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Ashbourne Reborn Programme Board

Minutes of a Ashbourne Reborn Programme Board meeting held at 10.00 am on Friday, 8th March, 2024 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Matlock, DE4 3NN.

PRESENT

Councillor David Hughes - In the Chair

Board Members: Councillor Simon Spencer (Vice-Chair) (DCC), Councillor Steve Bull (DCC), Councillor Steve Flitter (DDDC), Councillor Stuart Lees (DDDC), Councillor Peter Dobbs (DDDC), Sarah Dines MP, Tony Walker (Ashbourne Methodist Church), Sue Bridgett (Ashcom) and Councillor Anthony Bates (Ashbourne Town Council)

Present as substitute: Kim Dorrington (Ashbourne Town Team)

Steve Capes (Director of Regeneration & Policy), Giles Dann (Regeneration and Place Manager), Karen Henriksen (Director of Resources), Lucy Harrison (Democratic Services Assistant), Anna Paxton (Communications Officer (Ashbourne Reborn)), Laura Simpson (Principal Regeneration Officer) Kevin Parkes (Head of Professional Services – Highways Delivery – Derbyshire County Council) and Paul Wilson (Chief Executive)

Note:

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APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from: Anne Wright (Ashbourne Town Team) and Jim Seymour (Derbyshire County Council).

18 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

19 - INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

20 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was moved by Councillor Anthony Bates, seconded by Tony Walker and

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the minutes of the meeting of Ashbourne Reborn Programme Board held on 30 January 2024 be approved as a correct record.

The Chair declared the motion **CARRIED**.

21 - Ashbourne Reborn Programme Update

21a - PROGRESS OVERVIEW

Laura Simpson, Principal Regeneration Officer (Derbyshire Dales District Council) introduced an updating report which provided Board Members with information regarding the activities undertaken to progress the Ashbourne Reborn Programme, highlighted key programme risks and set out relevant next steps.

Laura noted that partners continued to work collaboratively to progress both projects. Board Members were informed that the Link Community Hub Project continued to progress through RIBA Stage 4 detailed design and the process for the procurement of the main contractor was ongoing following good indications of interest in the project at PQQ stage. The procurement Guideline/Strategy for the project had been updated to reflect the latest position in line with DLUHC requirements and was attached at Appendix 4.

The DCC led Highways and Public Realm Project was also progressing through Stage 4 RIBA detailed design. Designs for Shrovetide Walk and Millennium Square need to be completed to the required level of detail to enable updated cost estimates and subsequent construction, with cost estimates for this design work to be provided by AECOM for agreement. It was noted that framework contractor Galliford Try were now in contract and Early Contractor Involvement had enabled an initial review of the estimated project cost and an indicative phasing plan. It was anticipated that further development of this work, including to reflect progressed detailed designs as they became available through AECOM, would inform recommendations in March and April 2024 about the extent of any value engineering and if necessary descoping.

It was noted that following discussion, the minutes of the H&PR Project Control Board, as included at Appendix 1, were deemed to not be fully reflective of the response from Guy Taylor Associates to releasing design information for Shrovetide and Millenium Square. It was noted that this would be recorded in the H&PR Project Board Minutes.

Laura informed Members that a further meeting of the Design and Events Working Group had taken place. The future use of spaces and associated influences on design were discussed, with recommendations about street furniture and a preference to allow for the provision of a canopy to support flexible use of the Market Place considered for feedback at the subsequent Project Control Board.

Members were informed that feedback had been received from DLUHC accepting the baseline information that was proposed in the Quarter 2 Monitoring Return in October 2023, rebasing the output and completion dates for the projects. This was July 2025 for the Link Community Hub Project and October 2025 for the Highways and Public Realm Project. It was noted that a new memorandum of understanding had not yet been issued but this was anticipated to be received over the next few months and would need to be checked to ensure all the agreed changes had been fully reflected.

DLUHC had launched their Delivery Associates Network, aiming to provide support to unlock barriers to delivery on DLUHC funded projects. Current challenges for Ashbourne Reborn had been outlined to DLUHC in response to a request for information, submitted in an online survey. It was noted that these challenges were mainly focussed on specialised issues outside the anticipated offer of support, such as Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) requirements and the influence of bat roosts. It was intended that knowledge sharing groups with other local authorities who had encountered similar issues with HVM would be arranged. Further support was being offered regarding challenges related to value engineering, which was being mobilised to enable a quick response should it be required, if any potential need for descoping becomes clearer in the weeks to come.

It was noted that the Communications Protocol (Appendix 3) had been updated and social media updates were ongoing and more frequent, with the comms group being reinvigorated with a new set of meetings. Anna Paxton, Communications Officer for Ashbourne Reborn, had been to Ashbourne with Gary Thompson from Derbyshire County Council to liaise with businesses and property owners regarding the condition and position of underground structures that may influence the methodology for the proposed works. It was noted Anna had begun initial contact with haulers. Councillor Tony Bates, Ashbourne Town Council, requested that once scheduling and a program of work had been finalised, a stakeholder engagement between partners and local retailers take place in order to provide all affected parties with full information in regard to the programme and allow opportunity for questions. It was agreed that this should be held and suggested that a drop-in session would also be beneficial.

10:22 – Sarah Dines MP entered the meeting.

21b - ASHBOURNE METHODIST CHURCH UPDATE

Tony Walker, Ashbourne Methodist Church, presented Board Members with an update on the progress of the Link Community Hub Project. Tony Informed Members that there was an anticipated delay with construction until late summer (circa 3 month delay). This was being actively managed, and it was anticipated that engagement with DLUHC would be held through the delivery associates network to support value engineering. It was noted that there were several causes for this anticipated delay, which included resource availability, delays with mechanical and electrical design and the impact of working within constraints of a grade 2 listed building. It was noted that the design team were nearing the completion of the design and technical specifications to enable the preparation of tender pricing.

Procurement of the main contractor was ongoing. An invitation to tender was due to be issued in late April, with these returned by the end of May, and the contractor on site mid-August. This revised schedule fits in with the bat mitigation measures and it was noted that surveys had confirmed the roof is a summer maternity roost, therefore work could now commence in the roof space from September onwards. The need to ensure co-ordination of the Link Community Hub works with the Highways and Public Realm works was acknowledged.

There was now an operational Hub Planning Team established to ensure the best use of the buildings for the community once the project was complete. Several sub teams had been created in order to execute this including teams for, performance, community, visitor accommodation, marketing, HR, admin, finance and legal. Potential names for the spaces had begun to be discussed.

Tony noted that whilst the Church had a website, there was a consensus that there was need for a new website, solely for the project.

21c - DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL UPDATE

Councillor Simon Spencer, Derbyshire County Council, delivered an update on the Highways and Public Realm Project. Members were informed that they were still in the process of developing a programme of work regarding timeline, costing and detailed engineering specification, which was critical to the whole programme running to schedule. It was noted that the initial timeline discussed with Galliford Try had been deemed to be unacceptable and discussion had taken place that works may need to be completed out of hours. The importance of communicating this with local residents and business owners in good time in order to ensure they would be inconvenienced as little as possible was emphasised.

It was noted that there was a historic challenge in Ashbourne in regard to land ownership issues, particularly land that directly lies in front of retail properties which was originally used for selling goods off the street. Some patches of this land were unregistered, and it was noted that there would be a significant amount of work involved in legally establishing ownership. Work was ongoing between DCC legal and highways departments to consider mechanisms for including these areas within the scheme and the implications of adopting the land where appropriate. The need to give Galliford Try assurance that they were able to work on these areas of land in a safe and legal way was noted.

11:06 – Councillor Steve Flitter left the meeting.

Choice of materials, particularly for the road surface, was another key issue under consideration. The materials specification needed to be agreed by the Highway Authority and also meet the aspirations of the original scheme bid and be affordable within the scheme budget.

Councillor Spencer raised concerns regarding the Communications Protocol as drafted which he felt could restrict the ability of Project Board Chairs to respond to media enquiries.

It was moved by Councillor Simon Spencer, seconded by Councillor Steve Bull and

RESOLVED

That recommended 2, 'That the updated Ashbourne Reborn Communication Protocol is received and noted by the Board, including the approach to urgent communications' is removed from the list of recommendations set out in the report.

Voting

05 For

03 Against

02 Abstentions

The Chair declared the motion **CARRIED**.

The Communications Protocol would be re-visited and considered at the next meeting of the Programme Board.

It was then moved by Councillor Simon Spencer, seconded by Councillor Anthony Bates and

RESOLVED (unanimously)

1. That the Board considers progress to date and the position regarding program, cost, deliverables, and risks be received and noted.
2. That the Board receives and notes the AMC Procurement Strategy/Guidelines document.

The Chair declared the motion **CARRIED**.

22 - PROGRAMME PARTNER UPDATES

Kim Dorrington provided Board Members with an update on partner initiatives on behalf of the Town Team. The team had been working with Thinking Place, a place brand specialist organisation, with the aim of achieving social, cultural and economic regeneration to transform the mindset of local people. Stage one of this work was narrative development, involving an in-depth consultation with stakeholders through workshops, focus groups and an online survey, it was expected that this would be shared by the end of march. The next stage was visual development, creating a brand identity and visual material to promote the Town and the final stage would be implementation. It was hoped this process would create unity of purpose and positivity and enhance civic pride and community confidence, attracting new visitors, residents and businesses.

The potential for Ashbourne to have a Business Improvement District (BID) was then discussed with Members, in order to ensure the Town centre had some form of management moving forward. It was noted that a BID could only be formed following consultation and a ballot in which businesses vote on a BID proposal for the area. The BID would be funded through a BID levy, this would be 1-2% of the hereditaments rateable value. It was noted that a BID would aid in achieving an effective networking and collaboration in the local community and with external bodies and could release funds to support the cost of a town centre manager.

Phase one of this work would be to carry out a BID feasibility study which would cost approximately £8,000. The Town Team were exploring funding opportunities for the feasibility stage. Steve Capes, Director of Regeneration and Policy, noted that this would be an important step in generating town centre management and suggested that the feasibility study may be able to be considered for funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) which included an allocation for feasibility studies within the investment plan. A proposal would need Board approval.

11:26 – Sarah Dines MP left the meeting.

Meeting Closed: 11.59 am

Chair