

Corby Town Deal Board

Friday 2nd October 2020
Meeting via ZOOM

Present:-

Lorna Dodge (Chair)	Love Corby
Councillor Tom Beattie	Corby Borough Council
Tom Pursglove MP	MP for Corby
Jonathan Waterworth	Corby Borough Council
Valerie Finke	Corby Borough Council
Kyra Joy	Tresham College Student Ambassador
Georgina Ager	Tresham College
Helen Willmott	Made In Corby
Lyn Buckingham	CENTARA
Dan Pickard	Corby Business Group
Simon Phipps	Sovereign Centros
Atul Joshi	Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH)
Steven Norris	Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH)
Councillor Owen Davison	Rural Area Forum
Nick Bolton	Electric Corby
Stephanie Beggs	MHCLG
Ian Achurch	Cities & Local Growth Unit
Hattie Edmunds	Parliamentary Assistant
Paul Thompson	SEMLEP
Sandy Cruickshank	MHCLG
Helen Wilmott	Made in Corby

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Jean Addison, Norman Stronach, Cath Conroy, Paul Goult, Hilary Chipping and Rob Offord (Northants Police – replacement being sought).

2. Minutes and Actions from the previous meeting

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 7 July 2020 had been circulated.

On Page 2, it was noted that meeting dates had now been set up till the end of the year.

On Page 4, it was confirmed that the LHS presentation had been forwarded to board Members following the meeting.

On Page 5, topics had been categorised and sorted into those in-scope and emerging themes and circulated as Handout C.

3. Highlight Report

A copy of the Project Board Highlight Report (Oct 2020) had been circulated and the following achievements since the previous meeting were noted:

- Successful funding bid for £750k of Accelerated Funding.
- Visioning Workshop held; results would be presented later in the meeting.

Tom Beattie commented that only £18k of the £162k upfront funding had been spent to date with a further £23k committed. He asked if this funding would be fully utilised. Jonathan Waterworth explained this was the spend on this first phase and the remainder was earmarked for the completion of the Town Investment Plan (TIP) and follow up work. He also said that more funds would be needed for phase 2 in the follow year and it was hoped some money could be saved towards this.

4. Accelerated Fund

A briefing note had been circulated showing the six successful projects, ie:

- Partial pedestrianisation of George Street - £350,000
- Cycleway infrastructure Improvements to link town parks - £110,000
- Corporation Street public realm and market improvements - £70,000
- Market walk site remediation - £100,000
- Outdoor gym equipment for Tresham College - £20,000
- Play area equipment replacement - £100,000.

Tom Beattie commented that the receipt of this funding was very welcome and he supported the projects chosen but asked how they had been selected. Jonathan Waterworth explained that the timescale to decide on the projects had been very tight. The Board's views and feedback had been taken on board and the projects had been assessed against the required criteria, state aid restrictions and deliverability (ie by 31 March 2021). The projects had also been agreed by the Council's One Corby Policy Committee as the Council was the Accountable Body.

Simon Phipps asked when funding agreements would be in place. Jonathan Waterworth said he anticipated draft agreements would be sent to lead organisations around the middle of the following week. Transfer of the funds would take place as works proceeded.

Lyn Buckingham asked if more details of the actual work/improvements to be undertaken were available. Jonathan Waterworth said that Simon Phipps had details of the town centre works. George Street improvements were being carried out in partnership with Highways and a feasibility study was underway to firm up the details. He confirmed that more details on all on the projects would be provided as matters progressed.

5. Board Visioning Workshop feedback

Vision

Atul Joshi (LSH) provided a presentation to the Board on the themes and draft visions which had emerged from the Visioning Workshop. A hard copy of the presentation had been circulated.

Key themes from Board members included education, health, creativity, skills development and job creation. Three versions of the vision had been drafted for the Boards consideration and these were presented. The final vision would be included in the TIP.

The Chair preferred Version 3, particularly the inclusion of references to regeneration, accessibility and signposting. TB agreed that this was the best of the three but felt it was missing recognition of the growth agenda and he suggested some rewording to address this.

Georgina Ager was pleased that education and training was included in all three versions but asked that the word 'classroom' be removed or changed as it was an outdated concept. Helen Wilmott also chose version 3 but liked the reference to a strong economic base at the start of the other versions.

Tom Pursglove agreed with Tom Beattie and explained the importance of emphasising the ambitious housing growth element which would carry weight with the government and Ian Achurch also agreed that this set Corby apart from other areas.

Stephanie Beggs asked about the extent of community involvement and explained that over 20 bids would be up for consideration by a wide range of people and uniqueness would be important.

Owen Davison also preferred version 3 but felt it should be condensed if possible to have more impact.

Intervention

Three main headings covered the ideas coming forward – Urban Regeneration, Skills and Enterprise Infrastructure and Connectivity. Low priority ideas arise were new housing, green space and road infrastructure, reflecting the view that these were already being adequately met.

Priority intervention theme and ideas were detailed under the same three headings and examination of these against the My Town online campaign themes showed a significant degree of conformity, common themes being:

Urban Regeneration – Town Centre regeneration; Leisure/Entertainment; Community Hub; Health Care; Youth Provision:

Skills and Enterprise Infrastructure – Education:

Connectivity – Links between railway and town centre; Pedestrian/Cycleways; Digital Connectivity.

Potholes had been mentioned a lot but otherwise it was clear that the comments largely reflected the Board's views in these areas.

Projects and Prioritisation

Based on this information, potential intervention projects included:

- Urban Regeneration - Higher education college, mixed use town centre hub space (health/pop up/leisure/education, town centre residential);
- Skills & Enterprise Infrastructure - Incubation/start up hub, creative and digital skillscentres, logistics training facility;
- Connectivity – Corby Walk review, Cycleway infrastructure review, Town Centre wayfinding.

The Board would need to consider these on the basis of key criteria. The TIP needed to show this clearly, based on the need for change and the evidence behind it.

Tom Beattie sought clarification on the suggestion related to the indoor market. He also asked if the higher education college in the Town Centre would be stand alone or linked to existing provision. Jonathan Waterworth understood issue around the indoor market was about raising awareness of it and increasing its use. The outdoor market had also come up and it was hoped to improve conditions for this at least. This was high level planning and would need to be developed out into much more detail in the coming months. He also believed education proposals would be linked to existing provision.

Georgina Ager explained that the proposals for Chisholm House related to a general 6th form centre and not higher education. There were also a couple of HE projects, however, including expansion of the current Digital Skills centre on George Street and higher level construction courses at Tresham Institute.

Tom Pursglove highlighted the need for a strategic approach, capitalising on housing growth and employment opportunities. University presence in the north of the County was weak and a hub and spoke model should be explored. It was crucial to put an attractive offer to Government to generate further support.

Helen Wilmott commented on the opportunity to combine digital and creative skills within an innovation centre as this worked really well to increase opportunities. The need for digital skills to be available to the whole population and not just the young was also highlighted and the importance of ongoing funding/sustainability was emphasised.

Comment was made on the opportunities here in respect of health, particularly KGH's plans for a new hospital and the need for renewal of some of the buildings at Willow Brook health complex.

Jonathan Waterworth emphasised the need to balance ambition with ensuring projects stacked up in terms of sustainability and affordability and also building in commercial elements.

It was confirmed that Kettering General Hospital was looking at redevelopment but this was a 5-10 year project. A new estate strategy was being pursued, including trying to resolve some of the current disconnections between key health elements. It may be possible to include some objectives in this project but timescales, etc, would have to match.

Ian Achurch commented on the importance of pushing clean, green infrastructure and showing ambition in this area, eg e-bikes/buses, robot deliveries, etc, and also full fibre connectivity.

Owen Davison asked about how Parish Councils could feed in and what the role of the Town Council would be. Jonathan Waterworth explained that the Town Fund work would transfer in to the new Unitary Authority. If a Town Council was formed this would be a separate body but it would have limited responsibilities unless the Unitary devolved any (non-statutory) activities to it. There were still a lot of uncertainties at the moment and it was unlikely that a Town Council would be up and running by Unitary vesting day (1 April 2021) but should be soon after.

6. Next Steps

Atul Joshi outlined the next steps in the process.

Comment was made that the headlines needed to be broadened out into more detail for the community and it was asked if there was an online campaign for engagement/feedback. Jonathan Waterworth confirmed a mixture of consultation mechanisms were being used, including online, community and business groups, telephone calls and some limited face to face where possible to observe social distancing, etc.

The importance of continuously reviewing and refining proposals and re-consulting as plans progressed in order to test ideas was highlighted. It was recognised that meeting the criteria and ensuring projects were deliverable in a short timescale was challenging.

The Chair said the LoveCorby group was very keen to have a presentation at their next meeting on 22 October 2020 if possible and it was agreed to try to do a combined session with the Business Group.

Action – Dan Pickard to arrange joint presentation/discussion for LoveCorby and Business Group on 22 October.

7. My Town Campaign Ideas

A table detailing the public responses/preferences had been circulated as Handout C. Leisure/Entertainment was the top priority mentioned, followed by healthcare, highway infrastructure and youth provision.

Some of the comments on the website related to big items such as hospital, bowling alley and ice rink but these were not realistic with the funding/time currently available and did not meet the criteria. It was, however, important to bear these desires in mind in respect of making space, etc, should proposals come forward.

Simon Phipps confirmed Sovereign was conscious and active on these types of developments and would continue to actively market particular areas.

8. AOB

Cath Conroy had asked that the Board being informed of the opening of the One Public Estate funding. £30m was available but it was not clear if any local schemes would meet the criteria, however this would be reviewed and considered.

Stephanie Beggs was moving on and a colleague would replace her on the Board. Board members thanked her for her input and wished her well.

9. Close of Meeting

Meeting closed at 11.25 am, next meeting 10 am 6 November 2020.