

Blackpool Town Deal Board Meeting No. 9

Agenda Item 5

Report to: Blackpool Town Deal Board
Subject: Community Engagement Update
Relevant Officer: Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director
Date of Meeting: 12th March 2021

1. Purpose of the report

To provide a further update on progress towards delivering the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

2. Recommendation

- a) For the Board to note progress on the latest Commonplace online engagement exercise;
- b) For the Board to comment on the stakeholder engagement undertaken and that planned to May 2021, and make suggestions on additional activity required at either a programme or project level.

3. Background

The engagement report to the last Board meeting outlined the need to undertake engagement on each scheme, using a new Commonplace website to build on the theme-based approach delivered last year.

The latest exercise, supported by a press release and regular social media promotion, is due to close today. At the time of writing, the <https://blackpooltownsfund.commonplace.is> website had received 261 visitors, with 159 respondents submitting 414 contributions. This includes respondents who had previously signed up for updates through the “People’s Panel” described in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, as well as new respondents, of which 74 went on to sign up for future updates and news. Over 85% of contributions received so far have been “positive”, as determined by Commonplace’s built-in analytical tool, although further exploration of the comments will be needed to ensure they can inform the business planning process effectively.

The numbers engaging are so far lower than the first Commonplace engagement exercise, in part due to changes in the algorithms used by social media companies to prioritise posts in users' news feeds, resulting in them being seen by fewer people. We will address this through the use of paid advertisements prior to the closing date. Last time, a spend of around £200 resulted in advertisements seen by 50,000 people, leading to 11,000 people engaging with the post, and 443 people visiting the Commonplace website.

An analysis of the key points emerging will be shared with the Town Deal Engagement Team week commencing March 15th, and further detailed analysis will be sent to the scheme leads by 2nd April for use in their respective business planning processes. Due to the need to integrate the results into the findings, the analysis will also be circulated by email to the Board for any strategic observations and comments at the same time.

4. Next Steps

As noted at the last Board meeting, scheme leads are also undertaking some stakeholder engagement necessary as part of their work developing the projects and business cases. The Appendix gives an overview of the activity undertaken and planned by scheme leads between January and (approximately) May 2021. This demonstrates the breadth of partners involved in the process and the variety of activity underway. It also clearly shows that each project requires a different approach to engage with their specific stakeholders.

In addition, the Appendix outlines some mechanisms to be used to undertake more detailed engagement on schemes with the public and key groups. It is deliberately flexible to account for the stage of development of each project, the relevant business plan deadlines, legally required consultation mechanisms and engagement activity undertaken to date. In particular, Phase 1 of the Enterprise Zone and the Courts relocation as part of the Blackpool Central scheme both require consultation in the near future as part of the planning process, and the Revoe/Southern Gateway project needs to build on the rich engagement undertaken with local communities as part of the development of the Revoe masterplan. Similarly, the engagement process extends to include stakeholder engagement activity to seek the views of significant numbers of people or volunteers who are part of a stakeholder community through a survey or other research methods.

Although early engagement activity will still be limited by lockdown measures, the approach addresses the issue of potential exclusion from online engagement by using local community groups and representatives, plus casual fieldwork researchers regularly used by the Council to reach out to seldom-heard groups and communities through both online and offline methods. It also takes into account previous comments from the Engagement Team that there needs to be a particular focus on ensuring the voice of groups with protected characteristics, working with the Council's equalities team and directly with local groups to seek further perspectives on the projects.

The plan seeks to minimise the risk of fatigue with the engagement process. The "People's Panel" process allows people to engage on their own terms with activity of particular interest to them, but

the role of the communication process in bringing new participants into the process in a sustainable way is crucial. A tailored approach to involving interest groups which minimises the use of “broadcasts” via social media is important to avoiding this, ensuring that the activity is relevant to the participants.

The operational plan has been shared with the Engagement Team, and with the VCFS Leadership Group at its meeting on 5th March. The plan will continue to evolve over the next few months. Findings from engagement activity will be reported to the Engagement Team and scheme leads as they emerge, with an overview of progress and findings being provided to future Board meetings. Plans are also underway to ensure that the performance measures identified in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan are collected, so that the effectiveness of the process can be assessed.

Appendix: Engagement undertaken and planned as part of business case development (January to May 2021)

Engagement across all schemes

| Time Period | Stakeholders Engaged | Type of Engagement | Outcome |
|---|---|---|--|
| February to March 2021 | General Public - all Blackpool residents and visitors | Web portal with project details seeking feedback | Town-level engagement; signups for news items and future engagement activity; raising of awareness of Town Deal and specific projects |
| April to May 2021 | Groups with protected characteristics (including Race, Disability, Age, Sex, Faith and Belief, Sexual Orientation, Gender reassignment, marriage and pregnancy) – via council equalities team, CVS (using model developed by Locality), Infusion Fieldworkers | Dependent on covid restrictions, mix of telephone and face-to-face engagement including via key local groups | Detailed opinions and perceptions of projects to inform business case development; gathering of contact details for use in future engagement |
| From April in line with business plan deadlines | General public – all Blackpool residents and visitors | Facilitated “coffee morning”-style discussions with scheme leads (online/offline as covid restrictions allow) | Rich dialogue with the public on schemes; collection of contact details for future engagement; views to inform business case development. |
| From April in line with business plan deadlines | Online surveys of key stakeholders with large audiences as required for each project (e.g. sports club | Online survey promoted by stakeholder organisation | Stakeholder-level engagement; signups for news items and future engagement activity; raising of awareness of Town |

| Time Period | Stakeholders Engaged | Type of Engagement | Outcome |
|---|---|---|--|
| | members; college student; business networks) in collaboration with stakeholder organisation | | Deal and specific projects; ownership and active contribution |
| From April in line with business plan deadlines | Online surveys of the general public if projects need more detailed input than obtained from Commonplace exercise | Online survey promoted via social media | Town-level engagement; signups for news items and future engagement activity; raising of awareness of Town Deal and specific projects; detailed comments on individual schemes |

The Edge

| Time Period | Stakeholders Engaged | Type of Engagement | Outcome |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------|---|
| January 2020 | UCLAN (2) and LUMS (1) | Meeting | Preliminary discussions on how the universities could help with The Edge. |
| February 2020 | Blackpool & Fylde College (1) | Meeting | Initial discussions on working together on the Edge |
| December 2020 January 2021 | Blackpool Innovation Group (formerly Blackpool Tech Hub) (10) | Online meetings | Input on different operating models including incubation and acceleration. Interest in Barclays Eagle Lab raised. |
| March/ April 2021 | Existing tenants at the Enterprise Centre and FYCreatives. Plus Postal Service Clients. (55) | Survey | Input on facilities and services needed in The Edge |
| March/April 2021 | <p>Consultees in Demand Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lancashire LEP – Boost Business Lancashire services and providers • Fylde Coast Responsible Business Network • Federation of Small Businesses • North & Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce • Key education providers: B&F College, Lancaster University, UCLAN • Other managed workspace providers: Lancashire or further afield. • Local commercial estate agents | Consultants | Input on demand, pricing, services and facilities |

Blackpool Enterprise Zone – Phase 1 development (a: sports facilities; b: highways improvements; c: commercial development)

| Time Period | Stakeholders Engagement | Type of Engagement | Outcome |
|-------------------|---|--|--|
| March/ April 2021 | EZ businesses c.200 -300 Local neighbourhood residents EZ Project Team EZ Security Team Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum Cricket and rugby club AFC Social media followers Council leadership Local MPs Government Town Deal Board Planning Committee Local schools B&FC | Online consultation on EZ website E-Newsletter Social media Website updates Mail shot letter to residents and EZ businesses 1-1 briefings Workshops/site visits (subject to Covid restrictions) Media updates, press briefings and enquiry handling | Feedback will inform planning application for highways and sports facilities Potential lead generation for commercial plots which will inform demand and size of property required that can be fed into design and layout of employment land Increase social media awareness and engagement Increase newsletter subscriptions Increase traffic to the EZ website |

Multiversity

| Time Period | Stakeholders Engagement | Type of Engagement | Outcome |
|------------------|---|--|--|
| To Be Determined | <p>Internal engagement to date with B&FC Lancaster University & Blackpool Council</p> <p>Future public & stakeholder engagement to include:</p> <p>Blackpool Council Members B&FC Board Blackpool Council Officers (Planning, Transportation, Highways) Business in the Community (BiTC) Business Improvement District (BID) Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Blackpool Business Leadership Group (BBLG) Blackpool Entertainment Company Limited (BECL) Town Deal Board Community Groups? Local Residents MUSE Network Rail / Northern Rail Houndshell Companies</p> | <p>The consultants have met with educational leads at B&FC regarding requirements</p> <p>The consultants have surveyed the area of the town centre with regards to site selection</p> <p>The consultants have presented a stage 1 report to the CEO's of BBC, B&FC & LU</p> <p>Tracey Betts (Infusion Research) will be invited to a meeting following Stage 1 approval to discuss the wider stakeholder & public consultation</p> | <p>B&FC requirements for the new Multiversity (space & type of space)</p> <p>Determination of an appropriate site</p> <p>Stage 2 consultation to be determined</p> |

Youth Hub

| Time Period | Stakeholders Engagement | Type of Engagement | Outcome |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Ongoing meetings with Jobcentre Plus – every 6 weeks or so. Task & Finish Group yet to be established.</p> | <p>Organisations: Jobcentre Plus B&F College</p> <p>Wide range of other organisations may be connected with or deliver from the hub on a planned appointment basis. These local organisations are in part already mapped by JCP.</p> <p>Agreement needed on appropriate use of space.</p> | <p>Original idea was to form a steering group – met briefly but seen as ineffective, too many organisations involved.</p> <p>Intention is to form a Youth Hub Project Task & Finish Group to develop TD business case and look at immediate uses for the hub (we hope to have keys to space by 1st April). Our priority has been to firm up a location for the hub and negotiate lease terms and practical fit out measures such as wifi, furniture, fire safety etc. These are still ongoing. Risk assessments will come next. We are not there yet.</p> <p>The reality is we will be testing the use of the facility for most of 2021 until the Towns Funding allows us to transition to full service.</p> <p>We have not developed a firm engagement methodology as yet.</p> <p>One idea is to ask users to help us actually name the place as part of a branding exercise; as well as seek views on the services they would like to see (within the parameters of an employment and skills hub).</p> | <p>Understanding how partner agencies want to engage with young NEETs and the facilities they would like to see at the hub.</p> <p>Help shape the services that can be delivered.</p> <p>Ensure impartial multi agency approach; avoid duplication. Further meetings will help define core approach.</p> |

| Time Period | Stakeholders Engagement | Type of Engagement | Outcome |
|---|---|--------------------|---|
| <p>Prior to May business case submission.</p> | <p>Service Users: None engaged yet. JCP have engaged with some users re JCP premises – general view is would prefer a different place for services to younger jobseekers. We will be looking to engage once we have a firm multi use plan and clear list of services.</p> | | <p>Young NEETs aged 16-24 ... JCP focus is on 18-24 UC claimants in the main but they will not refer all to the hub. Council provides statutory services to younger NEETs (16/17) and Care Leavers.</p> |

Blackpool Central Courts Relocation

| Time Period | Stakeholders Engagement | Type of Engagement | Outcome |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|
| Jan 21 | General Public | Following Exec Report regarding potential CPO of properties a number of complaints were received. Responses to complaints raised via Customer Service and Leaders Officer | No further action to date |
| 25 th Feb 21 | General public | Scoping exercise prior to planning submission – live on planning portal 25 th Feb | Feedback from public on proposals, will inform planning application submission. |
| 25 th Feb 21 | Property professionals/ local businesses & general public. | Press release issued to Commercial property / Trade press & Local Media | Potential questions relating to detail of the scheme. |
| 25 th Feb 21 | Council Leader, Cllr Lynn Williams (Claremont ward, Labour); Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Projects & Partnerships, Cllr Ivan Taylor (Claremont ward); Cabinet Member for Tourism & Culture, Cllr Gillian Campbell (Park ward). Site ward members - Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise & Job Creation, Cllr Mark Smith (Talbot ward, Labour); Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Jim Hobson (Bloomfield ward, Labour); Cllr Jane Hugo (Talbot ward); Cllr Graham Cain (Bloomfield ward) | First Stage Stakeholder engagement, notification that public consultation will commence soon, general briefing note. | Full presentation or 1:1 briefings as part of public consultation process |
| April/May | General Public | Public Consultation as part of statutory planning process. Press release to outline detail of planning submission | Feedback to inform the outcome of the planning submission. |

Revoe/Southern Gateway

| Time Period | Stakeholders Engagement | Type of Engagement | Outcome |
|----------------|--|---|--|
| February-March | Extensive consultation has been carried out in the production of the Revitalising REVOE Community Led masterplan. | Consultation to ensure pitches will meet local needs and demand | Production of the REVOE Community Led Masterplan. |
| Jan-Feb | Blackpool Community Trust have carried out engagement in the community and with local schools as part of the vision to deliver community football pitches. | Phone calls and meetings between Blackpool Football Club Community Trust and Football Foundation. | Delivery of Community pitches, independent school and Changing facilities. |
| Jan – June | Football Foundation | Meetings and emails | Review and discuss potential opportunities for additional funding support. |
| Dec 20-Jan 21 | Council’s Leisure Services Department. | Meetings and emails. | Discussion supply and demand needs across the borough and how provision will meet future needs |
| Dec-Jan | Local Education Department | Website | Discuss possible inclusion of education facilities on the site and wider health and well-being benefits for young people |

Illuminations

| Time Period | Stakeholders Engagement | Type of Engagement | Outcome |
|-------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| April to May 2021 | Tourism Recovery Group; LeftCoast; Light Up The North Network and Arts Council | Meeting/Call | Receive feedback around season extension; Receive feedback around suggested artistic elements, involvement with local artists, strategic fit in local Arts planning; as previous plus potential fit in regional strategic picture across light festivals, how we can support Arts Council priorities post-COVID, acquisition of artistic collaborations. |

Note that the balance of public and member engagement on the Illuminations project will take place after acceptance of the business plan (and up until 2025) around the selection process for new features and direct input into making this decision.