



Blackpool Town Deal Board meeting 16

Agenda Item 6

Report to: Blackpool Town Deal Board
Subject: Town Deal update
Relevant Officer: Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director
Date of Meeting: 11 February 2022

1. Purpose of report

To provide the Board with an update on the Town Deal Programme

2. Recommendations

To note the report.

3. Activity Update

3.1 Business case development process

In November 2020 the Council Executive and Town Deal Board accepted an offer of £39.5 million over financial years 2021/22 to 2025/26 for seven projects, with an additional £1 million coming from accelerated funding in July 2020 to acquire the former Devonshire Road hospital site as a proposed location for the replacement Courts building.

In line with the grant funding requirements, the Council needed to develop business cases and submit Summary Documents to the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) by 17 November 2021. On the 10 December 2021, confirmation was received that 5 projects had been approved after DLUHC review and confirmed that an initial up-front payment of £2,808,095 for 2021/22 was to be sent to the Council before the end of December. This is in addition to the initial 5% advance payment of £1,975,000



provided on 13 September 2021, to support up-front costs incurred in project development and delivery.

All of these funds are part of the total allocation of £39.5m and of this total received of £4.78m, £3.5m is targeted spend to be defrayed by the end of March 2022. Any remaining funds can be carried forward into the 22/23 year under the financial programme flexibilities available to the Blackpool Council Section 151 officer.

On the 15 December a request was made for some further information to be provided on the Multiversity and Blackpool Central Courts Relocation scheme. Information was provided on 5th January and a decision is anticipated shortly. The current position is thus:

Project name	Funding allocation (rounded)	Approved
Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone	£7.5 million	Yes
Blackpool Youth Hub	£0.5 million	Yes
Revoe Community Sports Village	£6.5 million	Yes
The EDGE (Stanley Buildings)	£4.5 million	Yes
Illuminations	£4.5 million	Yes
Multiversity - Land Acquisition	£9.0 million	Awaited
Blackpool Central Courts Relocation	£7 million	Awaited
Total	£39.5 million	

3.2 Programme management

The programme has therefore now moved into the delivery phase and a separate paper outlining the programme management approach is elsewhere on the agenda at item seven.

3.3 Community Engagement Activity

An engagement week took place (6 to 11 December 2021) where council “Infusion” team members of staff, field workers, and staff from the Community Safety team set up a pop-up shop in Blackpool Houndshill Shopping Centre, to engage with individuals about the Town Deal projects and wider Community Safety consultation.

Across the week over three thousand interactions took place, from short conversations to undertaking face to face questionnaires. Around one thousand and five hundred leaflets were distributed containing information on the Town Deal projects and a link to ‘Have Your Say’ via a short online survey. The shop unit was furnished with visual displays to encourage and start-up conversations from members of the public. A wide variety of topics were discussed during the engagement week, with respondents able to find out more about which Town Deal projects had been chosen including further detail about the progress of construction. During the week there was an increase in engagement from younger people, those who identify as LGBT+, and ethnic minorities.



Key topics of conversation during the week were as follows:

- Some residents seemed largely unaware of the project developments, with more information perhaps needing referencing generally around town rather than just online. With certain schemes, this will be addressed as soon as they commence physically on site with display boards etc. being visible.
- Positive about face-to-face interaction with the council.
- Some queries were of concern if schemes will actually go ahead and for example will developments match artist impressions and benefit locals.
- Many expressed support for the Multiversity.
- General negative comments about Blackpool's town image were made.

A presentation on Community Engagement will be given under item nine on the agenda.

3.4 Internal Audit

The council's internal risk team undertook an audit of the Town Deal programme late in 2021 with a final report provided on the 17 December. The scope was to review:

- Compliance with DHLUC's Town Fund guidance.
- Town Deal projects business case development and submission; and
- Governance and approvals process.

The "Overall Opinion and Assurance Statement" stated:

"We consider that the controls in place are adequate, with some risks identified and several changes necessary. It is a testament to those involved in the programme to date that the key requirements of the programme have been delivered against the backdrop of the pandemic and with the majority of staff delivering the requirements of the programme alongside their normal work duties. We did find a few weaknesses and have made a number of suggested improvements that will hopefully strengthen the success of the programme".

As suggested above, the report was on the whole very positive and the team welcomed the review. A number of minor recommendations were made and are being addressed but two are drawn to the Board's attention:



- “We recommend a programme level risk register is developed” – after two workshops with the council’s risk team in December and January, a draft Programme Level Risk Register is in place and is at item eight on the agenda.
- “We recommend the development of a communications plan to schedule and plan announcements and milestones” – individual projects have assigned council Communications team members to support activity throughout delivery and a new communications plan is under development and will be provided to the next meeting.