

Norwich Town Deals Board

30 March 2020 (via teleconf)

Attendees

Linn Clabburn, Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor
Phil Courtier, South Norfolk/Broadland District Council
Andrew Dernie, Aviva
Stefan Gurney, Norwich Business Improvement District
Clive Lewis MP
Julie Schofield, UEA
Jo Middleton, Norfolk County Council
Jan Feeney, Norfolk County Council
Graham Nelson, Norwich City Council
Chris Sargisson, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
Ellen Tilney, Norwich City Council
Cllr Alan Waters, Norwich 2040 Vision
Mary Scales, Jobcentre Plus

Apologies

Stephen Evans, Norwich City Council
Helen Lewis, UEA
Shan Lloyd, Cities & Local Growth Unit
Minnie Moll, Jarrold
Vince Muspratt, Norfolk County Council
Nikki Rotsos, Norwich City Council
Chloe Smith MP
Chris Starkie, New Anglia LEP
Julia Nix, Jobcentre Plus
Sarah Steed, NUA
Cllr Mike Stonard

Notes of Meeting

1. Welcome, minutes and actions from previous meeting

Action	Lead
Minutes of Meeting 24 February 2020	Complete
Capacity Funding spend updated monthly	Ellen Tilney
Chair to meet with council officers (via teleconf) before next Board Meeting – date/time TBC.	Ellen Tilney

2. Transforming Cities Update

Graham Nelson confirmed that the Transforming Cities outcome was not as positive as the one that Norwich had hoped for. Three cities – Stoke, Portsmouth and Norwich – are required to do further work on their bids for a share of the remaining £117million. Based upon a pro-rata distribution of the above, it is estimated that Norwich could now be in line to receive £35-40million which is substantially lower than previous expectations. County colleagues are now working to re-prioritise the schemes in the original bid. This will also be likely to impact upon the work to identify priority areas for improvements to public realm in the city centre.

3. Town Deal update for Communities and Local Government Team

During the regular fortnightly teleconference on 26 March we were informed that Town Deals are definitely still on as a key part of government policy. Government believes that the 101 towns identified are likely to be those hardest hit by COVID19 and as such would encourage towns to look at their plans in the light of recovery, regeneration and growth. As so many CLG staff are currently redeployed to emergency assistance measures there will be a delay in issuing the guidance of approx. 5 weeks – this is now expected end April/beginning May – of course, this effectively also shifts back deals by the same margin.

4. Project Development

Growth Projects:

Digital Hub – active work on suitable sites/locations, building specification, construction costs and funding gap that would need to be met by Town Deal to secure the project alongside other partner contributions and city council borrowing. There is also a requirement to produce a business case for a viable operational model that does not expose the council to unacceptably high financial liability/risk. The ideal model would see the building generating a surplus (once optimum occupancy is achieved) and there is potential for a proportion of this surplus to be set aside for economic development and skills activities within the building to support business and jobs growth beyond the lifetime of the Town Deal funding.

Skills – Norfolk County Council and skills partners are working on a digital skills offer linked to the digital hub. First meeting was cancelled due to COVID19 but work will continue and teleconference dates expected shortly.

Tackling Economic Drag Factors - similarly the Norwich Good Economy Commission has to cancel the recently scheduled meeting. Work continues and teleconference arrangements will be established as a means of pushing ahead.

Leveraging Norwich's city brand – work is underway, led by the Norwich BID team to develop proposals aligned to the already established City of Stories branding, naturally these proposals will also seek to address re-establishing the city centre's vitality following the impact of COVID19.

Regeneration Projects:

East Norwich Master Planning – discussions ongoing between key partners and landowners.

Revolving Fund to Unlock Stalled Brownfield Sites – a financial model of how the fund could be used along with likely legal costs and timescales. This will be brought back to Town Deals Board for discussion.

Improved Public Realm – a long list of projects will be taken down to a shortlist along with anticipated costs and benefits for each location. This will also be review in the light of the recent Transforming Cities announcement.

5. Next Steps

Further progress on individual work packages with a view to developing more detailed costings and potential leverage in time for issue of more detailed bidding guidance at the end of April.

Summary of Agreed Actions:

Action	Lead
Amend one of the forward meeting dates to allow a better fit with MP's schedules – awaiting feedback from Chloe Smith MP.	Ellen Tilney

6. Future meeting dates:

Tuesday 26 May, 10-11.30am, (details TBC)