



Minutes of the St Helens Growth Board

12:00–14:30, Friday 27 October 2023
Totally Wicked Stadium

Board Members in Attendance:

Board Member (Deputy)	Role	Organisation
Councillor David Baines	Chair	Leader of St Helens Borough Council
Aston Fuller (deputising for Richard Katz)	General Manager	Glass Futures
Shirley Goodhew (deputising for Ruth Du Plessis)	Consultant of Public Health	NHS
Councillor Kate Groucutt	Portfolio Holder for Economy, Business and Skills	St Helens Borough Council
Lisa Harris	Executive Director of Place Services	St Helens Borough Council
Malcolm Jackson (deputising for John Downes)	Chief Operating Officer	Langtree
Hazel James	Owner and Managing Director	Brendon International Ltd
Steven Knowles (deputising for Phil Mayall)	Director of Development Management	Muse
Tracy Mawson	Chief Executive	St Helens Chamber of Commerce
Councillor Richard McCauley	Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Planning	St Helens Borough Council
Simon Pierce	Principal & Chief Executive	St Helens College
Clare Richards (deputising for Duncan Inglis)	Senior Partnership & Business Development Manager	Homes England
Neil Syder	Managing Director	Pilkington UK Ltd, NSG Group

Observers in Attendance:

Jayne Taylor - Head of Comms, Engagement & Reputation Management, St Helens Borough Council
James Morley - Senior Scrutiny Officer, St Helens Borough Council

Local Authority Representatives in Attendance:

Sean Traynor - Director of Strategic Growth, St Helens Borough Council
Robert Gatensbury - Programme Lead, St Helens Borough Council
Rachael Buckley - Partnerships Officer, St Helens Borough Council

1. WELCOME – CHAIR

The Chair welcomed Board Members (and those deputising) to the inaugural meeting of St Helens Growth Board at the fantastic Totally Wicked Stadium and expressed sincere thanks for their agreement to join the Board and for their ongoing commitment to the borough of St Helens.

The Chair set out his vision for the borough in accordance with Our Borough Strategy and recognised that this is a pivotal time for St Helens with so much opportunity for growth but in the context of a particularly challenging economic climate for many, and so the creation of the Growth Board at this time and its future activities will prove invaluable. The Chair advised that he was very much looking forward to the work of this new Board in the ethos of our St Helens Together approach.

1a. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Board Members:

Board Member	Role	Organisation
Jane Beardsworth	Senior Relationship Manager	Arts Council England
Steve Coffey	Chief Executive	Torus
John Downes	Group Chief Executive	Langtree
Ruth Du Plessis	Director of Public Health	St Helens Borough Council
Katherine Fairclough	Chief Executive	Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Neil Hargreaves	Managing Director	Knauf Insulation
Duncan Inglis	Director MPP North	Homes England
Richard Katz	Chief Executive	Glass Futures
Phil Mayall	Managing Director	Muse, ECF Partnership
Kath O'Dwyer	Chief Executive	St Helens Borough Council
Liz Walls	(Super Curriculum) Assistant Principal	Carmel College

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Lisa Harris briefly described the Draft Terms of Reference and explained they could be amended (where appropriate) by the Board in the future as it developed its activities and direction.

Decision: The Board endorsed the Terms of Reference as set out in the agenda pack.

4. LINKS TO WIDER GOVERNANCE

Lisa Harris provided a verbal explanation of the role of the St Helens Growth Board in the context of wider governance, policies and strategies, with particular emphasis on delivery of the St Helens Inclusive Growth Strategy. It was confirmed that the St Helens Growth Board does not have any decision-making powers and its role is defined in the Terms of Reference (Item 3 relates).

Decision: The Board noted the item.

5. AGENDA GOING FORWARD: STANDING ITEMS

The Chair invited Board Members to consider any potential additional standing items for future meetings.

Decision: No suggestions were made but Board Members are invited to notify the Chair of any suggested additional items for future meetings.

6. ST HELENS BOROUGH REGENERATION

Lisa Harris presented information regarding the current state of the economy in St Helens Borough, local demographics, natural and built environment and the challenges and opportunities facing the Borough.

The presentation also provided a progress update on growth and regeneration programmes across the Borough, including future plans.

Aston Fuller provided the Board with a brief update on Glass Futures and explained why (given its history, heritage, links with industry and location) St Helens was its obvious home.

The Chair reiterated the importance of the proposed new hotel in St Helens town centre, which forms part of the English Cities Fund Phase 1 development proposals, the provision of which responds directly to feedback received from several business.

Malcolm Jackson noted the noteworthy progress that has been made on the Parkside development, reflecting that it is now an exciting and pivotal time for the Borough.

Tracy Mawson raised the importance of SMEs to the future growth of the economy in St Helens, highlighting the need for ongoing support and grow-on premises/facilities. Sean Traynor acknowledged this matter, highlighting that there are related actions identified in the St Helens Inclusive Growth Strategy and that St Helens Borough Council / Liverpool City Region Combined Authority is proactively supporting here with examples such as Sutton Fold and the Frontage Land to Glass Futures.

Lisa Harris concluded the presentation by requesting support from the St Helens Growth Board to positively spread the word about all of the opportunities in St Helens to attract further inward investment and buy in for what the Council is trying to achieve through its strategies and programmes. It was emphasised that it is future generations that need to be able to benefit from these exciting opportunities, and this is a major driver for the St Helens Inclusive Growth Strategy.

Decision: The Board noted the item and thanked Lisa Harris for the presentation.

7. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Sean Traynor explained the importance of the varied communities in St Helens and the Council's current approach to engagement, inviting a discussion on how the St Helens Growth Board can help bring together businesses, organisations and individuals to attract investment, business and visitors to St Helens, with reflections also invited on the previous Ambassador programme/ network.

With regards to the previous Ambassador programme/network, it was highlighted that several independent networking forums have been successfully established since and Board Members considered it unnecessary for the St Helens Growth Board to reestablish the Ambassador programme/network nor to create a new initiative; instead the St Helens Growth Board should work with existing networks and signpost businesses to them as appropriate.

Sean Traynor also explained that St Helens Borough Council is scheduled to undertake a review of its current 'Place Branding' and suggested that the Growth Board consider involvement in its development.

Decision: The Board agreed to develop a Communication & Engagement Plan and nominate a Board Member to participate in the St Helens Borough Council 'Place Branding' review.

8. RESOURCING

Lisa Harris further explained the resourcing arrangements for the St Helens Growth Board as outlined in the Terms of Reference (Item 3 relates), specifically the role of Rachael Buckley (Partnerships Officer) and Programme Leads in St Helens Borough Council Growth Delivering Prosperity Team. Board Members were also asked to consider other people or businesses that could add resource value to the activities of the Board, and Aston Fuller suggested engagement with John Wailing (LCRCA).

Decision: The Board noted the item.

9. NEXT STEPS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair asked Board Members to consider the information received during the inaugural meeting, which provided a broad overview/baseline, and share any thoughts about the next steps for the St Helens Growth Board.

A suggestion was made that future meetings could focus on a specific theme of regeneration and examples included the impact of health (particularly mental health) on employment; how to address the inequalities gap; and raising aspirations of young people.

It was also suggested that the Growth Board consider a particular set of actions from the St Helens Inclusive Growth Strategy in detail at a future meeting.

Reference was made to the LCR Fair Employment Charter, and a query raised as to whether the St Helens Growth Board could explore a pledge for St Helens Borough (e.g., spend local, offer good jobs for good wages, etc.) at a future meeting.

A suggestion was also made that the Growth Board engage with local FE colleges over a refresh of curriculum, to ensure courses are delivering the skills that local and future growth businesses need.

In addition to engagement with local FE colleges (as represented by membership on the St Helens Growth Board) it was suggested that engagement takes place with universities in the City Region to support the attraction of graduates to the Borough.

Decision: The Chair thanks Board Members for their suggestions and Rachael Buckley will ensure related items are included with the agendas for future meetings of the St Helens Growth Board, noting that the next meeting is to be held in January 2024 and Rachael Buckley will contact Board Members to confirm arrangements.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair invited any items under AOB and, with none being received, the Chair thanked all attendees before closing the meeting.