

Margate Town Deal Board Minutes

- Date:** Friday 3 April, 2020 at 10am
- Venue:** Virtual meeting
- Present:** Graham Razey OBE, Cllr Ruth Duckworth, Madeline Homer, Eddie Kemsley, Sam Causer, David Smith CBE, Richard Ash, Nicky Bentley, Adam Bryan
- In attendance:** Louise Askew
- Apologies:** Sir Roger Gale, Victoria Pomery OBE, Liz Shutler, Iain McNab, Cheryl Potts

The meeting was held virtually through video conference due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

2. Government update

- Louise informally updated the Board following an email discussion with Iain McNab. There is likely to be some flexibility in timelines, however further guidance on the programme and deadlines was still to be published.
- There was discussion about the potential for the programme to be cancelled, however Graham highlighted that any work that is completed wouldn't be lost and should be continued. Eddie suggested that the Investment Plan could easily translate to any other funds.
- Madeline highlighted the importance of planning for economic recovery. David Smith provided an update on what Kent County Council is doing in this regard.
- It was unanimously agreed that the Board should continue with the development of the Investment Plan.

3. Stakeholder Engagement

- Louise identified that the procurement for stakeholder engagement consultants had not taken place and therefore it gave the Board a chance to consider the best way to engage with stakeholders and the wider communities.
- A discussion took place around whether some elements could be delivered in house in the short term, considering digital platforms, with the recruitment of consultants coming further down the line.
- Sam identified that the engagement strategy will need to take account of lack of physical contact / use of digital media.
- Richard highlighted concerns about the use of social media and Eddie suggested that there were a number of organisations that would be considering the best platforms for engagement during this time.

- It was agreed that the tender specification would be revised and that we should proceed to procurement as soon as possible and to get the engagement activity started as soon as possible.

4. Community Representatives

- Graham updated the Board on the current position in recruiting two Community representatives for the Board. Due to the Covid-19 situation an extension was given for expressions of interest.
- Eight expressions of interest had been received
- The Panel have carried out shortlisting and will be having a teleconference on the 7th April to discuss the outcome of the shortlisting.
- The successful candidates will be invited to have a briefing session ahead of the next meeting.
- Graham has offered to meet with all of the unsuccessful candidates to hear their ideas and discuss options of how they can be engaged.
- There were a mixture of applications in terms of length and breadth of experience and the Panel were clear that they should be successful in recruiting two community representatives.

5. Planning for recovery

- The Board had a discussion about the role of the Margate Town Deal Board in engaging in the process of recovery. Graham wanted to know what the Boards role should or could be.
- David outlined that Kent County Council (KCC) has initiated collective thinking about what should be happening across Kent to prepare for and deliver good recovery. KCC's view is that we should start now, if we wait it will be too late. David would share some of the work that KCC are doing, which includes some suggestions about what should be happening. They will also be putting together a group of ten panels, not specifically relevant to Margate/Coastal but looking at themes across Kent. David suggested that the Board should look at the specific themes it may wish to engage with and link this to discussions with Government. Use the work that KCC are doing to put it into context for a recovery plan for Margate.
- Madeline was keen to see what the approach was across Kent as a backdrop and context for Thanet/Margate. The Board should focus on understanding what the landscape might look like including its businesses and communities, considering what initiatives might be required.
- Richard shared his concerns and highlighted the practical implications for businesses on the high street and for landlords in the town, including looking for rent holidays/reductions. It was also identified that some people were dropping through the Government assistance packages.
- It was discussed that currently there is no template for developing a recovery plan. When Pfizer consolidated in Sandwich there was a task force with Cabinet Minister participation and although the later might be difficult to engage, following the model of the Sandwich Task Force, which was ambition and local engagement could provide a model to work to.

- Eddie highlighted that the business support schemes being provided by the Government did not take into account those businesses that are seasonal - a large proportion of the town/districts businesses. For many businesses 80% of their income comes between now and August. Even taking into consideration that there may be more flexibility to be out and about this will not make up for the time lost. It will be very difficult to recover income lost from the summer, which is required to carry businesses through the winter.
- It was agreed that there was a need to make sure that Margate is ready to trade for Q2 in 2021 to recover next year.
- There were a number of queries relating to how a recovery plan might be informed/developed when there were so many unknowns. The impact on the town, Central Government's support packages, investment in the programme etc.
- Graham suggested that the Board has some experts on seasonal businesses, and we will need to make some assumptions about what will happen to those businesses during this period to consider what the overall position is likely to be and what will be needed for recovery.
- Madeline noted that it is good that the Board is looking to plan for recovery early, considering that the basic principles of that recovery are probably known and we need to articulate these in a way for everyone to understand. The economic landscape will be damaged but the core structure of the economy will need to be re-established. There is a need to understand from the business perspective - what does the future look like for them. They may re-emerge differently. TDC will be working with KCC to be thinking about recovery.
- It was suggested that seasonality should be a theme for the Investment Plan. It is the biggest threat because it makes the economy fragile and will therefore take longer to recover. There needs to be consideration on how the town/district continues to grow outside of the peak time.
- Louise suggested it might be worth speaking to Government departments and quangos to identify what their view is of the economy - is there any consideration of specific areas in the country or specific economic sectors?
- Louise will feedback to Iain the relevant comments relating to Margate about seasonality, businesses working from home etc in relation to specific support requirements from Central Government.
- Graham asked that TDC and KCC feed back to the Board about the work they are doing around recovery and how it should be engaged.
- Richard raised concerns that businesses would not make it through the winter. Graham asked that Louise/David feed that back up through the channels out of reach of the Board. If they do not survive the winter then our recovery plan will be much harder.

6. Reminders

The Board were reminded to:

- send a short Bio and picture
- Complete Declarations of interest forms
- Put forward substitutes for agreement of by the Chair
- Complete Declarations of interest forms for substitutes

Actions	Responsibility
Future meeting dates to be added to diaries	TDC
Review and redraft brief for stakeholder engagement consultancy. Send out for procurement.	TDC
To circulate the final guidance once it is provided by Central Government.	TDC
Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct to be added to the Councils website	TDC
To complete short biographical profiles and provide pictures to build website content and to provide transparency.	ALL
To complete declaration of interests form and returned	ALL
Put forward substitutes for agreement of by the Chair	ALL
Complete Declarations of interest forms for substitutes	ALL
Minutes and agendas from the first two meetings to be added to the Councils website	TDC
A meeting is to be arranged with Graham Razey, Louise Askew and iain McNab	Louise Askew
Feedback to Cities and Local Growth Unit issues relating to seasonality on Margate's economy	Louise Askew
Speak to Government Departments and Quangos re stats and sector/place forecasting for recovery	Louise Askew
Advise the Board members of who the Community Representatives are and provide a briefing for them	Chair
KCC to share their recovery plan work	David Smith CBE
TDC and KCC to share all their recover plan activity	David Smith CBE Louise Askew