



**Todmorden Town Deal Board Meeting
Minutes of the meeting held Thursday 10 April 2025
Todmorden Community College**

Attendees

Pam Warhurst (Chair)
Cllr Susan Press (for Cllr Skelton)
Cllr Silvia Dacre
Esther Ferry-Kerrington
Tony Lawson
Keith Brealey
Gareth Marshall

Others in attendance

Cllr Sarah Courtney
Kate McNicholas
Rob Shipway

1. Welcome to the meeting

The Chair opened the meeting.

a. Apologies

Josh Fenton-Glynn MP
Cllr Brundell
Amna Nisah
Kerry Wheelwright Lee
Cllr Skelton

b. Confirmation of quorum

The meeting was declared quorate.

c. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of the meeting held 13 February 2025

The minutes were declared a true record of the meeting.

a. Matters arising

No matters arising not included in the agenda.

3. Programme update

RS reported good overall progress and noted that feedback from MHCLG regarding performance was very positive. MHCLG officers have agreed to attend the June meeting of the Board to see the progress of projects, most of which will be on site by then.

Work is underway at the Town Hall, Fielden Hall, Todmorden College and the Enterprise Centre. The tennis courts have been completed. Contractors have been appointed for Centre Vale Park (Bandstand and Pavilion) Hippodrome, and tenders will be invited for the Public Places project after Easter.

Regarding Active Todmorden, final designs will be completed by the end of April. Asked about the Board's support for works to the towpath, KM informed the Board that the Council team was working through the elements of the project identified as amber in the February presentation to the Board.

The Board welcomed the progress made and noted the positive feedback from MHCLG as encouraging.

The Board welcomed news of the programme extension, KM noting that most projects were still looking to complete by the end of March 2026.

4. Risk log

RS presented an update on the programme risk log.

a. Budgets

It was noted that all projects except Riverside would deliver TIP outputs within budget, but there were shortfalls for some projects who are seeking to deliver additional outputs through bringing forward planned future work.

Hippodrome – the project will deliver all its TIP outputs. The Hippodrome has successfully secured £520,000 of match funding and is now in a position where it could deliver its longer-term ambitions if it can secure a further £200,000. RS reported the Council is working with TAODS to seek loan funding, as to deliver the work as part of the current Town Deal project would realise capital and revenue savings and deliver additional outputs.

Todmorden College – again this project will deliver its TIP outputs within budget, but a second phase of works will be facilitated if the College can secure £150,000,

subject to tender. As with the Hippodrome, completing the works as part of Town Deal will deliver cost savings and additional outputs.

Enterprise Centre – CVCLTE and contractors are reviewing costs and while the project has commenced, value engineering continues. At risk are sustainability features, which total £200,000. The project will need to know soon whether it can progress confident it can deliver these elements or withdraw them. This would have no impact on TIP outputs, but the Board agreed the sustainability features are important.

In terms of supporting the projects, RS reported that he was working with project partners to monitor any potential underspends, such as unused contingencies, but noted that the timescale for projects was such that this may be late in the programme, and that any returned funds from unused contingencies would be used to ensure any unforeseen costs across the programme could be covered.

b. Impact on town

RS noted that the works will be extensive, and a risk might be disruption in the town, such as from works on the market and any Highways works. The Chair expressed concern, citing as an example the Frosthorne Mill development at Cornholme, and asked that RS / KM facilitate a meeting with Highways to provide an overview of works planned over the next 18 months and how they might impact on residents, businesses, pedestrians and motorists.

Action: RS to liaise with Highways and ensure communications colleagues are prepared.

c. Business engagement and events

RS noted that while the programme extension provided welcome breathing space for projects, it did make it more difficult to prepare an 'end of programme' event. The Board agreed it was important to provide opportunities for local businesses to benefit from the works and that events to mark the successful completion of the programme are important.

Board members suggested the extended timescale was an opportunity, allowing the programme to put in place a staggered programme of events. RS reported that projects were taking pictures of works as they progressed, to provide a timeline of development. The Board suggested a programme of events and a large finale to showcase the town and the programme.

Action: EFK to liaise with Frankie Mullen to explore opportunities and draft a programme of events.

5. Riverside

RS reminded the Town Deal Board of the process that had been agreed following UCVR's presentation to the Board, requiring a revised business case and independent assessment before being reconsidered by the Board. He presented

progress against that requirement, noting that UCVR had worked with Turner and Townsend to submit a revised business case on time.

The Chair reminded the town board of the premise on which the project was originally agreed, within which the focus on visitor economy was significant. The Chair reminded the town board that it had previously identified the issues it was concerned about and conveyed them to the project.

All members of the Board discussed the proposed changes in scope of the project and considered whether the project continued to meet the vision and goals of the programme. The Board felt strongly that the project had reduced significantly in scope with a consequent impact on outputs and deliverables, specifically those related to the visitor economy.

The Board recognised the value of football facilities, a cycle track and enhanced facilities, but expressed grave concern that the focus on visitor economy had been lost, which in turn has reduced the economic impact of the project. The revised BCR had fallen significantly, reflecting this lost value.

The Board reflected on the original ambitions for a Bunkhouse, hard standing areas for mobile homes, and pods. It was noted that camping without hook ups and electricity is possible, but all Board members felt the revised proposals marked a significant scale back from the original plans, and that camping businesses with limited facilities do not generate significant income.

The Board raised concerns about proposals for income generation and noted concerns regarding potential subsidy control issues regarding the café.

All Board members questioned the deliverability of the scheme, noting the proposed changes to project management adds further risk to the project.

The Board was concerned at the continued delay in approval from the Environment Agency given experience on other projects. Reflecting on previous requests to fully engage identified project stakeholders, the Board felt that this had not been concluded satisfactorily.

Summarising the discussions which had included all Board members, the Chair noted the Board still has concerns the project no longer has the potential to drive economic opportunities, and there is a lack of confidence in deliverability.

Resolved: There was unanimous **agreement** that the town board could not support the progress of the project.

KM advised on next steps. A conversation with MHCLG will be required to ensure that the funding simplification pathfinder pilot flexibilities permit the retention of resources. As accountable body there will be a need to review the required next steps.

GM left the meeting.

There was a discussion around potential future opportunities for the cycle track element. The Town Board reiterated its strong commitment to Empowered People

and urged the Council to explore options for how that can be taken forward, including support for external funding.

The Board stressed the need for early and effective communication with UCVR and Empowered People.

6. Any other business

There was no other business.

7. Date and venue of the next meeting

12 June 2025. Please note this meeting will take place at Fielden Hall. The meeting will be attended by project partners and colleagues from MHCLG. Board members are invited to join at 5.30 at Fielden Hall for refreshments and to meet the projects.