



Blackpool Town Deal Board Meeting No. 18

Friday, 2 September 2022, 1pm

Winter Gardens Conference Centre and MS Teams*

Blackpool Town Deal Board

Paul Smith - Chair	(PS)	Business in the Community
Anna Blackburn*	(AB)	Beaverbrooks (attended in part – signal issues)
Bev Robinson*	(BR)	Blackpool & The Fylde College
Debbie Francis*	(DF)	Lancashire Enterprise Partnership
Peter Swann (PS)*	(PS)	Coolsilk
Dick Cartmell	(DC)	Together in Lancashire
Helen Warren	(HW)	DWP
John Sullivan	(JS)	The Big Picture
Mark Robinson	(MR)	Ellandi
Neil Jack	(NJ)	Blackpool Council
Paul Maynard	(PM)	MP for Blackpool North
Peter Cole	(PC)	Chartered Surveyor
Steve Williams	(SW)	Force Technology
Alan Cavill	(AC)	Blackpool Council (last half hour of meeting only)

In Attendance

Nick Gerrard	(NG)	Blackpool Council
Robert Latham	(RL)	Blackpool Council
Kevin Sturley	(KS)	Blackpool Council
Mark Gillingham	(MG)	Blackpool Council
Michael Hodgson	(MH)	Blackpool Council
Andrew Fletcher	(AF)	Blackpool Council (The Platform)
Graham Cowley	(GC)	BITC

Notes and Actions		By Whom
1.	Welcome, Apologies and Introduction a) The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Anna Blackburn, Bev Robinson, Debbie Francis and Peter Swann attended via MS Teams. b) Apologies received from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben Mansford, Blackpool Football Club • David Gaffney, Arts Council • Kate Shane, Merlin Entertainment 	



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Cole, Blackpool Transport • Steve Fogg, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust • Tracy Hopkins, Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre VCFS • Tina Redford, Leftcoast • Richard Fee, Nikal • Trish Armstrong-Childs, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust <p>c) New Town Deal Board members, John Sullivan and Mark Robinson introduced themselves to the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Robinson is the co-founder of Ellandi, the company overseeing asset management of the Houndshell Shopping Centre and other council-owned properties in the Town centre. MR is also currently the Chair of the High Streets Task Force. • John Sullivan, is the founding director of The Big Picture Ltd and is currently working with Blackpool Council to deliver The Backlot which includes the new IMAX cinema as part of the Houndshell Phase 2 extension. 	
<p>2. Declaration of Interests</p> <p>a) The Chair asked members of the Board to declare any interests. The following were recorded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bev Robinson, Blackpool & Fylde College Principal and Chief Executive: Multiversity. • Steve Williams (Force Technology): Blackpool Illuminations. • Mark Robinson (Ellandi): Chair of the High Streets Task Force. • John Sullivan (The Big Picture): Houndshell Extension Phase 2. • Neil Jack (Blackpool Council): All Blackpool Council led projects. 	
<p>3. Meeting 17, 20 May 2022 Minutes and Matters Arising</p> <p>a) The Board approved the minutes of meeting 17.</p> <p>b) Town Deal Board and Town Deal Investment Panel Terms of Reference: NG to add the 'additional roles' agreed in respect of Blackpool's Shared Prosperity Fund to the Terms of Reference and circulate to the Board.</p>	<p>Nick Gerrard</p>



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<p>4. Town Deal Update</p> <p>a) NG updated the Board on the latest Town Deal activity as outlined in the report, noting that they had not been without their challenges due to inflation and rising costs. The following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All required claims and returns to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have been submitted on time and no outstanding issues reported. • 6 Town Deal schemes are in progress (the 7th, The Platform (Youth Hub) scheme is not due to commence as a Town Deal funded project until October 2022). • Project delivery activity and planning is well underway and hence an overall Amber RAG rating is noted. • Programme Spend - whilst project activity is well underway on all schemes, there is a programme level underspend against the original September 2021 profile hence a Red RAG Rating is shown for this. However, re-profiling is to be expected for a programme of this scale, the position is retrievable, no resources are at risk and a re-profile of Town Deal annual spend is acceptable to DLUHC in principle. • The latest forecast project spend to the end of March 2023, shows a total programme spend of £11.4m against an allowance of £17.1m but spend on 'Multiversity' and 'The Edge' is to be re-profiled and expected to be lower this financial year than forecast. <p>c) The Board were informed that inflation has impacted on all of the Town Deal projects and that value engineering options and other matters would be examined such as reducing specifications, phasing works or sourcing additional funds to ensure that all the projects were delivered should this become necessary. Unlike at least one other town which had dropped one of its schemes to fund others there was no intention to do this with the Blackpool programme.</p> <p>d) NG noted that it was important to share the details of the challenges being faced (as a result of inflation) and inform the Town Deal Board and the Town Deal Investment Panel (TDIP) of such matters. The Board discussed this matter at some length as had the TDIP at its recent meeting and the situation on all projects would be kept under close</p>	



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<p>review and the TDIP and Town Deal Board would be apprised of progress.</p> <p>e) The Chair asked Board members to put forward any questions.</p> <p>f) PC raised the issue that if the financial challenges for any project became too severe then it may be necessary to think of radical ways of delivering the same or similar objectives via an alternative project.</p> <p>g) PM commented that whilst Blackpool considered there to be no desire or plans for dropping any of the projects it would be very important to keep a close eye on any changes with the new Government which might affect delivery of the programme.</p> <p>h) Chair of the TDIP, Steve Williams, updated the Board on the discussions held at last week’s TDIP meeting and assured the Board that whilst there are significant issues with one of the schemes, as discussed, the TDIP were keeping the situation under close review and were now awaiting the outcome of the value engineering of project costs that has been actioned by the Project Manager and the Programme Management Office.</p> <p>i) SW noted that the TDIP had also reviewed the significant underspend against the original profile but that this was not considered to be a big surprise as projects were only into the second quarter of the financial year and quarterly spend reviews and spend profiles would be regularly updated during the course of the five year programme.</p> <p>j) SW commented that all projects are ‘very well co-ordinated’ and noted the role of the TDIP, which is to make sure the Town Deal projects are being managed well to which BR responded that whilst the underspend is a concern the value of the TDIP’s work cannot be understated.</p> <p>k) The Chair thanked SW and the TDIP for all of their work and commented that it was good to see the projects moving forward.</p> <p>m) Town Deal Programme Risk Register: The Chair drew the Board’s attention to the Risk Register and asked members to put forward any questions or comments. The Board noted the report.</p>	



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<p>n) Town Deal investment Panel Minutes 24th August 2022 The Board noted the (confidential) TDIP minutes, which had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.</p>	
<p>5. Community Renewal Fund (CRF) Programme Update</p> <p>a) NG gave an overview of the CRF Update report circulated.</p> <p>b) Three of the four CRF projects noted to be ‘cracking on’. The Board were made aware that some questions had been raised by the TDIP regarding Inspira’s ‘Ready for work’ scheme, which is meeting it’s spend profile but not delivering its outputs.</p> <p>c) The Board were referred to the minutes of the last TDIP meeting, which explained how DWP decisions had impacted on numbers as well as the difficulty of defining the ‘economically inactive’ beneficiary group, which had proven difficult to identify and had led to a ‘change of the goal posts’ during the project. DLUHC have been informed of the above mitigating factors and the Council is now awaiting a response as how to proceed re further payments to Inspira.</p> <p>d) GC commented that Inspira’s output results were quite a number off and asked if there was a way for the project to achieve more relevant targets via engagement between Inspira and ‘The Platform’ (Youth Hub) to increase referral rates. It was noted that the difference in success rates between Inspira and The Platform was a result of ‘The Platform’ not having to work with those in the inactive group and that it had come down to essentially finding the right customers for the right intervention’.</p> <p>e) The Board noted the progress on the Community Renewal Fund projects.</p>	
<p>6. Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) / Multiply</p> <p>a) NG updated the Board on the latest SPF/ Multiply progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government announced SPF allocation to every local authority, which replaces EU funded schemes. • Blackpool’s’ investment plan was submitted in August 2022 with details of 13 proposed schemes totalling £5.1M. Government approval is expected in the autumn. 	



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National numeracy programme (Multiply) approved at £717,000 and will be delivered in Blackpool. <p>b) The Board noted the report and that it would receive further updates at future meetings.</p>	
<p>7. Levelling Up Fund (LUF)</p> <p>a) Following an unsuccessful ‘LUF Round One’ bid, Blackpool submitted its LUF Round Two bid in July with the outcome expected in autumn 2022. Three bids were submitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiversity - £40m. • Hotel (former Abingdon Street Post Office Building) - £8m. • Town Centre Access Scheme - £15.4m <p>b) DC asked what would happen if the change of government led to a change in policy, and would Blackpool be left with undeveloped building sites. NG informed the Board that Town Deal funds could not be pulled back as Government had already committed the funding and noted that Town Deal funds are being used to acquire the ‘Multiversity’ site for which there was still justification, as set out in the original business case, to acquire the site even in the event that Blackpool’s LUF Round Two bid was unsuccessful.</p>	
<p>8. The Platform (Youth Hub)</p> <p>a) Andrew Fletcher showed the Board photos of The Platform’s completed interior and gave a presentation re progress to date.</p> <p>b) The following has so far been achieved with Community Renewal Funding (CRF):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 300 customers engaged. ○ 75 into training. • Actual figures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 300 plus customers engaged. ○ 69 into training (currently on track to meet target). ○ 75 customers have gone into employment. ○ Referral process has been changed to become more efficient. 	



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low numbers for the 'Innovation Fund' but working with contracted providers to see if they can up their outcomes. • 'The Platform' is seen as flagship site by DWP. • Working in partnership with Mental Health Link and the Princes' Trust to improve customer confidence. • One of the four Employment Advisor roles has been changed to a Transition Coach to oversee all 'in work support' <p>b) AF explained to the Board, that the project had 'not all been plain sailing'. The majority of referrals were originally expected to come from DWP but due to 'low engagement' this number was significantly lower. Only around 300 Universal Credit claimants of a possible 900 in Blackpool are engaging with JCP at a time, not all of which are suitable candidates for 'The Platform' service.</p> <p>c) HW commented that DWP are currently planning a piece of work to increase engagement with 18 to 24 year olds. To increase referrals, 'The Platform' service has had to 'diversify' by learning about their customer demographic and gaining a better understanding of the barriers faced. Various marketing drives, partnerships with training providers and local colleges have helped to increase direct referrals. A significant number of referrals have been received from the Council's Adolescent Services.</p> <p>d) The Platform team have recently worked with Blackpool & The Fylde College on results day to prevent young people from going NEET (not in education, employment or training) in the first place and will be overseeing some awareness work with local schools in November.</p> <p>e) The Platform team have started conversations re transition from CRF funding to Town Deal funding and it has been agreed new contracts will need to be created once Town Deal funding is received to ensure the longevity and success of the service. CRF period is considered to have been a learning period.</p> <p>h) HW noted that the pathfinder needed to be looked at to increase referrals and the number of youths into work. DWP have no plans to pull out of the service, which has provided some fantastic results. On-going funding for the two DWP staff based at 'The Platform' will continue.</p>	



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<p>i) PM asked how the Board members as a group planned for The Platform team to engage with the 600 Universal Credit NEET customers that had not engaged with DWP and referred to the service’ noting that some of this group are thought to be estranged from their families and have very complex needs. The Platform team are currently considering how this group can be reached and a possible event held at Blackpool Football Club was suggested. However, it was noted that NEET numbers can be difficult to track due to the data protection and the constant fluctuation of people going in and coming out of work.</p> <p>j) In response to the above, BR stated that an ‘integrated skills system is required’ to stop young people from becoming NEET. Blackpool and The Fylde College is to give out The Platform contact details to those who fall out of education to make sure they are aware of the service. They also plan to support ‘the team re possible future events with the aim to reach young people that are not engaging with DWP.</p> <p>k) The Board thanked Andrew for his presentation and noted the excellent progress on the project and future plans.</p>	
<p>9. E Sports Presentation</p> <p>a) John Sullivan gave a presentation on E Sports for the Board’s consideration to assist with a proposal to exploit the potential of E Sports within Blackpool. Refer to presentation slides.</p> <p>b) The following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESports are one of the fastest growing leisure sports in the UK. • Blackpool is considered to be a prime location for an E Sports arena because of the EZ subsea fibre optic cable. • Opportunity to build a facility for the ESports community similar to Dundee ESports arena. However, the ESports community have ‘regressed’ away from this idea. • It would have a strong impact on Blackpool’s economy. • Opportunity to link with local education establishments. • Opportunity to commercialise and put in place a joined cohesive strategy with Blackpool’s large ESports community. • Potential target audience of 1M plus. • Opportunity for local tourist attraction operatives i.e. Merlin, Nikal, to expand in Blackpool. • Reciprocal benefit similar to the streaming world but can only be done with the support of education and Blackpool gamers. 	



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<p>b) The Board were asked for comments and questions. Both GC and MR were in support of an ESports proposal, noting that this could be a fantastic opportunity that feeds into Blackpool’s levelling up aspirations.</p> <p>c) The Board were made aware that a number of educational institutions and secondary schools are already delivering ESports training as part of their curriculum to increase students’ digital skills.</p> <p>e) AC commented that most players (for an ESports arena to become a reality) are represented on the Town Deal Board and would require all of us to pull together, as a local authority would not be able to deliver this alone. Support from schools and many others would be required.</p> <p>f) The Board noted the report and that JS would link up further with the Council and other partners to agree an optimum way forward to exploit the potential of ESports for Blackpool.</p>	<p>John Sullivan</p>
<p>10. Any Other Business</p> <p>a) None.</p>	
<p>11. Future Meeting Dates</p> <p>Friday, 18th November 2022, 1pm-3pm. Venue to be confirmed.</p>	