

## SOWERBY BRIDGE TOWN BOARD MEETING

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Via MS Teams

### MINUTES

#### **Present:**

- Cllr Audrey Smith
- Gareth Baigent
- Phil Hawdon
- Janice Dawson
- Sarah Fanthorpe
- Sam Irvine

#### **CMBC Officers:**

- Kate McNicholas
- Mary Farrar
- Rob Shipway
- Lauren Brundell
- Callum Pickersgill
- Sandra Robertshaw (Minutes)

#### **Apologies:**

- Cllr Adam Wilkinson
- Cllr Dot Foster
- Cllr Sarah Courtney
- Sarah L Dyer
- Sarah Richardson
- Richard Seaman
- Stephen Priestley
- Wahid Rashid

The town board meeting was preceded by a visit to the Old Town Hall.

#### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies received from Cllr Adam Wilkinson.

#### **2. Declaration of Interests**

- Declaration of Interest forms – all completed forms have now been received.
- Declarations of Interest agenda items – no pecuniary interests declared.

#### **3. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

Agreed minutes were an accurate reflection of the meeting and the following actions noted:

- Working Groups: breakdown of costs received. Information provided to support the markets working group develop a specification for further options work.
- Parking Provision – Lauren Brundell will double check with business that information has been received.
- UKSPF – slides were circulated.

#### 4. **Board Membership**

Following the recent recruitment drive, four applicants were interviewed. The Chair proposed the recruitment of Caroline Sewell and Celia Cullen.

- Celia Cullen: has experience in legal work, local authority services, project management, financial expenditure and budgetary control. She has worked on several volunteering projects, has experience as a finance co-ordinator, worked with Friends of the Earth, and has asset transfer experience.
- Caroline Sewell: involved in social care for 25 years, does a lot of youth work, experienced in conflict resolution, quality assurance, business improvement background.

Jean Allen and Frank Darnley were the other two applicants and while both would be enthusiastic members of the Board, it was felt that their support would be most valuable by bringing their expertise to specific projects, such as Arts.

**Action:** As the meeting was not quorate, it was agreed Rob Shipway would circulate the recommendation to absent Board Members to seek their views.

**Action:** Rob Shipway to explore recruitment of a further two positions, including, if possible, a representative for young people. Janice Dawson would assist by contacting local organisations, Youth Council/Youth Services.

#### 5. **Climate Action**

Kate McNicholas provided an overview of the Climate Action Plan, and the following points and comments were noted:

- Plan is split into 6 themes.
- Consulting with wider stakeholders, needs to be owned by everyone and capturing actions we can do together.
- The importance of this issue given local flooding issues. Concerns around building on floodplains especially Sowerby Bridge and Copley. Local Plan has whole sections of local floodplains, something we need to look at.
- Discussion about air quality, being healthy and encouraging economy growth.
- Transport theme within the climate action plan which picks up on what has been done already, and promoting strong voice around vehicles/travel etc.
- Green Economy, we are working with WYCA and Mayor, Green Task Force where businesses are pledging what they can do.
- Making connection between net zero and associated work on biodiversity and ecological emergency.
- Climate Action Partnership are looking for new members/volunteers, particularly from the voluntary community and local businesses.

##### **Actions:**

- Kate to investigate Local Plan and query regarding building on floodplains.
- Climate Action Leaflet available, with QR code. PDF copy to be circulated with the minutes of this meeting.
- All encouraged to participate with feedback, utilise website and complete questionnaire.

- Board Members to encourage participation/involvement with the Climate Action Partnership, particularly from voluntary community sector and local businesses.

## 6. CIP High Street Programme

Mary Farrar, Corporate Lead – Transport, welcomed to the meeting. MF provided an overview of the scheme.

- On site at Rishworth, working on a safety scheme crossing in front of the school.
- Minor works at Ripponden have been completed (junction narrowing).
- Sowerby Bridge West, the new signals on the other side of the railway bridge and the redesign of the car park where West End Chip Shop is. The design has been problematic on this latter area, but now on final stages of approval, expect to issue that work shortly.
- Sowerby Bridge Central, demolition of market will take place on Monday next week. Need to look at the structural condition once market structure has been removed and will then progress. Agreed it would be helpful to provide information boards around the area. Noted the compulsory purchase order has been approved.
- Regent's Parade, back of the footway is in private ownership, but want the entire footway to ensure parking is reduced. The design includes the use of Yorkshire stone. A significant milestone will be the approval of the compulsory purchase order.
- Work in Sowerby Bridge will begin in earnest and will involve pavement widening and adding a crossing to take to Old Causey.
- Currently on site at Bolton Brow, the lining won't be put down due to not having a TRO in place for cycle lanes (one on A58 Rochdale Road by Sainsburys Local, and cycle lane up by Pye Nest to join A58). Since the Business Case was approved, a new policy has come in, one is the Green & Healthy Streets Policy and the other is the Government policy on Cycle Infrastructure, Local Traffic 120. All cycling and bus infrastructure needs to be segregated (raised a little bit and off the carriageway), couldn't retrospectively put onto Corridor Improvement Programme. Active Travel England are providing the funding for walking, cycling and bus infrastructure. Formal consultation is completed, going to governing body for a decision on 3/11/22.

Comments from the Board:

- Discussed the use of branding and hoardings and utilising Historic England banners. Rob Shipway and Mary to see if this is feasible.
- Tuel Lane will keep crossing and add another one.
- Phil Hawdon queried why there was no mention of Hollins Mill Lane, and the fact that no consultation had taken place with Fire & Water. Mary Farrar confirmed this work was being led by the Capital & Asset Team (Bona Matturi) and was unable to provide an update at this time. Kate confirmed that information had been provided previously to indicate that consultation would take place in the summer, construction due to start in November with completion expected in March 2023. Cllr Smith asked if this information could be shared with the Board. In respect of the design, Kate confirmed the work would not involve a redesign but would be a like for like replacement.
- Phil Hawdon raised traffic light control in West Sowerby (bottom of Tuel Lane), which he suggested was out of synch, specifically the right-hand turn signal that is only allowing five cars at a time to pass. He suggested this is causing a backlog of traffic up Tuel Lane. Mary Farrar confirmed that all traffic lights throughout the borough are being upgraded but agreed to investigate the signalling at the bottom of Tuel Lane.
- Query about whether it would be beneficial to move the bus stop outside Roxy's Nightclub, the Board felt this was too close to the traffic lights, making it difficult for cars to pass when buses are stationary. Similarly, the bus stop at bottom of Sowerby New Road, just before the tunnel going into town. Agreed Mary Farrar to follow up.

## **Actions:**

- MF to progress information on markets site hoardings.
- MJ to feedback repeated request for conversation with Fire and Water on the Hollings Mill Lane public realm works.
- MF to investigate sequencing of traffic lights on the right-hand turn at the bottom of Tuel Lane.
- MF to investigate both bus stops mentioned and the possibility of moving these.

## **7. HAZ Programme**

Craig Broadwith welcomed to the meeting. Craig provided an overview of the HAZ Programme to date. The following points were noted:

HAZ is part of Government's Future High Street Fund Initiative. The goal is to fuel economic and social recovery and breathe new life into local high streets and help to reinvent themselves. Retail is struggling, big retailers are disappearing smaller shops are struggling. We need to find ways to help the high streets reinvent themselves to encourage new retailers.

National budget is made up of £40m from the Dept of Digital Media and Sport, £52m from DLUHC, Dept of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and £3m from National Heritage Lottery Fund. Sowerby Bridge received £1.75m. Nationally there are 67 HAZ Programmes, of which 26 are based in the North of England, 9 in Yorkshire and two in West Yorkshire. Craig is working on both West Yorkshire HAZ Programmes. There are three strands within a HAZ:

- regeneration (bringing vacant shops and spaces back in to use), improving the appearance of the high street (also tying in with Public Realms works happening this year and next),
- culture, separately funded, which Fire & Water are partnering with and helping to deliver a cultural programme.
- community, separately funded. Julie Edwards, along with Heritage Schools, recruited several local schools to get children to engage with the town and its heritage.

The rationale for involvement in Sowerby Bridge was the low daytime footfall, the prevalence of personal care premises on the local high street (hairdressers, barbers etc), which are very niche but not likely to increase footfall. Historic England want to help diversify the economy. The Market Square will be delivered to improve public realm and support regeneration and draw visitors in. This would also bring a wider diversity of use into the space. Fire & Water is being developed to provide a place where you will begin to enjoy cultural events, and Market Square can host events when weather permitting. However, across the town there are several building condition issues, caused by poorly or inadequate maintenance, and we want to address this problem with the grant schemes we have in place. Historic England also want to encourage owners to turn unused space into residential accommodation.

Fire & Water complex had not had heating or power for a decade or more, rules of HAZ normally mean you cannot fund these mechanical installations, but Craig's team managed to persuade the National Board to support this. As a result, air source heat pumps will make the building usable.

Regarding the Old Town Hall project, Historic England wanted a multiple use building but timings didn't allow. However, the owner will invest in a bar in spring of next year which will help to regenerate the rest of the building, and in turn the wider Town Hall Street. Historic England and Calderdale Council are also providing some support to 30 Wharf Street.

The final phase of the regeneration of the high street under the HAZ will be the Shop Frontage Scheme.

## **8. Sowerby Bridge Shop Frontage Scheme**

Rob Shipway provided an overview of the work involved and the following points were noted:

- Pilot shop frontage scheme, £200k from Heritage England and £50k from private schemes.
- 30 Wharf Street has had work done on their shop frontage. The project was a pilot for the wider Shop Frontage scheme and has provided useful learning.
- The project must be delivered in one year running from April 2023 to March 2024.
- Given the timescales, current economic climate, and the desire to make a visible impact, the programme team have worked with Historic England to agree a programme of light touch, sympathetic improvements to buildings, such as signage, paint removal, stone enhancement.
- This approach would provide an opportunity to support up to 15 properties.
- Already working with Planning Services to ensure smooth process, working with Lauren Brundell to reach out to local businesses.
- There is already interest, we have been approached by some owners.
- Timeframe for the work is from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

Comments from the Board:

- With regard to whether planning permission will be required, the Programme team has liaised with Planning Services but as this work is essentially "light touch" and planning permission should not be required.
- It was noted that work was restricted to properties on Wharf Street.
- Board members were asked to notify the team of any interested parties and to spread word of the grant scheme.
- Discussed whether there had been any public input? RS confirmed not at this point, but it would be good to have some positive communication/promotion.
- We are working to try and raise the profile of work that has been done on projects, with the proposal of a celebratory event for the two main schemes which will have finished by December and would be good to promote to local businesses.

### **Actions:**

- Board Members to promote the shop frontage scheme to private property owners
- RS to bring back a progress report in advance of the December meeting of the Town Board.
- RS to include an agenda item on the scheme at the December meeting, to feedback to Town Board members on levels of interest among businesses and gain their input on priorities for investment.

## **9. Any Other Business**

The Board discussed the request from Cllr Adam Wilkinson to fund the fitting of an outside tap at Christchurch to water planters. Agreed this would normally be funded through a Ward Forum Grant. Agreed Cllr Smith to send the request through to Janice Dawson to respond to. RS confirmed that there was recognition around lack of detailed knowledge about what Town Boards can fund, and information will be collated and shared in due course.

MF advised the Board that Rochdale and Calderdale Councils working together through the Community Rail Partnership in respect of drone footage, art and media work. Karen Hornby has been appointed on a part time basis to support this work. Bradford Council are also interested in joining the partnership. Looking for accreditation, once this is done will get more funding in, which will act as a vehicle to help Calderdale, promote usage of the line and the communities around it, increase ridership, which will increase investment in the line. Cllr Smith asked if disabled access would be taken into consideration and MF confirmed this would be included.

**Actions:**

- Cllr Smith to forward the request for funding to Janice Dawson
- RS to collate a protocol around use of the ambitions for towns budget and share with the board.

**10. Board Administration and Dates of Future Meetings**

Next meeting was due to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> December, however PH confirmed this clashed with the Fire & Water Board Meeting and would result in three Town Board Members being unable to attend.

**Action:**

- RS to reschedule the next meeting date
- LB to provide an update on her work engaging with businesses at the next meeting.