

NOTES

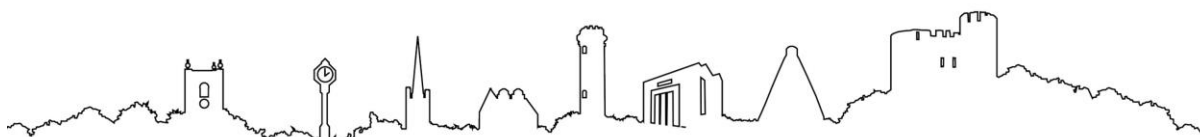
Meeting title	Brierley Hill Town Board
Date & time	Friday 6 th September 2024 at 10 am
Venue	MS Teams
Invitees	<p>Tim Sunter – Chair James Challis – Dudley CVS Cat Eccles MP Clare Waldron – Dudley MBC Clive Skidmore – Property Owner Councillor Adam Davies Councillor Matthew Cook Councillor Wayne Little Emma Atkins – Dudley MBC Frank Chamberlain - Project Manager Brierley Hill Community Programme Hannah Cashmore – Gov office, Business and Trade UK Helen Martin – Dudley MBC Jayne Pilkington – Dudley MBC Jonathan Poole – Savills Mark Clarke - Dudley MBC Neil Thomas – Dudley College Nicky Haigh – Transport for the West Midlands Paul Hunt – Higgs LLP Rocco De Gregorio – GLL Sam Cohen – Evolve Estates Shane Birch-Bastock – Business Owner/Brierley Hill Traders Steven Bridgewater – Brierley Hill Market</p>

1. Declarations of interest not already declared

None.

2. Apologies

Helen Martin, Neil Thomas, Clare Waldron, Emma Atkins, Shane Birch-Bastock, Paul Hunt, Rick Benton, Jonathan Poole, Marilyn Grazette, Steven Bridgewater, Cat Eccles MP, Cllr Matthew Cook and Sam Cohen.



Hannah Cashmore - Business & Trade from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), was in attendance as an observer.

Nicky Haigh, Transport for the West Midlands, was welcomed to the Board meeting.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

4. Any matters arising not otherwise on the Agenda - None.

5. Levelling Up Round 3

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board met on 19th July and endorsement had been given for the Metro Link to proceed from Dudley Town Centre to Merry Hill (subject to the approval of MHCLG and the Treasury). The link from Merry Hill to Brierley Hill High Street remained outside of this approval.

A response from the MHCLG on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was expected by the time of the Autumn Statement. Hannah Cashmore said it was appreciated that there was uncertainty at present, but the decision was with the Chancellor and an update would be made by the Autumn Budget on 30th October 2024.

T Sunter asked if there was anything that could be done, for example lobbying the politicians. Cllr A Davies added his support for applying pressure as this was important to Brierley Hill and any further delays could make the project unviable. It was requested the Council continued to stress the importance of the project to Brierley Hill through the various Boards and Working Groups attended by DMBC politicians and officers. **Action - Ongoing.**

6. Future High Streets

The programme had been in implementation since 2021 and was now substantially complete with all contracts to be let by September 2024. There had also been a grant spend programme extension to March 2025 and the delivery of match funded spend which could continue to March 2026.

Highway Improvements – The project had now completed.

Public Realm Improvements – The majority of the public realm works had been completed. Works left to complete included:-



Brierley Hill Market Hall - Redecoration was to be completed by the end of September. The next phase was to address the leaking flat roof, which would require a change to access arrangements to allow the work to be undertaken. The Council noted the importance of the Christmas trade and would do all that was possible to assist with this. F Chamberlain said that despite J Pilkington having met with the market traders, there remained some confusion and he agreed to go back to the traders to provide an update. **Action FC**

Works to the reconstruction of footways and fencing repairs were due to commence in Bell Street South and the graveyard – T Sunter advised that the post was coming away from the wall which J Pilkington noted.

St Michaels Church – footpath improvements. Approval had been granted by the Diocese of Worcester for the majority of the works but a faculty approval was awaited before the works around the Delph font could be undertaken. Cllr A Davies asked that note was taken of the concert on 4th October and Remembrance Day so that access was not restricted by the contractors during these important events. **Action JP to liaise with the contractors.**

Replacement flagpole on Churchill – Proposed installation during week commencing 9th September.

Marsh Park Improvements – The Council had been working with the Friends of Marsh Park to develop the proposals.

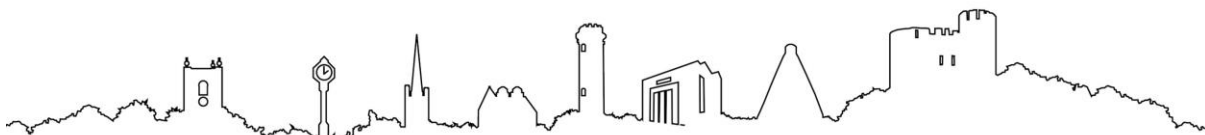
Repairs to the clock at 151-153 High Street were being completed offsite before being reinstalled.

Dudley Road – Letters had been sent to residents in July, followed by an officer/resident meeting on 7th August. A second letter had been sent to residents at the beginning of September concerning the works that were due onsite focussing on the resurfacing of the pavement in front of the shops, which was due to commence on 9th September and be completed by the end of October.

Cllr W Little queried whether there was sufficient budget for a tidy up/ redecoration of lamp posts on Venture Way. J Pilkington confirmed a small budget remained which was being held in reserve until the larger projects had been completed.

It was noted that the painting of the Brier Rose was to be done in situ and would be completed by the end of October.

Dudley Road Christmas Tree – The Board discussed the request to have a live Christmas tree together with lights (funded by the Future High Street Funding). J Pilkington said that initially the live Christmas tree would be small and therefore not suitable until it had grown. An alternative would be for existing trees to be lit, however Cllr W Little did not believe the trees were appropriate.



Following consideration J Pilkington was asked to procure lights via FHSF funding and for a live Christmas tree to be purchased although this would not be lit until it had grown to an appropriate height.

Black Country Transport Consultation – J Pilkington drew the meeting’s attention to the public consultation being undertaken by Black Country Transport. **Action JP** to forward the link to the website.

Civic Green – J Challis queried progress on the steps that connected the green to the civic route. J Pilkington confirmed that as this was police land due to their policy on health and safety steps were discouraged, instead the police proposed the use of slopes with handrails which would also separate the pedestrians from cars.

Library Lift – Tendering had completed for the new lift and Deltron had been appointed. The lift was being fabricated offsite before being brought to site for installation during January/end February 2025. R De Gregorio confirmed that the design would be completed by early October 2024 and so the timescale could possibly be brought forward. **Action MC to discuss timescales with Corporate Landlord Services.**

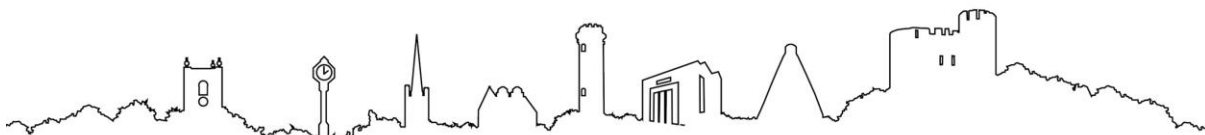
Public Toilets Refurbishment - Signage had been installed onto the building. A privately owned wall on third party land had collapsed onto the compound area of the public toilets in August 2024. This matter was now being dealt with by the Council’s Claims/Insurance section.

7. Metro Business Case Progress (WMCA)

N Haigh presented an update on the Metro Business Case. The first phase of the route to Dudley town centre in Flood Street was due to open by Autumn 2025. Subject to approval of the business case, work on phase two of the route to Merry Hill would be undertaken concurrently in 2025.

Strategic case for change – It was considered that Dudley and Merry Hill were disconnected from the wider transport network with public transport connectivity especially important as car ownership was low. There were highway network issues causing significant congestion. It was agreed that these issues would persist or worsen if the proposed Metro scheme was not completed.

A new business case was needed to secure further funding taking into consideration the social value and wider benefits beyond just the commercial benefit. A Committee meeting to consider the new business case was to be held on 16th September. The Board was invited to attend the drop-in events commencing 16th September which provided an opportunity to view fly through footage. T Sunter highlighted the need to show the huge benefits of the Metro link to the Brierley Hill High Street and queried how to get the decision makers to look beyond the cost/benefit ratio.



M Clarke confirmed that a key factor was that the Mayor, Richard Parker, was in agreement with the Metro coming to Brierley Hill, also getting the Metro to Merry Hill was a stepping stone to achieving this final goal. In addition, the improved position on the housing density and development value appraisal added to the business case.

T Sunter thanked N Haigh for attending and presenting the progress on the Metro business case.

8. Future of Brierley Hill Police Station

Cllr A Davies raised the subject of the future of the Brierley Hill Police Station and stressed that as the building was a key site there was a requirement to prevent the building from sitting empty in the hands of the private sector. Cllr A Davies considered there was a need to have a plan in place and for some of the proceeds to be reallocated back into Brierley Hill. **Action All** to share their ideas to assist with achieving this goal.

9. Pheonix Project

F Chamberlain confirmed that rehearsals for the various programmed performances were currently taking place at St Michaels Church with the finale to take place on 7th September. The project was scheduled to be completed by the end of October following which a report would be provided. **Action FC**.

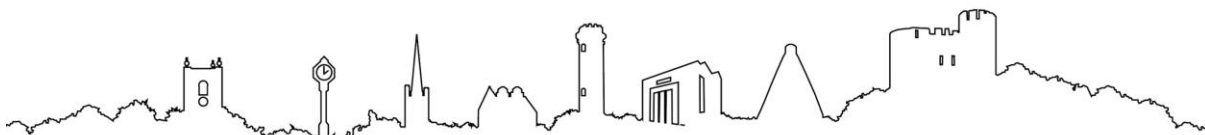
10. Heritage Open Days 7th – 14th September

The programme to celebrate the history of Brierley Hill had been circulated. The various events were due to take place at seven different venues and involved opening buildings that were usually closed together with several tours. T Sunter highlighted the enormous amount of work that had been undertaken by various partners and extended an invitation to Board members to attend the events which were all free to attend.

11. Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund

Following the success of the Brierley Hill Cultural Programme a further award had been made by the WMCA through the Commonwealth Games Legacy Funding which had facilitated 8 diverse projects – a newsletter was currently being drafted which provided details of the projects. **Action FC to circulate**. Leaflets detailing the various building tours, heritage trails and publications generated throughout the programme could be downloaded from the Council website. **Action JP** to incorporate the dates into the webpage.

12. Terms of Reference Review



Action MC to update the Terms of Reference following P Hunt's input and resubmit to the next Board meet for approval.

13. Brierley Hill in Bloom

It was agreed that Brierley Hill in Bloom had had another successful year. T Sunter confirmed replanting would commence towards the end of October 2024 and support was currently being sought from sponsors.

14. Any Other Urgent Business

Publications - F Chamberlain confirmed that all leaflets could be accessed via a postcard carousel within the Brierley Hill library.

Plans for Marsh and Baxter to become a Dixy Chicken shop – Cllr A Davies felt the plans would be detrimental to the character of the area and would have an adverse impact on the views within the conservation zone. JP was currently preparing a conservation report concerning the plans.

Heritage Action Zone – M Clarke and J Pilkington were in contact with Clive Fletcher who was preparing WMCA's Heritage Strategy. Discussions were positive and would be used to support a request for succession funding for the Heritage Action Zone. **Action MC** to provide an update report to the next Board meeting.

Brierley Hill Civic - J Challis confirmed there had been a full refurbishment of both the upstairs and downstairs toilets.

Attendance of the MP at Future Board Meetings – **Action MC/PW** to contact the constituent's office to check if the MP was available to attend future Board meetings.

15. Date of Next Meeting – Friday 22nd November 2024 at 10 am via MS Teams.

