



Meeting of the Ryde Town Board of Directors

Held on Friday 11 July 2024, 1pm in The Conference Suite, The Former NatWest Building, Ryde, Isle of Wight.

Present	In Attendance
Steven Holbrook - Chair	Allan Bridges
Carol Jaye	Ann Barber
Jim Pegler (for Donna Jones)	Liz Edmunds-Lamb
Karen Lucioni	Lisa Dyer
Joe Robertson	Pete Fellows
Geoff Underwood	Jon Baker (Minutes)
James Hinton	Alex Minns
Rachael Randall	Colin Rowland
Richard May	Sarah Chatwin
Trevor Nicholas	
Lisa Gagliani	Guests Speaker
Luke Kerr	Christopher Scott
David Redrup	
Louise Dandy	

Item		ACTION
1.	Welcome and Introduction The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made by all . Apologies for Absence Apologies were noted from Donna Jones (PCC) and Phil Jordan (IWC).	
2.	Declarations of Interest None.	
3	Minutes - To agree the notes of the meeting held 07 June 2024 Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.	
4.	Update from Christopher Scott.	

	<p>Mr Scott provided members of the Board with a history and over view of several projects, funded by various raised funds, for Ryde and the surrounding area (the Ryde Development Area), which had been discussed with the IW Council over the years. Such projects were around housing, commercial, retail and leisure space. Planning application times were taken into account and some projects needed to be viewed as realistically feasible and some not so. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Harcourts Sands</u> • <u>Ryde Pier</u> • <u>Ryde Theatre</u> • <u>Hovertravel</u> • <u>Rosemary Vineyards</u> • <u>Ryde Dormitory Scheme</u> • <u>Ice Rink</u> • <u>Nicholson Road</u> 	
5.	<p>Levelling Up update (SH) Latest on guidance and future of programme</p> <p>Once the General Election was called, the feedback from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (Now Housing, Communities and Local Government), was basically that things were on hold. No further comment was being made until “further notice”, which remained the case at the time of the meeting.</p> <p>The Board therefore decided to continue with the current process of utilising the allocated £250K in order to put Ryde in the best position possible should things restart. This was for two reasons. Firstly, the money was being spent locally, for the benefit of the local economy and secondly Ryde would be in a good position should things progress as originally planned.</p> <p>In conclusion, the Board would continue as if there has been no change, and the deadline of 31 July 2024 would be worked to.</p> <p>Logically, owing to much of the Levelling Up funding being allocated to many northern parts of the UK (with far fewer in the South), the feeling was that funding would not be withdrawn as it could be seen as a bad political move for the new government, although it may possibly be adjusted.</p> <p>However, should the worst case scenario happen, there had still been a lot of positive work carried out in Ryde with research, engagement and possible plans made utilising the money allocated so far.</p>	
6.	<p>Finance update (AB) To report that we are still on budget</p> <p>So far just the £250K has been released to ensure that the initial work around Community Engagement was being carried out and the long term plan being created.</p>	

	<p>The amount spent by Ryde Town Council (RTC) which amounts to around £92K (of the £250K) would be released back to RTC, once assurances of evidence around money spent correctly had been received.</p> <p>The Board would also receive a monthly summary account from the Accountable Body, and it was also noted that there would be a financial report presented at each Board meeting.</p> <p>Regarding any potential future borrowing, the S151 Officer had indicated that he had no issues in principle</p>	Ann B
7.	<p>Section 151 Officer strategy to discuss how the IWC Section 151 Officer proposes that the scheme is managed</p> <p>Members were advised that the Accountable Body was the Isle of Wight Council acting on behalf of the Government and the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government (but not acting under IW Council rules). Matters such as HR, Legal, Accounting and Procurement do however need to meet the necessary standards which would be approved by the S151 Officer.</p> <p>The Service Level Agreement would stipulate certain conditions such as timescales around small business being paid over a certain period and the Accountable Body would be held to account to ensure compliance.</p> <p>Regarding the acquiring additional resources from, for example the Isle of Wight Council, these would need to be purchased and dedicated to the work of the Board and not used by the IW Council for any other business.</p> <p>The Board was advised that whilst the IW Councils S151 Officer is the Accountable Bodies responsible officer, he is also shared with Portsmouth City Council and Gosport Borough Council. Therefore, potentially additional resources may come from staff across the Solent.</p> <p>The S151 Officer must ensure that all practices are correct and that all monies are spent in the correct manner but will not decide how the money is spent.</p> <p>Whilst Procurement, Financial and Legal would probably need to be carried out by purchased IW Council resources, which would be more efficient, HR could be provided by RTC, providing the correct rules and procedures were adhered to.</p> <p>Should there be limited or no capacity at the IW Council to provide any additional resources, owing to unforeseen problems (which was acknowledged as a risk), then there was the possibility of purchasing staff from either Portsmouth City Council or Gosport Borough Council.</p>	

	<p>Concerns still remained however over the risk of there being insufficient support.</p> <p>RTC would need to appraise its councillors on any risks, being clear and transparent on any procedures that would mitigate any risk to the Town Councils reputation.</p>	
8.	<p>Engagement update (AB) To discuss the written report and update on how the Community Engagement has evolved.</p> <p>The first tranche of the engagement had been completed with a lot of manual input being carried out which should be completed within a few days, with the results provided to the statisticians, and presented to the Board.</p> <p>Members of the Board were presented with a very early flavour of the results and outcomes.</p> <p>The number of responses were around what was expected considering the geography and demography of the town. It was however noted that there was a large response from a younger cohort (up to 19 years of age), although this was largely down to the engagement from Ryde School (largely years 7 to 13), who's headteachers encouraged engagement. More efforts would be made to encourage engagement with the 20 – 29 age group (the lowest respondents in the survey) in the future.</p> <p>A separate report on Primary School age group consultation has been carried out by Network Ryde and will be sent out to Board members in due course.</p> <p>There did, however, appear to be a lack of evidenced responses from the business community which again needed to be focussed on moving forward and this could include the improvement of social media and website presence. An improved Ryde Business Association (RBA) could also help with this. Also, business based questions should perhaps be offered to stimulate a better response.</p> <p>Additionally, businesses should be asked to offer suggestions from them as to what they would prefer for Ryde. More face to face engagement on the streets would also be beneficial.</p> <p>The Board agreed that whilst they appreciated and accepted the results in their present form they did need to hear more from areas where there would be more value added. Engagement needed to continue with all areas of the community, but the Board was mindful as to the tight timescales that were in place to receive all feedback and formulate a response, although with the recent General Election and the change of government, there may be a possibility that the timescales may be extended.</p>	

	<p>Regarding the following three areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Street Heritage and Regeneration • Safety and security • Transport Connectivity <p>There were 24 criteria where projects could be evaluated to be in a good position for consideration and then fed back to the S151 Officer.</p> <p>Members noted that within the consultation results there were some areas that featured a somewhat unexpected response.</p> <p>These included Ryde Arena being a higher priority than the Town Hall (Theatre) and Community Safety (CCTV/Policing) being more of a priority over Heritage issues (particularly with the younger cohort being concerned for their safety due to high levels of drug and alcohol abuse).</p> <p>There was also a large response, from all ages, around improved sports and leisure facilities.</p> <p>Due to an issue with the questionnaire Plug-In that was used, answers to Question 19 require adjustment, which will be made in time to meet the deadline</p> <p>Regarding Ryde Arena, it was suggested that a Working Group could be set up to meet with AEW and the IW Council to establish the latest status of the building and what the current future plans were, in order to better evaluate the projects feasibility within a three year period or longer. Similar groups could be set up for other projects such as Nicholson Road. Such a meeting could be organised through Phil Jordan via RTC.</p> <p>Regarding the Levelling Up money itself, it was clarified that it would go straight to the accountable body and would be ringfenced solely for the purpose of investing in Ryde. It was not the IW Councils money or Ryde Town Councils money to decide how it would be spent. The Board would set up a CIC to hold the money and also establish a charity. Once the charity was ready then the money could be transferred into the charity which would then be in a better position to attract grant funding. This would ensure that the money would remain in Ryde and for Ryde. The Section 151 Officer has indicated that in principle there would be no objection, but the finer details of how this is done would need to be made clear. It was also noted that other Boards around the country could be contacted to establish any useful information on how best to go about the setting up of such bodies. The money could then be used for all aspects of a project such as procurement, ongoing maintenance and possible staffing costs etc.</p>	<p>A Bridges</p> <p>A Bridges</p>
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	<p>The setting up of various forums was also discussed and it was noted that RTC had a Community Forum which could also offer support and assistance. Such forums could allow smaller businesses and interested parties to approach the Board for small amounts of money, should it be beneficial for Ryde. However, the Board should be mindful that whilst such sums would be quite small, there was still only a finite amount of money available. It was therefore noted that match funding should be encouraged, if possible, much the way RTC had done when approached for grants, as well as directing people to other funding streams if possible.</p> <p>Regarding the answers provided within the Engagement Survey, it should be noted that they only provide a broadbrush set of ideas and suggestions and that further work on digging deeper to seek more details was needed and this could be where forums would be of most value.</p>	
9.	<p>3 year plan (SH) To discuss how the Community Engagement can shape the 3 year plan</p> <p>The original guideline was that the allocation was for a 10 year plan and that the money could be allocated / spent on however it was decided.</p> <p>This approach was however changed to it being allocated in three year blocks, which fundamentally changed the whole strategy, affecting potential planning application procedures and long term goals. This could have a significant impact on any realistic plans for projects such as the Ryde Arena and Ryde Town Hall.</p> <p>It was therefore noted that at the next meeting, members needed to be clear what should be put forward as achievable outcomes, given the three year time window (which would be less than that for the first phase, given the time already spent).</p> <p>This didn't mean that projects would have to finish within three years, but concrete plans would need to be in place to ensure they were properly planned and secured for set finish time.</p> <p>There are 22 projects put forward for the collective investment fund (CIF), which included Ryde Skate Park and Ryde Arena. Projects would be evaluated around revenue, capital and geographical status and whether the funding would be within the Boards spending limits. Other areas of evaluation would be whether projects would be "shovel ready", have an opportunity for any match funding, any long term prospects and also transport connectivity. The Board suggested that another area of evaluation could be around impact on other projects.</p> <p>Regarding the Treasury 5 Point Plan, this would be sent to Board Members after the meeting but could also be found in the guidance documents.</p> <p>All of the evaluation and weighting points discussed would also be sent out to members.</p>	<p>All Members</p> <p>L Dyer</p> <p>S Chatwin</p>

