

**STEVENAGE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
MINUTES**

Date: Thursday, 16 June 2022

Time: 10.00am

Place: Virtual (via Zoom)

Present: Adrian Hawkins (Independent Chair)
Matt Partridge (Chief Executive, Stevenage Borough Council)
Councillor Sharon Taylor (Stevenage Borough Council)
Councillor Richard Henry (Stevenage Borough Council)
Tom Pike (Stevenage Borough Council)
Chris Barnes (Stevenage Borough Council)
Dave Wells (Stevenage Borough Council)
Lucy King (Stevenage Borough Council)
Gemma Hannant (Stevenage Borough Council)
Natasha Lee (Stevenage Borough Council)
Clare Fletcher (Stevenage Borough Council)
Lewis Claridge (Stevenage Borough Council)
Patsy Dell (Hertfordshire County Council)
Adam Wood (Hertfordshire LEP)
Norman Jennings (Hertfordshire LEP)
Briege Leahy (Herts Chamber of Commerce)
Martha Lytton Cobbold (Knebworth House)
Simon Holmes (WENTA)
Claire Dicks (MBDA)
Kasia Averall (Catapult)
Kit Davies (North Hertfordshire College)
Sian Carter (Homes England)
Steve Finlan (The Wine Society)
Karen Hillen (BEIS)
Helen Tomlinson (Cities and Growth Unit – DLUHC)
Colette White (Cities and Growth Unit – DLUHC)
Karen Burness (Airbus)
James Latham (Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst)
Hetty Thornton (Historic England)

Start / End Start Time: 10.00am
Time: End Time: 11.25am

1 WELCOME AND CHAIR'S OPENING COMMENTS

The Board Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Board was advised that apologies for absence had been submitted by the following:

County Councillor Richard Roberts (Hertfordshire County Council)
Stephen Ward (Catapult) – Kasia Averall substituting
Ed Jordan (WENTA) – Simon Holmes substituting
Kevin Cowin – (Mace Developments)
Julie Newlan – (University of Hertfordshire)
Duncan Parsley – (GlaxoSmithKline)
Will Rohleder – (Reef Group)
Charlotte Blizzard Welch – (Citizens Advice Bureau)
Sarah Brierley – (Community Health Trust)
Mary Hartley – (Community Health Trust)
Richard Whitehead – (Aecom)
Greg Westover – (Legal & General)

3 **MINUTES - STEVENAGE DEVELOPMENT BOARD - 24 FEBRUARY 2022**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Stevenage Development Board held on 24 February 2022 be approved as a correct record.

4 **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND OPENNESS**

The Board received the latest conflicts of interest list.

Councillor Sharon Taylor declared that her eldest daughter had recently started work with the Wates Group and she would be updating her Register of Interests accordingly.

5 **REGENERATION PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Dave Wells, Regeneration Manager gave an update on the latest Regeneration Programme. He reported on the achievements of 2021/22 including:

- The re-opening of the Visitor Centre following Covid. The Centre had received over 700 visitors since January and would be hosting a visit by JHN school with over 100 pupils in attendance;
- Improvements to the Town Square;
- Development of the North Block;
- Co-Space opened;
- Acceleration of the Hub Delivery report to support the SG1 development;
- A successful planning application for the new Multi Storey Car Park at the train station. A total of 622 spaces including 30 blue badge and 30 electric vehicle charging points alongside secure parking for 80 cycles would be provided. It was envisaged that this would be a 40 week programme of construction;
- Allocation of £37.5million for the Towns Fund;

- 9 green book business cases submitted to Central Government;
- Completion of Queensway North development including 110 homes and new retail and office space;
- Construction and opening of the new Bus Interchange. The Council had worked closely with HCC and the bus companies leading up to the opening on 26 June. A full communications strategy was in place for the launch and preparations were underway for the decommissioning of the current bus station and the application for its future use as a flexible space for different activities would be considered by the Planning and Development Committee later in June;
- Demolition of Swingate House and Southgate; and
- Approval of the planning permission and start on site for the £65million development of the 81,000 sq. ft. Autolus European Headquarters.

6 **STATION GATEWAY / AREA ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

Tom Pike, Strategic Director and Lewis Claridge, Planning Policy Manager gave a presentation on the work to enable development in the Station Gateway area including the new Stevenage Bus Interchange and the new Multi Storey Car Park and Cycle Hub.

The Board were advised of the key findings from the longer term planning (Area Action Plan also known as the AAP), views from the public and the next steps.

In the longer term – 10 - 15 years, the planning policy was to enable development via an action plan. The intention to engage with Network Rail and other partners to develop a more detailed Masterplan on how the land could be used was welcomed.

In the shorter term, focus would be on delivering projects to create an enhanced experience in this Gateway area, such as the consolidation of surface level parking to release land and the creation of a high quality public transport interchange.

A period of consultation had been undertaken including wide engagement via social media, leaflets, promotional videos and press releases. Stalls had been in place around the Town encouraging people to provide their views on:

- The vision of the AAP;
- Transport and highways improvements in particular the cycle routes and proposals for Lytton Way;
- Active travel and sustainability;
- Integration of culture, art, heritage and the public realm;
- Accessibility issues and disabled parking provision.

The Board noted that the next steps in relation to the Area Action Plan would be for officers to work on a preferred option and consult more widely over the summer and autumn; further engagement with Network Rail on their aspirations for the station area; and following the completion of the MSCP in 2023 work on the next stage of land use/investment options.

Lewis asked that any comments or views from the Members of the Stevenage Development Board should be directed to the Planning Policy Team at Stevenage Borough Council for inclusion in the consultation responses.

Members of the Board were pleased to see the concepts being turned into reality and agreed that the AAP was the start of work on what was an important gateway to the Town and a major step forward in this long term project.

7 DELIVERING THE TOWNS FUND PROGRAMME - BOARD FOCUS FOR 2022/23

The Chair informed the Board that Chris Barnes, Assistant Director (Regeneration) would be leaving Stevenage Borough Council shortly following his appointment as Executive Director (Place) at Welwyn and Hatfield District Council. He thanked Chris for his hard work and commitment to the Board and wished him well in his new post.

At this juncture the Chair also thanked Councillor Richard Henry, Executive Member for Leisure, Culture, Children and Young People, to the Board who had replaced Councillor John Gardner. The Chair took the opportunity to thank John for all his work on the regeneration of the Town.

Chris Barnes then gave a presentation on the Board's excellent achievements to date. He advised that the Board now had an opportunity to shape the focus for 2022/23 and beyond with the key principles:

- To ensure Towns Fund monies were used in line with the vision to achieve maximum impact for the Town;
- To utilise the skills and experience of Board Members to add value in targeted areas;
- To ensure there was no loss of focus on the bigger picture;
- To maximise opportunities for local people.

It was agreed that the Board's work for the future should include those principles.

Following a question and as a result of recent concerns regarding pedestrians using the A1M during the recent concert in the grounds, it was agreed that the lack of pedestrian access from the Town to Knebworth House along with the smart motorway implications should be looked at as a future issue for the Board.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

To be advised.