

Boltons Town Board

Minutes

Wednesday 27th March 2024 11:30am – 12:30pm

Artillery Room, 1st Floor, North Side, Albert Halls, Bolton Town Hall, BL1 1RU / Microsoft Teams.

Attendees

Councillor Nick Peel	Leader, Bolton Council
Sue Johnson	Chief Executive, Bolton Council
Jon Dyson	Director of Place, Bolton Council
Yasmin Qureshi (YQ)	MP Bolton South East
Councillor Debbie Newall	Kearsley
Councillor Nadeem Ayub	Farnworth North
Councillor Paul Saunders (CPS)	Farnworth & Kearsley First
Paul Whittingham (PW)	Bolton Council
Dwayne Lowe (DL)	Bolton Council
Anita Boardman (AB)	AFG Law
Nicholas Bonson	GMP
Helen Clayton	Bolton CVS
Dawn Yates Obe	Bolton CVS
Noel Sharpe	Bolton at Home
Roddy Gauld (RG)	Octagon Theatre
Tim Vaughan (TV)	Moorgarth
Scott Mallinson	Capital and Centric
Patrick Hickey	Hive-Projects
Kelly Rodgers	GM Moving
Alexander Maynar	GMCA
Matthew Sharrocks	Bolton Council
Michille Hilton	Bolton Council
Peter Entwistle	Bolton Council
Samantha Elliott	Bolton Council
Peter Bright	Bolton Council
Cathy Palmer	Bolton Council / Walker Sime
Grace Popplewell	Business and Trade
Callum Heaps	Business and Trade
David Kelly	Farnworth Health Centre
Cassey Harper (Minutes)	Bolton Council

1. Welcome and Housekeeping

Paul Whittingham started the meeting – advised on housekeeping.

2. Introductions

Paul Whittingham started introductions around the table and on MS/Teams.

Anita Boardman gave an introduction of herself, she started as a junior secretary at AFG law 34 years ago and is now the co-director, she decided to pursue to be president of the Bolton Law Society 2 years ago, she then met Sue Johnson within this role due to clients coming to her with Town Centre enquiries, Anita wasn't able to assist them due to not having the connections or knowledge on what was happening within the Town Centre, Anita reached out to Sue Johnson and asked if a line of communication could be opened up between herself and the Council to be able to give more information and be involved with the Town Centre projects. Sue Johnson then offered Anita the current role of the Towns Board Chair.

Sue Johnson commented that Anita shares a real passion for Bolton and that she is in no doubt the Towns Board will be a great success.

3. Appointment of Chair

Anita was nominated by Cllr Paul Saunders and seconded by Yasmin Qureshi MP.

4. Appointment of Deputy Chair

Anita is open to suggestions for Deputy Chair.

PW advised the previous towns board deputy chair was Deputy Dr Baroness Helen Newlove.

5. Terms of Reference

TOR have been Circulated, the members list will be updated on this due to slight amendments and will be recirculated with the minutes from today's meeting.

6. Background

Farnworth has been selected by the Government to be part of its Long-Term Plan for Towns programme. This means that a grant of £20m will be available over the next ten years to develop and deliver a long-term plan for the regeneration of Farnworth.

The funding is allocated evenly over the ten years and unlike schemes like the Towns Deal and Future High Street Fund which were to fund capital projects (typically large-scale building works), 25% can be spent on revenue projects such as events and workshops.

Farnworth is expected to produce an investment plan for the funding and submit it to Government for approval by 1st August 2024. The plan is expected to address issues identified in the attached dataset and be heavily influenced and driven by the local community. There is also an expectation that the plan will deliver a portfolio of projects of varying scale and not be limited to a small number of major building works.

Within the functions of the board Paul Whittingham highlighted that there will be a need to bring reports back to the government for the outputs of all the various funding streams to ensure we are complying with the investment plan from the government.

With Bolton being part of the new path finder program, being one of the 10 Councils, we will have the opportunity to feedback on the positives and negatives.

Anita would like to see the private sector more involved with the Towns Board, she has people/businesses in mind who she knows would be like to be involved and would like to offer them an invite to be on the board to be included to have there say also.

All in agreement with the Chair.

7. Progress Since Last Towns Board and Simplification Pathfinder Pilot

Peter Bright shared presentation.

Peter Bright advised the program shows rationalizing of the funding streams on the regen front. The presentation shows all streams on funding and goes into detail giving an update on each specific project, ending on slides advising on the next steps.

The Program however doesn't include the long-term plan for Farnworth.

Paul Whittingham advised this due to ensuring the protection of the Farnworth funding, the funding must be spent on Farnworth which is why this isn't included in the program.

.7. Questions

Roddy Guald asked if there would be any opportunity within the funding for any monies to be spent on the aquarium. As this potentially will also bring further footfall to the town.

Paul Whittingham and Jon Dyson advised at this moment in time the focus is still to prioritize the projects that are in the pipeline currently, but this is not to say any future funding can't be secured to help deliver more projects within the town centre including the aquarium.

8. Long Term Plan for Farnworth

- **Presentation by Cathy Palmer**

Cathy Palmer gave an introduction of herself, Cathy advised she is here to help guide Bolton through the investment of the long-term plan for Farnworth, advising there is a defined timeline in place and will be presenting a presentation today to give a briefing on the investment plan.

The Initiative of this was announced last year, 55 towns were allocated October 2023 this has now increased to 75 towns, the funding of £20m will be available over the next ten years to develop and deliver a long-term plan for the regeneration of Farnworth, advising there are also thoughts in looking at if the funding streams can be used to compliment other linked projects with the Town Centre.

The vision statement for Farnworth is highly important, the masterplan was done back in 2018/19.

Cathy advised we need to come together to discuss what makes Farnworth unique.

Cathy and Peter are happy to have individual / group sessions with colleagues for any ideas on the visions, they are also preparing for a community engagement event after the elections in May to bring together the community.

Paul Whittingham advised the distribution of funding is currently split equal over the 10 years however, there is a need to look at how this can be split and used to work within the town center projects. Work is required to see how best we can maximize the funding.

Paul Whittingham advised we will also be looking at the crime metrics to see what people's conception of crime alongside what the data is tells us. Bethan Dearden from GMP will also join the membership of the towns board moving forward and will be involved in the workshops around this.

Nicholas from GMP has been involved in the street lighting in the Town Centre, where assessments of lighting levels and routes across the town have undertaken, this is due to be completed imminently, and this report can then be shared with the Towns Board, to see what considerations have been considered, and being made aware of what makes people feel safe when walking around the town center.

Paul Whittingham advised we can look at the benefits of this report to use as an opportunity of doing the same in Farnworth.

- **Boundary Change Request**

Going through the legal process through DLUC to agree this. Suggestion to extend to A666 agreed.

- **Adam Hawksbee Visit – 26th April 2024**

Adam Hawksbee is the Chair of the Government's Town Unit charged with helping to deliver the long-term plan for towns programme.

Adam would like to meet with politicians and also local community and local community groups on his visit including to visit a current project, Paul Whittingham advised this will be the Capital and Centric project.

The visit is taking place between 10am and 12pm and invitations will be issued within the next 7 days.

9. Questions

The Chair Anita Boardman asked who the working groups will be aimed at.

Cathy Palmer advised although all colleagues are welcome to attend, this will be aimed more for people in the community.

Cllr Debbie Newall

Has had reservations about the streets for all program, about how this will affect the Kearsley ward, **Cllr Newall would like to pick this up.**

Cllr Debbie Newall asked if there is any potential of a local business holder who has reached out to her, who is a stake holder to be included on the board.

Cathy advised she has a meeting with the gentleman in question later today, then will pick up the Chair Anita Boardman to look at including him on the board.

Noel Sharpe

Noel advised Bolton at Home being the largest Landlord – They do their own Perception surveys / crime surveys – and is happy to share this information with the board and is also happy to facilitate meetings with investment officers.

Bolton at Home also have a Peer Navigator program which recruits within the community, this could be used with an intention to help the facilitate the event scheduled after the May elections.

Cathy will pick up offline with Noel.

Kelly Rodgers- Perceptions around safety, it is important to understand the specifics around the issues and how this impacts people moving in and around Farnworth. GM Moving have been looking at strategic interventions which will have some ideas for Farnworth potentially–

Cathy will pick up offline.

Paul Whittingham advised it would also be good if Kelly can share the document from the meeting Paul attended last week.

Patrick Hickey

Patrick asked if it is for board members to give comments on the project proposals, Cathy advised that the Board will have the opportunity to comment on the project in the emerging Long Term Investment Plan as part of the process.

Grace Popplewell

At this stage the government are content with the proposal of the chair and board structure, however, this is still subject to DLUHC governance checks.

Samatha Elliott

Samantha is working on a project at Moses Gate Park in Farnworth this is a 4-million-pound investment, Banana Enterprise are delivering the project on behalf of the Council, Sam advises this would be interesting to see how the projects align stating a big part of this project is to look at linking Farnworth Green to Moses' Gate Country Park. It was proposed that the boundary be extended to include Moses Gate.

Cllr Paul Saunders

Cllr Saunders seconded the proposal to see if there is a potential of including Moses Gate Park in the boundary and to extend up to the water way on the A666.

He agrees that there is a huge opportunity to look beyond the town center and advises there is a lot of knowledge available between all which is available to be shared.

Cllr feels highly committed to ensure we engage with all the community, to bring awareness of the projects in place.

Cllr advised on a project running in Newbury and Highfield, The Violence Reduction project, this is looking at how to prevent Anti-Social Behavior in Newbury and Highfield, a fund of 200k was funded to cover the period 2024/2026, great organizations are working behind the scenes to pull it together.

Cllr Saunders has some ideas to share –**Cllr Saunders to share contacts by email and engage in the Farnworth Working Group sessions which will be scheduled shortly.**

Paul Whittingham advised the boundary does already stretch into Moses' gate park in 2 sections and advised he is happy to work with the team to get an agreement in place to potentially include Moses Gate Country Park. **All in agreement of this today.**

Yasmin Qureshi

Thanked Cllr Saunders for highlighting the project in Newbury and Highfield, asked for future meetings to be held on Friday were possible. **This has been noted for future meetings.**

10. Next Steps

Paul Whittingham advised the next steps are to produce the detailed accounts of where the monies have been spent and to establish what money we have for the future and what projects to be used on, also to ensure we are concentrating on the outputs to ensure we can demonstrate all the criteria in the investment plan to the government.

Cathy Palmer advises workshops will be set up to engage the community and businesses / colleagues of the board are welcome to join, but not a necessity.

11. Date of Next Meeting

This was provisionally scheduled for 5th July 2024.

The Chair Anita Boardman advised she thinks it would be beneficial to meet earlier than the 5th July. All in agreement for the next board meeting to be held early June 2024. **Cassey Harper to circulate dates.**