



Minutes of St Helens Town Deal Board

14:00 – 16:00, Friday 20 March 2026
Board Room 10, St Helens Town Hall

Board Members in Attendance:

Neil Butler – Chair, St Helens Town Deal Board
Councillor Anthony Burns – Deputy Chair and Leader of the Council, St Helens Borough Council
David Baines, MP – Member of Parliament, St Helens South and Whiston
Councillor Richard McCauley - Cabinet Member for Regeneration, St Helens Borough Council
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
John Tabern – Project Director, Cannington Shaw Preservation Trust CIC
Kate Farnell – Director, Ubique Risk Management

Local Authority Representation:

Dean McGauley – Programme Lead (Town Deal), St Helens Borough Council
Mary Jefferson - Head of Regeneration & Growth, St Helens Borough Council
Robert Gatensbury – Programme Lead (St Helens Town Centre), St Helens Borough Council
Suzi Smith – Communications Officer (Regeneration), St Helens Borough Council
Jon Ridgeon – Assistant Director of Finance, St Helens Borough Council
Mark Orford – Assistant Director, ICT, St Helens Borough Council

Project Sponsors/ Leads:

Iain Taylor - Project Manager (SINA Project), IMT Consulting
Chris Bishop - Town Centre Living & Regeneration, ECF
Hayley O'Brien – Project Manager (Digital Infrastructure), Founds Group
Chris Founds – Project Manager, Digital Infrastructure, Founds Group
Matthew Moreton – SRO, The Youth Hub, YMCA St Helens

Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from:

Board Members:

Gill Smith – Regional Director and Project Management Service Lead, AtkinsRealis
Ross Miller-Green – Senior Investment Manager, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Marie Rimmer, MP – Member of Parliament, St Helens South and Whiston
Rachel Yeates - Engineering Project Controller, MBDA

Project Sponsors/ Leads

Walter Coxon - Glass Futures 2 (SINA Medical Glass)
Steve Berlyne – Business Connect, St Helens Borough Council
David Saville – Programme Lead (Connected Places), St Helens Borough Council
Sarah Taylor, Project Lead, The World of Glass.
Wayne Longshaw – Project Lead (Healthy Communities), NHS Mersey and West Lancs NHS Trust (MWLHT)
Matt Whiteley, Project Lead Town Centre Living & Regeneration, ECF
Jamaila Hussain – SRO, Healthy Communities, St Helens Borough Council

Local Authority Representatives

Donna Wilby – Finance Business Partner (Regeneration), St Helens Borough Council
Lisa Harris – Executive Director of Place Services, St Helens Borough Council
Sean Traynor – Director of Strategic Growth, St Helens Borough Council

Item 2 – Declarations of interest

The following conflicts of interest were noted:

Kate Farnell – Connected Places Project
Councillor Richard McCauley - Member of the Planning Committee
John Tabern – Project Lead, Cannington Shaw

Item 3 – Minutes of the Town Deal Board meeting held on 12 December 2025

DECISION: Board Members approved the minutes of the previous Town Deal Board Meeting held on 12 December 2025.

Item 4 – Matters Arising and Action Log

Dean McGauley (DM) provided an update on the Action Log. As shown in the Matters Arising Action Log, several actions are completed with two outstanding actions, these are as follows:

Item 3. MW - Share Town Centre Living & Regeneration energy plans/renewable energy plans with the Board as soon as they have been developed and are available. Update: Action is in progress and will be reported as soon as possible.

Item 5. SINA – IT to provide a breakdown of job timings and link to machines as they come on site. Update: Action is in progress with several jobs reported in this quarter in the highlight report.

DECISION: Board Members noted the updates provided in the Action Log on page 14.

Item 5 – Minutes of Town Deal Steering Group held on 27 February 2026

Board Members acknowledged the minutes of the Town Deal Steering Group held on 27 February 2026. Steering Group minutes are provided for information only.

Item 6 – St Helens Town Deal Board - Membership

Neil Butler (NB) presented the report which provided an update on the membership of the Town Deal Board with a recommendation to appoint Ross Miller-Green as the new representative for the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA).

NB stated that in line with the St Helens Town Deal Board Terms of Reference, St Helens Borough Council (SHBC) is responsible for ensuring the Board includes representatives from all tiers of local government, including the Mayoral Combined Authority. Daniel Bimpson (DB), Senior Investment Manager at LCRCA, advised of his intention to resign from the St Helens Town Deal Board in September 2025. Since DB's resignation, and with the agreement of the Board's Chair, Ross Miller-Green, Investment Manager at LCRCA has been attending the Board on his behalf.

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board endorsed the appointment of Ross Miller-Green, Investment Manager at Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to the St Helens Town Deal Board until September 2027.

Item 7 – St Helens Town Deal Finance Report

Jon Ridgeon (JR) presented the report on behalf of DW. The report shows the financial position of the Town Deal Programme up to 31 December 2025. This report excludes any change requests for individual projects that will be considered later in the pack under individual project highlight reports.

Section 4 shows the total programme funding expenditure to date. 76% of the total Town Deal Fund grant has been spent. This equates to £18.9m against the £25m allocation.

There has been a slippage of £1.4m expenditure since the last report, JR emphasised that this was not in relation to projects delays but has been driven by the reprofiling of project spend on Cannington Shaw, the use of other grant funding sources for the Town Centre Living and Regeneration Project and the timing of grant claims with the Health Innovation Hub and SINA Medical Glass.

JR also reported that the Connected Places has fully spent its allocated Town Deal grant and the Digital Infrastructure is ahead of the spend forecast.

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

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board noted the forecast for remaining expenditure until 31 March 2027 and the tracking charts.

Item 8 – St Helens Town Deal Communications Plan

Dean McGauley and Suzi Smith (SS) presented the report. DM stated that the report provides an

update on the St Helens Town Deal Communications Plan, which has been developed in collaboration with Project Leads. The plan outlines the approach to promoting Town Deal projects, engaging stakeholders, and ensuring clear and consistent messaging. Section 4 shows the Town Deal Communications Plan. This includes project milestones, content, responsible officers and key dates.

SS outlined the planned communications activities within in plan noting the positive project press releases that have taken place in the previous quarter. Councillor Richard McCauley (CRM) thanked those who attended the SHMMI Press Event on 20 March 2026 and said that he is pleased with the number of local workers and companies who are involved with the Connected Places project. NB noted the news stories and events that have taken place including the Digital Launch Event and the Buzz Hub connectivity event and press release.

ACTION: Board Members and Projects Leads to share positive case studies relating to Town Deal projects with SS.

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board noted the contents of this report and the Communications Plan under section 4 of the report.

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board agreed to the approach that the Communications Plan is reviewed and updated regularly to reflect project milestones and communications opportunities.

Item 9 – Project Highlight Reports

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board noted and discussed the highlight reports appended to the report.

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

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board discussed issues or areas of concern and mitigating actions.

A (i) SINA Medical Glass (Glass Futures Phase 2)

Iain Taylor (IT) presented the report. The first two machines have been commissioned and machines three and four arrived on site on 16 March 2026 and are currently being assembled ahead of commissioning. It is anticipated that Town Deal Board will be invited to visit site in June or July 2026.

During this quarter the focus has been on continuing support of the startup phase. An energy solution has now been designed and agreed, and SINA are currently commissioning the energy system. Over the next quarter the focus will be on jobs, skills and recruitment. Once vial orders are up and running, then SINA will begin generating monies and will inform the credit facilitators to expand the machines from four to eight machines.

CRM asked if it if the energy solution has been confirmed. IT responded by stating that the scheme is agreed and it is now in process. IT said that we are currently within a defined regulatory period, so we cannot yet confirm an exact go live date. However, SINA has temporary generators in place, which means we do not anticipate any delays to the commissioning of machines three and four. The energisation date is forecasted to coincide with when 3 and 4 will go live. Scottish Power have a scheme ready to go forward, with Ipsum instructed to carry out the installation.

CRM noted the positive progress and asked about when the recruitment will begin. IT stated that three roles have been appointed to on the quality side of SINA and overall ten jobs have been created to date. SINA have not yet carried out further recruitment due to the site not being ready. As soon as there is a clear go live dates the recruitment process will increase.

Mark Palethorpe (MP) stated that SINA have impressed on the local supply chain using local companies and stated there needs to be reassurance that jobs are being applied for by local people. MP asked for SINA to inform the Council if there is any support that the Council can provide.

IT explained that the technical roles linked to SINA's operational capacity initially require specialised skills. Currently, two operational employees are local. SINA's aim is to ensure these jobs become as local as possible, as the area has strong manufacturing skills. SINA will provide clear timelines and specify the skills required so that any local skills gaps can be addressed in advance.

ACTION: DM/IT to provide a project and recruitment update to St Helens Town Deal Board via email before the next Board meeting.

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board noted expected completion of power project and installation of machines three and four in April 2026.

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board noted that full operations linked to first 4 machines is expected to commence in April / May 2026.

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board considered the proposed change to the financial forecast with £184,000 expected to be claimed in April 2026 as highlighted in section 9 of the report.

A (ii) Cannington Shaw #7 Bottle Shop

John Tabern (JT) presented the report. EFT completed works in December 2025, these included the installation of a drainage system and water attenuation tank. EFT had returned to site to complete some snagging works including repairs to the roof which were completed week commencing 16 March 2026.

Key restoration works to the roof, toilet block and drainage completed in December 2025, supported by retrospective planning approval secured in January 2026. Scheduled Monument Consent from Historic England has also been obtained.

Health and safety concerns were explained in relation to the North end of the site where some of the ruins were unstable and these have been demolished. JT said that the main power supply was installed in November 2025 by SPEN, but the supply was downgraded to get a more favourable standing charge as the original was costly. A new electricity meter will be installed on 24 March and all the reliance on a generator will no longer be required.

The Artisan Market at the Bottleshop is planned on the 4 April 2026 with 30 stalls booked to date. The project has also been shortlisted for the Museum and Heritage Awards under the Restoration of the year award category. Progress has also continued on the Heritage Skills Academy and Community Shed Project.

Kate Farnell (KF) asked whether any alternative energy measures, such as solar power, were being considered. JT confirmed that they are but noted that these options may come later in the project. NB noted the recommendation for the uplift of cost, under the further installation. Section 9 table highlights the project expenditure change.

The documentary film was played and received congratulations from the Board who noted the positive progress made during this quarter.

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board approved the variation of £5,462.40 (£4552+VAT) as shown under the financial commentary in section 9 of this report.

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board noted the changes to project expenditure in the table in section 9 of the report.

B: Town Centre Living & Regeneration

CRM presented the highlight report and noted the good progress that has been made on the project during the previous quarter. CRM stated that there was a reserved planning application in September and a lot of pre works took place ahead of January main contract. The conditional enabling works are due to conclude this month, with major works to follow.

A four-week delay caused by an asbestos discovery is expected to be fully recovered within the Main Works programme. The project is still within budget. Through Vinci and the wider project team, the apportioned Social Value Return on Investment for this workstream currently stands at £2.11 million, based on activity across local supply chains, employment, training, apprenticeships, education and wellbeing initiatives.

Chris Bishop (CB) stated that enabling works have been completed and the main works and piling works are starting imminently. The project timelapse video showing the last twelve months of progress was played to the Board.

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board noted progress detailed in the highlight report.

C: Heritage World - The World of Glass

Sarah Taylor (ST) was unable to attend the meeting. NB stated that the project completed in August 2023 and project outcomes and outputs will continue to be monitored in line with Programme requirements.

DECISION: ST Helens Town Deal Board noted progress detailed in the highlight report.

D (i) Youth Hub

DM provided an update on the project. The Archive Service has now been relocated to The World of Glass from the area in which the Youth Hub will be located. The Gamble Engagement Event was held on 30 January 2026 with stakeholders and the wider public and received positive feedback.

Procurement for the enabling works concluded in December 2025, with legal agreements now being finalised ahead of the commencement of asbestos removal and soft strip out. Cabinet approval was secured for £741,000 of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding allocated specifically to the Gamble Building, supporting improvements that will enhance energy performance and contribute to the

Council's energy efficiency.

Enabling works are now progressing, and detailed design activity is scheduled to commence through RIBA Stage 4, followed by planning processes and assessment during 2026. No significant issues or challenges are currently identified.

Communications opportunities have been identified through the Gamble Communications Plan and will continue to be reported to Town Deal Board. NB noted The Gamble Engagement Event, the attendance and engagement from the public was really positive for people to see the tangible impact of Towns Fund.

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board noted progress detailed in the highlight report.

D (ii) Healthy Communities – Health and Care Career Hub and Business Connect

Wayne Longshaw, Jamaila Hussain and Steve Berlyne sent their apologies for the meeting, therefore MP presented the report. MP stated that the refurbishment of the Health and Career Hub is nearing completion. There have been some minor delays due to issues with the technology and repairs to the lift and the project team are working to resolve these issues as quickly as possible. The Health and Care Career Hub launch event and a full opening is expected in late Spring 2026.

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board noted the progress detailed within the report.

E: Connected Places

Kate Farnell (KF) presented the report. Project construction remains on track; main works are well established. Concrete slabs have been installed and steel structures are currently being installed meaning that the shape of the north and south stands is now visible.

Hall Street was recently closed to enable utility diversions to take place. KF thanked the Council Communications Team who have coordinated the messaging to keep the public informed. Regular catch ups with the communications team have taken place and colleague have been in the town centre to mitigate the impact of disruption by speaking with the affected businesses.

Public communications have remained active during the previous quarter. A number of business forums have also taken place. Continuous and positive feedback of the Temporary Bus Hub has been received and the SHMMI Golden Spanner Press Event on 20 March 2026 has been a great opportunity to share messaging. MP commented on the importance of the interaction with businesses and residents.

Coordination with other town centre regeneration programmes continues to ensure alignment of construction activities and minimise disruption. Vinci, working with ECF and the Council, has engaged with schools, colleges, employment programmes and local businesses to provide training opportunities, support local recruitment and strengthen supply chains. Community outreach, educational events and charitable contributions continue to form a key part of the programme's wider impact.

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal Board to note the progress detailed within the report.

F: Digital Infrastructure

Hayley O'Brien (HO) and Chris Founds (CF) presented the report. HO stated that the Town Centre network is now complete and ready for customer connections ahead of schedule and on cost. The first

active connection to the Buzz Hub went live on 25 February 2026.

Communications are ongoing and activities during this quarter have including press releases featuring the network going live, promotion and showcasing the project's social value achievements. The project has delivered over £500,000 of social value to date.

A formal launch event took place on 12 March 2026 at the BrewDog Stadium to promote the network to local businesses and stakeholders. The focus during the next period will be on getting customers and businesses connected to the network. Marketing materials and door-drop campaigns are ready for deployment to businesses and residents to support take up on the network. Town centre Wi-Fi funding has been secured and Elevate have commenced the soft mobilisation.

Section 9 of the report shows that the full cost allocation is included within the January to March 2026 quarter, but there is a possibility that £23,610 of revenue spend could move into the first month of the following quarter. Therefore, Town Deal Board are asked to consider the reallocation of £23,610 of revenue spend into the first Quarter of 2026/2027.

The first Thrive online event took place in October 2025 and was hugely successful. A second event, a business live stream, took place 11 February 2026 and focused on local employment inclusivity. The third Thrive event, a careers fair for local employers and young people with SEND is currently being planned to take place in April 2026.

Chris Founds highlighted the strong social value being delivered through the project. A key focus is ensuring that local businesses fully benefit from the fibre network, as many may already be in a contract already or may not understand the advantages of joining the network. To address this, Elevate has begun outreach to local businesses, supported by promotional materials that Elevate has provided. Elevate will continue to offer ongoing support to help promote the network and drive further engagement.

KF commented on the high performance that Elevate has demonstrated, noting their participation in the weekly town centre projects coordination hub and their ability to deliver efficiently without complication. She praised their consistent presence, flexibility and commitment, describing their rapid delivery as a testament to their effectiveness.

A video was presented to the board showcasing the Buzz Hub's free connection to the network. Cath Fogarty (CF) added that the Buzz Hub video is an excellent example of the case studies needed for this project, particularly as there is no physical asset to showcase. KF emphasised the importance of developing more case studies as additional businesses become connected to the network.

DECISION: St Helens Town Deal approved the reallocation of £23,610 of revenue spend into Quarter One of 2026/2027.

Item 10 - Any Other Business

Mary Jefferson (MJ) asked Board to note that the Cannington Shaw Artisan Market will take place on 4 April and informed the Board that a new Artisan Market operated by Independent Street is scheduled for 21 March in the Town Centre and monthly thereafter. MJ highlighted that these events are expected to boost footfall in the Town Centre and increase visitor numbers to surrounding local businesses.

Item 11 - Date of Next Meeting

The next St Helens Town Deal Board will take place on 26 June 2026.