

# STEVENAGE TOWN DEAL BOARD

## Terms of Reference – Draft

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Stevenage was the first new town to be designated under the New Towns Act of 1946 and was the first place in Britain to have a fully pedestrianised town centre. The town has ambitious regeneration plans spanning the next 20 years, with real progress made since 2015.

Stevenage is one of the 100 towns included in the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG)'s Towns Fund, set up to address growth constraints and to deliver long term economic and productivity growth through:

- Urban regeneration, planning and land use
- Skills and enterprise infrastructure
- Connectivity

The Towns Fund provides an opportunity for Stevenage to agree a Town Deal with MHCLG and thereby benefit from significant investment for growth.

It is a requirement of the Towns Fund that Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) develops and convenes a Town Deal Board.

### 2. THE ROLE OF THE STEVENAGE TOWN DEAL BOARD

The Stevenage Town Deal Board (“the Board”) is the vehicle through which the vision and strategy for Stevenage is defined.

The Board will:

- (i) develop and agree an evidence based Town Investment Plan that includes:
  - Background, context and evidence of need for suggested interventions
  - A vision for Stevenage, complementing agreed or emerging local economic strategies
  - A high level description of priority areas for the short, medium and long term including
    - Activity that can be locally funded
    - Projects that could be supported by public investment (including through the Towns Fund), with high level costs estimates
    - Ambitions for private sector investment and community involvement
- (ii) Develop a clear programme of interventions

- (iii) Coordinate resources and influence stakeholders

The area the Board will represent is the Stevenage Borough Council geographic area.

The Board is not a legal entity, and its role is advisory. Its purpose is to work with SBC, to which it is accountable as the Lead Council, to produce a well – evidenced Town Investment Plan which sets out a clear understanding of Stevenage focusing on its assets, opportunities and challenges. It will subsequently assist in the production of business cases to access Town Deal funding.

### **3. BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

The Board is made up of 18 members comprising:

- An independent chair from the private sector, appointed through a process led by Stevenage Borough Council (SBC)
- The local MP for Stevenage
- The Leader of Stevenage Borough Council and the Chief Executive of Stevenage Borough Council
- A representative of Hertfordshire County Council
- A representative of the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- A representative from a business representative body
- 2 representatives from large businesses having bases in Stevenage
- A representative from a Stevenage small and medium-sized enterprise (SME)
- A representative of a key education and skills provider
- Two representatives of relevant bodies in relation to Homes and to Culture, Leisure or Heritage
- At least one landowner / developer representative
- 1 Community representative.

Once appointed, the Chair will invite stakeholder organisations to nominate individuals to represent them on the Board. In the event of the Board meeting ahead of the Chair being in post, interim appointments will be made.

Individual membership of the Board is dependent on the continuing support of the relevant nominating body.

The Board will have the power at any time to co- opt further members if and when an appropriate candidate becomes available.

Within 12 months the Board will aim to have a minimum female representation of 33% in line with Government recommendations.

A Board member shall cease to be a member in the event of:

- such member giving written notice to the Board of their resignation, to take effect on receipt by the Board of the notice of resignation or, if later, the date stated in the notice
- such member's death or, being a corporation, its winding up
- such member's bankruptcy, making of any arrangement or composition with his creditors, or liquidation, or in the case of an organisation, winding up, liquidation, dissolution or administration or anything analogous to any of the foregoing occurring in relation to a member
- such member ceasing to have an office or other base within Stevenage or ceasing to be employed by such organisation as entitles them to be a member.

All Board members must retire every three years but can be reappointed by their nominating body at the end of each three year period.

SBC will provide administrative support to the Board.

#### **4. BOARD MEETINGS**

The Board will meet 6 times per year in the first year of operation, with an expectation of meeting 4 times per year thereafter.

No business shall be transacted at any Board meeting unless a quorum is present. The quorum shall be six and shall include SBC, and a Business/SME member.

Members of the public may attend all board meetings, unless information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person or organisation is likely to be disclosed.

SBC will give at least 5 clear working days' notice of all Board meetings, by publishing details on its website.

SBC will publish on its website copies of agendas and reports that are open to public inspection at least 5 clear working days before each board meeting, and copies of minutes of board meetings that are open to public inspection as soon as practicable once they have been approved by the Board.

SBC will invite MHCLG to send a representative to attend Board meetings as an observer.

Each Board member shall have one vote and decisions will be made on a show of hands. In the event of an equality of votes the Chair shall have a casting vote.

## 5. BOARD MEMBERS' CONDUCT

Board members are expected to adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life, known as the Nolan Principles, as defined by the Committee for Standards in Public Life . They are:

- **Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
- **Integrity:** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **Objectivity:** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- **Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- **Openness:** Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.
- **Honesty:** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- **Leadership:** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example

### Conflicts of Interest

Once the Board is in operation, SBC will maintain and publish on its website a Register of Board Member Interests.

The following provisions shall apply to all Board members:

- In the event that there is a conflict of interest the person so conflicted shall immediately declare the nature of the conflict or potential conflict and withdraw from any business where the conflict would be relevant.

- Whenever a person has an interest in a matter to be discussed at a meeting the person concerned will not be:
  - entitled to remain present at the meeting during discussion of that matter
  - counted in the quorum for that part of the meeting
  - entitled to vote on the matter

The Board may, at any time authorise a person to remain in the meeting whilst a matter in which they have or may have a conflict of interest is discussed, provided that the conflict of interest is declared and the person subject to the conflict of interest shall not be entitled to vote on the matter.

## **6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **(i) The Chair**

The role of the Chairman is to lead the Board in defining vision and direction, and in delivering the desired outputs, whilst ensuring that appropriate procedures for governance and management of resources are in place.

The key responsibilities of the post are to:

- Provide strategic leadership and direction to ensure that the Board achieves its goals
- Lead the efforts of the Board to agree a Town Investment Plan for Stevenage and business cases funding
- Effectively chair meetings of the Board, leading it towards decisions that ensure the strategic vision and key objectives of the Board are delivered.
- Be an effective influencer and “ambassador” for Stevenage at local, regional and national levels working with appropriate partner organisations and individuals
- Be an effective advocate on behalf of the Board, SBC and the businesses and people of Stevenage, in particular at conferences and events/meetings with Ministers, MPs and key civil servants
- Reflect the agreed policies of the Board and its members in all discussions with partners, stakeholders, government and its agencies.
- Ensure that the Board adheres at all times to high standards of ethics and governance in public life and is an exemplar to other organisations
- Ensure that all Board members participate actively in the work of the Board, encouraging their attendance and engagement and keeping regular contact with all members
- Exert a casting vote in Board decisions if circumstances so require

## **(ii) Board Members**

Board members have a responsibility to uphold high standards of integrity and probity. They should support the Chairman in instilling the appropriate culture, values and behaviours in the boardroom and beyond.

Board members should take into account the views of other stakeholders, because these views may provide different perspectives on the Board and its performance.

The duties and responsibilities of a Board member are to:

- Attend meetings of the Board and to nominate an appropriate named alternative where attendance is not possible, subject to the prior agreement of the Chair and Lead Council
- Reflect the agreed view of the Board and its members in all discussions with partners, stakeholders, government and its' agencies
- Support the Chair by leading on activities relevant to their knowledge and experience by representing the interests of the Board in meetings with partners, stakeholders, government and its' agencies
- Actively develop an effective partnership
- Contribute knowledge and expertise to the development of the Town Investment Plan and business cases for funding
- Formally represent the Board in meetings with other bodies and partner organisations as required