Todmorden Town Deal Board Meeting
Minutes of the meeting held Thursday 27th February 2025
Todmorden Community College

Attendees
Pam Warhurst (Chair)
Josh Fenton-Glynn (MP)
Cllr Denis Skelton
Cllr Silvia Dacre
Cllr Helen Brundell
Kerry Wheelwright-Lee
Esther Ferry-Kerrington
Tony Lawson
Keith Brealey
Gareth Marshall
Amna Nisah

Others in attendance
Cllr Susan Press
Cllr Sarah Courtney
Kate McNicholas
Rob Shipway
Zakariya Ali
Frankie Mullen
Karen Houghton
Steven Curry
Adrian Gill
Ella King

1. Welcome to the meeting

a. Apologies

No apologies were received.

b. Confirmation of quorum

The meeting was declared quorate.

c. Declarations of interest

Cllr DS declared an interest in the Centre Vale Park project.

2. Minutes of the meeting held 13th February 2025

The minutes were declared a true record of the meeting.

a. Matters arising

FM confirmed that Board members have been added to Programme communications distribution list.

3. Riverside

KH and SC presented to the Board. SC provided background to the project, setting out the need for investment in modern facilities to support greater use of the site and more inclusive sports.

Turning to the project budget, SC suggested the Board had been misinformed about a potential £500,000 budget shortfall and noted that contrary to reports to the Board external funding had been considered but that the surprise general election meant that a potential bid to the Community Ownership Fund could not be pursued.

SC explained how the business case had been submitted in 2022 since when inflation had peaked at 11%. This necessitated project adjustments and UCVR suggested the removal of the bunkhouse, which would save costs but leave most outputs intact.

Other unforeseen costs included biodiversity net gain (BNG) compliance which cost £80,000. Changes in building regulations resulted in a 4-5% cost increase. The original business case did not include a café but was now included as it could generate jobs and replace other outcomes. The project was still expected to be delivered by March 2026. Without the project, scouting, sports activities, and the annual agricultural show would be lost. Football participation had increased fivefold, demonstrating strong community interest.

SC and KH left the meeting, and the Board discussed the project. Board members raised several concerns, including the costs for the Riverside Centre, which some members felt excessive. The Board recognised that cuts were necessary to fall within budget but questioned some of the items withdrawn, notably site lighting which was seen as important for safety, and other cost elements which seemed to adversely impact on the visitor economy ambitions of the project. The effectiveness of project management was also questioned.

It was confirmed that if the project moved forward, a revised business case would be needed and subject to independent assessment. It would then return to the Programme Board and Town Deal Board for approval. Ongoing project risks included Environmental Agency (EA) approval which could take at least two months.

The withdrawal of investment into deliverables for the visitor economy was raised, and the potential impact on the benefit cost ratio. Members were keen that any revised project delivered a strong benefit cost ratio.

The importance of delivering a centre of excellence for all ability cycling was highlighted. Board members expressed concern regarding the role of Empowered People and the level of investment into the cycle track and disabled facilities. The Board supported the original plans for the cycle track extending into the woods at the North of the site, and sought reassurance that disabled parking met the needs of Empowered People and site users.

The Board agreed to support a revised business plan subject to changes in the project to include:

- Extension of the cycle track to the woods
- Inclusion of site lighting
- Investment in site infrastructure for the visitor economy
- Review of disabled parking provision
- Liaison with the UCVR Board to discuss project adjustments, costs, and future project management and monitoring
- Renewed stakeholder engagement with Empowered People and football users
- Independent assessment of revised proposals including Benefit Cost ratio.

4. Active Todmorden

Area	Status	Cost	Cost
A- Centre Vale Park Lighting	On track	£153,000	
B- Vicarage Gardens to Centre Vale Park (School area)	On track	£579,175	
C- Route 66 Crossing and NCN66 upgrade	Further work to assess viability		£150,400
D- Tipside (NCN66)	On track	£360,351	
E- Station Approach	Further work to assess viability		£180,854
F- Ridge Road & Rise Lane	Further work to assess viability		£245,121
G- Halifax Road Cycle Connection	Remove from scope		£199,938
H- Wetland Improvements- Centre Vale Park	Remove from scope		£60,000
I- Cycle Storage and Wayfinding	On track	£30,000	
TOTAL		£1,122,526*	£836,313*

Ella King (EK) provided a presentation on the Active Todmorden project (slides attached). This started with a reminder of the outputs and the work done so far since the decision was made to progress with the Walking Improvement Proposal in late

2024. Since design work has progressed on each area there has been some issues uncovered during CMBC internal engineer and road safety reviews.

Each area was discussed with an overview of the intervention, the cost and any issues arising. All areas were then RAG (red, amber, green) rated on their deliverability vs cost.

Areas rated as ‘green/on track’ were Centre Vale Park lighting (Area A), Vicarage Gardens to Centre Vale Park (new crossing outside Tod C of E school- Area B) and Tipside resurface (Area D).

Further work was required at Route 66 crossing and NCN upgrade (Area C), Station Approach (Area E) and Ridge Road/Rise Lane junction improvements (Area F). These areas were rated as ‘amber/further work to assess viability’.

Areas assessed as ‘red/remove from scope’ were Halifax Road cycle connection (Area G) and Wetlands Area, Centre Vale Park (Area H) due to issues with deliverability and cost.

EK proposed another opportunity if funds are available once the scope has reduced; CMBC have been working in collaboration with the Canal & Rivers Trust to look at designs for a resurface of the Rochdale Canal from Todmorden Town centre to the Calderdale boundary. This collaboration has ensured accurate cost estimates, and a solid delivery plan has been provided. Previous consultation events have shown strong public support for the resurface of the canal, which can be completed within the required timeframe. The work has been divided into smaller phases, with additional phases included in other CMBC funding bids. Phase 1 will cover 1.52km from Todmorden Town Centre to Hollins Road, Walsden.

The project budget is now £2.57 million. Next steps included finalising detailed designs and progressing park lighting installations.

The Board recommended proceeding with the green areas outlined in the chart above while removing the red areas from the project scope. The board provided a strong steer and strong support for the Phase 1 canal towpath resurface.

Action: Zak to circulate the presentation.

5. Project budget pressures

The Board received an update on the process and potential for reallocating funds via the Council’s pathfinder pilot status. This included recommendations for the movement of resources across different projects from the Todmorden Programme Board.

Budget shortfalls have been identified for Public Places in the Heart of Todmorden, the Hippodrome, Centre Vale Park, Todmorden College Community Learning Hub, and Riverside.

Councillor DS declared an interest as a representative of Todmorden Council. It was noted that Centre Vale Park had been successful in securing significant match funding and had delivered value engineering but still faced a shortfall of £70,000.

Todmorden College had reported a shortfall of £50,000 with the cost for windows higher than anticipated.

The shortfall for Riverside had not yet been fully determined and had been the subject of discussion earlier in the meeting.

At the Hippodrome, a shortfall of £300,000 was reported based on the full ambition for the project. However, the programme outputs can be delivered, and the additional works could not be completed within the programme period. It was also noted that the applicant was working with the Community Foundation to seek loan support.

The Programme Board had considered the funding gaps, and the potential funds released because of the revised Active Todmorden project costs. The Programme Board had recommended to prioritise support for Public Places and Centre Vale Park. The Board agreed that this decision aligned well with the overall strategic vision and endorsed the Programme Board's decision to allocate £600,000 to Public Places and £70,000 to Centre Vale Park.

6. Any other business

There was no other business.

7. Date of the next meeting

10th April 2025.