

**STEVENAGE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
MINUTES**

Date: Thursday, 30 March 2023

Time: 10.00am

Place: Virtual (via Zoom)

Present: Adrian Hawkins (Independent Chair)
Councillor Richard Henry (Stevenage Borough Council)
Councillor Jeannette Thomas (Stevenage Borough Council)
Tom Pike (Stevenage Borough Council)
Dave Wells (Stevenage Borough Council)
Annie Piper (Stevenage Borough Council)
Lucy King (Stevenage Borough Council)
Gemma Hannant (Stevenage Borough Council)
Natasha Lee (Stevenage Borough Council)
County Councillor Richard Roberts (Hertfordshire County Council)
Patsy Dell (Hertfordshire County Council)
Adam Wood (Hertfordshire LEP)
Martha Lytton Cobbold (Knebworth House)
Emma Wright (WENTA)
Claire Dicks (MBDA)
Kasia Averall (Catapult)
Kit Davies (North Hertfordshire College)
Sian Carter (Homes England)
Steve Finlan (The Wine Society)
Greg Westover (Legal and General)
Mary Hartley (Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust)
Hetty Thornton (Historic England)
Tamim Choudhury (Cities & Growth Unit, DLUHC)
John Lewis (Aecom)
Ella Lyons (Viavi Solutions)
Piers Slater (Reef Group)
Will Rohleder (Reef Group)
Gary Chamberlain (Morgan Sindall)
Sally Bedwell (Morgan Sindall)

Start / End Start Time: 10.00am
Time: End Time: 11.41am

1 WELCOME AND CHAIR'S OPENING COMMENTS

Adrian Hawkins, 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:

Matt Partridge (Chief Executive – Stevenage Borough Council)
Clare Fletcher (Strategic Director – Stevenage Borough Council)
Norman Jennings (Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership)
Charlotte Blizzard Welch (Stevenage CAB)
Briege Leahy (Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce)
Stephen Ward (Catapult) – Kasia Averall substituting
Ed Jordan (WENTA) – Emma Wright substituting
Keith Ellis (Airbus)
Kevin Cowin (Mace Developments))
Julie Newlan (University of Hertfordshire)
Ian Langley (Viavi Solutions) – Ella Lyons substituting
Duncan Parsley (GlaxoSmithKline)
Sarah Brierley (Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust)

3 MINUTES - STEVENAGE DEVELOPMENT BOARD - 2 FEBRUARY 2023

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Stevenage Development Board held on 2 February 2023 be approved as a correct record.

4 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND OPENNESS

The Board received the latest conflicts of interest list.

5 REGENERATION PROGRAMME AND TOWNS FUND UPDATE

Annie Piper (SBC Regeneration Programme Manager) provided an update on the Towns Fund, and began by referring to the projects that would be progressed in 2023/24, including the Autolus building, the Forum development, the GlaxoSmithKline development site, and the Guinness Partnership development of the former Matalan site.

Annie advised that work was underway for the 2022/23 end of year spend actuals to be finalised. Once finalised, the final 2022/23 Towns Fund spend progress report would be circulated to Board Members. As at 27 March 2023, £8.9Million spend had been achieved out of a total of £10.3Million. She referred to the 2023/24 Towns Fund spend profile of £10.650Million. A further report would be provided to the Stevenage Development Board, setting out the expected expenditure against the 2023/24 profile.

Dave Wells (SBC Assistant Director: Regeneration) updated the Board on the SBC Regeneration Programme as follows:

- Station Gateway Enabling Works: Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) – work was continuing on site in preparation for handover and a Spring opening, which was expected in the next few weeks. A successful preview event had been held with Development Board Members and SBC councillors;

- Stevenage Sport and Leisure Hub – Morgan Sindall had been appointed as the delivery partner through a SCAPE framework; and
- Cycling and Pedestrian Connectivity – an SBC Project Manager had been assigned and project scoping was underway. Elements of the project would include an arts and heritage trail, cycling and pedestrian improvements, and public realm/connectivity interventions.

In response to a question, Dave confirmed that the MSCP was for general public use, rather than specifically for Network Rail users. There were different options for the purchase of car parking season tickets for commuters to reflect flexible working arrangements of a mix of commuting/home working.

In reply to a further question, Dave commented that he would ensure that the wayfinding of pedestrian/cycle routes from the MSCP would be aligned with the work Arup were doing on the Gunnels Wood Road Study.

Natasha Lee (SBC Regeneration Marketing & Communication Manager) advised that a great deal of the communications focus on the new MSCP had been on answering questions on social media and posting FAQs on the website. It was hoped that an MSCP opening date would be posted soon.

Natasha referred to the other marketing/communications activities, including the appointment of Morgan Sindall as the development partner for the new Leisure Centre; the imminent commencement of the Matalan site redevelopment scheme by Guinness Partnerships, providing affordable homes; community engagement on the regeneration programme across the town; and the submission of entries for the Let's Celebrate Towns" and "Constructing Excellence: Herts and Beds" Awards.

Kasia Averall (Catapult) informed the Board that she had shared various images of the plans for Stevenage with representatives of a major Cell and Gene Therapy enabler during a recent visit, and that they had been very impressed.

6 STEVENAGE SPORTS & LEISURE HUB UPDATE - MORGAN SINDALL

Gary Chamberlain and Sally Bedwell (Morgan Sindall) gave an update presentation on the Stevenage Sports and Leisure Hub project.

Sally referred to the complimentary businesses under the Morgan Sindall banner, including construction and architectural arms of the company, which was based mainly in the northern Home Counties area. The Morgan Sindall team comprised 107 staff and had delivered £69Million of Social Value through its projects over the past 12 months. It had a Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) score of 45, against an average of 38 in the industry.

Gary advised that Morgan Sindall was experienced in working in the Leisure Sector, and showed some images of their recent projects, including Hackney Britannia, Marina Centre (Great Yarmouth), Centre Leisure (Slough) and Kingsland Leisure (Houghton Regis).

Gary explained that sustainability and decarbonisation were central to Morgan Sindall's ethos, in terms of the approach to their assets, site operations, individual contracts, supply chain and customers. Over 250,000 trees had been planted and 9 new woodlands had been created, and 22,000 tonnes of carbon had been sequestered over 25 years. He referred to Morgan Sindall's electronic in-house Carbonica tool for carbon reduction which would be used on the Stevenage Sports and Leisure Hub project.

Sally commented that Morgan Sindall was proud of the Social Value outcomes delivered through its projects, and referred to the £78Million delivered through the award-winning Hackney Britannia scheme, which had created 57 new jobs, 34 apprenticeships, with 89% of beneficiaries aged 16 to 25. She also referred to the Skills Knowledge Quad at Kingsbrook Secondary School in Buckinghamshire, which was a multi-purpose educational hub aimed at growing and developing the local community.

Gary concluded the presentation by showing a short video highlighting the work carried out by Morgan Sindall.

Comments made by Board Members included:

- the Council's new leisure contractor (SLM – Everyone Active) was looking forward to working with Morgan Sindall to develop the new Leisure Centre;
- it was hoped that the Knowledge Quad concept could be introduced in Stevenage to help raise the aspirations of young people in the Borough, and tie in with the work of the Council and North Herts College;
- it was confirmed that North Herts College would be a key stakeholder, and Morgan Sindall would be in contact shortly;
- the Design Team for the new Leisure Centre would be investigating proposals to tap into alternative heat sources to offset energy use at the Centre; and
- the County Council would be very supportive of any opportunities to bring assets together for the benefit of the Leisure Centre project.

7 SITEC PHASE 1 LAUNCH AND UPDATE

Kit Davies (North Hertfordshire College) gave an update presentation on the SITEC project.

Kit advised that the SITEC official opening had taken place on 9 March 2023, and had been very successful. The immersive technology suite had been showcased, and a simulation had taken place in the Life Sciences Laboratory, with students conducting a variety of experiments.

Kit was grateful to the Borough Council and Local Enterprise Partnership for their support for the event and all those who had attended. The industry attendees were extremely impressed by the facility and the enthusiasm of the students. Courses leading to T level qualifications in life sciences would commence in September 2023. Kit was delighted with the event and was excited for the future of SITEC.

8 REEF GROUP UPDATE ON THE FORUM

Piers Slater and Will Rohleder (both of Reef Group) gave an update presentation on the Forum redevelopment project.

Will advised that the scheme had received planning permission (a resolution to grant permission) in February 2023. Since then, Reef had been working proactively with the Planning officer and Hertfordshire County Council colleagues on the Section 106 Agreement, with the hope that a Decision Notice would be issued at the end of April 2023. Reef was also working with SBC regarding a land transaction matter. Will added that he was positive that the scheme would commence on site in the summer of 2023.

In respect of the GlaxoSmithKline development, Will stated that Reef was targeting the submission of a planning application in Mid April 2023, with the intention of a start of site during Quarter 1 of 2024/25. He hoped to present some CGI images of the proposed scheme to the next Board meeting.

In relation to the Autolus project, Will advised that building handover was anticipated in early April 2023.

Piers explained that UBS, Reef's funding partners, were very committed to the various projects in Stevenage. He commented that there was a continued need to market Stevenage, both nationally and internationally, as an important location for life sciences companies.

The Board felt that it would be important for Reef to give a presentation on their work in Stevenage to a future meeting of the Stevenage Industrial Area Board.

9 STEVENAGE DEVELOPMENT BOARD WORK PLAN 2023/24

Tom Pike (SBC Strategic Director) advised that he envisaged that the Board's Work Programme for 2023/24 would comprise a continued focus on the various town centre infrastructure projects (including the new Leisure Centre, the Forum development, the GSK development and the design phase of the new Civic Hub).

Tom explained that a second layer of work would involve the Town Fund projects relating to cycling, heritage, pedestrian access and retail support. A third layer would be a stepping up of the messaging on skills development for local people, with the help of local businesses.

Tom commented that there would also be long-term preparation work carried out for the 10-15 year transformation of the Town Centre, Stevenage Gateway area and Gunnels Wood Road area, with a continued focus on investigating external funding opportunities.

It was noted that the 15 year plan for the Gunnels Wood Road area had been discussed at the recent Stevenage Industrial Area Board meeting.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(1) Gunnels Wood Road area / Stevenage Industrial Area Board (SIAB)

Tom Pike (SBC Strategic Director) gave a brief slide presentation following the recent initial meeting of SIAB.

Tom advised that the SIAB meeting had considered the visioning study prepared by Arup for the future of the Gunnels Wood industrial area up to 2040. He commented that the Arup Study had been co-funded by the County Council, Hertfordshire Growth Board, Borough Council and Local Enterprise Partnership.

Tom stated that Gunnels Wood Road was one of the largest employment areas in Hertfordshire, containing 250+ companies and providing 20,000 jobs. Established sectors included defence, communications, healthcare, trade, engineering, a growing demand for life sciences, and the nearby Knebworth House and Gardens. The area was surrounded by change and opportunity, such as the Stevenage Town Centre redevelopment, the expansion of the GSK campus, and the residential growth to the west of Stevenage.

Tom reminded the Board that the long-term vision for the area was to work with businesses, local partners and others to look at the art of the possible for a thriving heart of Hertfordshire towards 2040, and to create an ambitious vision for Gunnels Wood that demonstrated how this prestigious employment area should be enhanced as a state of the art, walkable, climate resilient and thriving innovation and employment hub.

Tom stated that there was an opportunity to build on the current momentum for change in the town, including the Towns Fund programme and the £400 Million GSK campus expansion, and to better link together those opportunities.

Tom referred to the strengths of the Gunnels Wood area, such as the mix of types and scales of business space; the excellent road network/ access; the excellent transport links; good access to surrounding natural assets; the development and regeneration context; and global and local businesses network.

Tom concluded by drawing attention to the challenges for Gunnels Wood, including not enough high-quality manufacturing and growth space; vulnerability to climate change; and physical severance between sites and movement around the area.

Patsy Dell (HCC) commented that it was pleasing to see the joined up working between local government and the business community to support regeneration developments in Stevenage.

Martha Lytton Cobbold (Knebworth House) highlighted the amazing Arts and Heritage assets in the town (including the heritage trail). She hoped that Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy monies could be utilised to improve these further.

(2) Legal and General

Following a question raised by the Board Chair, Greg Westover (Legal and General) agreed to update the Board at its next meeting on Legal and General's proposals for development of the site adjacent to Airbus/Viavi Solutions.

11 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that future Board meetings would take place (virtually via Zoom) on the following dates:

- Thursday, 15th June 2023: 10.00am - 12.00pm
- Thursday, 14th September 2023: 2.00pm – 4.00pm
- Thursday, 16th November 2023: 10.00am – 12.00pm