



DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of the MK: BLETCHLEY/FENNY STRATFORD TOWN DEAL BOARD held on THURSDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2021 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), H Chipping (Chief Executive - SEMLEP), P Hume (Joint Sponsor Lead – Network Rail/East West Rail Company), H Hupton (Clerk – West Bletchley Council), J Mills (CEO - MK College), J Pickering (Business Development Manager - Network Rail), A Ravn-Aagaard (Treasurer – Consortium of Bletchley Resident Associations), I Revell (CEO - MK Community Foundation), T Roxburgh (Special Projects Director - Milton Keynes Development Partnership).

Also Present: T Aldworth (Deputy Chief Executive - Milton Keynes Council), P Hammond (Area Manager MK Land and Tariff - Milton Keynes Council), K Hyatt (Project Manager – Milton Keynes Council), M Todman (Area Lead - BEIS), D Webber (Associate – Hyas Associates) and R Tidman (Committee Services Manager - Milton Keynes Council).

Apologies: Dr V Cathanboo (Westfield Road GP Surgery), O Mytton (Deputy Director for Public Health - Milton Keynes Council), D Shephard (Clerk - Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council) and D Wetton (Commercial and Business Director - Network Rail).

TDB42 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed members of the Board to the meeting.

TDB43 PREVIOUS MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Chair invited comments on the draft minutes of the Board meeting held on 10 December 2020.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Board's meeting on 10 December 2020, be approved as a correct record.

TDB44 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

TDB45**EAST/WEST RAIL UPDATE**

Peter Hume provided an update on East West Rail. The funding had now been approved including for the high-level platforms to service the Oxford to Milton Keynes link. Work on a wider Bletchley Station masterplan/feasibility exercise would start shortly and would explore how the station would grow and evolve to adapt to passenger growth and flows in the future and to ensure that the station design fits with the wider context. Following the completion of feasibility and master planning work in approximately 2-weeks' time, a 12-week engagement exercise will be undertaken. This would facilitate input from key local stakeholders to help develop a range of options which would then go out for wider consultation.

Julie Mills indicated that Milton Keynes College would like to ensure early engagement with the feasibility work to ensure that their development plans were taken account of.

Diane Webber advised that it would be helpful to ensure that Hyas linked in with the communication team at the East West Rail Company to ensure coordination of messaging.

RESOLVED:

1. That the update be noted.
2. That officers from Milton Keynes Council provide an update to P Hume on the key contacts and issues that the East West Railway Company needed to be aware of going forward.

TDB46**UPDATE FROM GOVERNMENT ON LATEST POSITION OF BID**

Mike Todman advised that the Government was not quite at the point of being able to make an announcement and it was likely this would now be linked to a larger national announcement aligned with the budget on the 3 March 2021. Ahead of any announcement MHCLG would share embargoed Heads of Terms and press notices.

The Heads of Terms would include details of the terms of the Town Deal, a project by project summary identifying any issues or conditions and the financial allocation amount.

There would be two weeks for the Chair of the Town Deal Board and the local authority Chief Executive to review and sign. There would then be two months to agree which projects would be delivered or to reprioritise projects if the financial settlement was less than requested. Thereafter, a period of up to twelve months is programmed for the development of project business cases to enable funds to be released.

It was noted that if the local election process impacts on the above timeframe it might be possible to 'flex' the Town Deal process.

It was, further, noted that each local authority had taken its own view as to the level of governance that was required to sign off the decision to accept the Heads of Terms.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

TDB47

NEXT STEPS OF THE BID DEVELOPMENT

Tracey Aldworth advised that there would be a need to start developing the business cases and potentially prioritising what was in the TIP. Following a recent Business Case Development event, clarification was sought as to whether business case sign-off is conditional on planning permission being secured. Mike Todman advised that there were no hard and fast rules about releasing funds before planning permission was obtained and that this decision would be taken on a project by project basis.

Members commented that there would be different vested interests in terms of which projects were prioritised and that alternative sources of funding should continue to be sought as this could determine whether a project was able to progress or not.

It was noted that the Board would have a better steer on this when the draft Heads of Terms were made available as this would determine the funding allocated and, if appropriate, set out specific conditions on any projects that MHCLG had concerns about.

In the meantime, the Board was advised to start thinking about the prioritisation of the Bid projects should we not obtain 100% of the bid value

It was likely that there would be some additional financial support to assist with business case development but the preference of MHCLG was that, ideally, this should be used to build in-house capacity rather than commissioning consultants.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

TDB48

ACCELERATED PROJECTS UPDATE

Paul Hammond provided an update on the Accelerated Projects. Ongoing progress had been with survey work and scheme design attaching to the Redways project. Issues had arisen in terms of ecology and biodiversity. A more detailed update would be provided at the next meeting when there would be more clarity around these issues.

Excellent progress was being made with work on the former Fire Station. Planning approval for demolition had been secured and demolition contractors had been appointed by MKDP. It was expected

that work would start on site by no later than the middle of February. Initial work would focus on asbestos removal with physical demolition works following in March. Network Rail have been served notice of these works and would need to approve the contractor risk assessment method. It was expected that the demolition would be substantially completed by the end of the financial year. It was noted that this demolition would be a conspicuous start to the Town Deal work in Bletchley and the Council's comms team was primed to reflect this.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

TDB49

UPDATE OF DELIVERY PLAN

Tracey Aldworth provided an update on the Delivery Plan indicating that this was based on initial work looking at how projects in the TIP would be delivered. Key to this was the establishment of an implementation group which would work on actions between the board meetings. John Cove had agreed to Chair this group which would predominantly be made up of the key players involved in delivering the actions and outputs. There was a need for this group to be established as soon as possible so that it became operational as soon as the Board was in receipt of the funding announcement. The implementation group would keep the project plan updated and report this and the RAG rating to the Board for its input.

Helen Hupton noted that at the last meeting the issue was raised about parking and whether consideration should be given to a subgroup being formed to address this issue. Both the West Bletchley Council and the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council were looking at the best way to ensure that parking issues across the two parishes were prioritised and had agreed that a sub-committee of the Board was not the way forward but there was a need to find some way to give parking issues more prominence. Both Councils were looking at a draft resolution which would ask the Board for their commitment to engage with key partners so issues of parking could be considered at the earliest possible stage. The Board welcomed this approach.

Councillor Marland advised that the Council was looking at allocating funding for a supplementary planning document which would cover issues such as parking. However, he highlighted that making parking a priority could have adverse implications and that a sensible balance between parking provision and the achievement of other aims would need to be struck. Catherine Butt drew attention to the challenge of reconciling car-parking with the green agenda. All acknowledged that car parking was an issue that needed to be considered at an early stage and that business cases might weigh this issue alongside the potential for increased electric car usage or a decrease in car use.

RESOLVED:

1. That the update be noted
2. That the Clerks for West Bletchley and Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Council's update the Board on any resolutions that their organisations made on this matter for the Board to consider.

TDB50

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Paul Hammond provided an update on communications and engagement noting that, in anticipation of a positive announcement from Government regarding the Town Deal Bid, ongoing stakeholder engagement support would be required to oversee phase 3 of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

At its December meeting, the Board resolved to appoint Hyas for a further six months to deliver this work. Hyas, had since been asked to produce a proposal to provide further support to include ongoing liaison with key partners, wider stakeholder identification and engagement activities, involvement in Town Deal sub-groups and work on the website. It was confirmed that 'in principle' agreement to the appointment of Hyas had been secured from the Council's Procurement and Finance teams and that formal completion of the associated contract was expected to follow shortly.

Diane Webber noted that the delay in the announcement does give time to plan for communications. She also noted that she was keen to establish those points in the process where the Board was looking to engage and gain input from stakeholders and those points where it was more about providing information so that it was clear at what points people could input.

John Cove noted that he felt a key task for Hyas would be helping the Board to develop the narrative or 'Story for Bletchley' and that there was support available for this from Town Deal colleagues.

Angie Ravn-Agagaard noted that, whilst there was rightly much positivity surrounding proposals for the railway station and the Institute of Technology, from a local community perspective it was felt that there was more opportunity to get good news stories out in the locality.

The role of SEMLEP was considered and the potential for it to provide intelligence or support to assist the development of business cases.

RESOLVED:

1. That the update be noted.
2. That Milton Keynes Council officers contact SEMLEP regarding their support to help develop business cases.

TDB51

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date for the next meeting was confirmed as:

Tuesday 23 March 2021, 2.15pm – 4.00pm

RESOLVED:

1. That the Board note the date of the next scheduled meeting.

TDB52

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Tracey Aldworth, on behalf of the Board members, passed on her thanks to Mike Todman for advocating on behalf of the MK: Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal and that all looked forward to hearing the details of the announcement in due course.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 4.40 PM.