



Halifax Town Development Board Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held 1 April 2025

Meeting held at Halifax Town Hall

Attendees

Cllr Joe Thompson
Cllr Sarah Courtney
Cllr Kelly Thornham
Cllr Geraldine Carter
Cllr Colin Hutchinson
Cllr Paul Bellenger
Lee Kenny
Rev. Hilary Barber
Claire Bradshaw
Jason Gregg

Others in attendance

Phil Jones
Mohammed Shah
Andrew Hewitt
Lee Robertshaw
Janet Whitlow
Kate McNicholas
Rob Shipway

1. Introductions and apologies

Apologies received from Cllr Tim Swift.

a. Declaration of Quorum

The meeting was declared Quorate.

b. Declaration of Interest

There were no interests declared.

2. Minutes and actions of previous meeting

Matters arising

Actions from the previous meeting were discussed.

3. Bolt Works Update

The Board received a presentation from Placefirst, a residential developer leading the redevelopment of Bolt Works. The Board noted the organisation aims to bridge a gap in the rental market for working professionals who perhaps cannot afford full ownership but are not able to access social housing. 25 and 54 years old. A significant proportion of tenants are key workers, particularly NHS staff and healthcare professionals. The demand for high-quality rental properties remains strong, with an average of 19 rental enquiries per listed property.

Placefirst has worked closely with Calderdale to deliver a successful scheme at Bolt Works. The development will see 122 homes Placefirst's strategy for partnership and regeneration relies heavily on utilising former council-owned brownfield land. Placefirst remains committed to integrating itself within communities, providing long-term rental options rather than short-term developments for profit. The company also has a strong commitment to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles. TPJ reported progress. Heads of Terms for the land transaction were signed in September 2022, followed by a planning permission submission in November 2022, which was approved in February 2023. In June 2023, Placefirst purchased the land from the council, and works commenced in August 2023. The project remains on track for completion by 2nd May 2025. The first residents are expected to move in by June 2025. Properties are now live on Rightmove, with initial viewings scheduled for the following week.

Cllr GC asked about tenancy, PJ explained that they have a threshold and criteria which is that rent must not account for more than 25% of gross income to ensure it is affordable. With regard tenant management and tackling potential antisocial behaviour, PJ highlighted the use of resident managers and their approach to working with tenants.

The Board welcomed the presentation, and the development works at Bolt Works.

4. Halifax Vision

Board members received an update on the Halifax vision from Planit, the successful consultants for the study.

Board members asked about the deliverability of the vision and whether the new study builds on previous masterplans or represents a complete restart. Planit noted that while previous studies would be considered, the vision would need to tackle account of changes in economic, social, and environmental factors, ensuring that it remains relevant and achievable.

Asked about delivery and phasing, Planit explained that the ambition is to move forward as quickly as possible, recognising the need for strategic planning. The study would include development of early wins, as well as longer-term strategic developments,

AH was asked about whether there was an existing budget in place or if additional external funding would need to be secured. Planit noted that a mix of funding from the public and private sector would be needed, but the vision ensured there was a strategy for investment and a pipeline of projects for delivery, to encourage and

secure investment in the town. The study will include a detailed funding strategy, including engagement with potential investors and funding bodies.

Regarding consultation with business and residents, Planit confirmed that there would be consultation. The Board asked for regular feedback on consultation so that stakeholders could see how consultation influenced decisions.

Board members discussed the potential impact on local businesses, and Planit acknowledged the need to minimise disruption and ensure effective communication with businesses.

Regarding transport and connectivity, Planit confirmed that transport integration is a core part of the plan, with a focus on improving accessibility for both residents and visitors.

Actions:

Workshop materials, including slides and case studies, will be shared with attendees. Interest in follow-up sessions will be assessed. Feedback from participants will be reviewed to refine future workshops.

5. A629 Update

Andrew Hewitt and Mohammed Shah updated the Board on the A629 project.

Skircoat Road/Prescott Street: is now complete, with only minor snagging works remaining.

Bull Green: The team is working closely with local businesses; the public car park remains closed at present. Bull Green is currently operating as a two-way road, allowing traffic to flow in both directions. The area contains individual gas, water, and sewage pipes. The team is working diligently and as safely as possible due to the complexity and condition of these utilities. Some of the pipes are extremely old – for example, a gas pipe dating back to 1923 was discovered beneath Bull Green. Pedestrians have found it easier to navigate the area, with improved pathways. Due to safety requirements, traffic management remains extensive in this location.

Orange Street: All four quadrants are now substantively complete, with work progressing to the central islands. Traffic management has been improved and sensors have been activated to facilitate better traffic flow.

Northgate (Crosshills and Winding Road): Works are progressing well. The next phase of the project is anticipated to focus on the area outside the bus station.

A local spend of £2 million has been invested in the project. Materials are being recycled rather than sent to landfill – local stone partners crush and separate materials for reuse. The project also includes partnerships with Calderdale College, which is incorporating construction into its curriculum.

A Board member raised an issue regarding the traffic lights outside Fountain Street, near the Halifax Building Society, which turn red and impact traffic flow. It was noted the timing cannot be changed as the lights are linked to traffic coming from the opposite direction.

Cllr GC raised concerns about the pelican crossing at the end of Harrison Road, noting it is frequently pressed, leading to constant red lights. AH replied that people had previously been crossing unsafely at that location, and from a safety perspective, the crossing was necessary to meet safety standards.

Cllr GC asked whether the road closure from Prescott Street could be lifted, as it is causing access issues. MS acknowledged the challenges at the junction and explained that the closure is necessary to maintain overall traffic flow. MS offered to discuss the matter further with Cllr GC.

Regarding Winding Road from the train station, Cllr GC commented that traffic had worsened significantly. AH confirmed that traffic data is being collected, which will help the team implement the most efficient traffic management solutions, such as determining optimal traffic signal timings.

AH confirmed that the team is engaging daily with local businesses, The Piece Hall, and the BID. They are continually reviewing lessons learned. Due to the central location, the project is particularly challenging. The team welcomes feedback and is open to discussions both within and outside of the Board. They are also working on a wider communications plan, including providing councillors and council members with updates and visual documentation, such as photographs of ongoing works.

Cllr CH asked if findings beneath the roads – such as old pipes – are being recorded for future reference. AH confirmed that pre-surveys and drawing works are conducted, and a system is in place to record all discoveries. This data will be handed over to the Major Projects team at Calderdale Council.

Cllr CH also asked whether the drone footage presented could be shared with the public and requested clarity on the timescales for completion. AH replied that the drone footage can be shared with the public. He reported that works at Bull Green are currently due for completion by July 2025, with Cow Green scheduled for completion by the end of 2025. The Board requested that detailed timescales be circulated to all Board members via email.

Actions:

AH and MS to share presentations with the Board. Additional resources related to regulatory changes; stakeholder management will be provided.

6. Date of next meeting

15th of July, Location TBC.