STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

STEVENAGE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (FORMERLY STEVENAGE TOWN FUND BOARD) MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 26 March 2026
Time: 10.00am

1 WELCOME AND CHAIR'S OPENING COMMENTS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted by the following:

- Adam Wood – Hertfordshire Futures
- Barry Chaney - Muse
- Chris Scott - Muse
- Claire Dicks - MBDA
- Clare Fletcher - Stevenage Borough Council
- Ed Jordan - WENTA
- Greg Westover - Legal & General
- Ian Langley - Viavi Solutions
- John Lewis - Aecom
- Kit Davies - North Hertfordshire College
- Melanie Bel Haj - Citizens Advice Bureau
- Samuel Atack - Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst

3 MINUTES - 20 NOVEMBER 2025

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Stevenage Development Bord held on 20 November 2025 be approved as a correct record.

4 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND OPENNESS

It was noted that Board Members were required to update their details for the Stevenage Even Better website, including registration of interest forms, photographs, and blog contributions as a requirement of Towns Fund.
Any updates should be sent to Lisa.jerome@stevenage.gov.uk or natasha.lee@stevenage.gov.uk

5 STARSHIP TECHNOLOGIES - HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

The Board received a presentation from Hertfordshire County Council on lessons learned from the use of automated delivery robots in other locations.

The presentation outlined the operational experience to date, including potential benefits observed elsewhere, while also noting the need to carefully consider local conditions, risks and impacts.

Members discussed a range of high-level topics, including the importance of robust monitoring, public communication and resident engagement.

It was **RESOLVED** that the updates be noted.

6 STATION GATEWAY - MUSE

The Board received a presentation from Muse regarding the Station Gateway project. It was noted that the scheme focused on the regeneration of land to the east of the train station, forming part of a wider ambition to enhance the town centre and improve connectivity.

The project had an estimated value of approximately £1 billion and the potential to deliver at least 1,000 new homes, alongside commercial space, public realm improvements, and enhanced station facilities.

The Board was advised that the proposals aimed to improve the sense of arrival at the station, strengthen links between the station and the town centre, and create a vibrant, mixed-use environment.

It was confirmed that community engagement would form a key part of the next stage, with public consultation events planned to gather views from residents, businesses and stakeholders. Further comments highlighted the need for clear communication with residents.

In discussion, questions were raised regarding the importance of ensuring the station continued to function effectively. It was confirmed that continuity of service during construction would be prioritised, with new infrastructure delivered alongside existing facilities before any decommissioning.

Members of the Board also questioned the taxi provision, cultural and heritage integration, and opportunities to enhance the visitor experience. Officers confirmed that such details would be developed further and informed through ongoing engagement.

The Board expressed strong support for the project and welcomed its ambition, recognising its potential to significantly enhance the town centre, support economic growth, and improve the overall experience for residents, businesses and visitors.

It was **RESOLVED** that the updates be noted.

7 SITEC PHASE 2A TOWN CENTRE CAMPUS

Updates were provided on the SITEC Phase 2a project with the construction of the North Hertfordshire College campus at the former indoor market site.

It was noted that construction works commenced in late November and had since made significant progress despite a number of challenges associated with the age of the building.

Early stages of the works had focused on key infrastructure, including levelling the site and beginning to divide the large internal space into functional areas. Current works included roofing improvements to accommodate mechanical and electrical equipment, with further structural works, including steel installation.

Officers confirmed that the project was still on track for completion in time for a September opening, when the facility would welcome its first students.

It was **RESOLVED** that the updates be noted.

8 **SPORTS AND LEISURE CENTRE**

The Board received an update on the Sports and Leisure Centre project. It was reported that since the last meeting, planning had progressed positively, with the outstanding objection from the local flood authority now being resolved.

Officers advised that recent months had involved extensive partnership working to finalise detailed design elements. Consideration had also been given to national challenges relating to supply chains, inflation, and material availability.

The Board was informed of the initial works which included the installation of a substation to support the development, followed by works to establish site access and drainage infrastructure. Main construction works were expected to commence in June.

It was noted that the north and south car parks at the existing swimming centre would be closed to facilitate the works, and that mitigation measures had been introduced, including alternative parking arrangements and the provision of accessible bays.

Works to deliver a new pedestrian crossing at St George's Way were scheduled, although this remained subject to coordination with other highway works in the area. The overall construction programme was expected to take approximately two years, with completion of the new leisure centre anticipated in March 2028.

Key risks which were identified included managing disruption caused by car park closures, maintaining clear communication with residents and users, and ensuring coordination with wider highway works. Officers confirmed that mitigation measures were in place, including accessible parking provision, ongoing stakeholder communication, and planning for emergency access to the site.
The Board also received an update on communications activity. It was reported that the closure of the swimming centre car park had been widely communicated through multiple channels and direct engagement with users and stakeholders.

Officers confirmed that engagement had taken place with facility users, schools, and community groups, including those representing accessibility needs, to ensure appropriate mitigations were in place. Temporary drop-off points and coach bays were also being provided.

It was noted that the car park would close on 13 April 2026 and communications would continue throughout the build period to minimise disruption.

The Board noted the update and acknowledged the significant progress made, as well as the level of planning undertaken to mitigate disruption.

It was **RESOLVED** that the updates be noted.

9 **STEVENAGE HEART TRAILS**

The Board received an update on the Stevenage Heart Trails project, following its recent launch. It was noted that the Heart Trails initiative combined heritage, art, and the town's identity. The project aimed to showcase the town's history and culture through an accessible and engaging trail for residents and visitors.

Significant progress had been made in recent months, including the identification of locations for the infrastructure. The scheme comprised of approximately 320 installations, including around 60 interpretive signage pieces.

It was reported that all locations had undergone road safety audits in collaboration with the County Council. While minor amendments had been required, the overall outcome had been positive, enabling installation to commence.

The Board was informed that a dedicated website for the Heart Trails had been launched, which provided an interactive guide to the trail and its features. Engagement had taken place with a range of stakeholders, including council officers, Members, walking groups, and cycling organisations to inform ongoing improvements.

Key risks identified included potential delays in securing permits, which could impact programme delivery. However, officers highlighted the positive working relationship with County Council colleagues in mitigating this risk. Other risks included potential vandalism or damage to installations, although robust and durable materials had been specified to minimise this. Ongoing monitoring and maintenance arrangements were also in place.

The Board noted the update and welcomed the successful launch of the project, recognising the collaborative effort involved and its potential to enhance cultural engagement and community pride within the town.

It was **RESOLVED** that the updates be noted.

10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board was informed that £20 million had been allocated to the St Nicholas Ward in Stevenage over a ten-year period as part of the Government's "Pride in Place" initiative.

The initiative would comprise of an independent Chair, local residents and key stakeholders, and would be responsible for shaping and delivering the ambitions for the area. Members noted that this approach would ensure that the regeneration of St Nicholas was locally led and reflective of community priorities.

The Board also noted that an expression of interest had been submitted for Stevenage to be considered as a 'Town of Culture'. This initiative was being led in partnership with local organisations, including the museum and Junction 7 Creatives.

Members welcomed the positive developments and recognised the collaborative efforts that had contributed to securing funding and progressing cultural initiatives.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and noted the overall positive and productive nature of the discussions.

11 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

- Thursday 11th June – 10.00am-12.00pm – Zoom
- Thursday 10th September – 10.00am-12.00pm – Zoom
- Thursday 26th November – 09.30am-12.00pm – In person, venue TBC

CHAIR