

Stocksbridge Towns Fund Board (STFB)

DATE & TIME: Friday 22 November 2024, 9.30am

LOCATION: Stocksbridge Community Leisure Centre, Moorland Drive, Stocksbridge, S36 1EG

CO-CHAIRS: Dr Marie Tidball MP, Yuri Matischen

ATTENDEES:

Board Members attending:

- Yuri Matischen, Stocksbridge Resident - Co-Chair (**YM**)
- Marie Tidball, MP for Penistone & Stocksbridge - Co-Chair (**MT**)
- Ian Sanderson, SLR Outlets (**IS**)
- Graham Silverwood, Stocksbridge Training and Enterprise Partnership (STEP) & Stocksbridge Community Leisure Centre (SCLC) (**GS**)
- Sean McClean, Director of Regeneration and Development, SCC, on behalf of Kate Martin (**SM**)

Also attending:

- Michelle O'Neill, Acting Programme Manager, SCC (**MO'N**)
- Helen Spivey, Communications Officer, SCC (**HS**)
- Johnny McQuillin, Finance Officer, SCC (**JM**)

Apologies:

- Kate Martin, Executive Director, City Futures, SCC (**KM**)
- Cllr Julie Grocutt, Stocksbridge and Upper Don, SCC (**JG**)
- Kathryn Giles-Bowman (**KG-B**)
- Gail Larkin (**GL**)
- John Crawshaw (**JC**)
- Justin Homer, Cities & Local Growth Unit (**JH**)

Minutes:

Melanie Crawford, Service Support Officer, SCC (**MC**)

Item 1: Welcome, confirmation of minutes & issues arising

Introductions were made around the table.

YM confirmed that the minutes of the previous meeting and it was discussed that these had been approved as a draft and that all items for action were on today's agenda.

Action: Then it was agreed that this Board meeting minutes will be uploaded to the SCC and Stockbridge websites. This will be actioned by HS.

Item 2: Governance & Declaration of Interests /MHCLG Compliance checks-internal review

Board Meetings:

It was discussed, then agreed that Stocksbridge Leisure Centre (SCLC) is a suitable alternative to the Town Hall now that the library is no longer an option to hold future Board meetings.

Action: This will be actioned by MC to book future meetings at SCLC/Town Hall depending on availability.

Governance Review:

It was discussed that a review is required in respect of the Board governance structure, as discussed at the previous meeting.

MO' N advised the Board that Jo Calcutt-Scott (CDS PMO Manager at SCC) has been tasked to carry out an internal review prior to the official Towns Fund Review.

Action: This will be actioned by SCC, as noted above.

Declaration of Interest

It was discussed that all current Board members are required to reaffirm any declaration of interest.

All around the table declared no interests.

Financial Compliance

It was discussed that the Board has asked to have a current view on how much funding the Towns Deal has paid to SCC and an update on what has been spent to date.

Action: This will be actioned by MO'N/JM to provide an update at the next board meeting to outline spend to date and forecast spend.

Item 3: Board membership

It was discussed that the Board had received potential expressions of interest from new Board applicants. Seven applications have been received. Then it was agreed that interviews will be held on Monday 9th December. The interview panel will comprise YM, MT and possibly another current Board member. It was agreed that interviews will be carried out remotely.

It was discussed that there are two available positions:

One, to replace Neil Curtis, who stepped down

Plus, a Board Representative for Skills and Education (who has relevant interest, skills and experience).

GS and IS asked if there should be scope to nominate an additional person if they could demonstrate skills across several sectors eg music, education ie expand 1 vacancy and take on 3 people.

MT joined the meeting at this point. She noted that a Board member with a creative music/arts background could be suitable for the community champion role.

Education and Skills Provider

It was discussed that Northern College were a preferred provider for the education and skills hub at 519. Then it was agreed that a review of the status of the current relationship was required, including the selection process and Memorandum of Understanding.

MT clarified that this should reflect the original intention of the Board as well as previous discussions with / expectations of Northern College and that all information should be clear and in one place.

Then it was discussed that past engagement had also included Sheffield and Barnsley Colleges, however Northern College had been the only interested party. It was noted that as the college is not currently being funded and an element of work has already taken place by the college, there was an element of risk on their part.

It was then discussed that the colleagues who had previously dealt with this project had now left the Board.

MT then asked about reaching a decision point at the next Board meeting regarding which FE provider the Towns Fund would progress with. It was then noted by MO'N that this was not yet planned.

It was then discussed about the planned completion for the building and any potential impact of providing an educational service. It was then confirmed that the building completion is summer 2026, which will require a fit out.

MT asked for a paper from SCC to summarise funding for this project and recommended options around the process. MT requested that Officers refer to previous minutes for details discussed at prior Board meetings on this project.

Action: This will be actioned by MO'N who will advise on the timescale for this action so that work can be prioritised to meet key targets. YM will contact Northern College.

It was then agreed that an informal meeting of Board members will be arranged prior to the formal Board meeting in January 2025.

Item 4. Programme & Project updates: (Appendix 1: 2411 Board Report)

Hopper Bus service

It was discussed that SCC had met with the preferred provider to discuss the current status of the project. It was noted that a number of activities need to be completed prior to completing the grant fund agreement relating to legal advice, subsidy control and passporting of SYMCA revenue to the grant recipient.

MO'N noted that Officers are working to resolve issues and submit a business case for internal SCC Capital Approval in December, with a target date of signing with the preferred provider in early 2026. It was then discussed about lead times to purchase the buses and commence the service. The preferred provider has advised best case is five weeks.

Contact details were then provided for Officers who are leading on legal and transport discussions.

MT noted that she was happy to write to the SYMCA lead to reinforce the need that this project goes ahead and restate the cut-off point. MT noted that SCC need to liaise with the bus company and update Board members on the outcome of discussions and on the next dates principle contract and other governance approvals could be approved by SCC legal team.

Action: This will be actioned by SM to advise the Board if there are any actions that the Board can take.

SCC Team Structure

It was then asked by YM about the project team structure within SCC and how the projects are being managed. It was confirmed by SM:

Senior Responsible Officer: Sean McClean

Programme Manager: Michelle O'Neill

Finance Partner: Jonny McQuillin

Communications Officer: Helen Spivey

Board Administration: Melanie Crawford

Stocksbridge 519

It was confirmed by MO'N that capital approval had been received at the end of October, and the contract has now been awarded for the next design stage with R G Carter Construction as the contractor. An internal kick off meeting has taken place, and a project programme is due to be provided.

The Board were then updated that they will be introduced to the contractor shortly, where any derogations will be presented for Board discussion. A discussion then took place around potential derogations in relation to the specifications for the building. This relates to items that could be omitted or need to be changed, to meet the budget allocated. It was noted by MO'N that a review of the monitoring and evaluation strategy is taking place which may require an amendment to the stone slips and that the contractor's knowledge will be used to alter the scope in a way that does not affect the feel/look of the building.

Acquisitions (Board report item 5: Property Acquisition status)

It was discussed that The Factory Shop is now up for sale as a residential property. It was noted that this is understood to be going up for sale before Christmas but is not currently listed. This was agreed to be a significant factor for the Placemaking project but would not be an issue for the Community Hub. It was then noted that the acquisition of The Factory shop was an important factor for the Placemaking project but did not create any impact for the Community Hub.

YM asked whether The Factory Shop had submitted planning or planning pre-application. Officers noted an action to check.

It was then discussed about land assembly and that no build can commence until the land is owned. Highways adaptation was raised and if this could be an issue for the placemaking project.

It was noted that an agreement had been made with St Luke's, but that vacant possession could be a potential issue, with the Charity having advised the lead time for the property to be vacant in June 2026.

Action: This will be actioned by SM who has already spoken to one of the trustees and will continue to seek a resolution.

In respect of the flat purchase, a price had originally been agreed, however the owner's legal team have been unresponsive so far. IS noted the importance of resolving this issue to enable progress to continue.

It was raised that the above could have the potential to create a risk to the start date for 519 and how the Board could support SCC to get approvals through.

In respect of the Charity Shop it was discussed that a freehold price had been agreed and exchange expected shortly and that a compensation payment is to be provided to occupier/tenant shortly who has been given notice to vacate by owner, independent of SCC process.

Shop Fronts

It was discussed that CODA Architecture were leading on the shop fronts project with design. MT noted that a recent meeting held by SCC to brief the Board on placemaking and shopfronts had been useful and that she had also attended an external workshop on Town Centre Planning. She then emphasised that there was a need going forward to understand the plan for the upper half of Manchester Rd facades.

It was noted that CODA have produced images of shopfronts which have been received positively, while it was also raised that the designs presented so far were not at a detailed stage.

It was discussed by MO'N that designs are not at the detailed stage and will progress when access and survey information is obtained, where legal licences will be required to go into each individual shop.

It was agreed that a meeting with freeholders, leaseholders and occupiers will be arranged for the 9th and 18th December and that licences will be arranged following those sessions.

A discussion was then held regarding the requirement for all shops needing to have a survey or whether the design team could proceed with only a few being surveyed or contingencies used if not all could be surveyed immediately.

It was highlighted by MO'N that this approach could have potential risks and that it was not appropriate to assume that one unit is the same as another. It was then raised if any preparation work can be done ahead of licences being in place.

Action: This will be actioned by MO'N to understand progress of subsidy control prior to licences being in place.

A discussion was then held regarding the time needed for all 16 shop owners to be in agreement with the scheme, which was estimated to take about 12 weeks.

It was clarified by SM that the licence sits with the tenant-agreement and is between tenant and landlord, when design can then be progressed alongside obtaining the agreement.

It was noted that owners will be invited to an online Teams session but raised that there could some difficulty in getting a date which suits all. It was then noted that designs should be shared with them before the meeting.

It was clarified by HS that she was visiting business owners following the meeting to share details of the meetings and gain up to date contact details.

It was then raised if there was a contingency plan in the event that either tenant or landlord do not agree with the scheme and if the scheme could go ahead if one property was not in agreement.

It was clarified by SM the CPO was not an option for the shopfronts project, as there is no intention to acquire the property but simply the gifting of a visual upgrade. The Council has no mechanism to force shop fronts into accepting the assistance. If not all the properties sign up to the scheme, the board and SCC will need to take a view on the viability of the project.

It was then raised by YM that feedback from some owners has been that they would prefer to have funding to make premises more accessible, rather than improvements

to the shop front. It was noted that disabled access is the responsibility of the owner and that the funding available is for a visual uplift of Manchester Road.

Placemaking

It was noted that John Crawshaw as Board representative for Placemaking was not present at the Board meeting, but that he would be briefed following the meeting.

A discussion was then held where MO'N provided an update on the programme, noting that detailed design stage 3 is expected to begin in December (2024).

It was confirmed that the pre-application that was recently submitted for the Placemaking and Shop Fronts concept designs included the purchase and demolition of the Factory Shop. The project assumption is currently that the Factory Shop will be procured and included. Design will proceed on that basis.

It was noted by YM to the Board that there had been no comments from the shop front project Board representatives, GL or KG-B, regarding shop front improvements or placemaking scheme.

3G Pitch (Phase 2 Project)

This discussion then moved to conversations that have taken place with the Football Foundation (FF) regarding pitch and changing rooms, what funding is available for Phase 2 and that the FF offer is time-limited. It was noted that a commitment is required as soon as possible, but this requires costs to be known which will be at the end of the placemaking scheme. This item was then moved to later in the agenda to allow finances to be discussed first.

Pavilion (Phase 2 Project)

It was noted that £103k actual costs have only been allowed and that the project is part of Phase 2, and as such currently has no forecast against it.

Oxley Park

It was confirmed that the majority of works on this project have been completed, with some additional works on planting and EV chargers.

Sports Hub

It was confirmed that two grants issued to Stocksbridge Park Steels and Stocksbridge Rugby Club have meant that improvement works have now been completed at the latter with the former to be completed in December.

Library Move

It was confirmed that the library will close in early December and relocate to IKON church opposite the current site. It was noted that assets of the Historical Society need to be relocated elsewhere due to lack of space at IKON church.

Item 5: Finance (Board report item 7: Budget Summary)

A discussion was then held where JQ presented an updated forecast of current projects. It was noted that the programme is currently £1.2 million over budget, which assumes Phase 2 projects that are part-funded.

It was raised that in respect of Phase 2 projects, that there is a requirement for a commitment to funding a 3G pitch and that there is the potential for match funding for a 3G pitch (which is not included in the budget).

A discussion was then held regarding the potential option to save in the region of £1.2 - £1.5m from other projects. It was noted that the placemaking and shop fronts projects are in concept stages, and that there is the potential that changes could lead to increased costs.

It was then discussed the extent to which costs had increased significantly from reports received eight months ago. It was then raised if the affordability of the Phase 2 of the scheme was reasonable.

It was noted that costs for placemaking at £7.5m was significantly lower than a similar scheme in Fargate in Sheffield and also that £1.4m of the total estimate was the acquisitions estimate for the buildings required.

It was then noted that the contingency for Stocksbridge 519 could be fully utilised, depending on construction costs and any potential derogations.

It was then agreed that the required £1.2 -£1.5m for Phase 2 projects would not be taken from 519 as the flagship scheme. It was then discussed that possible savings could be made from other projects

The discussion then referred back to placemaking and it was noted that inclusion of The Factory Shop including acquisition, demolition and construction would cost approx. £3m and also incur design fees. It was then discussed if it could be an option to move away from purchasing The Factory Shop which has the potential to make a cost saving.

It was then raised if the Board had an aspiration to improve The Factory shop, where it was indicated that a new roof and a shop front upgrade would be desirable subject to costings.

The discussion then noted that the walking & cycling trails project would be part-funded by Yorkshire Water.

It was agreed that to be as efficient and effective as possible with funding, improved sports facilities are most beneficial as they have the potential to promote and improve health, wellbeing and physical activity in the area. It was discussed that while improvements to the town square were welcome, that this has the potential not to create a larger impact than the sports projects which have received a lot of public support.

It was noted by YM the importance of funding for a 3G pitch.

MO'N noted that the need to re-optioneer the Placemaking project to achieve such a significant saving will affect the programme, because detailed design cannot commence as reported on 6th December.

It was raised by YM that total expenditure to date for the scheme now totalled £3.2m and that, other than Oxley Park and the Sports Hub Grants, no construction works have started to date and asked for further information to be provided to enable the Board to oversee each project in full detail.

Action: This will be actioned by SM/MO'N to review options in respect of reducing placemaking costs where possible, and also the potential option to include retaining The Factory Shop as it currently resides.

Action: Further actions agreed were for Officers to clarify timescales for committing to a potential 3G pitch to ensure that the FF deadline is met for funding April 2025. In addition, SM/MO'N would liaise with JM to outline expenditure to date to include a breakdown of costs for each project. MO'N will also evaluate all potential options to ensure that designs meet the requirements of the Board.

It was agreed that: Officers would arrange a pre-January Board meeting on Teams in December as a progress update to the Board, that HS will draft responses for potential press enquiries, that feedback would be sought from Board members regarding proposals and that GS would discuss the issue of football funding with Gareth Hayden at the meeting at the end of November.

Item 6: Communication & Engagement (Board report item 6)

It was noted by HS that recent news updates had been issued on the Stocksbridge, website, social media profiles and provided to relevant local and regional press contacts. An update was also provided on potential upcoming communication activities/ news updates to the end of 2024.

HS confirmed that the library move had been covered by Look Local, as well as the Rugby Club grant funding improvements.

It was discussed if a formal update would be issued on the Stocksbridge website following the Board meeting or if resharing an upcoming interview with BBC Radio Sheffield would be more appropriate. It was agreed to review each option and make a decision with the Co-Chairs and SM.

Action: It was agreed that once the weather had improved, HS would provide a draft release regarding the improvements to Oxley Park and relating pictures and a progress update on Q4 2024 communications output. HS would also manage communications regarding the shop fronts scheme and December meetings.

Item 7: AOB

None

Item 8: Forward plan items to note for next meeting

None

Date of next meeting: Monday 20 January 2025, 9.30am, Stocksbridge Community and Leisure Centre.