

**WARRINGTON TOWN BOARD**

**Minutes of meeting held on 20 December 2024**

ATTENDEES		APOLOGIES
Steve Coffey (Chair)	Torus	Steven Broomhead
Lucy Gardner	Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospital	Charlotte Nichols MP
Steve Park	Warrington Borough Council	Sarah Hall MP
Cllr Jean Flaherty	Warrington Borough Council	Eleanor Blackburn
Cllr Laura Watson	Warrington Borough Council	Nichola Newton
Alan Dickin	Warrington Borough Council	Martin Wood
Joshua Kirsten	Langtree	Heather Standidge
Stephen Fitzsimons	Warrington Chamber of Commerce	Elliot Grimshaw
Stephen Hunter	Warrington Borough Council	Laurence Pullan
Kerry Hall	Warrington Borough Council	Cllr Nathan Sudworth
		Josh Downs
		Damian Richards-Clarke
		Dave Thompson
		David Boyer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1.0	<p><b>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chair welcomed all attendees.</li> <li>Membership changes John Laverick has left Warrington Borough Council, Athol Forbes has been invited to future meetings to update on Pyramid Remastered.</li> </ul>	
2.0	<p><b>Minutes of meeting held on 18 October 2024</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gifts and hospitality register has been updated with the Construction and Civil Engineering Academy official opening.</li> <li>Register of Interests plan to update for new financial year.</li> </ul>	
3.0	<p><b>Declarations of interest</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No declarations of interest were noted for this agenda.</li> </ul>	
4.0	<p><b>Towns Fund Programme Update</b></p> <p>Kerry Hall reported on the Towns Fund Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The programme continues to make steady progress with 4 of 7 projects in operation.</li> <li>Town Funds grant received 91% of allocation (£20.2M)</li> <li>Town Funds used/claimed 66% of funds received (£14.7M)</li> <li>Remaining income in relation to projects in delivery and will be released subject to milestones forecast/completed.</li> <li>Payments to projects continue to be used/claimed in line with milestone progress – notable increase Digital Enterprise Hub</li> <li>Continued efforts are underway to enhance positive news and PR coverage across the programme.</li> <li>Notified on 16.12.24 that Town Deals have potential to extend beyond March 2026, subject to approval by exception – Warrington Town Deal programme is planning to deliver to original programme timescale.</li> <li>Project Adjustment Requests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health &amp; Wellbeing Hub – change in outputs</li> <li>Sustainable Travel – change of scope</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the period from 1 March 2024 to 30 September 2024, only a minor query regarding the funding drawdown for Pyramid Remastered has arisen. This issue has been resolved.</li> <li>The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has initiated an evaluation to review processes and assess the impact of Town Deal, aiming to identify effective strategies for future funding programs. The Living Well Hub has been identified in the programme requiring stakeholder interviews and insights. The Programme Manager will coordinate with MHCLG and the Living Well Project Team to support this evaluation.</li> <li><b>Progress report accepted; no issues raised.</b></li> </ul>	
5.0	<p><b>Town Deal Project updates -</b></p> <p><b>Digital Enterprise Hub</b> Update from Joshua Kirsten:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project update in the meeting pack.</li> <li>Works progressing well – inclement weather has impact programme of works resulting in 3-week delay.</li> <li>Project completion reprofiled to June 2025.</li> <li>Budget expenditures are aligned with the planned financial profile, allowing for the integration of additional deferred activities within existing allowances.</li> <li>Phase 2 - shower and toilets complete.</li> <li>Roof 95% completed – snagging planned for January 2025.</li> <li>Approval has been granted for external works in the churchyard, with construction scheduled to commence in January.</li> <li>Tenant liaison event took place in November with another planned pre-Christmas.</li> <li>Name/rebrand still ongoing.</li> <li><b>Progress report accepted; no issues raised.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Warrington Borough Council has pledged to pay the Real Living Wage. Review and confirm whether the contracts associated with the Digital Enterprise Hub project adhere.</b></li> </ol> <p><b>Sustainable Travel</b> Update from Alan Dickin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project update in the meeting pack.</li> <li>Bewsey Road at final design stage and delivery planned for 2025.</li> <li>Kingsway bridge consultation closed and delivery planned for 2025.</li> <li>Environmental and public realm improvements at Sankey Street – consultation recently closed and working through feedback for extensive engagement activities. Delivery planned for 2025.</li> <li>A49 Wilderspool Causeway corridor improvements – there has been a redesign and reprofile of business case – received positive member sign off. Change in scope needs to be escalated.</li> <li><b>Progress report accepted – Project Adjustment Request agenda item 6.0.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Pyramid Remastered</b> Update from Kerry Hall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project update in the meeting pack.</li> <li>Construction update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roof works being undertaken.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	JK

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Site close down 2.12.24-06.12.25.</li> <li>○ As expect some challenges found as working ongoing -</li> <li>● Operational update:</li> <li>● Working towards delivering a pop-up facility.</li> <li>● <b>Progress report accepted.</b></li> </ul>	
<p><b>6.0</b></p>	<p><b>Towns Fund Project Adjustment Requests</b></p> <p>Health &amp; Social Care Academy – change in project outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The college has reviewed its Health &amp; Social Care Offer - decision made to cease delivery of Level 2 and Level 3 apprenticeships due to lack of demand from prospective learners and financial viability.</li> <li>● Focus will change to the in-demand training for the existing workforce via employer responsive/widened adult offer which has increased in line with employer needs.</li> <li>● Towns Fund have confirmed to progress with a PAR – to rescope the output/s.</li> <li>● Impact to the output: number of completed apprenticeship/s variance is over 30%, progress to Town Board for support pre formal PAR to the Town Fund Team for decision in January 2025.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTIONS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Inform the local MP about the project and its significance and request a letter of support.</b></li> <li><b>2. Submit the proposal to the Towns Fund team for assessment and a formal decision, ensuring all necessary documentation and justification are included.</b></li> <li><b>3. Notify the Warrington Skills Partnership of the project details, its potential impact on skills development, and any opportunities for collaboration or input.</b></li> </ol> <p>Sustainable Travel – change in project scope</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A change in scope to project component – Wilderspool Causeway.</li> <li>● Wilderspool Causeway has a funding allocation of £1,431,500 from the Sustainable Travel project allocation of £5.5M with a focus on bus priority measures with complementary active travel measures.</li> <li>● Development work has been carried out including design work and traffic modelling and to validate the scheme.</li> <li>● This work demonstrated that the benefit of the new sections of southbound bus lane was now marginal and did not demonstrate value for money.</li> <li>● Rescoped scheme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To connect Brian Bevan Island to Gainsborough Road and provide an attractive parallel alternative to cycling on the A49.</li> <li>○ Widen existing paths between Gainsborough Road and Greenhalls Avenue and create off road cycle facilities along Greenhalls Avenue connecting to the supermarket and Trans Pennine Trail.</li> <li>○ Additional measures to support access to Priestly College with an improved section of footway to provide high quality footway/cycleway connection between the college and Black Bear Park and a new bus layby on Loushers Lane to improve accessibility and improve pedestrian crossing facilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Overall Sustainable Travel project maintains the same budget, strategic goals, outputs and outcomes with an improved BCR.</li> <li>● Towns Fund Team have confirmed approach with the Project Adjustment Request (PAR) via the delegated route – Town Board decision and report to</li> </ul>	<p>KH</p> <p>KH</p> <p>KH</p>

	<p>Towns Fund Team for project update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Board agreed the project variation.</li> <li>• Project Manager to review delivery plan for works around Priestly College to minimise disturbance at the start of the new academic year, subject to environmental constraints.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTIONS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Inform the local MP about the project and its significance and request a letter of support.</b></li> <li><b>2. Submit the proposal to the Towns Fund team for information, ensuring all necessary documentation and justification are included.</b></li> </ol>	<p>KH</p> <p>KH</p>
<p><b>7.0</b></p>	<p><b>UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update</b></p> <p>Kerry Hall updated on status and key highlights of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) FY24/25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 40 projects across the investment priorities of Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business, and People and Skills.</li> <li>• UKSPF FY24/25 end date 31 March 2025, with no option for budget carry over. Any funding unspent from the £6.496M has to be given back to Government.</li> <li>• Closing to new project proposals at end of December 2024. Programme team are developing a timeline for final claim payments through to end of March 2025.</li> <li>• Mitigation plans are in place to address any underspend and ensure the full utilisation of the grant within the funding period.</li> <li>• UKSPF FY2025/26 allocations and guidance released 13.12.24 – new allocation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ £2.125M (£392,376 Capital, £1,732,808 Revenue) This is 32.7% of our current programme allocation.</li> <li>○ Proactively supports Mission-delivery – mapped existing interventions into the Mission-led themes across the three priority areas – can still support the side range of activity it has since 2022 and not required to do a new investment plan: Communities and Place; Support for Local Business and People and Skills. See Appendix 3.</li> <li>○ Changes include – Multiply numeracy programme will not continue as a specific ringfenced numeracy programme A change in core capital and revenue splits, a higher proportion of capital compared to previous years.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Progress report accepted; no issues raised.</b></li> </ul>	
<p><b>8.0</b></p>	<p><b>Levelling Up Fund – Warrington North Reconnecting the Settlements:</b></p> <p>Alan Dickin provided an interim update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government confirmed £9.432m grant funding for the LUF Warrington North projects as part of the 2024 Autumn spending review and countersigned the Memorandum of Understanding in November 2024. Getting first instalment of funding in New Year.</li> <li>• Programme management team has remobilised, and the various project teams have begun mobilisation.</li> <li>• Monitoring report completed November included cost pressure of £1.5m has been identified including the impact of inflation and revised programme timescale through to Autumn 2027.</li> <li>• Meeting with LUF team on 11.12.24 and subsequent letter from Minister Norris regarding LUF budgets and extension notification/s – to allow fundamentally different or new activity that</li> <li>• Community Project: Burtonwood Community Centre introductions made earlier in the year between the charity and board members and Stephen Bennet at the</li> </ul>	

	<p>NHS. <b>ACTION</b> 1. <b>Revisit the review of Burtonwood - healthcare services in community.</b></p>	<p><b>LG &amp; KH</b></p>
<p><b>9.0</b></p>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>Steve Park Informed that the government has published the Devolution White Paper, setting out plans to transfer more powers and responsibilities to local regions. This initiative aims to strengthen local decision-making, boost economic growth, and improve public services by giving communities greater control over key areas such as transport, housing, and skills. Cheshire and Warrington have the opportunity to join the government’s priority list for establishing a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) by May 2026. The government has requested expressions of interest by 10 January 2025. A streamlined and accelerated consultation process will take place in the first quarter of next year,</p> <p>Lucy Gardner Informed that Warrington &amp; Halton Teaching Hospital has submitted two bids for capital funding including a £15 million proposal to relocate outpatient services into the town centre. This bid has successfully progressed from local and regional review stages to the national team for further assessment, expect to hear by March 2025.</p> <p>Steve Hunter Provided an update on the electric bus fleet that now has 50 buses now in service with the remainder undergoing pre-delivery checks. Warrington Borough Council has committed to the £2 fare through to the end of March, the hope to extend subject to approval. Early 2025 there will be roadworks on the A49 to relocate utilities in preparation for bus priority works later in the year.</p>	
<p><b>10.0</b></p>	<p><b>Next Meeting</b> 21 February 2025 10am-12pm</p>	