

**STEVENAGE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
MINUTES**

Date: Thursday, 14 September 2023

Time: 2.00pm

Place: Virtual (via Zoom)

Present: Adrian Hawkins (Independent Chair)
Sally Bedwell (Morgan Sindall)
Gary Chamberlain (Morgan Sindall)
Tamim Choudhury (DLUHC)
Kit Davies (North Herts College)
Claire Dicks (MBDA)
Keith Ellis (Airbus)
Steve Finlan (The Wine Society)
Clare Fletcher (Strategic Director – Stevenage Borough Council)
Gemma Hannant (Stevenage Borough Council)
Councillor Richard Henry (Leader – Stevenage Borough Council)
Nick Heywood (FaulknerBrown Architects)
Darryl Jedowski (Stevenage Borough Council)
Norman Jennings (Hertfordshire LEP)
Lisa Jerome (Stevenage Borough Council)
Ed Jordan (WENTA)
Lucy King (Stevenage Borough Council)
Chris Le May (Mace Developments)
Natasha Lee (Stevenage Borough Council)
Nick Middleton (Stevenage Borough Council)
Tom Pike (Strategic Director – Stevenage Borough Council)
Annie Piper (Stevenage Borough Council)
Forogh Rahmani (Hertfordshire County Council)
Councillor Jeannette Thomas (Deputy Leader – Stevenage Borough Council)
Dave Wells (Stevenage Borough Council)

Start / End Start Time: 2.00pm
Time: End Time: 3.30pm

1 WELCOME AND CHAIR'S OPENING COMMENTS

The Chair welcomed everyone back to the first meeting of the Board following the Summer break.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted by the following:

Charlotte Blizzard Welch – Citizens Advice Bureau
Sian Carter – Homes England
Kevin Cowin – MACE
Mary Hartley – Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust
Ian Langley – Viavi Solutions
John Lewis – AECOM
Martha Lytton Cobbold – Knebworth House
Julie Newlan – University of Hertfordshire
Councillor Richard Roberts – Hertfordshire County Council
Will Rohleder – REEF Group
Hetty Thornton – Historic England
Stephen Ward – Catapult
Greg Westover – Legal and General

3 MINUTES - STEVENAGE DEVELOPMENT BOARD - 15 JUNE 2023

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Stevenage Development Board held on 15 June 2023 be approved as a correct record.

4 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND OPENNESS

The Board received the latest conflicts of interest list.

5 REEF GROUP - STEVENAGE PROJECTS UPDATE

Tom Pike (SD – Stevenage Borough Council) gave a presentation to the Board regarding two projects being brought forward by the REEF Group.

The Board noted that outside of the United States, Stevenage had the largest cluster of Cell and Gene Therapy companies in the world.

The Board was reminded that two schemes were currently in progress:

The Assembly (The Forum) – a mixed site including a life science space alongside good quality public realm and other uses, such as places to eat and drink and new retail. Planning permission had been granted in April 2023 and it was envisaged that around 1800 jobs would be created to boost the local economy should the scheme deliver in entirety.

Elevate Quarter – land adjacent to the GSK site. Planning permission had been granted in August 2023. The scheme would aim to put Stevenage at the forefront in Europe for medical and scientific research. TP outlined some of the benefits stated by the REEF Group for working at the site. He also referred to the work undertaken by Herts County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in ensuring that there would be sustainable travel plans to provide access to the site, including changes to the road layout and roundabout at the entrance to the site.

It was **RESOLVED** that the presentation be welcomed and noted.

6 MISSION 44 AND STEVENAGE SKILLS STRATEGY

Norman Jennings, Hertfordshire LEP gave a presentation on Mission 44 and a skills framework for Stevenage. The Board was reminded that Mission 44 was a charitable organisation founded by Sir Lewis Hamilton seeking to transform the lives of young people from under-served backgrounds by creating a pioneering programme attracting them into the STEM industry.

Stevenage Assets included:

- Committed and co-ordinated Stevenage Development Board and Towns Fund;
- STEM Discovery Centre;
- SITEC Phase One at North Herts College;
- Generation Stevenage Event;
- Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst and Cell and Gene Catapult;
- UKSPF resources and M44 resources.

The STEM Discovery Centre was targeted to Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils with a view to broadening their future aspirations. 65% of attendees were from schools along with a smaller percentage of home educated children.

In relation to pioneering Young STEM Futures, it was advised that the Programme had been launched in the previous week with an event held at Airbus Defence and Space attended by Sir Lewis Hamilton. The initial pilot phase would continue through to August 2024 with £1m funding being separated into two phases. This project was also aligned with the North Herts College bursary programme. The Board was advised that the development of phase two projects would be led by the voice of young people.

Members of the Board were pleased to hear of the success of the recent Generation Stevenage Event held at Knebworth House with over 1000 attendees and 60 employers taking part. It was hoped that the event would be repeated next year.

It was **RESOLVED** that the presentation be welcomed and noted.

7 STEVENAGE SPORTS & LEISURE HUB

Annie Piper, SBC Regeneration Team gave a presentation to the Board on the progress with the Stevenage Sports and Leisure Hub.

The Board noted that Morgan Sindall had been appointed as the developer for the Hub and that the feasibility study had been completed.

The Board was informed that the project was at the beginning of its journey but that a number of factors needed to be taken into account including:

- The need to maintain the operation of the current swimming pool during the development of the new Hub;
- Proximity to the highway and the improvements needed to be a safer and

- more inviting threshold into the new building;
- A stacked building would allow for a smaller footprint with more parking and landscaping. It would also open up the opportunity for further development on the existing pool site;
- The need to feed into the projects in the area that had already received approval.

In relation to the design of the new facility, a new 10 lane multi-purpose pool would be provided along with courts, soft play and gym facilities.

The Board were advised that the next stage of the project would be to receive approval from SBC Executive to move into the next stage which would include more detail of the project.

Following discussion, Members of the Board were pleased to see the proposed visuals of the development and agreed that it would strengthen the whole visual impact of the area.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Henry stressed the importance of local residents being part of the design and development of the Hub and that they should be kept fully informed at all stages.

It was **RESOLVED** that the presentation be welcomed and noted.

8 **REGENERATION PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Chris Le May from MACE gave an update on the progress of the SG1 Development. He reminded members that the development consisted of the development of 10 Town Centre sites which would provide 1900 new homes, a park, urban development, a new Public Sector Hub as well as a new school.

It was noted that Phase 1, the former Swingate House, was underway with the S106 agreement completed, utilities diverted, a revised design to ensure compliance with Building Fire Safety Regulations and Standards and completed legal conditions.

The Board was pleased to note that contractors would be fully on site to begin development at the end of this year with a planned completion date for the scheme of 2026.

Natasha Lee, SBC Regeneration then gave an update to the Board on the Regeneration programme including:

- The unveiling of the art work in the underpasses by the Football Ground on the Broadhall Way roundabout;
- A recent cycling event held to gather information from interested parties and local residents on the current condition of the cycling network;
- An Arts and Culture celebration including a social media campaign around Stevenage's iconic Clock Tower;
- The award of 'Park Mark Plus' for the new Multi Storey Car Park at the Train Station;

Natasha then informed the Board of the findings from the recent survey carried out in relation to the proposed New Towns Heritage Centre including:

- 293 responses had been received;
- Responses included requests for a more central location, more exhibition and activity/event space and different opening hours;
- The top 3 facilities suggested were a café, toilets and rentable space for the community;
- Top 3 activities & events included family friendly, educational and interactive experiences.

In relation to Future Activities, Natasha advised that the following communications would shortly be underway:

- Sports and Leisure Hub – a strategy was being prepared including how to work closely with the community as well as with the Stevenage Development Board, which would be key to shaping the project;
- A social media campaign was underway for a summertime Arts and Culture Celebration;
- Several awards were to be submitted across the Council including the underpass murals for a public realm improvement award.

Chris and Natasha were thanked for their updates and it was **RESOLVED** that the presentations be noted.

9 TOWNS FUND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Board received a presentation on the Towns Fund Programme Management and details of the 2023/24 funding profile. The presentation included information related to project adjustment requests.

The Board were in agreement to the proposal to move the SEC and SITEC projects and profile money into the next financial year in order to free up time and resources for the projects and to work on delivery options with partners.

The Board were informed that a report on the Towns Fund Programme Update would be submitted to the October meeting of the SBC Executive and the following recommendations were endorsed:

1. The progress of the Towns Fund Projects be endorsed;
2. The progress made and early-stage consultation regarding the New Towns Heritage Centre and Museum be noted;
3. That delegated authority be authorised to continue exploring Station Gateway masterplan opportunities;
4. The amends to the 2023/24 spend profile be noted.

At this juncture, in relation to the Station Gateway, the Strategic Director (TP) advised that through consultation on longer-term planning policies, around 1,500 responses had been received to the 18 month consultation. The Station Gateway Plan would then go forward to be included in the update of the Local Plan. A further report would be brought to the Board later in the year to share concepts and proposals on how to move forward with partners on this scheme.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair congratulated the Team at Wenta on their 40th anniversary which had recently been celebrated at a reception held at the House of Commons.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 16 November 2023 – 10.00am – 12 noon