



# Minutes of St Helens Town Deal Board

Friday 12 May 2023 | 13:00 – 14:30 | St. Helens Town Hall,  
Committee Room 10

## Board Members in Attendance:

Town Deal Board Chairman – John Tabern  
Councillor David Baines – Leader, St Helens Borough Council  
Steve Coffey – Chief Executive, Torus  
Justin Hill – Chief Executive, YMCA St Helens  
Tracy Mawson – Chief Executive, St Helens Chamber  
Councillor Richard McCauley – Cabinet Member Regeneration and Planning, St Helens Borough Council  
Marie Rimmer – Member of Parliament, St Helens South and Whiston  
Councillor John Hodgkinson – Member Champion for Local Business  
Cath Fogarty – Executive Director Corporate Services, St Helens Borough Council  
Kath O'Dwyer – Chief Executive, St Helens Borough Council

## Observers:

Steve Tant – Cities and Growth Unit, BEIS (Business, Enterprise, Industry and Skills)

## Project Sponsors:

David Saville – Connected Places  
John Tabern – Cannington Shaw No.7 Bottle Shop  
Max Bentham – Town Centre Living & Regeneration

## Local Authority Representation:

Lisa Harris – Executive Director, Place Services, St Helens Borough Council  
Sean Traynor – Director of Strategic Growth, St Helens Borough Council  
Mary Jefferson – Head of Regeneration & Growth, St Helens Borough Council  
Robert Gatensbury – Programme Lead, St Helens Borough Council  
Rachael Buckley – Partnerships Officer, St Helens Borough Council  
Kate Martlew – Project Officer, St Helens Borough Council

## 1. WELCOME – CHAIRMAN JOHN TABERN

Chairman, John Tabern welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 1a. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

Richard Katz – Chief Executive, Glass Futures (Iain Taylor attended as a substitute)  
Conor McGinn – Member of Parliament, St Helens North  
Pete Frost – Chief Executive, The World of Glass  
Councillor Kate Groucutt – Cabinet Member for Economy, Business and Skills, St Helens Borough Council  
Mick Allen – Deputy Area Director, Department for Business, Energy, & Industrial Strategy (Steven Tant attended as a substitute)  
Rachel Cleal – Director of Adult Social Services, St Helens Borough Council

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following attendees declared conflicts of interest:

John Tabern – Cannington Shaw Preservation Trust

Marie Rimmer – The World of Glass

Tracy Mawson – The World of Glass and Health Innovation Hub

## **3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (12 May 2023)**

Previous minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

The Chair provided an update on Board membership. Sophie Bevan has stepped down following her change in employment and nominated a colleague to take over her role at Board, and the suitability of the individual is being assessed.

The Chair further explained that in addition to this nomination, the new Partnerships Officer, Rachael Buckley, would be working to seek expressions of interest for new Board members in accordance with previous discussions at meetings of the Board. Robert Gatensbury clarified that work had already been undertaken to check terms of reference and governance, and some work had already been undertaken to identify potential candidates. The proposed timeline for the recruitment of new members was shared, with a view to bringing a paper to the next Board meeting.

**Action: Update Report on Board Membership to be given at the next Board Meeting - RG**

Justin Hill asked for clarity on the terms of reference and if they would be updated. Robert Gatensbury confirmed that they would.

**Action: Update terms of reference - RG**

Tracy Mawson reaffirmed that at the previous meeting she raised the importance of procurement and how significant this is to good governance. Tracy Mawson raised the importance of the Board taking a lead in this area and requested that this be included in the previous minutes and suggested that procurement should be a recurrent theme included in the highlight reports, going forward.

**Post meeting note: it is noted and agreed that the need to follow robust and appropriate procurement processes was discussed at the Board Meeting of 3 February 2023. There was also a related action (completed) to share the Social Value Portal baseline report.**

**Action: Procurement to be included in the highlight reports – RG to advise project leads**

## **4. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting and the action log was noted.

## 5. MINUTES OF THE TOWN DEAL STEERING GROUP – 28 APRIL 2023

The Chair clarified that the purpose of the Steering Group was non-decision making in nature, with the Board being responsible for all final decisions. It was agreed that minutes from the Steering Group would be included in the Town Deal Board agenda (as actioned in the pack today).

Marie Rimmer MP noted a lack of highlight report for Healthy Communities and the Youth Zone. The Chair commented that this was an item for discussion later in the agenda.

## 6. PRESENTATION ON ECF ST HELENS REGENERATION PHASE 1 – MAX BENTHAM

A presentation was shared to the Board and noted it was progressing well. Max Bentham highlighted the importance of St Helens'ness and how this would be kept in mind in the design/delivery of the whole project. Max Bentham noted the significance of history and heritage, creating community and maintaining 'reflections' of the town.

Tracy Mawson commented that the business community would broadly accept and welcome this but raised concerns over car parking, being climate adaptive and future proofed. Tracy Mawson also raised the point of procurement activity, with Max Bentham confirming that soft market testing had started in relation to this. Furthermore, engagement with stakeholders had already been undertaken and would continue as Stage 3 design is finalised. With regards to being climate adaptive, ECF are working with a sustainability champion and have a sustainability workstream to highlight issues.

Councillor Richard McCauley noted that the office building has been designed as a high-quality example of sustainability. He also noted the importance that residents and local businesses would benefit from this regeneration in terms of social value. Consultation with school children has also been very positive.

Steve Coffey noted the significant cost residential development brings and how this could impact viability. Max Bentham assured the Board that the housing offer available would suit a wide variety of residents.

## 7. TOWN DEAL BOARD PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Robert Gatensbury thanked project leads for their support in completing the performance template and advised that this second performance template, which covers the period of October 2022 to March 2023, will require Board endorsement in order to submit to Government.

- i) Robert Gatensbury noted that the Performance Report was due to be submitted by 9 June 2023 and would require the signature of the Chair. It was highlighted that the report template had changed to separate Health Innovation Hub and the Youth Zone, but the level of detail would remain the same.

**ACTION: The final version of the Performance Report will be shared with Board Members in advance of submission by RG.**

Councillor Richard McCauley commented that the new template highlights the mitigated risks better. This would be useful to include within the highlight reports.

Justin Hill highlighted the lack of risk/mitigation report for the Healthy Communities project.

**Town Deal Board agreed to:**

- i) Endorse the Performance Reporting Template submission (as included in Appendix 1) for the reporting period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.**

## **8. CAPACITY AND MAIN GRANT FUNDING UPDATE**

Donna Wilby updated the Board on the funding report provided in the agenda pack.

Donna Wilby advised that all of the £25 million is now allocated and the funding profile will now be tracked via the performance reporting to DLUHC to ensure that delivery is on target.

**Town Deal Board agreed to:**

- i) Approve the requisite reallocation of Revenue Grant funding in respect of Programme Management support as detailed herein (£50,550 movement).**
- ii) Approve the allocation of £17,000 for the Digital Project using the remaining Revenue Grant available to support pre-procurement market engagement (Appendix 1 relates).**
- iii) Note the grant funding profile returned to DLUHC and the expected expenditure timelines for all projects, which are set out at Appendix 2.**

The Chair advised that Tracy Mawson has made enquiries with respect to the Health Innovation Hub project. This relates to more detailed design work for the Business Connects elements of the project which is based within the Chamber of Commerce building. This was expected to be drawn from an agreed capacity funding allocation of £35,000.

Donna Wilby advised that all of the £25 million is now allocated and the funding profile will now be tracked via the performance reporting to DLUHC to ensure that delivery is on target.

## **9. PROJECT HIGHLIGHT REPORTS**

The Chair highlighted the updated projects included in the agenda pack and asked the Board if they had any questions on the projects by exception.

Marie Rimmer MP expressed deep concern at the lack of reports for the Youth Zone and the Health Innovation Hub, and that there was no attendance for a verbal update on the Health Innovation Hub project. This concern was echoed by the Chair who requested clarity on the matter, along with similar comments from other Board members including the Leader of the Council.

The Chair noted that this was unacceptable given the dates of the meetings are set well in advance. The Chair confirmed deputisation could take place where necessary.

Robert Gatensbury noted the last-minute apologies from the Project Sponsor for the Health and Innovation Hub project, who did provide an email update just prior to the meeting, which would be circulated to the Board.

**Action: Update on the Health and Innovation Hub to be circulated to the Board by RG.**

Robert Gatensbury provided a verbal update on the Youth Zone project. With regards to the Gamble Building initiative, Robert Gatensbury advised that Cabinet (at its meeting of January 2023) approved procurement of the next stage of design work for the Gamble

Building, with Faithful + Gould appointed as multi-disciplinary consultants to oversee the project and a site visit has recently been completed.

Marie Rimmer MP requested clarity on where the Youth Zone would be situated and commented on the excellent work undertaken by VIBE in Knowsley, questioning whether similar work had taken place in St Helens. Marie Rimmer MP also suggested that a risk assessment should have been undertaken on the Youth Zone/Gamble.

**Action: Childrens Services consultation feedback to be circulated – RG**

Sean Traynor addressed the Board and noted his disappointment at the lack of the reports and attendance at the meeting for the Healthy Communities project. Sean Traynor confirmed that the Town Deal Board agreed for the Youth Zone to be situated in The Gamble Building at a previous Board meeting.

**Action: Share previous Board decision when the Youth Zone was agreed to be situated in the Gamble Building - RG**

Justin Hill noted that the YMCA have a Youth Investment Fund bid in which has been considered by the panel and the outcome is awaited. This project and the Youth Zone need to be synchronised and complement each other. He has met and discussed this with Sean Traynor as per the action agreed at the previous meeting of the Board.

Sean Traynor advised that the Youth Zone project currently has no SRO appointed and suggested nominations from the Board to help address the current issues.

Lisa Harris highlighted the comment made by Justin Hill in relation to the YMCA Youth Investment Fund bid being compatible with the Youth Zone and the YMCA and suggested that Justin Hill could be considered for appointment as the SRO for the Youth Zone project.

The Chair asked Justin Hill to consider being the SRO with appropriate support being provided. Justin Hill welcomed the approach and agreed to hold a separate conversation to discuss the time commitment concerned with the role.

**Action: Justin Hill and John Tabern to meet and discuss the potential SRO appointment for the Youth Zone project - RG**

Steve Coffey commented that it is not sensible to have two separate Youth Zones.

Marie Rimmer MP suggested that the youth won't engage with one facility, in just one location.

Councillor Richard McCauley confirmed that several conversations had taken place in relation to the location of the Youth Zone and that it was decided to house this in the Gamble Building.

The Chair suggested he could see no issue with two locations as it was the offer that mattered.

Tracy Mawson mentioned her attendance at the Health Innovation Hub project meetings and the updates were overall positive with progression across the Chamber and College components. It was suggested that the projects were moving at different speeds causing difficulties, further compounded by a lack of a Project Manager and these issues should be taken into consideration.

Cath Fogarty raised the issue of SRO for Digital Infrastructure, which was previously Rob Huntington. Rob Huntington has recently left the authority, with a recruitment process is currently underway; however, an interim has been appointed who could take on this responsibility in the meantime until a permanent replacement has been appointed.

Justin Hill requested a governance map (page 63, Connected Places) to see accountability and how everything connects together.

**Action: Prepare governance map for Connected Places - DS**

**Town Deal Board:**

- (i) Noted and discussed the highlight reports appended to the report;**
- (ii) Noted and discussed the overall progress of the Town Deal programme; and**
- (iii) Identified issues or concerns with the Project Sponsors and sought to identify requisite mitigation actions as appropriate**

## **1. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and input and reiterated that the Board was a place to discuss any issues raised.