reflect these, but also be succinct enough to easily convey the vision to communities.

The Chair asked how the survey responses had fed into the vision work. It was confirmed that 230 survey responses alongside other stakeholder work which had included feedback from the subgroups, were reflected in the draft vision.

Initial feedback had been that the vision was too long overall and it had subsequently been refined, but there were also a number of key themes identified from stakeholder consultation, including:

- the unique selling point of the area, reflecting its strategic location in the centre of the Oxford Cambridge Arc and the associated rail connectivity;
- healthier community and place, including green transport/connectivity; and
- pride and value in the heritage of Bletchley Park, which included celebrating the of diversity of the people and the locational advantage of the site.

Overall, the Board felt that the vision should be shorter, but endorsed the idea of a strapline to accompany the vision. There was consensus that the vision and objectives should reflect the diversity of community and how the project would bring together and harness a sense of direction across the various communities. There was also agreement that health needed to be reflected more prominently and that desirable environments and public space were key to this. The Board also felt that the objectives should more clearly articulate the deliverables and impact that the project would have over time.

The Board also considered the need to reflect the aspiration that Bletchley and Fenny Stratford become an innovation centre in its own right and the balance between capturing this, but also reflecting locational advantage (and proximity to other innovation focused work) as an advantage.

The Board head from Mike Todman, who advised that the TIP assessment process was not a competition, but also noted the challenge of addressing lots of different issues in different places across a large Town Deal area. Keeping sight of intervention criteria such as deprivation and demonstrating how 'need' translated into opportunity and, subsequently, interventions which would be key to a successful TIP.

The Board therefore felt the vision should incorporate and balance elements that were encouraged in government guidance, such as a very clear and distinct vision of place which included the unique elements of railways, computing, code breaking and technology. This would help distinguish Bletchley and Fenny Stratford from the other Town Deal areas.

The Board recognised the urgent need to finalise the vision and strapline because of dependencies in the project plan and because objectives would inform the shortlisting of TIP projects.

RESOLVED:

1. That the 'direction of travel' of the work to date on the vision, strapline and objectives be noted and agreed.
2. That the HATCH team also provide feedback about elements of the TIP that would be advantageous to capture in the vision and that would reflect the requirements of a successful TIP.
3. That based on the feedback of the Board, officers agree a revised vision, strapline and objectives in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair.

## **TDB20 PROGRESS REPORTS FROM CONSULTANTS**

The Board heard from Dianne Webber who briefly set out the engagement work undertaken to date. There were three broad stages to the engagement work programme:

1. Identifying the challenges, issues, opportunities and strengths. This had been achieved via ongoing work with the survey, sub-groups feedback, stakeholder engagement and previous consultation work.
2. Agreeing the vision and a long list of interventions which would then need to be shortlisted. A key element of this process would be stakeholder feedback and central to this process would be a new branded website. This would serve as a central hub for information about the bid and enable real time feedback.
3. Post bid submission work, which would be set out in a stakeholder engagement plan. This would be submitted alongside the TIP and would capture the work required pre submission, but also how engagement would continue moving forward. The aspiration was that this work would develop into new groups of forums forming in communities over a longer period of time.

The Board also heard that the sub-groups had been very active, that membership had grown and would likely continue to grow.

The Board noted the importance of being able to clearly demonstrate engagement work that supported the first phase of the work and the challenges of the achieving this in the time available.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Board note the progress updates.
2. That Dianne Webber confirm to the Board when the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal website was live.

## TDB21 OPTIONS FOR TIP

The Board heard from Stephen Rosevear, who noted the challenging timetable associated with a TIP submission at the end of October. The outstanding work was:

1. to identify a long list of projects and to then shortlist these for the TIP;
2. to have developed the metrics for benefit/cost ratio which would be used to assess credibility of the TIP proposal; and
3. to have assessed benefit and costs of individual projects in the TIP.

Stephen Rosevear reminded the board of the background to the TIP preparation, submission and assessment process, including that:

- Up to £25 million investment was available (more for exceptional cases).
- The TIP should demonstrate the value of proposed projects.
- Funding was predominantly capital based (90%), over a period of 6 years and required longevity (revenue-based projects would need to sustain/fund themselves over time).
- There was an expectation from government that proposals would include evidence of 'match funding' from government departments/the private sector.

The Board heard that any submission for more than £25 million, would need to be more detailed and would attract more scrutiny, especially in relation to value for money and deliverability. This would require a much more persuasive bid that would take longer to prepare, assess and also to agree funding for. It was felt that there was sufficient time to develop a bid for up to £25 million in the time available before the cohort 2 submission deadline, but there was less confidence about delivering a successful bid for more than this amount, given the time available before the October submission date. In particular, the work required to develop and assess priorities would be a challenge.

Bids in excess of £25 million, would need to demonstrate benefits at a regional or national level and the challenge/approval process would be considered centrally, rather than by local accountable bodies. It was felt a very clear rationale would be required for any bid in excess of £25 million, but that there was also a very strong evidence base in the Town Deal area for economic regeneration, given the levelling up 'need' and socio economic outcomes in comparison to Milton Keynes.

The Chair reflected that the TIP bid should be ambitious and provide a pipeline of work and projects that would be a framework for other separate potential funding opportunities over a longer period (and in the very short term) and to serve as a foundation for or enable continuous work.

Noting the need for the TIP work to be complementary to the Super Station redevelopment work, the Chair asked for an update and heard that Network Rail continued to work with East West Rail, but the Board were advised funding of station work was not yet secured.

Overall, the Board considered that there was a balance of risk and reward to be considered and that a bid of up to £25 million seemed more deliverable in the time available, but that it was difficult to make such a decision without the context of a list of projects.

The Board also discussed the previous decision to select cohort 2 for TIP submission and considered progress with selecting and evaluating project proposals in time for an October submission. It was however felt that Hatch Regeneris had a good track record working with the LEP to secure funding and that their advice and services had always been excellent.

The Board heard from Mike Todman who noted that a neighbouring cohort 2 authority (Bedford Borough) had recently considered a draft TIP at a Cabinet meeting and had delegated authority to officers to make the necessary amendments prior to submission. It was also confirmed that although there was no disadvantage to moving the TIP submission date to cohort 3, there had been merit in cohort 1 authorities having time to respond to assessment queries from MHCLG at an earlier stage in the process and that a cohort 3 submission would leave a smaller window to respond to such queries effectively. The Board were also reminded that ministers were keen to see projects being delivered as soon as possible and that at TIP submission stage projects could be based on indicative costs and did not need fully developed accompanying business cases.

Tracey Aldworth updated the board that a long list of projects was provisionally agreed and that further work would be undertaken in the coming week, to shortlist TIP projects. However, there was an element of risk in being able to fully establish matched or private funding elements of the TIP.

Acknowledging the risk, the Board felt that on balance, officers should continue to work towards TIP submission at the end of October with proposals for up to £25 million but as part of a broader framework of projects for the whole area.

RESOLVED:

1. That the work towards a TIP submission date continue as planned for the end of October.
2. That the Chair and Vice-Chair keep progress under review and that officers be delegated authority, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair to move the submission cohort if required.
3. That the forward plan of executive decisions be amended to include a delegation to officers to make final amendments to the TIP after the Delegated Decision scheduled for 27 October.

## **TDB22 UPDATE ON £1M ACCELERATED PROJECTS**

Paul Hammond reminded the Board of the accelerated capital projects proposal which had included Redway route delivery in the area of the Lakes Estate and Newton Leys, alongside remediation/demolition work at the former Bletchley Fire Station site.

Officers had been advised that the accelerated funding bid had been successful, and that payment of the grant was due before the end of September. The Board heard that work was already underway on the planning phase, with project start up documentation having been completed, subject to the agreement of the Council's Corporate Portfolio Board on 22 September.

Officers were now working with Milton Keynes Council teams including, landscaping, urban design, regeneration, transport and planning as well as engaging with the MK cycling forum to progress the Redways projects. Required work for route alignment, design brief and topographical surveys was also underway.

Milton Keynes Development Partnership (MKDP) had already commissioned survey work and were thought to be in a position to progress quickly with work at the former Bletchley Fire Station site.

RESOLVED:

That the Board note the update and extend their thanks to officers for their work on securing funding.

## **TDB23 UPDATED PROGRAMME/TIMELINE AND BUDGET**

Tracey Aldworth reflected on the critical project dates, which had already been discussed by the Board. 'Sign off' for the vision, strapline and objectives as well as a final decision in respect of the TIP would take place at the Board meeting on 22 October.

The Board also heard that initial capacity funding released to help the Council reach its first milestone was on budget. Internal resources had been utilised and complemented with external expertise from Hatch Regeneris and Hyas Associates. Consideration would need to be given to officer and consultancy capacity and resources moving forward, and a small amount of revenue funding could be incorporated into the TIP.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Board note the update.
2. That work be undertaken to agree the required support resource for later phases of the project for inclusion in the TIP.

**TDB24 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board heard that Helen Hupton, Delia Shephard and Angie Ravn-Aagaard would meet with Diane Webber remotely to review progress on engagement after the Board meeting.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 17.05 PM.

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