

Corby Town Deal Board

Friday 15 January 2021

Meeting via ZOOM

Present:-

Lorna Dodge (Chair)
Valerie Finke
Jonathan Waterworth
Councillor Tom Beattie
Councillor Jean Addison
Georgina Ager
Simon Phipps
Dan Pickard
Helen Wilmott
Nick Bolton
Jessica Daldas
Kyra Joy
Tom Pursglove MP
Paul Ilko
Ian Achurch
Paul Thompson
Atul Joshi
Lyn Buckingham
Sandy Cruickshank
Steven Norris

Love Corby
Corby Borough Council
Corby Borough Council
Corby Borough Council
Corby Borough Council
Tresham & Bedford Colleges
Sovereign Centros
Corby Business Group
Made in Corby
Electric Corby
Homes England
Tresham College Student Ambassador
MP for Corby
TATA
Cities & Local Growth Unit
SEMLEP
Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH)
CENTARA
Cities and Local Growth Unit
Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH)

Guest Speakers:

Leo Hammond
Chris Martin
Rob Harris

Lambert Smith Hampton
Urban Movement
Ramidus

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Hilary Chipping.

2. Minutes and Actions from the previous meeting

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 11 December 2020 had been circulated. It was confirmed that the action at point 5 was still to be completed but the additional engagement at point 8 had been carried out.

3. Highlight Report

A copy of the Project Board Highlight Report (Dec 2020) had been circulated and it was noted that the telephone engagement survey report had been received and was summarised in the Town Investment Plan (TIP), together with the Business and Community Engagement Group surveys and the website survey. The study on the pedestrian/cycle and vehicle routes from the train station to the town centre was available and summarised in the TIP, as was the multi-use building study.

The key decision for this meeting was the approval of the TIP.

Targets for the next period included a CBC elected members briefing on Wednesday 20th January, followed by presentation of the Plan to One Corby Policy Committee on 26th January. A briefing would also be provided to the North Northamptonshire Shadow Executive in January ahead of the report being heard formally.

Engagement would continue with community groups and businesses to gather feedback on the proposed projects and TIP going forward and a smaller Advisory Group had been drawn from these members to engage in more detailed discussions going forward.

4. Accelerated Fund

A briefing note had been circulated and it was confirmed that the Tresham outdoor gym had been completed and the other five projects were progressing. It was asked if there would be a press release on the Tresham gym and VF confirmed there would but not immediately.

5. Town Investment Plan

JW was very pleased to present the Plan which distilled all the work undertaken to get to this point. He gave a brief overview of the Plan which presented four strong projects, including feasibility work and costings, and recommended it to the Board for approval. He emphasised that there was still a long journey ahead to finalise and deliver the projects and the Board, together with stakeholders, would continue to have a key role.

SN introduced the Plan and thanked the Board, and all involved for their support, particularly in the light of the challenges of the past year. He explained that the guidelines for TIPs were rigorous and the current circa 13,000-word count would need to be reduced to the permitted 10,000 words before submission. Much of this would be achieved through visuals and infographics.

The final document would be created in Adobe InDesign and would be beautifully set out with high quality graphics, etc, and would include key elements, including the golden thread and theory of change with clear messaging and information in the early part of the document.

Work on visioning and key objectives was carried out early on and helped to identify a long list of potential projects, some of which were being taken forward under the Accelerated Fund. Some had been discarded as they did not fit the brief, were too costly or could be delivered in other ways.

The final prioritised list of projects had been through a check and challenge process at the start of the year with MCLG and had received a good response on the vision, evidence, and the golden thread. The need for more detail in some areas, including around the still evolving projects, had also been identified. Feedback on the Plan would be welcome, particularly on anything which was missing or incorrect, bearing in mind the word count.

Corby Town Centre/Station Links

The team took the meeting through the Corby Town and Station Links project setting out the process of engagement and design work undertaken on both the Oakley Road and Cottingham Road routes.

The Framework report was shared on screen and key elements of the vision and design were highlighted, based on the objectives of wayfinding, safe and welcoming, health and wellbeing, reduced pollution, connection to open spaces, inclusive for all, as well as increased footfall and investor confidence. Greater emphasis would be placed on priority for pedestrians and cyclists, with increased greenery and the creation of more cohesive, open, safe, and attractive spaces while retaining all the current functions on Oakley Road and Elizabeth Street, including the dual carriageway layout and taxi rank.

The design for Cottingham Road followed the same principles with rationalisation of junctions, emphasis on the proximity of Coronation and West glebe Parks, improved verges, and green spaces, etc.

The separate elements of the schemes were broken down as follows:

- Station area
- Oakley Road
- Elizabeth Street/Corporation Street
- Elizabeth Street/Cottingham Road

- Cottingham Road/Station

For the TIP, the Station/Oakley Road route was prioritised with the hope that work to Cottingham Road could follow in the future when further funding opportunities arose.

Data on the potential increase in cycling/walking was queried and the difficulty of quantifying this was acknowledged, however, uptake was clearly evidenced in the success of similar schemes in other towns. Comment was made on the need for the continuation of the route out to the industrialised areas and it was confirmed that the Council was looking at wider provision, both under the Accelerated Fund and other/future funding opportunities.

It was suggested that a map showing the links to other parts of the network, even if fragmented at this stage, would be helpful.

Action – JW to follow up with colleagues to see what could be provided.

Sixth Form Centre at Chisholm House

GA explained that a specialist provision such as this had been an aspiration of the college for some time. The town centre was a good location, and the centre would cater for up to 600 students, commencing from the Academic Year 2022. Need/demand could be evidenced, and the proposals were based on an exciting rebuild similar to other schemes in the college's portfolio. The design provided a carbon neutral/negative, well insulated, and environmentally friendly solution which was shovel-ready at a cost of £9.5m, with the college picking up the ongoing revenue costs.

SP commented that this was an exciting project for the town centre owners, and he highlighted the importance of securing the funding as quickly as possible to meet the deadline for opening in 2022 and the aim was for work on site to start in July 2021. The project also linked into the proposed improvements to Elizabeth Street and Market Walk East.

It was asked how the facility would meet the identified needs in terms of skills shortages and GA explained that it would free up space at the main college site for more technical courses.

TP outlined a concern raised with him that there were surplus places and the lack of provision locally for students with special needs. There was a danger of duplication and more evidence was needed to show the facility would meet local needs, including drawing out the point about freeing up spaces for more vocational courses elsewhere.

GA confirmed that more evidence had been provided and further details of the market research was still to come. She recognised the need for special needs provision and was happy to discuss this further with schools with the possibility of incorporating more of this into the main college. TP supported this approach and would be happy to help. TB/JW were also involved in discussions on this and would support a wider meeting if helpful.

Comment was also made on the need for standards to be raised in some areas and meeting future needs as the population continued to grow.

SN asked for a concise summary of the evidence base, etc, to include in the TIP.

Action – GA to provide summary.

Market Walk East – Multi Purpose Space

SP explained that Architects had been engaged and were working up the designs to link the town centre to Elizabeth Street, including a multi-use space and residential/retirement apartment development.

The multi-use space was likely to be focused around arts/cultural provision facing on to Market Walk mall with the possibility of a lower level accessed from the car park incorporating complimentary uses such as gallery, studios, maker space, showcase area, arthouse films, etc. Flexibility would be key so that spaces could be altered to suit demand. Incorporation of a café and/or shop was also important to draw people in. The design would also be iconic but not too corporate.

This project would help to link Elizabeth Street visually and physically to the town centre.

Comment was made that £3.4m seemed a small budget to deliver the multi-use facility. The details were still being finalised, but the team was confident it could be delivered within this cost as it would effectively be a shell with minimal fit out. It was emphasised that the facilities funding options would need to be considered to support the facility and HW commented that there were funding opportunities which should be explored, including the Arts Council.

It was asked how firm the private sector investment element was and if thought had been given to soundproofing between the homes and the multi-use space. SP explained there was demand for Extra Care type housing and the site fitted this criterion. Feasibility would depend on the number of units and the Architect was aware of the need for sympathetic development for conflicting uses. The gallery would be located to the front of the development with the housing behind and visuals were available to show this. The TIP funding would deliver the arts centre and the private investment would do the rest, but it was recognised that there was still a lot to do.

The potential for the TIP to unlock other investments opportunities around the town was emphasised, including the police station/magistrates court, co-op supermarket site, etc, which could be used to meet other identified needs, such as office accommodation.

Concern was expressed that youth and community provision was not at the forefront of the proposals. The flexibility of the space was emphasised and although arts seemed to be where most demand was at present youth/community facilities were certainly not ruled out and eventual uses were still to be finalised. Comment was also made that 'arts' would almost certainly include youth and community engagement. The current rooftop gallery, which would relocate to a retail unit in New Post Office Square while redevelopment took place, already provided a wide range of activities aimed at the whole community.

Smart and Connected Corby

IA explained there were two elements to this project:

- Integrated Sensor Network providing intelligence on how the town centre functioned in terms of movement and air quality and informing decision making on planning and investment; and
- 'Corby 24/7' Dashboard capturing local sensor-based data in a map format and dashboard, showing local information.

This would provide an information resource to both local and national institutions and would bring a focus to the town and support further plans and bids.

Stakeholder Engagement

VF took the group through the stakeholder engagement undertaken so far and how this fed into the development of the four priority projects. The next steps were to approve the TIP for submission, finalise the engagement and narrative on the four projects and to pursue ongoing engagement post-submission.

JW outlined the next steps in relation to delivery of the programme if approved and confirmed the post-submission Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Strategy was being finalised for circulation. He emphasised that this was not the end of the engagement process by any means and that the Board would have a key role to play going forward. He thanked all those involved in getting the bid to this point in such challenging circumstances.

Action – to circulate the reports shared at this meeting to the Board Members.

Members of the Board were encouraged to raise any remaining questions/concerns to ensure all were fully united behind the Plan.

SN thanked all involved and asked members to review the TIP and submit any further comments/corrections/additions asap. The Board was best placed to get key points across,

and quotes were also helpful and were not included in the 10,000-word limit. Personal comments particularly carried a lot of weight.

The submission deadline was in two weeks' time and the design would be finalised shortly so comments, etc, were requested early in the following week although quotes could be added slightly later.

RESOLVED that:

The Town Investment Plan be agreed for finalisation as outlined and submission to Government Officer for approval.

6. AOB

None.

7. Close of Meeting

Meeting closed at 12.06 am. It was agreed that the next meeting would be arranged in March when the result of the bid would be known. VF would continue to circulate updates in the meantime.