



Halifax Town Board Meeting Minutes

Time: 6.00-7.00pm

Location: Teams Meeting

Attendees:

Councillor Tim Swift (Chair)
Councillor Sarah Courtney
Tracey Harvey

In Attendance:

Shelagh ONeill
Jess Thompson
Charles Campion
Paul Copeland
Charles Campion (JTB)
Vicki Spencer Hughes
Rob Shipway
Sandra Robertshaw

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies from: Gary Rae, Cllr Roger Taylor, Cllr Megan Swift, Cllr Joe Thompson, Chris Dalby, Joseph Tetley, Lee Kenny, Nick Holdsworth, Kayleigh Boyle, Janet Whitlow, Chloe McNeill.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest

3. Minutes from last meeting

No date on the minutes. SC – report back from the Menopause Conference, bump this item to the next meeting (raised by Lee Kenny). Subject to the amendment the minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

4. North Bridge (Vicki Spencer Hughes)

Cllr Swift welcomed Vicki Spencer Hughes to the meeting. VSH joined Calderdale in April. Noted that there had been uncertainty whether the report had been circulated to the Board.

Context, Key Insights and Recommendations:

Part of the work within the Suicide Prevention Strategy, which consists of six elements, includes reducing access to the means including public places. A report was commissioned from Urban Space Initiatives with a series of workshops with stakeholders to discover potential issues around the site and the practicalities and the role it plays within Halifax and going through existing strategic documents.

The overarching vision does intersect across multiple plans, including culture, communities. Insights and findings have been noted, none of which are surprising. It is a challenging built environment with negative perceptions of the area, and the impact on services and people. Another key point to make is that nobody has single ownership, the area falls outside any one person's remit.

Recommendations are noted on page 18 of the report. Three actions are recommended:

- Creating a vibrant place (changing the narrative above and below North Bridge).
- Creating opportunities with partnerships and engagement, make it a place where people can meet.
- Prevention, e.g., structural improvements.

It is about creative and positive uses, solutions could be beautiful, artistic, and interactive. The report addresses issues on multiple fronts. There is a high-level roadmap on two tracks: major capital investment needed, and shorter-term revenue project engaging with the local community. We are also currently working on appropriate decision making and what the options are to obtain high level agreement.

Questions and Comments:

Cllr TS: feels like a boundary site, owned by the Council but cuts across the Town and Boothtown, and other sites.

SON: Teams have been involved as the site has evolved, at the ideas stage, and how we take forward delivery. In terms of ownership and where the red line is and the vision conversation and plans for town centre, how do we bring Dean Clough into the town centre, it is a major asset, sits as an island at the other side of the road. In discussions with Jeremy Hall, Nicky Chance-Thompson, and Nick Holdsworth as the key anchor of organisations and assets in the town. Want to work with all three key stakeholders and others

about how we can increase connectivity and for what we can use the space. The site is problematic, work on the new Leisure Centre and the construction period (subject to approval) will start at the end of this year so it will be a different space for the next two years. The site does need to be within the red line boundary.

Cllr TS: Agree needs to feed into the master planning work and how we feed into that connection.

Cllr TS thanked VSH for attending and her input.

5. Vision Update (Jess Thompson)

JT confirmed that a full update will be presented at the next meeting. However, noted the headlines: looking at what the vision will be, struggling with the scale of Halifax as a place. How do we find the right approach, obviously needs to be consultation based, multitudes of scale, conversations with regional colleagues who have done a similar consultation in other boroughs. Need to think about how we start this, it will define as it grows.

6. Westgate House Planning Application (Nick Holdsworth)

Agreed agenda item for the next meeting.

7. Calderdale Placemaking Guide (Charles Campion, JTP Architects)

The Board noted the Placemaking and Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document presentation, shared onscreen.

CC: Board to advise if there is anyone else that we need to contact following recent workshops held. Have been raising awareness of the process we are doing, it is a new thing, Government Policy coming to all Local Councils will be asked to do this kind of guide/code, so it is a learning curve. Worked for the past 10 years in private practice.

We are following national modelling design code, launched a couple of years ago, which is all about ensuring places are designed for the future and meet the aspirations of the local community, and to draw in local people's aspiration and knowledge of their place and then interpret this into the guidebook.

Next stage from the initial workshop will be to form a Community Review Panel which will be a group of people, broad based group both geographically, democratically and in terms of interest. Will start off with a briefing about what a design guide is, and then go

into more details. Up to us to start putting content into the guide so people have something to which they can respond.

Link is on the JTP website which can be sent round on the documents. All documents can be viewed here and includes an introductory exhibition. Summer Programme may be optimistic, currently looking at Autumn. Once final draft available will go back to the whole community for consultation managed by the Council. This will ensure everyone can see the draft guide, understand its purpose, and make better informed comments about it.

[Calderdale Placemaking and Design Guide - JTP](#)

<https://www.jtp.co.uk/projects/community-planning/calderdale>

CIlr TS: struggling to see what the design guide will look like. Town centre has listed buildings, and a large conservation area. What practical difference will the design guide make to our work?

CC: primarily about new development or new things that happen, can also be about changes in development. Could be something that references work on existing buildings. Primarily what happens with new developments, significant site in and around Halifax especially East of the Piece Hall (Station area).

The guide will help to inform proposals for such an area. National Model Design Guide/Code talks about area types, different sorts of development that would be appropriate for a town centre setting, suburban, village or farmstead, a transect across the built environment inner town, inner city through to rural.

Look and shape of buildings, boundary treatments of buildings, public realm. As we go through the process will start to understand more about it.

PC: in terms of the existing built environment, in terms of modern design there must be acknowledgement of the existing built environment. The design code will flag that up e.g., Multcure Hall Road. It must take inspiration from its immediate location and surroundings.

CC: one of the things we are doing is talking to those in the built environment profession, and architects. Will ensure views are included into the workshops. One of the challenges is around viability.

Cllr SC: went to one of the consultation events in Hebden Bridge. The event secured useful information, people to talk to, felt really listened to. Observed other people being listened to and ideas and local knowledge taken onboard. Got the feeling that this was not the design for the whole of Calderdale, it was being sympathetic to each area and sub area. Felt very reassuring.

CC: Contextual element is important. Also planning to talk to Cornwall Council, about how it works from users' point of view and how it works from officers' point of view to assess applications as they come in and using the guide as a tool. Document will change over time as well. Also mentioned still have an online comment map-based platform available, will add link to that as well. Form comes up, you can make comments on specific areas or broader. Will keep this open over the summer. Exhibition is on there as well, 6-8 boards, will set out a contents page and will then start going in to drafting the documents. Can come back to the Board to show how progressing.

8. Any Other Business

Board Membership & Terms of Reference

RS confirmed that there needs to be a review Board Membership. RS and Cllr SC met today to discuss this across all the Town Boards. Halifax is struggling in terms of membership, three vacancies from the voluntary sector, and anomalies in terms of political representation.

There are new Councillors who have been recently elected. Cllrs TS/SC will do a briefing for the new councillors so they can play an active role. Also spoken to Orange Box in terms of representation on the Town Boards from young people and a meeting to discuss this with them has been arranged for next Friday. Also need consider representation from the private sector.

Cllr SC: looking at ToR and what we have and what gaps we have in terms of layout and next level of assessing is also then looking at the skill set needed. Health Sector membership also lacking. Political membership currently at 3, 3, 1 (Labour, Conv, Lib Dem), political balance of the Council is different to what it was when the Boards came into being. Also, should we be looking at Councillors from other Wards to ensure fair representation. Would be useful to meet with community anchors to discuss Board representation, and

we also need to be more diverse regarding representation from ethnic minorities, we could undertake targeted recruitment.

Cllr TS: we can pursue this and have a strategy to go forward and then a process for selecting new Board Members. Recognise that business representation may not be adequate, happy to have an additional representative. In terms of the political layout, we can look at the balance of Ward Councillors and can discuss this further on Monday. The point about lack of diversity is interesting, good to have a conversation with Chloe McNeill and Tracy Harvey in the private sector regarding gaps in this area.

RS: good point regarding the private sector. The Board Terms of Reference need updating. Worth discussing with Chloe, reaching out to private sector groups to get our balance right.

Cllr TS: we will pick that up going forward.

RS: Previously noted that Halifax Town Board did not have its own webpage, as the other Town Boards. This is being rectified and the HTB site will be up and available before the next meeting of the Board. The format will be in line with other Town Boards.

Cllr TS: all thanked for time.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 10th August at 6.00pm.