

Clay Cross Town Board

12th July 2024

Clay Cross Town Deal

Governance Toolkit Review

Report By: Sarah Sternberg, Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer and Lee Barnes, Chair of Clay Cross Town Board

Contact Officer: Tris Burdett, Programmes Manager

PURPOSE / SUMMARY

- To present a summary of findings from the Clay Cross Town Deal Governance Toolkit Review.
-

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Board notes the summary of findings following the Governance Toolkit Review.
2. That the Board agrees for the project delivery team to work with the Chair to consider and implement the identified areas for improvement, as set out in section 2 of this report.

IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details:

There are no financial implications.

On Behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details:

The role of the Board, as set out within the Terms of Reference, do not conflict with the Constitution of the Accountable Body.

On Behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Staffing: Yes No

Details:

No staffing issues are arising from this report. Activities required to deliver identified actions will be accommodated for within existing resources.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

REPORT DETAILS

1 Background

- 1.1 At the meeting held on 22nd March 2024, the Board agreed for the Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer and Chair of the Clay Cross Town Board to undertake a governance review utilising a toolkit published by the DLUHC Towns Fund Delivery Partner.
- 1.2 The toolkit was developed as an internal assessment to help get the best from Town Deal Boards, provide an opportunity to reflect on what a high performing board should look like and plan how to improve.
- 1.3 The toolkit looks at four thematic areas which are core to good governance and high performing boards:
- working well as a board team
 - working in the open
 - engaging with relevant partners and the community
 - making good decisions
- 1.4 The review was undertaken using the toolkit and a summary of findings are noted in section 2 of this report.

2 Report

Overall, the review highlighted the Board exceeded many of the minimum requirements which demonstrated that governance of the Board is robust and fit for purpose. Potential areas for improvement were identified and further work is required to either explore or action the recommendations.

2.1 Working well together as a Board team

As a minimum, there should be clear roles and responsibilities, that membership includes representatives from public, private and community/voluntary sectors, the purpose and accountability of the Board is clear and that Members advocate the work of the Board.

Strengths	Potential Areas for Improvement
Terms of Reference in place which clearly sets out roles and responsibilities and are reviewed annually by the Board.	Further consideration to attract representation from community/voluntary sector, if beneficial, given the advanced stage of the programme.

<p>Board membership reflects all tiers of local government, public bodies and private sector.</p> <p>Established structures and reporting arrangements are in place and key discussion points and actions are recorded in the Board meeting minutes.</p> <p>Members are able to voice concerns and debate key issues, which help to make informed decisions.</p>	<p>Identify further opportunities for Board Members to advocate the work of the Board.</p> <p>Board Members sign to say they have read and understood the Terms of Reference.</p>
--	---

2.2 Working in the open

The minimum requirement states that documents, including reports and terms of reference, as well as Board Member profiles, are published on the Lead Authority's (Accountable Body) website. Draft minutes should be published within 10 working days of a meeting and agreed minutes published within 10 working days of approval. Communication should be open with information circulated via newsletters and social media.

Strengths	Potential Areas for Improvement
<p>All papers for Board meetings are published on the Lead Authority's website including terms of reference.</p> <p>Board meeting dates are published in advance and meetings are open to the public.</p> <p>There are regular communications via social media, press releases and resident newsletter's which help to inform the community and partners of progress.</p> <p>There is a dedicated business newsletter and the Lead Authority's Economic Development Team actively engage with businesses on a face-to-face basis.</p>	<p>Publish Board Member profiles on the Lead Authority's website.</p> <p>Publish draft minutes within 10 working days of the meeting and agreed minutes within 10 days of approval, subject to capacity.</p> <p>Further consideration as to how the legacy of the programme is managed.</p>

2.3 Engaging with relevant partners

The minimum expectation is for a stakeholder engagement plan to be in place. Additional actions include identifying and overcoming barriers to involvement and incorporating the results of feedback.

Strengths	Potential Areas for Improvement
<p>Stakeholder engagement plan has been produced which is underpinned by a live communications plan.</p> <p>Regular updates are circulated via social media, press releases and information is reported through the Lead Authority’s residential and business newsletters. Feedback is monitored and responded to when required.</p> <p>Regular meeting with key partners are held in order to monitor progress and identify any barriers to delivery.</p> <p>Feedback from public consultation events have helped to shape the final plans for the scheme.</p> <p>Appointed contractor committed to strong community engagement which includes establishing a presence in the community via a dedicated ‘information shop’.</p>	<p>Further explore alternative opportunities to record methods of engagement and outcomes.</p> <p>Further work required to ensure the legacy of the programme is managed.</p> <p>Scope for further direct engagement between Board Members and residents/businesses.</p>

2.4 Making good decisions

The minimum guidance states a robust process should be in place to ensure all funding decisions are based on impartial advice, where possible. Arrangements should be in place for the Section 151 (S151) Officer to scrutinise and sign-off agreed data/relevant reports.

The presence of the Section151 Officer at Board meetings ensures transparency, with decisions and endorsements recorded through the minutes. Key reports are signed off by S151 Officer which ensures a robust decision-making process is in place and no further areas of improvement have been identified. A separate Governance review by the Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring confirmed there were no concerns with the Board and Accountable Body’s decision-making process.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 To ensure the Clay Cross Town Deal Board remains fit for purpose and that good governance is in place to enable the successful delivery the programme.

4.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

4.1 There are no alternatives options to consider.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report)	
Clay Cross Town Deal Toolkit Review 2024.	