

Minutes of The Bishop Auckland Stronger Towns Board Meeting
20th March 2020, 14.00 to 16.00 Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

David Land (<i>Chair</i>)	DL	Chair
Jonathan Ruffer	JR	The Auckland Project, Founder
David Maddan	DM	The Auckland Project, Chief Executive Officer
Dehenna Davidson	DD	MP for Bishop Auckland
Susie Doyle	SD	The Auckland Project, Head of Development
Rob Yorke	RY	Private Sector Representative - Teescraft
Cllr Brian Stephens	BS	Portfolio Lead for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships
Geoff Paul	GP	Interim Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth, DCC
Michael Matthews	MM	Private Sector Representative
Graham Wood	GW	Economic Development Manager, DCC
Tom Frater	TG	BEIS
Paul Robson	RP	Job Centre Plus

Apologies:

Bishop Paul Butler	PB	Chair of the Brighter BA Partnership Board
Natalie Davison-Terranova	ND-T	Principal/Chief Executive - Bishop Auckland
Helen Golightly	HG	North East LEP
Bill Fullen	BF	Believe Housing

Item		Action
1.0	Welcome/Introductions	
1.1	Noted some unavailability with late shift to a Teams meeting due to the emerging Coronavirus crisis.	
2.0	Review of Previous Minutes	
2.1	Accepted as a true record	
3.0	Declarations of Interest – if any	
3.1	No declarations of interest were registered	
4.0	Purpose of the Town Board	
4.1	Looking at membership for the Board to provide strategic oversight of economic regeneration across Bishop Auckland and oversee the development of a Town Investment Plan as part of a Town Deal for Bishop Auckland, which follows on from the Future High Street Fund (FHSF) application.	
5.0	Future High Streets Fund submission	
5.1	GW provided an overview of the draft business case and the proposed funding based around a number of priorities.	

5.2	DL asked about what returns MHCLG are looking for? GW identified that MHCLG are looking for economic returns to a 2:1 ratio in terms of the Benefit Cost Ratio.	
5.3	DL asked about pulling the FHSF and Stronger Town funds together and then can this money be used to cover a wider area. GW added that this is about connecting people with change and opportunity in their local area.	
6.0	Stronger Towns Investment Plan	
6.1	<p>GW noted the additional guidance hadn't yet been released – there has been delay in parliamentary business. However, the projects must make sure that people are feeling they get benefits from the works including in this is a focus on skills that will be provided through Bishop Auckland College, and a number of employment programmes such as Durham Works. These will provide the block of people-based projects but there is also a need for economic projects such as infrastructure and transportation.</p> <p>There are a few issues with traffic to the south of the town, around the Tindale Crescent area and this could affect the progress of housing sites due to a lack of infrastructure.</p>	
6.2	TF identified that whilst the guidance is overdue it should not deviate much from the prospectus. As a result, we should continue on current approach. There is stronger guidance on Capital projects with some flexibility on revenue. TF has asked that any challenges be brought up with him.	
6.3	DL: Asked if this includes infrastructure projects.	
	DM: This would be Bishop Auckland's 2 nd £25 million investment (and likely its last) is it better to start completing the bigger projects rather than spreading the money to thinly.	
	DL: Asks that a checklist of projects is created to that these can be circulated via the media.	
	RY: Raised the idea of the big picture, Bishop Auckland has the potential to have £50 million invested in it, how flexible are the boundaries as to what constitutes the town or should we be looking at spending funding closer.	
	TF: The boundaries are not set in stone and the 2 funding streams are viewed separately.	
	DL: If it is opened out across the area, is there something else that we could look at?	
	GW: Change of boundaries must have economic rationale – to look at natural growth of housing since last census such as Bracks Farm and growth opportunities around the Deerpark	
	DL - The Weardale railway could be integrated into the town projects themselves.	
	GP – Shouldn't just focus on these two funding streams – can compete for funding again in the future or from different sources. There is to be a shift in skills and employment towards hospitality and foreign languages to service the tourist industry.	
	DD: Has a worry not to spend all the money across too many projects but would prefer to see some large ones completed.	
7	Any Other Business	

Meeting #1

7.1	No issues were raised	
8.0	Date of next meeting	
	TBC	

Meeting Closed.