Minutes

Meeting: **West Chester Commercial BID Executive Board Meeting**
Date: **17th September 2026**
Time: **12:00pm – 2:00pm**
Location: **Obsidian Offices**

- Matthew Flack– Plan Ahead (MF) – CHAIR
- Jordi Morell - Obsidian Group (JM)
- Mary Murphy – Proximo (MM)
- Lexa Farthing – Cheshire West Library Services (LF)
- Jenny Williams – Deva Designs (JW)
- Rebecca Griffiths – Calder Industrial Materials (RG)
- Elaine Thomas – Living Floors (ET)
- Mark Diaper – Legat Owen (MD)
- Cllr Alan Smith – Blacon Labour Councillor (AS)
- Jane Hough – Groundwork CLM (JH)
- Hugh Shields – Groundwork CLM (HS)
- Stephanie Leese – Groundwork CLM (SL)
- Tina Upton – Pride in Place Proud of Blacon
- Samantha Dixon MP – Office of Samantha Dixon MP
- Dylan Topham – Office of Samantha Dixon MP

Apologies:

- Chris Leicester – Avenue Services (CL)
- Gill Williams – CWAC (GW)

Agenda Item	Minutes	Actions
Welcome and Introductions	MF welcomed all those present to the meeting and thanked all for attending. Apologies were received from CL, SLi and GW. Samantha Dixon MP for Chester North and Neston, Dylan Topham (assistant to Samantha Dixon MP) and Tina Upton - Chair of Pride in Place, Proud of Blacon attended the meeting and introduced themselves. **<u>Actions from the last meeting:</u>** • HS – there is an issue for lighting – cannot get a contact but is waiting for an answer regarding putting up a new lighting column to support the CCTV. • MF has not yet made contact with OneTek and the Parking Authority for Mercury Court. • HS and GW have not met with Highways regarding the trucks by the Volvo Garage and VW. MF will send a screengrab of the areas in question. • Proximo are starting a mentorship programme with Blacon High School. A lot of businesses from the BID area attended the Careers Fair at the High School.	**Action:** HS to sort out infrastructure for new CCTV camera on Jupiter Drive. **Action:** MF will link up OneTek with the Parking Authority company. **Action:** HS and GW to meet with Highways. **Action:** MF to send screen grab of the area in question by Volvo Garage and VW.

	The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as a true and accurate record.	
Samantha Dixon MP **Pride in Place – Proud of Blacon**	SD introduced herself and Pride in Place, Proud of Blacon. This is a very community driven initiative. SD feels the connections with the BID and the Proud of Blacon board could be really fruitful. There is £20mil of funding the government have pledged over 20 years which is entirely decided by Blacon on what that funding is spent on. TU feels that aspirations have not been met as much as they could be so far. TU would like there to be a work experience programme with local businesses. TU – would businesses be interested in partnering with Pride in Place Blacon to facilitate this? JH asked if there was an opportunity to work together and provide the resources from businesses to provide mentorship and apprenticeship programmes. SD asked if the BID advertises vacancies for the local businesses. JH – yes the BID puts them on the website and HS does a lot of work surrounding jobs. SD – are there issues with recruitment? Yes there are. TU thanked everyone for welcoming her to the meeting. TU left the meeting. RG – has had a big recruitment campaign but there are still vacancies. There is a piece of work to be done regarding expectations and aspirations. LF – there is a lot of planning going on at the moment. LF – keep the links to the school to make those connections. Update the Pride in Place – Proud of Blacon Team regarding the businesses that are here and what they can offer – and wait until the Pride in Place board reach out. This was agreed by the board. DT will send the consultation to HS to send out for businesses to fill in. SD believes Mayors should have responsibility for schools. The main thing is signposting and working as collaboratively as possible. SD will keep the board up to date with what is going on in government. SD – the businesses need a work ready workforce so it is a case of working out how we can all work together. JH – can look at something from the new 5 year Business Plan. SD – the BID also needs to plug in with the new mayor. MF – will plug in more easily if we are already showing some progress. AS – would be interested to find out how many people work on the estate from Blacon. Car parking is a major issue on the site – there is not enough parking for the businesses. Coaches will also park on the estate. The BID would like to see the park and ride car park opened as a car park as a major priority.	**Action:** DT to send consultation link to HS to send out to businesses. HS to send consultation out to businesses. **Action:** JH to look at workforce/recruitment in the new BID 5 year Business Plan
Article 4	Article 4 Direction – JH explained the background of Article 4 – applications were approved via permitted development on employment land. Applicants don't have to apply for a change of use from office to residential. This is lost employment opportunity for future development. JH has spoken on the	

	importance of retaining the land for economic growth. The council are consulting and are looking for supporting evidence from the business community. JH has drafted a letter to support the Article 4 direction from the West Chester BID. JM – felt it would still help employment as people could live there then walk to work on the Industrial Estate. JH – Article 4 would stop permitted development – residential could still go through but would need to go through the full planning process. The board approved the Article 4 support with 4 vs 1 in favour. JH will submit the letter as drafted.	
Finances	JH - it is the start of the new financial year. The finances have been shared with the board. There is no actual spend as of yet due to the BID year only just beginning. £98k income has been projected, with £7k coming in from prior year BID levy and £60k surplus from the prior year. This gives total funds available of £165k. The predicted yearly spend is £123k. RG – asked to see the final quarter of year 4 in terms of the accounts. JH will check with AG regarding the forecast and actual figures for the 25-26 accounts. MF asked if the Welsh businesses could be included in the BID? JH – we could offer them to pay a voluntary levy and they could become voluntary members. Would need to get the RV data online and not from the Business Rates Team. There were no further questions on the finances.	
Parking	GW and HS will be speaking with Highways regarding Parking.	
BID 3	JH - 43 businesses have filled in the consultation for BID 3. In terms of voting preferences, 34 were definite yes votes, 7 were undecided, 1 was a definite no. The full complete dataset has been received from CWAC and JH will create financial models. JH will arrange for a Teams meeting in October or November to go through the financial models and the Business Plan. MF would like to see something regarding recruitment included in the Business Plan. JH will speak with the Skills & Employment Team on what is being delivered at Groundwork. Businesses are wanting to recruit locally but there is a poor skill set. Local people are wanting to get in to work but need the skill set. Something is not joining up.	**Action:** JH to arrange Teams Meeting in Oct or Nov to go through the financial models and Business Plan for BID 3
AOB	The board decided they would like to go ahead with the volunteer litter picking day. GW has spoken to the local council regarding watering of hanging baskets and will report back when they provide an answer.	

	AS will be looking for permission to put the Poppies back on the lamp posts. ATS Euromaster has closed. JH feels writing to Nathan Pardoe regarding land re-development and including car parking would be beneficial. There was no other AOB. MF thanked all for attending and closed the meeting. **Date of next meeting: 21st January 2027.**	**Action:** JH to write to Nathan Pardoe regarding land re-development and car parking on the Industrial Estate.