



Halifax Town Development Board Meeting
Minutes of the meeting held 10th August 2023
Meeting held by Teams.

Attendees

Councillor Tim Swift (Chair)
Councillor Guy Beech
Cllr Abigail Carr
Jess Thompson
Tracy Harvey
Lee Kenny
Nick Holdsworth
Chloe McNeill
Hilary Barber

Others in Attendance

Karen Hornby
Rob Shipway
Shelagh O'Neill
Kayleigh Boyle
Janet Whitlow
Zakariya Ali
Bobsie Robinson

1 Introductions & Apologies

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Board members.

2 Apologies were noted from:

Councillor Sarah Courtney, Councillor Joe Thompson, Gary Rae

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4 Minutes of previous meeting

The Board agreed the minutes to be a fair record of the meeting held 8th June 2023.

a. Matters arising.

The Board noted that previous minutes referred to a planned review and, if necessary, update of the Terms of reference for the Board. Rob Shipway reported that the review would take place but had been postponed while new Board members were recruited, to ensure the rationale for any amendments were understood and agreed.

5 Board Membership

The Board received a report detailing up to date membership details of the Board. The May elections, coinciding with the time limits for membership of some members, had required a recruitment drive. The Board noted this had proven successful, with just one vacancy left for which Officers were in discussion with potential candidates from the voluntary sector.

The Board welcomed the new membership and urged Officers to continue to seek additional members, particularly from the private sector. Rob Shipway agreed to contact the Halifax BID team for assistance. The Board also suggested working with Voluntary Action Calderdale to explore opportunities for social enterprise participation.

ACTION: Rob Shipway to progress further recruitment.

6 Community Rail Partnership

The Chair welcomed Karen Hornby to the meeting, manager of Network Rail's Community Rail Partnership. Karen explained the purpose of the Partnership in Calderdale was to promote the Calder rail line, and to promote the towns that it serves. Karen had previously circulated a copy of the Community Rail partnership's new promotional guide to the Calder line. It provided details of points of interest in each of the town. Karen explained how she works with the Calderdale tourism partnership and was keen to work with Town Boards to further promote the Calder valley.

Karen reported links already in place in Halifax, including local charities, the Piece Hall, Eureka, and she is currently exploring opportunities to work closer with the Canal and River Trust.

Karen reported a new initiative, 'Ghost Walks' collaborating with local historians and linked to 2024 year of culture. She encouraged anyone interested in knowing more about the walks and how to get involved to contact her. Karen stressed that though the Partnership has a small budget, their strength was particularly in forging partnerships and harnessing the asset of the Calder Valley Line to promote sustainable travel and a stronger leisure market.

Kenny welcomed Karen's presentation and committed to establishing links with the Community Foundation and the Halifax BID team.

ACTION: Rob Shipway to provide Lee with Karen's contact details and facilitate an early meeting.

Action: Karen Hornby to circulate a new prospectus for the Community Rail Partnership which is expected to be completed December 2023.

7 Vision Update

Janet Whitlow from Calderdale Council delivered a presentation to the Board providing details of the developing vision for the town. Janet reminded the Board that the visioning work was needed as there had been masterplans, development plans, key regeneration projects, and more lately the Future High Streets Funding, which have made significant progress in delivering against the 2014 Halifax Development Plan.

Janet explained that the Major Projects team was currently working on completion of the project brief, an essential pre-requisite to a successful vision. The project brief must encapsulate different sectors and existing plans for the town. The Board urged Janet to ensure all areas were included, with some members concerned that areas like North Halifax feature less in similar plans. Regarding historic alleyways and heritage buildings, Janet confirmed that alleyways form part of a wider piece of more focused work exploring the trail and St. George's area.

Cllr Swift urged the vision to look beyond retail, drawing on all the sectors that support the development of the town. He noted his support for the vision work in identifying and promoting the development of difficult sites. The vision will also identify empty sites and buildings which are not in Council ownership but are run down and in need of upgrade to support the town's promotion in a positive light. Shelagh O'Neill highlighted the role of the Council in exploring the ownership of empty properties and where necessary using enforcement powers to bring buildings back into positive use.

The Board asked that the vision be aware of gateway sites such as North Bridge and King's Cross. The Board also highlighted the need for green space. Opportunities for mitigating violent crime was also raised, with one Board member noting the high ranking of Halifax in terms of violence per capita in England's large towns.

The Board stressed the need for consultation to get the brief right, and Chloe McNeill offered her support to engage the private sector through the BID team.

8 Future High Street Fund Update

Janet Whitlow updated the Board on progress of the Future High Street Fund programme. Janet confirmed the programme would see £11.6 million invested in the town. Victoria Theatre is nearing confirmation of the new contractors with works expected to start in the next few weeks. St Georges Square is progressing well with discussions with stakeholders continuing and a heritage planning application submitted to regarding public toilets. Borough Market continues to progress with its refurbishment with full Wi-Fi integrated for public and traders.

The Halifax art trail is being developed with consultants Art Works, still in development stage, it will include a mix of new and existing points of interest around Halifax town centre with an updated report to come to the Town Board in October.

9 Year of Culture

Kayleigh Boyle of Calderdale Council provided an update on preparations for the Calderdale Year of Culture, 2024. Kayleigh confirmed core funding secured from WYCA, with successful expressions of interest submitted to Heritage Lottery Fund and the Arts Council. The focus of work continues to be funding and liaison with communities to explore event opportunities. Kayleigh noted further opportunities for funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The Council's Culture team are developing a grant scheme for the year's festivities. From October 2023, the Culture team is planning to open its 'Activation Fund' to promote early activities in 2024 and encourage successful applications to use their award as match funding for other grants.

ACTION: Presentation to be shared by Rob Shipway

10 Westgate Update

Nick Holdsworth presented the Board with details of the planning application for Westgate. Nick confirmed that Grayson Builders have been appointed as the main contractor, with work to start September 2023, delivery due before the year end. The plan is to bring 12 units to the market, with the remaining 50% on a to-let basis. Board members were signposted to YouTube where there is information on Westgate Phase 2
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCITolQJv0M>)

11 Piece Hall Update

Gary Rae presented an update to the Board on the Piece Hall. Gary reported that 29 major events were delivered through the summer, selling over 125,000 tickets. During August and September, there had been two free-to-enter events, along with Calderdale Pride. Highlight events still to come in 2023 include the Charlatans, James, Limp Bizkit, and Johnny Marr.

He noted that the Christmas programme was almost complete and would be reported to the next meeting of the Board.

It was confirmed that the Council agreed to continue to invest in supporting the work of The Piece Hall Trust. Since reopening in 2017, the Piece Hall has added £10.2 million to the local economy on average each year, placing The Piece Hall firmly as a key driver of wider economic regeneration.

12 Halifax Development Board webpage

Rob Shipway confirmed that the webpage for Halifax Board, which would provide a home for Board minutes, has been set up and can be found at <https://new.calderdale.gov.uk/environment/regeneration/halifax-development-board>

13 Any other business

It was noted that lighting and wiring fixtures were in a state of disrepair meaning that £5,300 was needed to support remedial works to the Christmas lights. Councillor Swift asked if the Board could help.

Action: Shelagh O'Neill to explore options and contact Chloe McNeill with any ways forward.

Lee Kenny asked if the Menopause conference could be an agenda item at the next meeting.

Action: Rob Shipway to include Menopause Conference on the October agenda.

14 Date of next meeting

5th October 2023