

WARRINGTON TOWN BOARD

Minutes of meeting held on 15 December 2023

ATTENDEES		APOLOGIES
Steve Park (Chair)	Warrington Borough Council	Steve Coffey
Dave Boyer	Warrington Borough Council	Martin Wood
Georgia Millership	DLUHC	Christian Persoglio
Nigel Schofield	Warrington Chamber of Commerce	Laurence Pullan
Lucy Gardner	Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospital	Steven Fitzsimons
Eleanor Blackburn	Warrington Borough Council	Ian Cox
Simon Foden	Langtree	Stephen Fitzsimons
Malcolm Jackson	Langtree	Steve Hunter
Kerry Hall	Warrington Borough Council	John Adlen
Nichola Newton	Warrington & Vale Royal College	Steven Broomhead
Simon Bleckly	Warrington Borough Council	Stephen Hunter
Oliver Paterson	Parliamentary Assistant House of Commons	Claire Edmonds
		Dave Thompson

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1.0	<p>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</p> <p>Steve Park took the Chair in the absence of Steve Coffey and welcomed all to the meeting.</p>	
2.0	<p>Minutes of meeting held on 6th October 2023 & Matters Arising.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed as a true record. 	
3.0	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None received. 	
4.0	<p>Network North</p> <p>Dave Boyer updated on the range of transport packages launched following the announcement of the scrapping of HS2. £36 billion to be distributed to hundreds of projects across the country of which £12 billion has been set aside to improve links between Liverpool and Manchester to deliver Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPR is of strategic importance for Warrington, using a route section of line through Warrington. Liverpool City Region has some concerns over the route alignment between Warrington and Liverpool. Discussions are ongoing. As part of Network North, the government are increasing funding for most existing Major Road Network and Large Local Major Road schemes, which it is expected will include consideration of an increased allocation for Warrington Western Link. There have been difficulties with construction inflation on a number of these schemes. Discussion with government is ongoing over the level of funding for Warrington Western Link. A new funding stream, Local Integrated Transport Settlement (LITS) funding was also announced for local authorities not in a combined authority. This would be a confirmed multi-year settlement of primarily capital funding which would allow delivery of larger schemes than currently possible, such as major junction 	

	<p>improvement and sustainable travel corridor schemes to help tackle congestion. Currently waiting for more information and budget settlement, Funding coming forward from FY25.26.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway Maintenance Budget has received a substantial increase, this will be used to support delivery of backlog of maintenance. This budget is available now and in FY24/25. • Bus Service Improvement Plan, additional revenue funding £1.2m for FY24/25 announced to support new public transport service4s and improvements. • The group discussed the budgets/funding available now versus announcements and the uncertainty around future funding in an election year. 	
<p>5.0</p>	<p>DLUHC Visit – 5 November 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The visit brought the projects to life and were received positively. • Matters highlighted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Planning for communication around milestones and coordination with local area coordinator. ○ Need to maximise 23/24 spend/usage. ○ S.151 officer to use any freedoms and flexibilities at year end if claims/usage remain behind forecast. ○ Plan future visits when projects complete. • 31 March 2026 remains deadline for Towns Fund allocations to be spent. <p>Monitoring & Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitted on time via the new portal. • Next submission will be in FY24/25 Q1 for the period October 23 – March 24 • Liaising with Warrington Borough Council’s Audit to satisfy evidence requirements. 	
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Town Deal Programme Management</p> <p>Kerry Hall updated on the Town Fund Programme. The new template captures fundamental reporting requirements. Will continue to be dynamic, further development will have emphasis on reporting against the Town Investment Plan, community impact, benefits, partnerships, and collaborations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress overall to date is good. • The project portfolio is varied in status with two projects completed another nearing completion in Q3 prior to the end of December. Two projects are in development and two are at the planning & technical design stage. Both have had planning applications validated. • The majority of the grant funds allocated for Warrington Town Deal have been received although we currently find the programme is behind schedule and projected expenditure. Claim/usage reprofile is an area which is being closely monitored and the project use is committed as the original profile with 100% usage. • Some variances in the financials this is predominantly a timing matter between claim and payment process. A discrepancy was due to inclusion of business case fund and coding. Working with Finance to reconcile. • Outputs and outcomes are being reported showing that completed projects are stimulating economic growth through infrastructure improvement in line with the original Town Investment Plan. Significant collaboration is ongoing between 	

	<p>projects at all delivery stages with stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sustainable Transport portfolio has exceeded the amount of m² of existing parks/greenspace/outdoor improved at this interim stage. Since last meeting focus on assurance and compliance since guidance received from DLUHC. <p>ACTION:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Set up meetings with project leads and audit to confirm appropriate evidence requirements to support financial claims. 	KH
7.0	<u>Town Deal Project updates</u>	
7.1	<p><u>Advanced Construction and Civil Engineering Centre</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction works progressing at pace and to revised project timescale. Steel framework installation complete. Recent change controls minimum financial impact. Timescales/milestones as noted on programme, some adjustments with opening to students September 2024. Lots of stakeholder engagement ongoing with LSIP conference, employee week on campus open door event with Torus, sustainability working group, employees build curriculum. Press Release to promote construction on site. Progress report accepted; no issues raised. 	
7.2	<p><u>Health & Social Care Academy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Academy going from strength to strength and seen as exceptional with other facilities in the Northwest making contact to learn. Reporting against outputs and seeing significant engagement with schools and new learners. Digital Academy at the college is supporting the Health & Wellbeing Hub with artwork installations. Progress report accepted; no issues raised. 	
7.3	<p><u>Bus Depot & ZEBRA Funding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress with demolition and will be complete by Christmas completing the output of a cleared site. The site will be handed back to the council's Property Services. Orders placed for electrified bus fleet and infrastructure. Presently working on the livery. Demonstration bus will be in Warrington from March 2024. Progress report accepted; no issues raised, actions outstanding from previous meeting. <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Report back on the final settlement figure at the next meeting. Share the images of the electric buses with Kerry to distribute. 	JL SH
7.4	<p><u>Sustainable Travel Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress across the 8 sustainable travel projects. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycle Hub has been through procurement exercise, there is pressure around the budget available. • Key piece of work along the A49 will develop a bus priority lane providing additional capacity. Will involve land take. • Phase 1 of accessibility improvements have been completed and phase 2 is in design. • Consultation required for a number of projects that are scheduled post local elections in May 2024. • Project budgets are being monitored. • Progress report accepted; issues raised: 	
7.5	<p><u>Health & Wellbeing Hub</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final stages of fit out ongoing and working to a handover date of 21/12/23. Original plan was to open in January however some services are Care Quality Commission regulated that requires the building to be registered. Application was submitted in August although still not assigned for assessment, have escalated, currently waiting for allocation. • Option for phased opening with non-regulated first followed by regulated. • Highlighted risk around capital overspend c.6% options to mitigate underway and quantity surveyors are reviewing reasons for the cost overruns. • Advised that the resurfacing of adjoining/access road is not going to happen before the opening due to the overrun of works at the adjacent apartments. • The roof top garden will be part of Phase 2 works. • Piece of work with the college for artwork at the hub. • Art exhibition planned for 24th January. • To promote the hub digital information is being displayed at bus stops. • Lots of interest regionally and nationally on the development of the Living Well Hub from other Health Services. • Progress report accepted; issue raised in relation to capital budget overspend. <p>ACTION:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programme Manager liaise with Project Manager on the financial position. 	KH
7.6	<p><u>Digital Enterprise Hub</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 the Hydra facility was officially opened on 14th November. • The University of Chester and the Police are utilising the space. • Next stage includes the front elevations and defining the scope of works for other areas of the Digital Enterprise Hub. • Design team meeting mid-January 2024. • Reestablishing the Steering Group. • Progress report accepted; no issues raised. 	
7.7	<p><u>Pyramid Remastered</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed off stage 3 (4 December) and work started on stage 4 technical design. • Planning application submitted, project plan to run the tender concurrently. • Challenges remain around budget and timescale although further descoping works which have reduced the timescale. • Value engineering underway to identify further potential revisions to scope and specification if tender returns exceed budget. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet sign off to approve contract award post local election period – critical to timescale. • Progress report accepted; issues raised: no issues raised. 	
8.0	<p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update Eleanor Blackburn updated on status of UKSPF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging start as only able to deliver in year 2 due to government approvals in year 1, 46% of overall programme budget has been allocated/committed. • 12 projects have been approved. Including recent decisions supporting the Bus Interchange Improvements and Town Centre Cycle Hubs. • Procurements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Business Support – at contract award stage (3 bids were received) ○ Decarbonisation (Business Support) – Contract awarded to Groundwork. (3 bids were received). • Several new/revised proposals are expected including improvements to Community Facilities, Cultural programme for 24/25, Street Based Youth Work and Workforce Development. • 5 projects are being developed to support employers, businesses and communities that will be available for consideration in January. • A review of the programme to determine any gaps in spend and outputs is ongoing. • Progress report accepted; no issues raised. 	
9.0	<p><u>Levelling Up Fund</u> Dave Boyer updated following the Autumn Statement announcement that Warrington North is set to receive £9.4 million of Government funding for levelling up projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bid focuses on reconnecting the settlements of Warrington North, with three new active travel routes implemented to improve traffic-free links between the rural settlements of Burtonwood, Winwick and Culcheth and urban Warrington. The routes will encourage modal shift and active lifestyles, helping improve the health and wellbeing of local people, as well as bringing environmental benefits. • Include, two existing recreation facilities in Burtonwood the derelict pavilion at Burtonwood Recreation Ground will be redeveloped and Burtonwood Community Centre will be extended to provide improved facilities for sports teams using the local pitches and additional space to support community activities. • The Government's letter confirming the funding says that this is conditional upon a validation check and that the project should be delivered by March 2026. The validation check is currently ongoing. • Steve Park highlighted that the active travel routes will connect communities and commercial areas and will be of interest to partners with commercial assets to support workforce travel. 	
10.0	<p><u>Any other business</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	
11.0	<p>Next meeting <i>16 February 2024 10am-12pm</i></p>	