

Crawley Economic Recovery Taskforce (CERT) Group and Town Deal Board

Wednesday, 24 March 2021

Meeting Notes

ITEM	ACTION
<p>1. Welcome Chris Maidment (CM) welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Henry Smith MP, substituted by Jennifer Millar-Smith - Alison Barratt (DWP), to be replaced on the Board by Mel Munro - Jo Ward (Nestle) <p>The minutes of the previous meeting (24th February 2021) were accepted.</p> <p>DWP Support and Kickstart – Catherine Scott offered to attend any business forums to discuss the local DWP offer and Kickstart initiative.</p> <p>Gatwick Freeport bid – following the news that the Freeport bid had not been successful, Natalie Brahma-Pearl (NBP) sought feedback from government which confirmed that of the 18 bids submitted, 8 were successful (one in each UK region with the Portsmouth and Solent Freeport being chosen for the South East). This was hugely disappointing given the immense work that went into the Gatwick bid however it was the right thing to do for the benefit of our businesses and has placed Crawley on the government’s radar as ‘special’ and requiring further support. NBP thanked everyone who was involved in the bid development.</p> <p>With regard to the Government’s £4.8bn Levelling-Up Fund, Crawley has been categorized as level 3 (of 3). The only place within West/East Sussex and Kent categorized as level 1 is Lewes and we are trying to establish what criteria was used to prioritise funding allocations.</p> <p>NBP reported that recent conversations with MHCLG and BEIS have included reference to the recent bid by Chichester College Group for an Institute of Technology in the Gatwick Diamond region.</p> <p>The Town Deal Board agreed to write to Government to make a case for further funding interventions in Crawley, to support the levelling-up agenda.</p> <p>Town Deal Sub-groups – CM reported that we are still looking for a chair of the Town Centre Investment sub-group. If anyone would like to volunteer, please contact Lynn Hainge (lynn.hainge@crawley.gov.uk)</p> <p>Draft Economic Recovery Plan – Clem Smith (CS) confirmed that the draft plan will be going out for public consultation in May/June 2021.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">CS/CM</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ALL</p>
<p>2. Crawley Town Deal Heads of Terms</p> <p>CS referred to the draft Heads of Terms (HoT) that had been circulated before today’s meeting and reminded the Board of the key headlines, aims and terms of the offer from government. If accepted by the Board, the next steps will include:</p>	

By 24 May 2021

- Agree the scope of each project
- Prioritise projects in line with the revised funding allocation (£21.1m)
- Develop a plan to meet conditions within the HoT including a community engagement plan and local business case assurance procedures
- Programme wide equality impact assessments
- Project impact assessments.

By 24 March 2022

- Provide an overarching Town Deal summary document
- Deliver a programme of community engagement
- Prepare and submit detailed business cases for all 10 projects
- Ensure business cases pass through Crawley Borough Council assurance procedures

Steve Sawyer (SS) expressed his support for the broad principles of the HoT however he has some reservations regarding the details of the green infrastructure grants and gigabit schemes and whether we are bound by the bullet points in the annex of the Heads of Terms.

CS confirmed that the draft HoT are essentially a memorandum of understanding and are not contractually binding. They offer sufficient flexibility to further develop and agree the detailed scope of each project between now and 24th May and each sub-group will be invited to develop this over the coming weeks.

Clare Mulholland confirmed that the HoT must be signed and returned today and reassured the Board that there is sufficient flexibility within them to scope each project and fast track any which could be delivered in 2021/22.

Louise Blackwell asked if the Town Deal is dependent on match funding. CS confirmed that it is not dependent however there are opportunities to pool resources from different sources in order to maximise impact.

Members of the Board (at least 15) provided individual assent for agreeing to the Heads of Terms through the in-meeting chat.

The Board agreed to take up the offer of the Town Deal for Crawley and return the signed Heads of Terms to MHCLG today.

NBP/CM

3. Crawley Town Investment Plan – priority projects

CS referred to a briefing paper which had been circulated before the meeting, presenting initial proposals to reduce project funding in order to accommodate the reduction in the overall Town Investment Plan budget from £25m to £21.1m. CS has already received feedback from some Board members. The final proposals will need to be agreed by 24th May.

SS stated that he does not believe we need £2m for the gigabit project and it is important to make every £1 go as far as possible. CS reiterated the opportunity for each sub-group to develop detailed businesses cases, taking into account the reduced budget allocation.

Marie Ovenden stated the need to ensure that sub-groups feed into existing regeneration projects and governance, for example walking & cycling schemes within the Crawley Growth Programme.

Bob Lanzer asked if it would be appropriate to make the largest budget reductions to those projects for which other funding sources might be available? CS confirmed that this had been considered when drawing up the initial proposals

<p>together with other interdependencies and an assessment of overall impact e.g. the Innovation Centre for which the Getting Building funding is used for capital delivery and the Towns Fund will enable operational delivery and establishment. Tony Middleton expressed support for this approach, stating that the £8.6m Getting Building funding for the Innovation Centre is based on a level of match funding being available.</p> <p>The overarching principle is to seek out opportunities to combine funding in order to achieve better results for Crawley. This is also the reason why a flat % reduction across all projects was not considered appropriate.</p> <p><u>The Board expressed broad agreement for the initial proposals for budget reductions with a caveat to further engage in sub-groups over the next 2 months.</u></p>	
<p>4. Next Steps / Timeline</p> <p>The Board noted the following timescales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By 24th May 2021 - confirm priority projects and a plan for addressing key conditions relating to those projects and the overall Town Investment Plan. - By 24th March 2022 – complete businesses cases for each project and submit a Summary Document to MHCLG <p>It was agreed to prioritise meetings of the Town Deal sub-groups in order to start the process of project scope and budget reviews. Some sub-groups are already established whilst others will require support. It will be important to ensure the proposals are consistent and follow the conditions set out in the HoT.</p> <p>CS confirmed that, following a successful interview, we have offered the role of Towns Fund Programme Officer to an individual and hope to formally confirm this next week. The Programme Officer will provide additional, practical support to the sub-groups.</p> <p>LH to arrange meeting of Sub-Group chairs w/c 5 April and the next Town Deal Board in May (before the 24th deadline).</p>	<p>LH</p>
<p>5. Any Other Business</p> <p>None</p>	