

Corby Town Deal Board

Tuesday 7th July 2020
Meeting via ZOOM.

Present:-

Lorna Dodge (Chair)	Love Corby
Councillor Tom Beattie	Corby Borough Council
Councillor Jean Addison	Corby Borough Council
Jonathan Waterworth	Corby Borough Council
Valerie Finke	Corby Borough Council
Norman Stronach	Corby Borough Council
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)
Kyra Joy	Tresham College Student Ambassador
Councillor Owen Davison	Rural Area Forum
Paul Thompson	SEMLEP
Harriet Pentland	Parliamentary Assistant to Tom Pursglove MP
Nick Bolton	Electric Corby
Cath Conroy	One Public Estate
Stephanie Beggs	Cities & Local Growth Unit
Ian Achurch	Northamptonshire County Council
Hilary Chipping	SEMLEP
Paul Goult	Corby Borough Council
Jane Saggars	Observer – Tom Pursglove's Office

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Tom Pursglove MP and Rob Offord (Northants Police).

2. Minutes and Actions from the previous meeting

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 28th January 2020 had been circulated.

On Page 2, Dan Pickard confirmed that due to the Covid-19 crisis the Corby Business Group had not met. Hopefully an opportunity may arise in the future for a presentation on the Town Fund to be received.

On Page 3, it was noted that a Tresham College student representative had joined the Board. Kyra Joy was welcomed by the Chair.

On Page 4, Jonathan Waterworth confirmed that amendments had been made to the Terms of Reference as requested.

On Page 4, Jonathan Waterworth informed the meeting that further details regarding the "Town of the Year" competition were still awaited.

On Page 5, it was noted that a young person representative had been invited to join the Board, through Tresham College.

3. Future Meeting Dates

Following discussion, it was agreed that future Board meetings be conducted during daytime, and if possible on a Friday (this would assist in facilitating the local MPs attendance). The next Board meeting was likely to be held late August/early September 2020.

Action – Val Finke to arrange the time and date for the next Board meeting, to be held daytime on a Friday.

4. Highlight Report

A copy of the Project Board Highlight Report (July 2020) had been circulated.

The report provided a summary of the project and detailed the achievements of the previous 6-months. These included:-

- Specialised consultant engaged via framework.
- Town Deal Board set up and first meeting took place Jan 2020 with good attendance.
- Engagement with Tresham College to discuss gathering student's views on the Town Fund.
- A student representative recommended by Tresham College to represent the young adults of Corby has been invited to join the board.
- Publicised My Town Campaign, via community associations, board members, Corby Borough Councils (CBC) website, CBC Twitter feed, CBC Press Release, posters throughout CBC buildings and other organisations such as FSB and The Chamber of Commerce.
- Appointment of market research Company to carry out Towns Fund Study. (In the light of Covid-19 and social distancing rules, the planned street interviews in three areas of Corby over a period of one week was cancelled and will be rescheduled to comply with the latest government guidelines.)
- Visioning workshop was planned to take place but due to the current crisis this was also cancelled before invites to potential attendees were sent out. This will also be rescheduled and reviewed to comply with the latest government guidelines on social distancing and gatherings of people.
- Further funding offered to Corby in addition to the Town Fund. A grant of £750,000 by MHCLG was announced on 1st July. Project details to be submitted by 14th August 2020, this project is to be completed by the end of this financial year. FAQ will be updated and be published soon.

It was further noted, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, that the Board meeting that had been scheduled for March 2020 had to be postponed, and that other dates and milestones had to have been delayed or postponed in line with Government advice.

Under this item, it was noted that the Council had been informed that MHCLG were providing a grant of £750k to Corby. This was additional money to the substantive project, and was intended to assist in reinvigorating the local economy post-Covid. The Board were being requested to consider possible project submissions. These would be collated and forwarded

to MHCLG. Board members were requested to submit proposals to the Council by 13th July 2020. A final list of potential projects would need to be sent to MHCLG by 14th August 2020.

It was stressed that any projects funded by this additional £750k needed to be completed by 31st March 2021. The catchment area for these projects was commensurate with the catchment area for the substantive Towns Fund, therefore rural areas were excluded.

It was likely the MHCLG monitoring regime would be “light touch”, however the Council’s s.151 Officer would need to sign-off projects. The money was only available for capital projects.

Board members were encouraged to submit ideas for projects to the Council by 13th July 2020, so the preparation of a list to go forward to the MHCLG could be compiled.

The report also included details of the key targets for substantive project for the next period. These included:-

- Approach local schools once all children and young adults are back at school to gather student’s ideas on the Town Fund.
- Hold workshops for both students at Tresham College and for the people of Corby and receive reports back.
- Arrange a date for the market research company to carry out Towns Fund Study and receive report back.
- Arrange the next Town Deal Board meeting.

In relation to the project’s Budget Position, the budget was £162,019. Actual spend to date was £18,345, with a further £23,586 committed.

5. Further Guidance - FAQs

A copy of further guidance and a FAQ list relating to the Towns Fund had been issued by the MHCLG on 3rd July 2020. A copy of the FAQ had been distributed. The guidance include further information and clarification regarding the Towns Fund, Town Investment Plans, Funding, Governance and the Towns Fund Acceleration scheme.

It was noted that the Board needed to determine by which deadline Corby would submit its bid. Given current circumstances, the recommendation would be to submit for the January 2021 deadline. Given the need to conduct full stakeholder engagement and further preparations, it was unlikely the earlier deadlines could be achieved.

It was further noted that a consortium led by Arup had been appointed by the MHCLG to provide assistance and guidance to towns in the development of their respective Town Investment Plan.

6. Town Fund Update

Atul Joshi (LSH) provided a presentation to the Board covering the empirical research conducted and the emerging themes identified.

The presentation detailed the suggested challenges facing Corby, together with the opportunities identified. The Town Fund themes identified were Urban Regeneration, Skills &

Enterprise, and Connectivity. The presentation included the issues currently identified under these themes.

The presentation also included Case Studies from other urban areas, which had sought to address the themes identified in the Town Fund.

Councillor Beattie raised concerns regarding some of the content in the presentation, which seemed rather dated and did not fully reflect the work undertaken over the previous years on the development and regeneration of Corby. There had been some significant developments over the previous 10-15 years that had seen improvements in facilities and infrastructure. In addition, Councillor Beattie raised concern regarding the statistics used as a basis for the presentation, particularly around unemployment and anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Addison also queried the statistics used, and sought clarification of their source.

Councillor Davison queried whether there was any likelihood of parishes and villages benefiting directly from the Fund. It was noted that the Fund was specifically for Corby, with the boundary for the Fund's catchment area set by MHCLG. Whilst an enquiry could be made to the MHCLG, it was unlikely there would be any amendment to the criteria.

Norman Stronach also expressed slight disappointment by the presentation, which he felt did not fully reflect the advances made locally over the past 15 years.

Action – Val Finke to distribute copies of the LHS presentation to Board members.

7. Workshop Details

There was a presentation regarding the emerging workshop themes. These covered Regeneration, Skills and infrastructure, and Connectivity. In addition, some MHCLG case studies from other towns and cities were detailed.

8. Market Research Details

Corby Borough Council had selected Nems to carry out market research for the Town Fund, to conduct face to face interviews in three busy footfall areas in Corby over a period of one week (Monday to Saturday). In total 450 interviews were intended to take place in that period.

The main advantage with this approach was that it allowed the questionnaire to focus on the day in question which in turn permitted more accurate data collection, e.g. what the respondent would be doing on their trip that day, their first hand experiences, what they thought on that day.

Before this could be carried out the lockdown occurred and now social distancing of 1m+ was now in place (as of 4th July). The Board were being requested to consider whether they still wanted to carry on with the above approach or whether there were other alternatives.

The Board felt it was important that as much opinion and data be obtained, whether through questionnaires or workshops. It was felt that questions needed to be carefully considered in order to obtain the maximum benefit.

The Board felt that the research would still be desirable, and working with Sovereign Centros, some alternative arrangements for the conduct of the interview sessions could be facilitated.

9. Engagement with schools and Tresham College

Georgina Ager detailed the steps taken to date within Tresham College to promote interest in the Towns Fund. This included promoting the link to the My Town website, posters on campus and mini focus groups. Unfortunately due to the Covid-19 crisis, other workshops and events had been cancelled. Some feedback had been received, and this would be fed into the wider consultation outcomes.

It was noted that consultation within local schools was going to be difficult, even after the summer holidays, as other priorities would need to be addressed by schools.

10. My Town Campaign Ideas

The Board received details of the on-line responses to the My Town campaign for Corby. It was noted that the three main areas attracting support were –

1. Road improvements/Cycle path improvements/Pedestrian path improvements
2. Sports facilities/Leisure facilities/Family entertainment
3. Mental health improvements/New hospital

Some of the ideas suggested were outside the criteria. Officers stressed these were just emerging themes, and would need to be reviewed. It was intended that further opinions and suggestions would be collated. It was felt important that those contributing appreciated the criteria that applied, the maximum budget available (£25m) and the ability to deliver.

Action – Val Finke would categorise and sort the topics suggested into those in-scope and emerging themes.

11. AOB

Harriet Pentland thanked the Board, on Tom Pursglove's behalf, for reconsidering the date and time of future meetings to assist in facilitating his attendance.

12. Close of Meeting

Meeting closed at 8:07 pm