

# City of Preston Town Fund Board

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## City of Preston Town Fund Board 25 September 2020

**Present:** Mr J Chesworth in the Chair; R Connor , Vice Chair; Sir M Hendrick, MP, Councillors M Brown , A Phillips, R Binns, L Smith, R Jenkins, P Green and A-M Parkinson

**Also in attendance:**

Mr J Crellin	– Assistant Director (Head of City Growth & Regeneration) City Development
Ms B Joyce	– City Development
Mr Z Bapu	– Senior Member Services Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Moss, K O'Connor and M Close

### CD18 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record.

### CD19 Preston Towns Fund - Harris Quarter Pops Up - Implementation

The Board received a report on Harris Quarter Pop Up Project. In July 2020, the Council received a letter from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) offering Preston a Towns Fund grant of an additional and accelerated £1million to fund capital project(s). At its meeting in July the Towns Fund Board approved that the Harris Quarter Pops Up project be progressed under this initiative. In August 2020 the City Council as accountable body delegated acceptance of the grant to its section 151 officer and delegated to the Council's Cabinet any further project approvals required by the accountable body. The Chief Executive and s151 officer wrote to Government in August accepting the s131 grant offer which is expected to be received in full by the Council this month.

The s131 grant needs be fully defrayed within 8 months, and taking this into account along with the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's delivery capacity officers have considered how best the project can be delivered. The preferred option is for the Council to utilise the Lancashire Regeneration

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Property Partnership (LRPP) to appoint Maple Grove Developments (MGD) to act as project and development managers.

The main objective of the project is to encourage visits, from residents and visitors alike, into the City Centre and help re-establish the City Centre as a safe destination of choice. The project will see the design and delivery of a curated range of longer and shorter term uses of Preston's market areas and other public spaces to provide areas for a programme of pop-up events and visitor attractions. A long list of projects including: public realm; innovative use of public spaces; public art; cycle provision; site hoardings; occasional themed markets; and digital screens has been drawn up.

The project sponsor for the accountable body is the Director of Development and Housing who is establishing a working group, comprising Council officers, MGD and Towns Deal Board member organisations UCLan and the County Council. The project sponsor will keep the Town's Fund Board Chair updated on progress. MGD will lead on the first task of the working group to assess each project on the long list against a range of critical success factors, including alignment with existing regeneration proposals underway in the area; affordability; deliverability; impact; and alignment with grant criteria. This assessment process will take between 4 and 6 weeks which will further reduce the time available to deliver the project and defray the grant to circa 6 months.

The Board made the following comments and observations:-

- Pleased to see a local developer being involved.
- Good news for the City.
- Spend timescale very constrained
- Procurement challenges will need to be overcome.

**Resolved** – That the Board

- (i) Noted, subject to approval by the Cabinet of the Accountable Body, the use of the Lancashire Regeneration Property Partnership to retain Maple Grove Developments as Harris Quarter Pops Up development and project manager;
- (ii) Endorsed the "long list" of potential project elements and the sifting process set out in this report to enable the final project elements to be costed and delivered; and
- (iii) Requested that MGD and the Project Sponsor update future meetings of this Board on implementation progress.

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### CD20 Towns Fund Investment Programme - Update Report

The Board received an update on the Towns Fund Investment Programme. The City Of Preston Towns Fund Board submitted a City Investment Plan (CIP) to government at the end of July 2020. The CIP sets out a 15 year plan for the city centre including a £24.98m Towns Fund investment programme focussed on the Harris Quarter.

No formal feedback on the submission had been received at the time of writing. It is understood that a process of assessment and moderation has been taking place and that formal feedback may be forthcoming in early October. Heads of Terms will need to be negotiated and agreed by the City Council, in its role as Accountable Body (AB) for the Towns Fund, the government and the Board. The Towns Fund Board, and AB, will need to demonstrate assurance to enable accountable decision making, to ensure value for money and to provide for effective monitoring and evaluation through a Towns Fund Assurance Framework.

In July 2020 the Board requested that the AB ensure its Monitoring Officer and Chief Internal Auditor are appraised of the enhanced roles and responsibilities required of the AB during the next phases. In August the Council of the AB noted the future role of the AB and requested that the Towns Fund Assurance Framework be brought for consideration by the Council at the appropriate time. It is premature to ask the Board or the AB to consider a draft Assurance Framework in advance of any formal offer of Towns Fund grant. It is recommended that an Assurance Framework working group comprising a small group of Board members and officers be established to support the preparation of the Assurance Framework.

An important part of the Assurance Framework is appointment of future Board (and any Board sub group) members. It is recommended that the Assurance Framework working group prepare appointment protocols for consideration by the Board. In July the Board endorsed the establishment of an Investment Panel to make Towns Fund investment recommendations to the Board. It is recommended that the Investment Panel Chair form part of the Assurance Framework working group and that terms of reference for the Panel be prepared for consideration by the Board.

**Resolved** – That the Board:

- (i) Noted the AB's Monitoring Officer and Chief Internal Auditor have been appraised of the enhanced roles and responsibilities required of the AB during the next phases;
- (ii) Noted the AB has requested that a draft Towns Fund Assurance Framework be considered by the Council of the AB, when prepared;

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- (iii) Agreed that an Assurance Framework working group be established, to include the Chief Executive of the AB, the Chair of the Board and Chair of the Investment Panel; and
- (iv) Requested that the Assurance Framework working group draft appointment protocols and terms of reference for the Investment Panel for inclusion within the draft Assurance Framework for consideration by the Board in due course.