

**STEVENAGE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (FORMERLY STEVENAGE TOWN FUND
BOARD)
MINUTES**

Date: Thursday, 8 May 2025

Time: 2.00pm

Place: Zoom

Present: Adrian Hawkins (Chair)
Turkan Ahmet – Regeneration, SBC
Kevin Bonavia – MP
Ishbel Brierley – Regeneration, SBC
Kathryn Carr – Strategic Director, SBC
Kevin Cowin – Mace
Kit Davies – North Herts College
Claire Dicks – MBDA
Gemma Hannant – Regeneration, SBC
Councillor Richard Henry – Leader, Stevenage Borough Council
Ross Hughes – Regeneration, SBC
Lisa Jerome – SBC
Ed Jordan – WENTA
Lucy King – Regeneration, SBC
Natasha Lee – Regeneration, SBC
John Lewis – AECOM
Martha Lytton Cobbold – Knebworth House
Tom Pike – Chief Executive, SBC
Nick Strachan – Barry Glass
Councillor Jeannette Thomas, Deputy Leader, SBC
Ash Trowe – Beryl Bikes
Dave Wells, Assistant Director Regeneration, SBC

Start / End 10.00am

Time: 11.45am

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:

Sian Carter – Homes England

Tamim Choudhury – Department of Housing Communities and Local Government

Stephen Chown – Vincent and Gorbing

Keith Ellis – Airbus
Clare Fletcher – Stevenage Borough Council
Mary Hartley – Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust
Councillor Richard Roberts – Herts County Council
Chris Scott - MUSE
Alex Templar – Catapult
Stephen Ward – Catapult
Greq Westover – Legal and General

3 **MINUTES - 6 MARCH 2025**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Stevenage Development Board held on 6 March 2025 be approved as a correct record.

4 **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND OPENNESS**

The Board received the latest conflicts of interest list.

5 **GENERATION STEVENAGE**

The Chair gave an update on the Generation Stevenage Event which would be taking place at Knebworth Barns on 15 May 2025.

He advised that Generation Stevenage was a careers fair for young people in and around Stevenage to meet local employers from across a broad range of sectors. It would be hosted by Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal (HOP) and Hertfordshire Futures, in partnership with the Stevenage Development Board.

The event, which would be welcoming over 800 pupils, would offer information on career path options, employment opportunities, apprenticeships and work experience and skills development and professional qualification programmes.

6 **SG1 PHASE 1A**

Chris Le May from Mace gave an update on the development of Claxton House, on the site of the former Swingate House. He informed the Board that the development would deliver 261 new homes and a ground floor commercial unit.

The Board were advised that the piling had now been completed on site and the spur road had been relocated. Drainage services had been installed and the second tower crane would be arriving in a week.

The Board was pleased to hear that Mace was an industry leader on local employment and apprenticeships. Ten apprenticeships had been delivered and there would be an increase in the number of local operatives on site when the development moved into the trade work.

It was envisaged that the site would be completed in the first quarter of 2027. In response to a question, Chris advised that the SG1 development was a ten year programme over four phases and that Mace would be providing regular updates to

the Board going forward.

The Chair thanked Chris for his update.

7 STATION GATEWAY

Tom Pike, Chief Executive, Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) and Dave Wells, Assistant Director (Regeneration) SBC, gave an update to the Board on the Station Gateway Masterplan which had continued to progress in conjunction with the English Cities Fund.

The Board was advised that the completed Vision Masterplan had received a high level of interest and had been included in Invest in Hertfordshire, East of England Prospectus and UK Innovation Corridor Investment Prospectus. The intent was to submit the Plan for consideration by the SBC Cabinet later in the year prior to a multi-phased Development Agreement being signed.

Richard Henry, Leader of SBC, advised that the Council was fully behind the Plan and that the Council would be fully represented at the upcoming UKREiiF conference which was held to drive investment and regeneration across the country.

Kevin Bonavia, MP advised that he would be meeting with representatives from the Department of Transport and would endeavour to raise the profile of the project with them. He advised that he would welcome any additional information prior to his meeting them.

The Chair thanked Tom and Dave for their updates.

8 BERYL BIKE SCHEME

The Board received an update from Ash Trowe from the Beryl Bikeshare scheme reporting on the operation of the scheme for the first six months from October 2024 to March 2025. Beryl had been extremely please with the high levels of initial take up in October this had tailed off slightly over the winter months but it was envisaged that with further engagement and publicity in the town the usage numbers would increase throughout the spring and summer months.

A total of 45 bays were operational including 4 docked bays, 39 painted bays and 1 virtual bay.

Ash reported that there had been:

- Journeys - 42,608
- Users – 5069
- Distance - 122,837 Km
- Average Journey Distance - 2.89 km

The Board were advised that the impact of the scheme was a reduction of 5 tonnes of Co2 over the 6 month period.

Claire Dicks, MBDA advised that they had engaged with Beryl and the take-up of the

scheme by employees had helped to alleviate parking capacity issues.

In response to concerns regarding reports of vandalism and anti-social behaviour, Ash advised that Beryl were working closely with the Council and the Police to address the issues and educate users.

The Chair thanked Ash for his presentation.

9 DIVERSIFICATION OF RETAIL

Dave Wells reported to the Board on the proposals relating to the new gateway to retail core.

He advised that the proposal would provide improved connectivity between the station to the retail core and the town square. The creation of a new entrance to the retail core, by transforming the service yard entrance of the Westgate shopping to a new thoroughfare was planned. This would also maximise secure parking arrangements and would support the regeneration programme.

The Chair welcomed Nick Strachan from Leslie Jones Architects, who gave an overview of the design proposals for the Westgate enhancement project and details of internal and external refurbishment possibilities.

The Board welcomed the proposals which could also include improvements to the road access, a potential pedestrian crossing and access arrangements to the Westgate Centre.

The Chair thanked Dave and Nick for their update and requested that the Board be kept informed on progress on this.

10 STEVENAGE INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY CENTRE (SITEC)

Kit Davies, North Herts College gave an update on the Stevenage Innovation and Technology Centre (SITEC).

The proposal to re-locate into the Indoor Market site was progressing and procurement had begun to appoint the main contractor for the work with a planning application submitted in June 2025. The relocation of the market traders to their new premises in Park Place was being finalised. It was envisaged that contractors would be on site early 2026 with a 6 month build time and the college to be up and running by September 2026.

The Chair advised that he would be meeting with Kit shortly to finalise details including the skills aspect funded by the Board through a Memorandum of Understanding.

Councillor Richard Henry gave assurances to the Board that the Council was working closely with the market traders to ensure a smooth transition to their newer, fit for purpose premise.

The Chair thanked Kit for his update.

11 **TOWNS FUND GOVERNANCE - REPORTING**

Lucy King, Regeneration Manager, advised the Board that the Towns Fund 6 monthly reporting (looking at programme progress, risk, finances, outputs and outcomes) was near completion and would be shortly circulated to Board Members for opportunity to comment.

Lucy was pleased to report that a total of £3.85million was being claimed for this period, a total of £4.5million for the whole year.

The Board **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

12 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Dave Wells advised that this year's Stevenage Day would be held on 8 June 2025, and the theme was STEM and was a potential showcase for community organisations and businesses. Anyone wanting further information should contact Ryan Ansell, Health and Sport Strategy Manager, Stevenage Borough Council – Ryan.ansell@stevenage.gov.uk.

Martha Lytton Cobbold, Knebworth House, referred to a Charity Hub (link below), supported by the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, which had been established with the aim was to attract and support smaller charities seeking new or additional office accommodation and enabling interaction between them. She suggested that this could potentially be something which would benefit local charities.

[The Charity Hub - Watford & Three Rivers Trust](#)

13 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Thursday 10 July 2025 – 10.00am – Zoom

Thursday 25 September 2025 – 10.00am – Zoom

Thursday 20 November 2025 – 10.00am – The Cromwell Hotel

CHAIR