STOCKPORT MDC

DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting: **Meeting of the Board of the Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation**

Date: **26 March 2025**

Time: **10.30am – 12.30pm**

Place: **Stockport MDC Office, 4-6 Grand Central, Stockport, SK1 3TA**

Present:

Board Members
Simon Marshall (Private Sector Board Member) – Chair
Cllr Mark Hunter (Leader of Stockport Council and Liberal Democrat Group Leader)
Cllr David Meller (Labour Group Leader – Stockport Council) (remotely)
Cllr Anna Charles-Jones (Independent Ratepayers Group Leader – Stockport Council)
Michael Cullen (Chief Executive - Stockport Council)
Danielle Gillespie (Director – Homes England)
Andrew MacIntosh (Director of Place – Greater Manchester Combined Authority)
Dr Louise Brooke-Smith, OBE (Private Sector Board Member)
Debbie Francis (Private Sector Board Member)

Observers
Cllr Matt Wynne (Edgeley Community Association Group Leader – Stockport Council) (remotely)

Officers of the Corporation
Paul Richards (Chief Executive)
Jonathan Davies (Chief Finance Officer)
Jessica Greenhalgh (Corporation Solicitor until 5.a))
Kate Critchley (Corporation Solicitor from 5.a))
Frances Jones (Head of Strategy and Operations)

1. Election of Chair for the Meeting

1.1 The Chief Executive recommended Simon Marshall to Chair the meeting. The Board unanimously agreed.

1.2 The Chair welcomed those present to the Board meeting of Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC). The Chair also welcomed Catherine Chilvers who had joined to observe the meeting.

1.3 The Board is recommended to agree to exclude the public and press from the meeting, in accordance with Part 1, paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), to consider item 10, 11, 12 and 14 on the agenda.

1.4 The Board agreed that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of item 10, 11, 12 and 14 on the agenda in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), in that such items would be likely to involve the disclosure of information relating to the business affairs of the MDC.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Gary Lawson.

3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 Paul Richards declared his directorship of Stockport Hotel Management Company Limited, Stockport Exchange Phase 2 Limited and Stockport Exchange Phase 3 Limited. The companies each have an interest at Stockport Exchange as it lies within the MDC boundary. No further action required.

3.2 Danielle Gillespie declared her position as a board member of ECF (General Partner) Limited (the investor partner and development manager on Stockport 8). No further action required.

3.3 Councillor Anna Charles-Jones declared her position on Stockport Council's Planning and Highways Committee. No further action required.

3.4 There were no other declarations of interest relevant to items on the agenda.

4. Approval of Minutes of the Meeting Held on 5 December 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2025 were accepted as an accurate record.

5. Items of Business

a) Update on Corporation Solicitor

5.1 Frances Jones (Head of Strategy and Operations) updated the Board to say that Kate Critchley had returned from maternity leave and recommended that she be reappointed as Corporation Solicitor with Jessica Greenhalgh deputising for Kate Critchley when required. The Board unanimously agreed.

5.2 **The Board approved the appointment of Kate Critchley as Corporation Solicitor with Jessica Greenhalgh deputising when required.**

b) **Appointment of MDC Managing Director**

5.3 Catherine Chilvers exited the meeting whilst the Board discussed item 5b). The Chair and Chief Executive updated the Board on the proposed appointment of Catherine Chilvers as Managing Director for the MDC with effect from 9 June 2025. It was noted that Catherine will perform the function of Chief Executive as set out in the Constitution, but her job title is Managing Director. The Board noted that there was a strong field of candidates to choose from and that Catherine had been the outstanding applicant.

5.4 **The Board noted that the Greater Manchester Mayor had been consulted as regards the proposed appointment and approved the appointment of Catherine Chilvers as the Managing Director for the MDC, fulfilling the role of Chief Executive under the Constitution.**

6. Town Centre East Strategic Regeneration Framework

6.1 The Board received a presentation from CBRE and FCB about their work on the Stockport East Strategic Regeneration Framework (**SRF**) outlining the Draft Vision and SRF Objectives, including updates following the recent workshop, the introduction of the Spatial Vision, and five key strategic moves across three neighbourhoods. The update confirmed the draft SRF would be released for public consultation by end of April, taking it to Stockport Council's Cabinet for approval in autumn and extension of the MDC area progressing in parallel.

6.2 The Board discussed concerns around the framing of car-free neighbourhoods, flagging that we are not seeking to impose a car-free neighbourhood and emphasising the need for balanced messaging. CBRE clarified the intent is to create people friendly, accessible environments, which will be supported by input from an accessibility consultant to align with all people's needs.

6.3 The Board discussed the strategic positioning of BNG emphasising the need to highlight its benefits to developers, align with the Council's policy and ensure clear framing across the whole site, noting there is both the East and West compliment.

6.4 The Boad supported the ambition to open-up the river as an underutilised asset but stressed the need to address flood risks, discussing design solutions and ongoing engagement with United Utilities and the Environment Agency. The Board stressed the importance of clear public communication, particularly given local scepticism around existing flood infrastructure.

6.5 The Board welcomed plans for Fred Perry Way and suggested linking it to wider improvements around Lancashire Hill.

6.6 The Board discussed the location of future amenities within the framework, noting the need for flexibility, emphasised the importance of balancing ambition with realistic deliverability, identifying key catalytic sites to prioritise for early engagement with government.

7. Proposed Expansion of the Mayoral Development Area

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7.1 Frances Jones (Head of Strategy and Operations) provided a verbal update on the proposed expansion of the Mayoral Development area, confirming that papers have been taken to Stockport Council's Cabinet for endorsement of the proposal to expand the boundary which involves consultation that will run in parallel with the SRF consultation. It was confirmed that this is a statutory instrument process and clarity is being sought from MHCLG to clarify whether it is a single or a bolt on process as there is no clear provision to expand the area.

8. External Governance Review, Findings and Response

8.1 Kate Critchley (Corporation Solicitor) presented the findings of the external governance review conducted by Manchester City Council, noting good practice with recommendations for improvement. It was noted that a copy of the report and an action plan to address each recommendation had been circulated in advance of the meeting and advised that new annual register of interest forms would be issued following the meeting.

8.2 The Board found the traffic light system in the action plan helpful and discussed the 'orange' recommendations, which indicate essential actions. The Board discussed the status of each of the essential actions, noting an annual report will be separated from the SBP going forward to align with the recommendations.

9. Draft Strategic Business Plan, 2025-30

9.1 Frances Jones (Head of Strategy and Operations) provided an update on the draft Strategic Business Plan, 2025-30, highlighting its alignment with expansion proposals, with a final version due to be taken to Stockport Council's Cabinet for approval in June.

9.2 The Board discussed the potential impact of new devolution and planning powers, noting limited immediate effect but the need to monitor developments. Reflections were shared on delivery barriers and the importance of maintaining momentum, particularly around investment packaging and engagement with the government on social infrastructure.

9.3 **The Board:**

9.3.1 approved the content of the SPB (subject to it being updated and finalised by the elected Chair pursuant to 9.3.2); and

9.3.2 authorised the elected Chair to finalise the SPB;

9.3.3 approved the adoption of the SPB, subject to further approval by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.

10. Draft Annual Action Plan, 2025-26 (Confidential)

Minutes contained in confidential appendix.

11. Delivering the Strategic Business Plan Update Report (Confidential)

Minutes contained in confidential appendix.

12. Communications Update (Confidential)

Minutes contained in a confidential appendix.

13. Chair Recruitment

The Board was informed that the application process for Chair candidates had closed, with a shortlist of six individuals from both public and private sectors. Candidate details will be circulated once formalised, with interviews expected after Easter. It was noted that no conflicts have been identified that would delay appointment.

14. Risk Register (Confidential)

Minutes contained in a confidential appendix.

15. Any Other Business

The Boad noted that it was Councillor Hunter's last Board meeting, Councillor Hunter expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to work with the Board and wished the MDC every continued success. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked Councillor Hunter for his passion, commitment and valuable contribution.

16. Close of Meeting

The meeting ended at 12.30pm.