



Todmorden Town Deal Board Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held 13 February 2025

Attendees

Pam Warhurst (Chair)
Councillor Silvia Dacre
Amna Nisah
Councillor Denis Skelton
Gareth Marshall
Keith Brealey
Esther Ferry-Kerrington

Others in attendance

Councillor Sarah Courtney
James Purdy (WYCA)
Tom Jones
Kate McNicholas
Frankie Mullen
Zakariya Ali
Councillor Susan Press

1. Welcome

a. Apologies

Josh Fenton Glynn MP, Rob Shipway and Councillor Helen Brundell.

b. Confirmation of Quorum

Confirmed quorate.

c. Declarations of Interest

No declarations. The Chair reminded the Town Board of the need to raise interests for specific items if required.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held 3 December 2024

a. Matters Arising

The minutes were approved.

It was noted that through ticketing has now been implemented. Cllr Courtney (Cllr SC) is following up on the potential to increase bus route frequency.

Action: Kate McNicholas (KM) to ensure summary of consultation as previously requested is shared with Active Todmorden at next Town Board.

Action: Rob Shipway (RS) to progress governance review following previous approval.

The 150th anniversary of the town hall will involve a community feast, inviting community group members.

Action: any board member to flag to Pam Warhurst (PW) if they wish to attend – two spaces for the board.

3. Shared Transport Hubs

James Purdy (JP) from WYCA shared information on the shared hubs under development (often known as mobility hubs), which bring together different types of transport, including information, and provide an alternative option to private car ownership. He provided detail on the work being developed in Todmorden, which is the first in West Yorkshire.

Keith Brealey (KB) flagged the success in Bremen in Germany but suggested that there are limitations without multiple hubs. KB emphasised that the first mobility hub needed to perform well to ensure the success of future hubs, highlighting the importance of visibility and accessibility. Tom Jones (TJ) emphasised the importance of starting somewhere and building on a strong Upper Valley history of car clubs.

Cllr SC noted that a mobility hub would also be set up in Hebden Bridge, allowing users to leave bikes there as part of the same scheme and potentially useful for tourists. Councillor Dacre (Cllr SD) suggested that a lesser emphasis on bikes might be helpful at the start. Secure cycle lockers will be important. Amna Nisah (AN) agreed with the emphasis on tourism, as many residents prefer to walk in Todmorden due to the town's compact nature. Further development of designs will be required to meet detailed design standards, including highways engineer input for safety, along with continued engagement with stakeholders.

Councillor Skelton (Cllr DS) enquired about the cost of the scheme. JP stated that £3M funding was available across West Yorkshire. JP explained that successful car clubs already existed in Calderdale and that the aim was to build on these. Cllr SC mentioned that hires could be managed through a mobile app for both cars and bikes.

Graham Marshall (GM) enquired about potential collaboration with Active Todmorden. TJ confirmed that while they were separate projects, collaboration is underway. The Chair stressed the importance of clear and ongoing communication from the outset. The Board was asked to consider how its communications resources could assist in promoting the shared hubs.

4. Communications Update

Frankie Mullen (FM) shared slides setting out where we are now and the direction of travel. The existing vision has been broken down into key areas: people, place, business, and visitors. With an overall statement: “we are ambitious for a confident, safer market town where people and businesses can succeed in challenging times.” Work has been carried out with project partners to capture the programme’s benefits.

The aim is to update and inform, showing how the programme and vision impact and benefit people, businesses, and the wider community. This will be achieved by using tangible project outputs as they happen, reflecting and illustrating the overall programme outcomes.

Advocacy efforts will focus on local people who are directly benefiting, project partners, and board members. An example of a theme is bringing community buildings back into use, such as the Town Hall and Fielden.

The primary audiences include local residents, businesses, community organisations, and the press. Secondary audiences include regional and national partners, potential new residents and businesses, and existing and potential visitors.

Board members are encouraged to share ideas on potential contributors, with suggestions to be sent to FM. This includes board members speaking on specific projects, themes, or beneficiary groups.

Action: board members to share suggestions of key advocates and proposals for themes they would like to contribute towards with FM.

A mapping exercise will be carried out to determine who wants to be involved and in what capacity. Video clips will be used to sharpen key messages, focusing on the benefits of the programme.

A monthly e-newsletter provides updates, with new subscribers encouraged to sign up. Since launching feedback has been positive. Project partners have a full calendar of deadlines, though FM remains proactive in working with them. Communications also respond to misinformation and breaking news when needed.

Action: FM to add all board members to the newsletter distribution list.

Six press releases were issued in November. Securing front-page coverage remains important for reaching key sections of the population.

Many projects lack dedicated communications capacity, leading to crossover between project and programme communications. A pragmatic response is being taken to address this challenge. Communications will continue to be aligned with council-led projects in a partnership approach.

Social media content is being generated, producing quick and engaging short films to improve outreach. Content ideas are being mapped, covering topics such as learning, skills, and work-in-progress updates on key projects. There has been a 15% increase in video views and a 33% increase in profile visits, though there is still significant room for growth.

Website engagement has also increased, with unique visitors rising from 3,900 in 2023 to 8,700 in 2024. The website needs a refresh to make it simpler and clearer, providing updates on where projects currently stand. Social media feeds and project timelines should also be incorporated, with clear deadlines for completion.

Action: FM to update board member information on the website.

A proposal has been put forward to produce two or three printed programme editions. Consideration is needed on whether this is necessary and how best to assess demand. Serving offline audiences remains an important factor in this decision. GM suggested using data on people without online banking access as a proxy for identifying whether there is a need for print media.

Metrics for evaluating success include website user numbers, social media engagement, feedback from the monthly update, and potential database surveys. Increasing sign-ups to the monthly updates will also be a key priority. Temperature checks of stakeholder attitudes will be useful.

5. Programme Update and Risk Log

KM provided a brief programme update based on programme monitoring visits conducted by RS. The programme had reached a critical stage with increased project delivery. Some projects are currently reporting budget shortfalls.

Active Todmorden had made progress on the approved walking and wheeling option, with further detail to be reported at the next meeting. More details on Riverside will also be reported at the next meeting.

Cllr DS expressed concerns that value engineering might not be sufficient to address the Centre Vale Park shortfall, with COF funding needing to be spent by end of September. Discussions with the EA are ongoing, and MP support was being sought. The tennis courts will be complete before work on the new school starts.

Action: Cllr DS to share detail with Cllr SC to aid a letter to the MP.

Public Places faces a significant budget shortfall, with tenders expected to go out in early March and work commencing in June. GM suggested there may be a need to phase the project rather than reducing quality, given its significance to Todmorden.

The Chair emphasised that as a strategic board, the next meeting on 27 February will be crucial for Board members to attend to provide strategic leadership.

6. Any Other Business

None.

7. Dates of Next Meetings

- 6.00-8.00pm Thursday 27 February 2025 [Todmorden College]

- 6.00-8.00pm Thursday 10 April [Todmorden College]