



**Elland Town Development Board
meeting**

Minutes of the meeting held 4th March 2025

Project Colt

Attendees

Cllr David Veitch
Cllr Peter Hunt
David Wilkson (Co-Chair)
Pauline Shaw
Graham Hale

Others in attendance

Graham Gibbons
Alan Lee
Callum Pickersgill
Laura Bramley
Rob Shipway
Zakariya Ali

1. Welcome to the meeting

a. Apologies received

Apologies received from: Cllr Gallagher, Cllr Courtney, Cllr Prashad, Graham Sykes.
It was also noted Vicky Platt resigned from the Board.

2. Quorate declaration

The meeting was declared quorate.

3. Declaration of interest

No interests were declared.

4. Minutes of the previous

The minutes were declared a true record of the meeting.

5. Local Energy Plan (Callum Pickersgill)

Councillor DV enquired about the source of the data used for the local energy plan. It was explained that data is purchased from a company and collected when buildings are sold, at which point they receive an EPC rating. Properties that have not been sold for a significant period are assigned an average EPC rating based on similar homes in the area.

It was noted that the plan aims to generate £50 million in savings per year. A key objective is to transition away from fossil fuels towards heat pumps, with an annual carbon reduction target of 250 million.

DW asked how the heat is attained, to which LB explained that the plan involves heat pumps, both air source and ground source, with a centralised energy centre capable of integrating into a single scheme. The potential for using waste heat clusters was also discussed, including energy sources from rivers and canals. DW noted that historically, Elland was powered by water. However, LB clarified that while water power was once viable, it is no longer the most cost-effective way to produce energy. DW questioned which energy source would be the most economical, and it was acknowledged that increased electricity production is necessary, but it must be decarbonised through methods such as heat pumps or water-powered electric generation.

Councillor DV referenced the closure of Elland Power Station, noting that while operational costs have not increased, costs for consumers have risen. LB highlighted that water power does not offer a strong cost-benefit for investors compared to solar or wind energy. There are currently 43 non-domestic properties identified as suitable for heat pumps, alongside over 3,000 domestic buildings.

The importance of community renewable energy schemes was emphasised, particularly in light of the shift towards electric heating, which is expected to double electricity usage. The need to develop local energy generation and provide residents with ownership of community power schemes was discussed.

The discussion then turned to how Elland could engage with the local energy scheme. The concept of a "data twin" was introduced to maximise longevity in energy planning. Two business cases were noted, one for Todmorden and another for King Cross. RS enquired about identifying local representatives, referencing Todmorden's Sustainability Panel as an example. LB confirmed that Shaun Rogers is currently exploring the establishment of community hubs and avenues for government funding, including applications for Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and support from the Community Renewable Fund.

It was acknowledged that community energy projects are currently fragmented, existing only in small pockets. LB's team expressed interest in supporting community-led initiatives. DW asked whether it would be possible to install a wind turbine to power a group of nine houses in his area. LB confirmed that power generated could either be directed to the homes or fed back into the grid, allowing for discounts on energy costs.

Councillor DV asked whether setting up a local Elland Community Energy Group would require grant applications and how it would be controlled. LB explained that all such projects would go through planning at Calderdale Council. She also noted that there is currently no established community energy group in the area.

The discussion moved to property refurbishments undertaken by Together Housing. It was queried how funding for residents is sourced, and LB confirmed that applications must be made for grants and funding. She explained that government funding prioritises low-income housing due to limited resources. Low-cost loans at 3.2% are available for homeowners, but there are concerns about whether this is enough of an incentive. Alternative business models are being explored to ensure

that all homes can access some form of retrofit. At present, the Council is unable to invest directly in these projects.

DW asked whether grants are available for loft insulation. LB confirmed that while there are some schemes, they require bidding processes, and currently, only a few hundred houses per year benefit. She acknowledged the need for a larger-scale approach.

Councillor DV enquired how the Board could assist. LB advised that members should monitor available funding opportunities and collaborate with community groups to align efforts with the net zero strategy.

PS stressed that all areas must benefit from the energy plan, noting that small-scale projects alone would not be sufficient. Larger initiatives, such as wind farms, would be necessary. However, LB explained that funding at present does not support projects of this scale and that land ownership within Calderdale remains a challenge.

6. Planning application (Dave Wilkinson)

The proposal includes the implementation of a yellow box with cameras, which will result in fines for violations and a housing estate with around 444 homes to be built. Concerns were raised regarding the impact on Elland, with a strong sentiment that the area requires investment rather than further low-cost housing.

Councillor DV enquired whether a planner could be invited to the next meeting for further discussion, but it was confirmed that it is too late in the process to do so. The project is now 18 months in, progressing step by step, with objections already submitted. Members were encouraged to continue submitting objections and to request that the council conduct a road safety audit on the proposal.

A 2021 report, which provided an unbiased assessment of the road width, was identified as a potential basis for objections. Pauline has submitted the link to this report to the council. Concerns were raised regarding the scale of the development, as 444 houses is a significant number for what is currently a farm road.

Members were advised to reference their position on the Board when submitting objections. Additional concerns were noted about the pavements not being wide enough to accommodate two buses passing through simultaneously. Despite these concerns, the plans have already been approved at full council.

It was confirmed that Mortens own the land. If a sufficient number of objections are registered on the planning portal, the matter must be reconsidered, and a public consultation will be required.

To be feasible, the development would need to be reduced to fewer than 100 houses. However, it was noted that such a reduction would render the project financially unviable for the developers.

7. Vision and business plan update

Historic England has identified Elland as a potential project location. However, as they are not familiar with the town, input from the Board is essential to ensure a realistic approach. Efforts need to be made to identify the actual property owners involved.

Councillor Pete suggested the possibility of a ghost or history trail, while RS proposed involving members of the historic walks society to contribute their expertise.

DW highlighted two significant historic buildings in Elland—the Old Rose and Crown and the old Methodist Church. Further discussions are needed to determine which buildings Historic England would be particularly interested in.

A visit from Historic England is anticipated in April, though the exact date is yet to be confirmed.

Network Rail representatives will be attending the next meeting to discuss the new railway station, presenting an opportunity to turn this into a larger event.

8. Future of the Board

The establishment of the business hub has faced challenges, with issues still unresolved. It was acknowledged that these matters need to be addressed to move forward positively.

The next workshop will focus on the railway, opportunities for young people, and heritage. All relevant stakeholders will be invited to participate. Rather than openly advertising Board positions, efforts will be made to identify and approach suitable individuals directly.

PS emphasised that unresolved problems cannot simply be left behind, as they continue to hinder progress.

Councillor DV suggested structuring the Board to include members from various sectors, including business and voluntary organisations. Collaboration should be encouraged, and if certain parties cannot work together, alternative representatives from the same sector should be sought.

A workshop is planned where businesses will be invited to engage with the Board. It was highlighted that representatives from businesses, the Rotary Club, the 41 Club, and the Historical Society should be involved.

There was uncertainty regarding the status of the Red Bull Challenge, and further clarification is needed. Several project ideas have been proposed, and engagement with events organisers, including liaison with Sam McCormack, will be pursued.

Safeguarding for Board members was identified as a key priority. Councillor DV raised the question of how best to recruit suitable individuals for the Board.

9. AOB

There was no other business discussed.

10. Date and venue of next meeting

13th of May 2025, Project Colt