



Minutes of St Helens Town Deal Board

14:00 – 16:00, Friday 23 May 2025
Board Room 10, St Helens Town Hall

Board Members in Attendance:

Neil Butler – Chair, St Helens Town Deal Board
Marie Rimmer, MP – Member of Parliament, St Helens South and Whiston
David Baines, MP - Member of Parliament, St Helens North
Councillor Anthony Burns - Deputy Chair and Leader of the Council, St Helens Borough Council
Councillor Richard McCauley - Cabinet Member for Regeneration
Councillor John Hodgkinson - Member Champion for Local Business, St Helens Borough Council
Mark Palethorpe – Chief Executive, St Helens Borough Council
Cath Fogarty – Executive Director, Corporate Services, St Helens Borough Council
Steve Coffey – Chief Executive, Torus
Gill Smith – Regional Director and Project Management Service Lead,
Daniel Bimpson – Senior Investment Manager, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
John Tabern – Project Director, Cannington Shaw Preservation Trust CIC
Kate Farnell – Director, Ubique Risk Management Ltd

Local Authority Representation:

David Saville – Programme Lead (Transport and Infrastructure), St Helens Borough Council
Stephen Higham - Programme Lead (The Gamble and Town Deal), St Helens Borough Council
Dean McGauley - Project Officer, St Helens Borough Council
Donna Wilby – Finance Business Partner (Regeneration), St Helens Borough Council

Project Sponsors/ Leads:

Matt Whiteley – Town Centre Living & Regeneration
Vicky Willett – Digital Infrastructure
Wayne Longshaw - Healthy Communities, Health Innovation

Observers:

Mary Jefferson - Head of Regeneration & Growth, St Helens Borough Council
Robert Gatensbury – Programme Lead, St Helens Borough Council
Iain Taylor – Project Manager, IMT Consulting
Hayley O'Brien – CJ Founds Associates
Suzi Smith – Communications Officer (Regeneration), St Helens Borough Council

Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from:

Board Members:

Rachel Yeates - Engineering Project Controller, MBDA
Jennifer Greenan – Director, E-Verve Energy Ltd
Chris Founds – Digital Infrastructure (CJ Founds)

Project Sponsors/ Leads

Walter Coxon - Glass Futures 2 (SINA Medical Glass)

Sarah Taylor – The World of Glass

Local Authority Representatives

Lisa Harris – Executive Director of Place Services, St Helens Borough Council

Sean Traynor – Director of Strategic Growth, St Helens Borough Council

Jamaila Hussain – Executive Director of People's Services/NHS Place Lead, St Helens Borough Council

Town Deal Board noted that Justin Hill has resigned from his role at the YMCA and, therefore, he has now also formally resigned from Town Deal Board and Project Sponsor of the Youth Hub. Matt Moreton has taken over as Project Sponsor for the Youth Hub project in place of Justin Hill. Board membership and any recommendations to fill Board vacancies will follow the usual process and be resolved at the September Town Deal Board Annual General Meeting.

The Chair also apologised to Town Deal Board Members for the delay in sending the agenda pack to Board Members on this occasion.

Item 2 – Declarations of interest

Board Members are asked to declare any conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest will be recorded in the minutes. The following attendees declared conflicts of interest:

Marie Rimmer MP - Friend of the World of Glass

Councillor Richard McCauley – St Helens Borough Council Planning Committee

Gill Smith – The Gamble Building

John Tabern - Cannington Shaw

Kate Farnell – Connected Places

Item 3 – Minutes of the previous Town Deal Board meeting, 28 February 2025

Councillor Hodgkinson stated that item 9 of the minutes of the previous Town Deal Board meeting on 28 February was incorrect. The minutes state that *£6,000 was initially allocated for a purpose-built classroom for students*, the minutes should state that this figure is £60,000.

ACTION: DM to update the figure from £6,000 to £60,000 in Item 9 of the minutes of the Minutes of the previous Town Deal Board meeting, 28 February 2025.

DECISION: Board Members approved the minutes of the previous Town Deal Board Meeting held on 28 February 2025 subject to the amendment outlined above.

Item 4 – Matters Arising and Action Log

Stephen Higham presented the following updates in relation to each action on the Action Tracker.

Healthy Communities Capacity Funding Request – Existing Action: Further Social Value plans and details to be presented to the Town Deal Board for the Skills Academy. **Update:** Social Value has been included in the project highlight report under Item 11.

Project Highlight Reports - A (i) SINA Medical Glass - Existing Action: Explore the opportunity of

providing a site visit to SINA for Town Deal Board Members. **Update:** IT informed the group that a site visit will be organised when the vial machinery has been delivered and installed.

Project Highlight Reports – Town Centre Living and Regeneration - Action: Share Town Centre Living & Regeneration energy plans/renewable energy plans with the Board as soon as they have been developed and are available. **Update:** Detailed plans will be shared when available. A brief update was provided during the Town Centre Living & Regeneration Presentation.

DECISION: Board Members noted the updates provided in the action log.

Item 5 – Minutes of Town Deal Steering Group held on 2 May 2025

DECISION: Board Members acknowledged the minutes of the Town Deal Steering Group held on 2 May 2025.

Item 6 – Town Centre Living and Regeneration Presentation

MW provided an update and background on the progress to date, recent scheme reviews and subsequent revisions. In 2020, the project commenced with an initial partnership agreement that was soon followed by a wider more detailed development agreement. This subsequently developed into a Town Centre Masterplan. In 2022 Outline Planning Permission was achieved.

MW stated that the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) of the required properties were secured before Reserved Matters planning status was achieved and Vinci was appointed. Hampton by Hilton was also secured as the hotel partner for the project.

MW outlined how the scheme has been refreshed and refined. The visuals shared showed an impressive and deliverable scheme with phasing as follows:

- Phase 1a – 120 bed Hampton by Hilton Hotel, Market Hall, Public Realm and residential units.
- Phase 1b – Office and small-scale retail within the previous M&S unit.

As part of the ongoing design process, refinements incorporate positive changes including alterations to the hotel (internal layouts and a refined footprint), whilst still delivering an impressive 120-room hotel. Other refinements include there now being one building allocated to residential, negating the need for two cores. Hall Street town houses have improved aesthetics and the Market Hall has minimal changes. The Millennium Needle will be removed temporarily and will return to a prominent location adjacent to the new hotel, where it will have an even more impressive presence. A Public Arts Strategy is being developed. There have also been changes to electricals, cladding and paving.

MW discussed the programme with main works due to commence in October 2025 and buildings due to be completed late 2027. DB stated clearly to MW that it is essential the programme does not slip, and the public must see ongoing positive progress to this once in a generation change.

MR asked how ECF and the Council will communicate progress. MW responded that this will be done through our communications partners (Influential) and Jayne Taylor (Head of Communications at the Council) is involved. One story or news article will be released per week, varying between a 'human' story and stories specific to the construction. MJ took the opportunity to introduce Suzi Smith to the Board, the new Communications lead for Regeneration projects at the Council, who is supporting communications activity for town centre regeneration.

RM asked for an update on Social Value initiatives. MW outlined that there was activity already underway which was of significant value and detailed in the highlight report.

ACTION: MW to review and confirm Social Value amount with ECF and Vinci.

Item 7 – Town Deal Finance Report

DW, Finance Business Partner (Regeneration), presented the report. The report provided Board with an update on the financial position in relation to Town Deal grant funding approved by Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The total of £25m available includes £23.75m Capital Grant and £1.25m Revenue Grant. Accounting considerations for the Council will report via capital programme and revenue budgets as appropriate.

The latest position on expenditure to date as of March 2025 is shown in Table 1 of section 4.1 of the report. Reasons for significant variances are provided in the end column as requested at the last meeting of the Board. DW stated that baselines have been provided from September 2024 to demonstrate the variances. Reasons for significant variance and upward spend for the forecast are outlined. DW stated that there has been a small adjustment on the Connected Places project as outlined in the report.

Table 2 and the accompanying chart under Section 5.1 show the expenditure to date, and the remaining forecast up to March 2026. This has been collated in collaboration with all Town Deal Project Managers.

Section 6 shows charts for Board Members to visualise where the plans are up to against the forecasts. The charts in Section 6.1 have been developed using the quarterly forecasts for the remainder of expenditure of the Town Deal grant values, for each live project (excluding the World of Glass with expenditure now complete). This shows the position reported as of September 2024 as the baseline, actual and forecast, the previous position from December 2024, and the up-to-date position as of March 2025.

Section 7 provides an update on the financial aspect of Town Deal Performance Returns. The next report is due to be submitted on 27 May 2025. Within this return the revenue funding aspect attributed to each project is included within the Programme Management line as required by MHCLG. The chart provided in Section 7.2 shows the overall cumulative expenditure and changes reported to MHCLG since March 2023.

Section 8 details project expenditure updates. Cannington Shaw and SINA have revised forecasts by expenditure heading against the original business case. This is reported to the Board for transparency of planned expenditure, and for awareness of forthcoming updates and requests from Projects to repurpose funds or change scope.

A revised forecast was prepared by the Project Manager for the main capital grant for Cannington Shaw. This will be reflected in the revised Grant Funding Agreement between the Council and Cannington Shaw. Board was reminded that £32,250 of this forecast relates to funding for the Heat District Network Feasibility Study, and funding will remain with the Council. This amends the grant value to be paid to Cannington Shaw Preservation Trust to £1,482,458. DW stated that £22,000 is set to be spent by the end of March this year. Security and energy costs are also included which are funded by Town Deal.

Section 8.4 provides an update in relation to the SINA Project. A small amendment has been made to the use of capacity/ revenue funding for this project to utilise the Town Deal fund to cover £12,000 towards security and energy costs incurred during the time between the end of the lease with the previous leaseholder, and the start of the lease with SINA Medical Glass Ltd, for costs incurred by the Council. DW stated that there is a slight delay at the end of March against the original plan with the project being £1.8m behind the previous projection at the end of March. Table 2 shows the revised forecast.

In relation to the forecast for remaining expenditure until 31 March 2026, MR stated that the Youth Hub project shows a large proportion of the spend remaining. MR asked if the project team will be in control of this spend being made promptly. SH said that an update will be provided on this under the Youth Hub item.

DECISION: Board noted the financial position for actual expenditure to date against the Town Deal grant funding and variance based on the expected expenditure to 31 March 2025.

DECISION: Board noted the forecast for remaining expenditure until 31 March 2026 and the tracking charts.

DECISION: Board noted and approved the revised expenditure breakdown for Cannington Shaw, including requests for reallocation of expenditure for additional Project Management and revenue items.

DECISION: Board noted the small amendment for SINA and use of £12,000 of Capacity Funding.

Item 8 – St Helens Town Deal Performance Return: Round 7

DM provided this update. The report seeks the approval of Board Members to submit the attached performance report to Government by the required deadline on 27 May 2025. The performance Template at Appendix 1 captures programme progress from 1 October 2024 to 21 March 2025.

The spreadsheet covers a summary of programme progress, a summary of each project including risks and upcoming milestones, funding profiles for each project, project outputs, project outcomes and risk registers for each project.

The performance return has been completed and shared with all projects leads for approval. It has also been presented to Town Deal Steering Group, before being presented at Town Deal Board as required.

The submission deadline for the reporting template is Tuesday 27 May 2025. The agreement of Board Members is sought in advance of this deadline for the submission to be made on time. DM stated that if approved at Town Deal Board the return will then require the signature of the Council's Section 151 Officer and Town Deal Board Chair to confirm that all the information in the return is accurate.

DECISION: Town Deal Board approved the submission of the Performance Reporting Template at Appendix 1 for the reporting period between 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Item 9 – St Helens Town Deal Milestones Presentation

SH presented the St Helens Town Deal Milestones presentation. The document brings together the eight Town Deal Projects into one plan of activity and provides an update to Town Deal Board Members on potential communication and engagement opportunities.

The objectives for this phase of communications are to raise the profile of the programme and projects, identify strategic communications opportunities increase opportunities for Government Office / Ministerial visits to Town Deal project sites and effectively engage with stakeholders.

Methods include media relations, digital and social media, engaging with key groups. press releases, events, and internal communications.

SH shared key milestone and press opportunities from April 2025 to April 2026. Town Deal Milestones Communications guidance and events guidance were also shared as part of the update.

SH also updated the Town Deal Board on the next steps which are included in the actions below.

ACTION: DM to circulate presentation to Project Leads.

ACTION: Project Leads to review their respective project Communications Strategies and future significant milestones.

ACTION: SS and DM to develop a Programme-wide Communications Strategy with inputs from Project Leads.

ACTION: DM and SH to ensure that communications to become a more prominent feature of future Assurance Meeting agendas.

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board noted the contents of the presentation.

Item 10 – Cannington Shaw Contingency Funding Request

SH set the context for the request by reminding Board Members of the outcome of the previous Town Deal Board Meeting. This request was originally heard at February 2025 Board, but the Board at that time noted that there was still three months remaining of a construction programme where risks could have been realised which may have triggered the need to utilise the contingency funding.

This second request therefore builds upon the initial 'interim' approval from the February 2025 Town Deal Board Meeting where the Cannington Shaw project received an approval for a first tranche of works. This included:

- Funding for (three days of) investigative works to be undertaken by Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) specific to investigating the existing ducting below the carriageway.
- Funding for vegetation works adjacent to the site to the value of £4,612.80. This work would enable the required groundworks to lay the necessary infrastructure for power and water.

St Helens Town Deal Board also approved, in principle, the remaining contingency funding request on the condition that all outstanding quotes are collated and accepted by the Council as comprehensive evidence to match the request value. Full and final approval would have to be granted in the future.

JT presented the item and said that this request is essential to the delivery of the project as the end of phase one is approaching. JT said that it is essential for the project team to organise events and raise the awareness of the project and raise income. Water and power are central to do this, which is why the

contingency fund is being requested today. JT stated that an impact of recent delay in decision making due to the contingency potentially being required for other costs, is that SPEN and United Utilities (UU) will requote with a potential inflationary increase.

JT said that phase one will come to an end in May and the project team have found construction savings that will assist with the affordability of the request. The core elements of the No 7 Bottle Shop have now been stabilised as per the original project objectives. There are early 20th century buildings outside and it is still unknown as to whether these elements will be saved or demolished.

The first of the events to take place at Cannington Shaw will be the St Helens Heritage festival on 31 May 2025. The project team is looking at holding further events over the summer if power and water is available on site.

JT stated that a Heritage at Risk application has been submitted and the outcome is awaited. The fund would be used to install permanent roof. A match fund of with £70,000 will be required if successful.

KF asked for further information in relation to the request. SH stated that this report seeks Town Deal Board consideration of a request to release their remaining contingency budget of £142,387.20 to facilitate the installation of a power and water supply to Cannington Shaw Bottle Shop No.7.

SH stated that considerable work has been undertaken by JT and himself, to make this request as robust as possible. SH stated that he was much more comfortable with the request now, as the main contract is so close to completion the possibility of risks being realised are now very small.

SH did, however, state that if this request is granted by the Board, then it will completely exhaust all remaining budgets. There is no, or very little, funding left for JT to return to Board with a further ask if there are any difficulties on site during the installation of power and water. The Cannington Shaw Preservation Trust would have to accept this risk if they are to move forward with the commissioning of this work. The figures in the request are robust and a 3% inflationary uplift has been included in the SPEN quote as it has now expired. SPEN will not re-issue their quote until the original quote has been paid in full and up-front.

KF raised again the point she made at the February 2025 Board meeting regarding the Scheduled Ancient Monument being in close proximity to the proposed works. KF understands that an application needs to be made to Historic England. JT responded by saying this is not required as no excavation is taking place. The power supply will be fed through existing ducting in the ground.

CF stated that power and water is needed to secure and deliver future sustainability of the site beyond the Town Deal Programme. SC stated that he supports the request but stated that the Board need to be aware that if we use all of the contingency funds now then that will mean that no further funding is available in the future.

MR explained that the Board is making a decision based on the possibility of what could happen. If there is a building with no power or water, then there is a possibility that it could go into decline again. MR then stated that the Board have been made aware of this possibility and know what the risks are if the request is not approved.

GS stated that once JT has power and water, the Trust can access more funds. At present Cannington

Shaw Preservation Trust cannot raise any further funds until utilities are available on site.

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board agreed and approved the follow-on request from the Cannington Shaw Project Manager in line with the St Helens Town Deal Contingency/ Risk Budget Release detailed in Appendix 2.

Item 11 - Project Highlight Reports

Ai: SINA Medical Glass (Glass Futures 2)

IT provided an update for this item. IT provided the really positive news that the first two vial machines arrived today. In addition, the flooring, the ceilings, and the mezzanine are complete. In terms of recruitment, Hot End Setter and the first of the QA roles are going out to advert next week. Procurement of machines 3 & 4 has gone out to tender so machines will be arriving later this year. Headline figures – 80% of UK vial demand will be produced. SINA are talking to investors now and once machines are up and running then investors will be attracted. It is forecasted that 180 jobs will be made available relating to the first vial machines. A forecast is being developed with office and shift roles to be determined. As soon as the vial machines are up and running then SINA will recruit to the available job roles.

IT raised a major issue in relation to the project - Legal agreements between the Council's Legal Team and partners are yet to be reached to allow energising the site in order to power the vial machines. The site will therefore not be energised until a deed of easement is put in place. If the facility is not energised in 3 or 4 weeks, there will be a 3-month delay on the programme. IT emphasized the importance of resolving the agreements. Subject to resolution, production will be up and running in June 2025, if not then production will only be underway in September 2025 at the earliest.

NB and KF asked if a temporary power supply can be set up as an interim solution. IT said that this has been investigated but is not an option that SINA wish to pursue.

RM asked that if the issue is resolved quickly for confirmation on what kind of job numbers can we expect. IT said that a low estimate is 170 jobs. SINA are confident on fourth machines they will attract customers and investors and therefore create more jobs. Ultimately, SINA are looking to create a total of 350 jobs. The aim is to have 8 or 10 machines up and running as soon as possible.

MR and SC asserted the importance of immediate resolution of this urgent issue on both the side of the Council's Legal Team and partners including SPEN and SINA.

ACTION: Council Legal Team to prioritise urgent resolution of the easement issue with internal colleagues and external partners including SPEN and SINA, supported by the Project Lead. The Project Lead to provide regular updates to the Council on progress.

ACTION: IT to send breakdown to job timings and link to machines as they come on site.

Aii Cannington Shaw No.7 Bottle Shop

JT provided an update for this item under agenda item 10.

B: Town Centre Living and Regeneration

MW provided an update for this item under agenda item 6.

C: Heritage World - The World of Glass

Apologies received from ST; therefore SH provided the following update. Town Deal project completed in August 2023. Work will continue to monitor the outputs and outcomes of the project.

D (i) Youth Hub

SH presented the item. The Youth Hub project forms part of the wider Gamble Building refurbishment works and, therefore, spend profile links to that timeline. There are plans in place to ensure the spend profile expedites. The Youth Hub will be located in the lower ground floor, currently occupied by the Archive Service. It is proposed that the Archive Service will be located in the proposed extension on the eastern facade of the building, overlooking the new multi-modal interchange.

The project team are currently meeting with potential bidders as part of early contractor involvement. The aim is to commence Gamble extension and refurbishment works by May 2026. A meeting is scheduled with STAR Procurement on 3 June 2025 to discuss the decant of the existing Archive Service with potential future locations currently being explored.

An engagement exercise is underway that is building on the feedback from the original Vibe consultation. The consultation results stated that the Youth Hub must have a strong focus on E-Sports, E-Gaming, etc. SH advised that the project team are also engaging with the Buzz Hub. A cohort of 12-15 people will start feeding into the design works so they can specify what it should feel like. Meetings have taken place with a couple of specialist organisations to inform how we develop plans for the Youth Hub. E-Sports federation are setting out and showcasing what the hub can look like in the future. SH stated that he is confident that by the next Board there will be further reassurance on spend.

MR commented that the project is starting to make good progress. SC commented that Sony and other companies are based in Liverpool and that SH may want to explore the option of working with them to develop the project. JH questioned why the project end date in the highlight report states March 2027. SH explained that Business Connect and Youth Hub projects have been granted an extension by MHCLG to March 2027.

RM asked if we are going to have enough bandwidth to provide E-Sports and E-Gaming facilities in the Gamble Building. SH replied positively as the digital project team is looking to expand connectivity across the town to support the Gamble.

D (ii) Health Innovation Hub

WL presented the item. WL stated that the NHS will gain access to the Skills Academy on 27 May 2025 before refurbishment works can commence. Refurbishment works should be underway in a matter of days at 4-6 Hardshaw Street. The project team have been engaging several partners with some of these planning to start operating and running services from the Skills Academy in September 2025. The project team have also identified a communications partner based in St Helens that can help with the

promotion of the Skills Academy. SH stated that work is continuing on the Business Connect element of the project that will be located in the Gamble Building. Business Connect has been allocated 150sqm of space.

E: Connected Places

DS presented the item updating that £150,000 worth of social value has been provided to date. The project team are looking to produce on a more periodic basis and raise the profile going forward. Communications around the first phase demolition have been produced and further positive communications opportunities are being worked on. Merseytravel have completed the Openreach CCTV fibre optic cable installation on site.

DS described how the project is working at pace and the programme remains on track. MR noted the positive feedback and the attention to detail which provides reassurance to the public such as locating the bus stops in the right place and engaging with local businesses. DS said that the project team is listening to key stakeholders and taking feedback on board.

F: Digital Infrastructure

VW presented the item stating that the project is progressing well and is ahead of schedule on activities such as civil works and ducting work. Frequent meetings are being held with wider town centre regeneration sites to enhance connectivity with other sites. The project team are working with Elevate to connect the new Market Hall and there are some positive social value aspects on the project. The project team is also working with SEND cohorts as well as some of the more deprived communities within schools to inform further social value. Further stakeholder briefings and website updates have been planned to manage questions from the public.

DECISION: Board noted and discussed the highlight reports appended to this report.

DECISION: Board noted and discussed the overall progress of the Town Deal programme.

DECISION: Board noted and discussed the overall progress of the Town Deal programme.

Item 12 - Any Other Business

NB raised an issue concerning the duplication of decisions in the finance report and Cannington Shaw Contingency Fund request paper.

Item 13 - Date of Next Meeting

The next St Helens Town Deal Board will take place on 3 October 2025.