

Blackpool Town Deal Board Meeting No. 24

Friday, 8th March 2024

Conference Room 3A, No. 1 Bickerstaffe Square & MS Teams

Blackpool Town Deal Board

Peter Cole (Chair)	(PC)	Chartered Surveyor
Graham Cowley	(GC)	Business in the Community
Tracy Hopkins	(TH)	Blackpool Citizens Advice Bureau
Neil Jack	(NJ)	Blackpool Council, Chief Executive
Paul Maynard MP [^]	(PM)	MP for Blackpool North and Cleveleys
Mark Robinson*	(MR)	Ellandi Management Ltd.
Kate Shane	(KS)	Merlin Entertainments (Blackpool) Ltd.
John Sullivan	(JS)	The Big Picture (Cinema Advisers) Ltd.
Steve Williams	(SW)	Force Technology Ltd.
Julian Winter [^]	(JW)	Blackpool Football Club Holdings Ltd.

In Attendance

Nick Gerrard	(NG)	Blackpool Council
Mark Gillingham	(MG)	Blackpool Council (Project Management Office)
Robert Latham	(RL)	Blackpool Council (Project Management Office)
Jayjay Sanson	(JS2)	Blackpool Council (Project Management Office)
Kevin Sturley	(KS2)	Blackpool Council (Project Management Office)
Sam Blenkinsopp*	(SB)	Department of Work and Pensions
Vanda de Freitas* [^]	(VdF)	Blackpool Council (Work and Health Programmes)
Andrew Fletcher [^]	(AF2)	Blackpool Council (The Platform)
Rob Stocks [^]	(RS)	Parliamentary Researcher & Communications Manager for Paul Maynard

* By MS Teams; ^ For part of the meeting

Notes and Actions	By Whom
<p>1. Introduction, Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>a) The meeting commenced with a welcome and introduction by the Chair: who reflected on the progress that has been made regenerating Blackpool in recent years, identifying the imminent opening of several key developments and noting (at the Convention of the North 2024 in Leeds on Friday, March 1), the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' announcement that Blackpool had been awarded £90m to regenerate housing in the most deprived parts of the town.</p> <p>NJ stated the amount, to be expended over 5-6 would initially, target improvements in inner areas (Central and Revoe) and masterplanning works for South Shore and Claremont. This activity will target houses of multiple occupation, ill-health, deprivation, transient individuals and more.</p>	

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<p>The hope is that the £90m is only stage 1; however, the initial funding will fundamentally change areas and create communities that local residents and businesses will invest in.</p> <p>PM commented that Blackpool continues to enjoy a high level of interest in Government and he hoped, as more money was needed, more would be forthcoming</p> <p>GC stated the award was consequential to the case-making of the Blackpool Town Prospectus, led by the Blackpool Pride of Place Partnership and the partnership with Central Government with Blackpool's status as a Levelling Up pilot area. He also noted that the fourth iteration of the Town Prospectus (which had been launched in the House of Lords) and which would be launched in Blackpool on 22nd March asks for a broader relationship with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and other departments. A copy would be circulated with the minutes.</p> <p>PC noted Blackpool was becoming the levelling up blueprint for the UK and that there was a very positive reception for the resort at the House of Lords recently where the United Utilities plc chair espoused the town's new conference centre and hotels; saying 'go to Blackpool, which is transforming rather than Manchester where the offer isn't changing'.</p> <p>JS also championed the changing offer in Blackpool; reflecting on the fact more still needed to be done and that people needed to be made aware of the change that is underway.</p> <p>b) Apologies were received from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott Benton MP (SB), MP for Blackpool South • Dick Cartmell (DC), Together Lancashire • Alan Cavill (AC), Blackpool Council • Jane Cole (JC), Blackpool Transport • Richard Fee (RF), Nikal Ltd. • Steve Fogg (SF), Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust • Alun Francis (AF1), Blackpool and the Fylde College • Debbie Francis (DF), Lancashire Enterprise Partnership • David Gaffney (DG), Arts Council England • Tina Redford (TR), Leftcoast Blackpool Ltd. • Helen Warren (HW), Department for Work and Pensions • Charlotte Schofield (CS1), Cities and Local Growth Unit (North-West Team) 	<p>Nick Gerrard</p>

Notes and Actions	By Whom
<p>2. Board Membership</p> <p>a) The Board noted the following changes to its membership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam Blenkinsopp (DWP) acting member replacing Helen Warren for the foreseeable future. • Julian Winter (Blackpool FC) replacing Mark McGhee • Tina Redford (Leftcoast Blackpool Ltd) has now left and a replacement will be sought. 	<p>Neil Jack/ Peter Cole</p>
<p>3. Declarations of Interest</p> <p>a) The Chair asked members of the Board for any new interests other than those previously recorded. No additional declarations were made.</p> <p>b) Declarations of Interest must be formally renewed annually:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms to be distributed to every Board member before next meeting • Form to be sent to Julian Winter as a new Board member 	<p>Rob Latham Rob Latham</p>
<p>4. Minutes of Meeting No. 23, 17th November 2023</p> <p>a) The Board approved the minutes of meeting No 23, 17th November 2023.</p> <p>b) <u>Matters arising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (5a) <u>DLUHC return.</u> The fully signed off form was circulated to the Board in time for submission on 24 November. DLUHC raised questions in January - these were responded to on 30 January. No further questions have been raised. • (9) <u>The Edge.</u> The project team have considered the Board’s suggestions and found them very helpful. The team has also looked at similar buildings providing business support services and interior designers will be appointed. The main contract delivery commenced in early February • (11) <u>Devolution consultation:</u> noted that instead of a letter being sent from the Board individual Board members had been asked to respond directly. The next stage will be for the three Upper Tier Authorities to consider at Special Council meetings on 13th or 14th March. 	
<p>5. Town Deal Programme and Project Update</p> <p>a) Programme Update The Board noted the programme update report. <u>Programme Delivery</u></p>	

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<p>a) Whilst good progress was being made the overall RAG rating is still red (according to the DHLUC definitions against the original business case) because two schemes are significantly more than 6 months behind the original schedule (Edge & Revoe) and two are over 6 months behind (Enterprise Zone & Multiversity).</p> <p>b) In discussion it was noted that using the DLUHC definitions is considered ‘harsh’, especially for projects like The Edge, which has been delayed for good reason and would, if measured versus the original targets, be red forever. In a discussion it was agreed to look at a more suitable rating for the Board’s monitoring so that the Board can see the progress against the revised programmes now that the projects have successfully commenced and ensuring both the budget and the expenditure were achieved within the DHLUC required timetable</p> <p><u>Programme Spend</u></p> <p>c) Rated amber. At the end of December, programme spend was £10,817,777.90. There is a forecast spend in the final quarter of £6,903,491.27 yielding a total forecast spend by the end of the financial year of £17,721,269.17. £19,634,424.15 was forecast at the last meeting.</p> <p><u>Programme Risk</u></p> <p>d) Rated amber. Issues have not changed particularly and, whilst projects have risks classed as high impact, mitigating actions are in place to ensure the Programme’s objectives will still be met.</p> <p><u>Claims</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board noted the progress on claims and the steps being taken to ensure that they were brought up to date following the TDIP discussion and the recommendation from the Council’s internal audit. • It was also noted that the Internal audit that had reviewed the governance and management of the Town Deal programme had been given a positive endorsement overall. • All required external returns to DLUHC have been submitted on time, the last being on the 24th November covering activity to the end of September 2023. Some additional minor project updates were requested on the 29th January and responded to on 30th with no outstanding issues reported. <p>b) <u>Project progress</u> The Board noted the project progress reports</p> <p><u>Enterprise Zone</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 18 month major highway contract is very close to being let, which will open up 10.4 Ha of business sites for which the Council has a number of enquiries awaiting delivery of the sites. 	


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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The United Utilities objections which had held up the letting of the contract and hence Town Deal spend could be withdrawn soon allowing a start on the highway next month. • The ‘neat’ highway design was noted as the roadside verges and landscaping include swales to improve drainage <p><u>The Edge</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project lost a year for redesign and retendering to reduce costs following the impact of construction inflation since the project was initiated, but works have now commenced on a 60 week contract which will see all the Town Deal funds spent this year and completion in 2025 <p><u>Illuminations rejuvenation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent progress has been made with new features having been displayed and more in preparation. • This scheme is having a reinforcing/renewing effect, especially in the matter of getting people out of their cars through features like Odyssey, an interactive attraction which responds to pedestrians walking through it. <p><u>Blackpool Central Courts relocation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council’s planning committee approved the new Courts building at the junction of Devonshire Road and Talbot Road thus enabling the new Courts building to start on site later this year. • The contract to make a £3m Town Deal contribution to the new building is still on hold until the current building leases are transferred. • With the premature closure of the Courts being accelerated by RAAC this will enable the other element of the Town Deal project, the demolition of the current buildings, to be brought forward and commence in the next few months. <p><u>Revoe Community Sports Village</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productive discussions have taken place with the Football Club about accelerating progress which JW fully endorsed. • A revised agreement has been passed to the Council, which includes adjustments to the community pitches element • In respect of the properties to be acquired 12 acquisitions have been made thus far. When the planning application for the new East Stand is submitted in the summer a compulsory purchase order (CPO) for the acquisition of any outstanding properties on Henry Street will be made. In the meantime negotiations continue. • SW stated TDIP showed some anxiety over progress on the scheme. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JW agreed with the report adding that the delays were attributed to unknowns relating to land transfers and values; however, the club is now in a position to pass the agreements to their lawyers. • JW also stated Avison Young (UK) Ltd. continue to lead on the purchase of properties and the designs for the new stand are expected at the end of April allowing a planning application in June / July to support the CPO application. <p><u>Multiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has been a challenging project with around half the properties needing to be purchased either acquired or with agreed terms • Pursuit of the CPO which is scheduled to be made in April • will facilitate the acceleration of negotiations with property owners who have not yet come to an agreement • The land referencing process (establishing all the interests to be acquired under a CPO) will precede a three week objections period following which the Secretary of State will decide if a public inquiry is required. • If no inquiry is required, the CPO will be confirmed • If an inquiry is required, the appointed independent inspector holds the inquiry then makes a judgement that is then determined by the Secretary of State. • Communications and support for the tenants continues. <p><u>The Platform</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A presentation on The Platform was given later on the agenda • The success of the Youth Hub project was acknowledged and it was stated it would come to an end as a Towns Fund scheme on 31 March (to be supported for a further year under the Shared Prosperity Fund) <p>c) <u>Programme Risk register</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board noted the Risk Register on which there had been no changes. <p>d) <u>Town Deal Community Engagement</u></p> <p>The Board noted the report on the community engagement event on the Town Deal projects that had taken place in Abingdon Street Market on 6th and 7th December 2023. An extensive discussion noted a number of points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • this was the first major engagement exercise since the Investment Plan was developed and was very positive • There were c.100 in-depth conversations with residents and visitors and another c.100 of lesser depth • Feedback was on the whole positive and people were much more aware of what was happening in the town than was expected. 	


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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair asked if another venue (not in the town centre) would be better in future but it was pointed out that the event was best placed where the projects were nearby and a location away from the town centre would likely raise a wider variety of issues that would require a broader presence (to include the police and health representatives for example) and not just those representing regeneration activities. There were also other consultations and engagement events planned in other locations such as those relating to Homes England’s Brownfield Infrastructure Land Fund Programme award recently announced. • It was also suggested there were a lot of community events scheduled for Spring and ‘piggy-backing’ on some of these might be a good idea. • The Chair also commented the report identified a low level of interest from young people. A discussion had taken place at the TDIP meeting on using different media vehicles to attract young people and suggested young people may not have been able to attend during the day in any case. • It was also noted that the Growth and Prosperity Programme video was to be placed on Blackpool Transport assets. • PM observed that when speaking to members of the electorate and in schools he feels they know about the Growth and Prosperity Programme and projects but are concerned about money for other things – he also feels the involvement of young people is very important. • It was also noted that there is a request in the new Town Prospectus for an allocation to conduct wider community engagement exercises • GC commented that Business in the Community is working with the Council’s youth services department and the experience is good • GC also noted there are two dimensions to social value relating to our projects ; the first is founded in construction (as per the positive Vinci experience); the second is in the use of the amenities (e.g. community pitches, new conference centre, etc.) and there is a need to get this benefit across to our young people so they see the benefits from the more visible building sites. • MR agreed that the Vinci plc involvement has been outstanding and the social uplift provided by the recent developments at the Hounds Hill shopping centre by Grahams are substantial • MR offered to share Ellandi Management Ltd’s annual improvement plan at the next Board meeting – this will show how they measure the ongoing social contributions made by the centre • KS stated the Pride of Place partnership has a ‘nut to crack’ in regards to young people and how we can get the message about what is relevant to young people in Blackpool across to them. 	<p>Mark Robinson</p>

Notes and Actions	By Whom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JS added, ‘There were 500 people in attendance at the Cinema Association (London) conference and the feedback from the young people was incredible – the highlight of the session.’ • KS also added, ‘The gap between us and them is significant and proven – the older attendees of the BITC supported eSports event needed subtitles to understand the conversations.’ • PM suggested the wider message is missing and a larger ‘narrative arc’ is needed – this has been a long term project so showing where Blackpool was and where it is now is required. People see what is in front of them, not what was there before - being able to communicate the whole story will show what has been achieved rather than relying on unpredictable journalistic narrative. • It was agreed to note the report and for the Council to consider commissioning a piece of work to develop the Blackpool story. 	<p>Nick Gerrard</p>
<p>6. Town Deal Investment Panel (TDIP) Meeting No. 18, 21st February 2024</p> <p>a) SW gave an overview of the TDIP meeting’s detailed review of progress and highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilising the DLUHC RAG ratings was potentially misleading and stated the new realistic RAG ratings would be provided in parallel to those generated following the DLUHC definitions. • The TDIP considered the £17m programme spend target to end March 2024 to be achievable having spent £11m by the end of December 2023 • TDIP recognised the delays to the progress (and spend) on the Enterprise Zone (EZ) scheme imposed by UU objections was unhelpful and all should acknowledge everything is not under the control of the project teams. • TDIP agreed with the overall amber rating for the programme noting there were several positive ‘green’ rated schemes. • The Panel had an extensive discussion about claims progress, the principal concern being that projects were progressing despite claims not being up to date but it was noted that the completion of internal claims does not prevent funds being made available to Council-led schemes and the Panel were happy that satisfactory safeguards are in place to ensure no problems arise and only legitimate expenditure incurred owing to the Council’s internal control systems for Town Deal which had recently been audited. • The TDIP now understands the biannual returns to Government that secure the funds run in parallel to the internal claims process and are not linked. Both processes are thorough but it was acknowledged that the primary focus of the project managers was on delivery. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDIP also recognises the low number of outcomes at present is either due to schemes not due to have delivered them by now or due to the delays • Despite the claims situation and the lack of control over such as the UU objections, the TDIP considers the individual projects to be well controlled both financially and in delivery. • The TDIP was also impressed by the outcomes from the community engagement event. Hearing the level of understanding of the projects was surprising but well received. Finding out the lack of young people being involved was a concern but the idea of using bus videos to get the benefits of such as the new sports facilities was also well received • The SPF projects show good results and claims are c. 80% of where they could be • TDIP is impressed by the success of the Shared Prosperity Fund Project Board (SPFPB) which provides an open and transparent forum for networking and has the potential to deliver huge benefits – it is a great example of best practice in operation <p>b) The Board noted the minutes and the report by the TDIP Chair and thanked the Panel for their continuing good work</p>	
<p>7. Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)</p> <p>a) NG gave an overview of the detailed report which set out overall progress on the 13 SPF schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A handful of schemes are rated amber but most are green • This is a good example of an integrated programme with several projects working together to enhance the impact of their projects • We need to hit a certain spend threshold at the end of March to receive all of next year’s funding (£3.2m) up front and we are currently on target to achieve this. <p>b) In discussion the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TH stated that participating in the SPF Project Board and hearing from all the teams is important – the sharing of learning makes it feel like one project. • There will be a local evaluation of the projects by Arcadis to give Blackpool the local detail for future activities even though the successor to SPF is not yet known. Their findings will be reported to TDIP. • It is understood Blackpool is the only Lancashire body undertaking its own evaluation as other authorities are leaving evaluation to Central Government activity. <p>c) The Board noted the report and the good progress being made with the SPF programme</p>	

Notes and Actions	By Whom
<p>8. Levelling Up Fund (LUF) and Capital Regeneration Programme (CRP)</p> <p>a) <u>Hotel Indigo (CRP)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NG stated it had been challenging getting this scheme ‘off the ground’ owing to a number of factors as set out in the report but progress was now being made and site investigations are aiming to start in the next few weeks prior acquisition and the design and subsequent tendering. • DHLUC had asked for a review meeting in mid-March after which they were satisfied that the CRP spend and delivery of the scheme could still be achieved within the required timescales notwithstanding the challenges faced. • The Indigo branded hotel is part of the same group as the Holiday Inn (InterContinental Hotels Group, IHG) <p>b) <u>Multiversity (LUF)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design work is progressing well and the 9th April Planning Committee meeting will consider the planning application. • An agreement is still needed with Blackpool & the Fylde College (B&FC) but has been complicated by the VAT situation. • The project has already had to absorb the cost of a £2.7m liability for VAT which has added to the pressures on the overall budget. <p>c) <u>Town Centre Access Scheme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the initial offer of the £15.7m LUF a validation exercise has been undertaken by the Department for Transport (DfT) after which authority to proceed with the signing of an MoU is awaited and is anticipated this month. • Redesign of the scheme’s 5 phases will be required owing to the passage of time since the original submission but this cannot commence until the MoU has been received and signed. • There is substantial pressure to achieve delivery by March 2026 in what is now an incredibly tight timescale. • An option to extend this has been out to DfT to which a response is also awaited <p>d) The Board noted the progress report</p>	
<p>9. The Platform</p> <p>a) Andrew Fletcher gave a presentation in the achievements of The Platform (attached). The following points were noted:</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>The Platform Board Presentation.pdf</p> </div>	

Notes and Actions	By Whom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the project began with Community Renewal (CRF) funding, which was successful in itself but acted as the ‘pump primer’ for the Towns Fund scheme and whilst it was finishing as a Towns Fund scheme at the end of March it would then continue for another year with Shared Prosperity Funding. • 168 different organisations have now given Platform beneficiaries positions • The group was reminded there are human considerations to go with the raw numbers (people supported with skills & into employment or training) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Almost 63% of the young people they work with are male – this matches the demographic (63% of benefits claimants in Blackpool are male) ii. The majority of those worked with are from Blackpool’s most deprived wards iii. 30% of those worked with who identify as unemployed have been out of work for over a year • The team had recently received Employment Related Services Association (ERSA) partnership award • PC commented, that the recognition is good but the project effecting real change is more important and with a target demographic of 1,900 so plenty to support if funding is available • AF2 stated the project has the capacity to help more, as more people are successful, more people will be attracted plus B&FC are looking to refer on college leavers • KS stated she was proud of the project team, the care leavers activity and the relationships the team has forged but the gap between young people and the involved organisations needs to be narrowed – Big organisations are making pledges but a local level initiative to encourage smaller businesses to do the same would be useful; ▪ GC stated there is clearly a need in the town for such an initiative - the new prospectus asks for exactly that ▪ SB stated the work they do with the Platform is remarkable, particularly as engaging with young people became much harder during and after the Covid-19 pandemic – it is a blueprint for other places and those other places are asking to visit and understand how it works ▪ TH stated that was good to hear and that improvements to how mental health is handled could assist young people to engage; social prescribing is already helping with the identification of training and business start-up and could be a good additional tool for the Platform. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PC asked how the project could be sustained and it was recognised that the best opportunity would be the post March 2025 successor to the Shared Prosperity Fund but there was currently no information about that which was a concern. 	

Notes and Actions	By Whom
<p>10. Growth & Prosperity Programme Update</p> <p>a) NG gave a presentation on the extraordinary amount of activity and completions taking place this year as many aspects of the Council's Growth and Prosperity Programme were now coming to fruition (see below)</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Town Deal Board 8th March 20241.pdf</p> </div> <p>b) SW congratulated the Growth & Prosperity (G&P) team on being shortlisted for the Medium Team of the Year at the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2024, the outcome of which would be know in June.</p> <p>c) MR stated it wasn't long between the new Houndshill cinema development opening and the Frasers store opening last November, which should be celebrated plus since then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houndshill footfall is up 15% versus the national trend of -2.5% • 900,000 to 1,000,000 more people have used the Houndshill shopping centre • 75% of whom spend whilst there (averaging £50.00) • Frasers will add to the £35m contributed by the shopping centre to the local economy <p>d) NG added:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abingdon Street Market should be included in the mix as that opened just prior to Frasers and is now well established as a venue for residents and visitors alike • The Civil Service Hub is likely to be practically complete ahead of its March 2025 scheduled date with the external cladding almost complete and some internal fit-out is already underway • Showtown is due to open on 15 March to be followed closely by the The Backlot Cinema & Diner on 22 March 	
<p>11. Any Other Business</p> <p>a) There was none</p>	
<p>12. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>a) Friday, 7th June 2024, 13:00 – 15:00 (venue TBC).</p>	