



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

15 September 2021

Report Title:

Place Board

Cabinet Portfolio

Council Leader

Cabinet Member

Councillor David Baines

Exempt Report

No

Reason for Exemption

N/A

Key Decision

No

Public Notice issued

N/A

Wards Affected

All

Report of

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Borough priorities	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	
	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	x
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	x
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	x
	Be a responsible Council	x

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report brings forward proposals to review the current economy-based governance arrangements disbanding the current Economy Board and replacing with a St Helens Place Board. It is anticipated that this adaptation will provide improved strategic oversight and a framework to facilitate inclusive growth across the Borough.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Cabinet is recommended to:

- i) **Note and endorse the work of the Economy Board and the Ambassadors Programme;**
- ii) **Rename the Economy Board as the St Helens Place Board and expand its remit as outlined in paragraphs 4.11 to 4.16 of this report;**
- iii) **Agree the St Helens Place Board Terms of Reference outlined at Appendix A.**

3. Purpose of this Report

- 3.1 This report provides Cabinet with the background to the current place-based governance arrangements including the St Helens Economy Board and the Ambassadors Network and provides a summary of their successes to date.
- 3.2 The report follows a formal review of the current arrangements and functions and proposes establishing an overarching St Helens Place Board (to supersede the St Helens Economy Board) together with the subsequent development of a St Helens Inclusive Growth Plan.

4. Background /Reasons for the recommendations

Economy Board and Ambassadors Programme

- 4.1. In February 2017 Cabinet approved the establishment of an Economy Board. Its role was to lead the economic rejuvenation of St. Helens. It was tasked with leading an approach based on

behaviours that grasped opportunity. The Economy Board was supported by the establishment of an Ambassador Network which was a forum for businesses within St. Helens.

4.2. The St Helens Economy Board, made up of key private sector leaders, was duly established in April 2017. The Board was tasked with changing perceptions and promoting St Helens, helping to grow the economy. They were supported in this endeavour by the publication of the St Helens Story which set out the narrative for St Helens, the Invest St Helens' website and the formation of a Place Delivery Team to support the work. The Economy Board has had significant success to date, which has included:

- Leading the design, development and delivery of Place promotion in St Helens.
- Coordinating and influencing other organisations activity in support of Place promotion.
- Board members have undertaken specific roles in supporting Invest St Helens and Ambassador events to drive enthusiasm and foster the support of partners.
- Provided support to St Helens Council and the Ambassador Programme.
- Created the Ambassadors Network and encouraged recruitment of over 150 business members.
- Held several large events, each attended by over 100 people from a range of sectors.
- Successfully running bi-monthly networking forums since 2018.
- Launched the School Ambassadors programme delivering multiple events and projects.
- Enabled and supported the launch of Invest St Helens Place branding and narrative.
- Developed the initial Town Centre vision and Objectives.
- Created the Invest St Helens Website.
- Created the St Helens Story book, Town Centre brochures, logistics literature.
- Held Invest St Helens Business Awards in 2018 and 2019.
- Instrumental in securing support for Glass Futures and identifying the location.
- Securing promotional imagery, photography, videos and case studies.
- Commissioned educational programme 'The Canary Sings' published in the British Library.

4.3. The Ambassadors Programme created by the Economy Board are a group of public, private and voluntary sector organisations who make a commitment to raising aspiration and ambition in St Helens. The Ambassador's Programme is a self-financing network which has gone from strength to strength in the first three years, and now has over 150 members. They have supported the Council's ambitions, helping to promote apprenticeships, raise aspiration of school children and build a bridge between business and the St Helens community. Achievements have included;

- Acted as the sales force for St Helens, championing the borough as a place to live, work, study and invest.
- Attending networking events and meetings,
- Established sub-groups such as the Haydock Industrial Estate network.
- Supported the School Ambassadors Programme
- Providing work programmes for young people
- Enabled a central network of business engagement.
- Raised significant funding to support Covid based activity.
- Supported Christmas events for Care Leavers
- Provided digital equipment for disadvantaged school children during Covid pandemic.

Changing Economic Environment

4.4. The Covid pandemic has created significant challenges for the business base and economy of St Helens, it has highlighted more than ever, the need for the Borough to work together in

partnership so as to ensure our economy recovers and reset to the new economic conditions. In an attempt to support the business base, the Economy Board took a decision in June 2020 to waive all membership fees to the Ambassadors Programme for the year ahead. This decision was taken to demonstrate support to Ambassadors in their own recovery journey. This initiative was well received by members and has prompted a surge in new businesses, schools and voluntary organisations signing up to the programme.

- 4.5. The Invest St Helens platform is governed by the St Helens Economy Board, which has to date been chaired by Eamonn McManus, Chairman of St Helens Rugby League Club. The Chair is joined on the board by other private sector business leaders, all of whom have close links to St Helens. In December 2020, the Chair took the decision to step down from the position.
- 4.6. The Economy Board has achieved many of its aims since its inception, however the landscape has changed significantly in the last 12 months. The focus of the Economy Board was on economic growth, whereas it is recognised that if we are to recover and meet our true potential then growth will need to take many different forms. It is proposed that Cabinet recognise the opportunity that is presented to refocus, remobilise and repurpose St. Helens. With the adoption of the St Helens Borough Strategy in March 2020 providing an overarching strategic framework for partnership forum arrangements.
- 4.7. In addition to the Chairs decision there has been other significant change over the last 18 months these have included; economic changes, the establishment of a partnership with English Cities Fund (ECF), the development of the Town Deal Board, the adoption of the Borough's Economic Recovery Plan and the reorganisation of the Place Directorate. These changes appear to have provided a natural juncture for the Council and our partners to take stock, review, and consider the most appropriate arrangements to guide the new challenges and shape developments as we move ahead in the next chapter for St Helens.
- 4.8. There is a recognition that whilst growth has been achieved, the gap in some communities is at risk of widening and therefore there is a renewed imperative to ensure that there is a greater emphasis on the achievement of inclusive growth that incorporates social outcomes and community cohesion. Previously the Economy Board was tasked with leading a change in behaviours to grasp opportunity that came along, which was successful, and the Borough now has several significant physical growth opportunities. The future challenge will be to drive the delivery of these programmes to ensure quality place and people outcomes are achieved.
- 4.9. The Councils adoption of a challenging Climate Change target also necessitates the promotion of a green recovery. If we are to recover quickly and deliver green growth, we must plan for the right quality and quantum of development, promoting St Helens nationally and internationally to secure and deliver the right opportunities for the Borough.

Revised Governance arrangements

- 4.10. For the reasons listed in paragraphs 4.7 to 4.9, the proposals are to widen the role of the Economy Board and to replace it with a St Helens Place Board that will oversee a broader place making role. The St Helens Place Board will provide a coherent and collective voice for Place based activity in St Helens. It will coordinate partnership activity to deliver the St Helens Borough Strategy and it will provide help and support for the delivery of the St Helens Local Plan "A Balanced Plan for A Better Future". In addition, it will support the implementation of the St Helens Economic Reset and Recovery Plan and the development of a long-term Inclusive Growth Strategy.

- 4.11. The Place Board will be responsible for the communication of growth in the Borough and for the promotion of opportunity to national and international stakeholders. They will act in an advisory capacity to St Helens Council, The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 4.12. The Place Board will demonstrate the collaborative #St Helens together approach by creating a forum where the public, private and voluntary sectors can meet and collaborate for the common aim of delivering place-based growth and people based economic success, to be referred to as Inclusive Growth. The Place Board will establish formal links with the St Helens People Board and with the emerging ICP Place based arrangements.
- 4.13. The Board will oversee delivery across six thematic areas:
- Economic Development
 - Business Engagement
 - Employment and Skills
 - Town Centre Regeneration
 - Housing Development
 - Green Growth
- 4.14. The Board will help to develop strategy in these 6 thematic areas, coordinate partnership activity, drive delivery, assess outcomes and impact and revise plans accordingly so as to support the delivery of inclusive growth in the borough.
- 4.15. These revised arrangements seek to strengthen and build upon the work of the Economy Board to date, reinforce engagement with partners and maximise inclusive growth outcomes in St. Helens. The Place Board will mirror and collaborate with the St Helens People's Board, ensuring cross-membership and representation to ensure a joined-up approach to establishing thriving communities.
- 4.16. The proposed Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix A, they outline the purpose of the Board, its aims and objectives, a proposed membership and the role and responsibility of these members. The Terms of Reference also outline how the Board will be supported by the Council.

5. Community Impact Assessment

- 5.1 The Community Impact Assessment identified that having an overarching Partnership Board whose role it is to oversee the delivery of inclusive growth in the Borough can only help to provide positive outcomes. The board will coordinate partnership activity which will help to remove duplication and facilitate more efficient delivery, thereby improving productivity in the Borough. Inclusive growth will help the Borough to tackle existing inequalities, reduce the risk of the inequalities widening and help to target those most in need.

6 Consideration of Alternatives

- 6.1 In conducting the review of the Governance arrangements the original terms and role of the Economy Boards was considered. It is recognised that many of the aims remain the same, however the limited membership of the Economy Board and its narrow focus has at times meant that the wider partnership has been blind to its achievements. In addition, the review has taken the opportunity to consider a range of governance and partnership arrangements elsewhere across the country. The Place Board is proposed as the best way forward to meet the aim of Inclusive Growth for St Helens.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 This report proposes revising the current Economic based governance arrangements to widen them to become more place based in nature. It proposes the establishment of a St Helens Place Board to provide a coherent and collective voice for Place based activity in St Helens. It will coordinate Place based partnership activity to deliver the St Helens Borough Strategy and it will provide help and support for the delivery of the St Helens Local Plan “A Balanced Plan for A Better Future”. The Board will; develop the placed based strategic framework, coordinate partnership activity, monitor delivery, assess outcomes and impact to deliver the St Helens Economic reset and recovery Plan.

8. Implications

8.1 Legal Implications

- 8.1.1 No decision making or statutory function of the Council will be delegated to the Place Board. Legal advice has been sought in drafting the terms of reference for the Board. The Board will be registered on the Council’s register of partnerships.

8.2 Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications

8.2.1 Social Value

- 8.2.1.1 Inclusive growth has social value at its heart and the Board will oversee the delivery of social value outcomes across all development in the Borough.

8.2.2 Sustainability and Environment

- 8.2.2.1 The Board will provide the Climate Change Commission with a forum to discuss proposals across the wider St Helens Partnership and will help to increase green growth activity assisting the Borough to meet its zero-carbon emissions target.

8.2.3 Health and Wellbeing

- 8.2.3.1 The adoption of an inclusive growth approach will influence a significant number of wider determinants of health such as employment, skills, and quality of place. The inclusion of a representative from Public Health on the Board will provide a link to the People’s Board thereby ensuring a more coherent approach to Place based activity.

8.2.4 Equality and Human Rights

- 8.2.4.1 There will be no adverse Equality and Human rights issues. Recruitment to the Board will be mindful to have a balanced membership that reflects the population of the Borough.

8.3 Customers and Resident

- 8.3.1 The adoption of a partnership approach to oversee the delivery of inclusive growth should have a positive impact on customers and residents as service delivery will become more coordinated. Communicating the success of this partnership approach will help to develop further the St Helens Together ethos.

8.4 Asset and Property

8.4.1 There will be no direct impact on assets in the Council ownership by the proposals within this report. However, the Place Board and new governance arrangements will provide a forum for more strategic approach to asset disposal and development.

8.5 Staffing and Human Resource

8.5.1 The Place Board will require administration and officer support which will be provided through the provision of a dedicated Partnership Support Officer. This post will be created through the Place Directorate re-organisation. Human Resource support will assist with the formation of the role, the job evaluation and recruitment.

8.6 Risks

8.6.1 These changes will build on the success of the existing arrangements. The proposal is to retain the existing Ambassador arrangements but provide a broader partnership forum for them to sit beneath. It will be important to have a communication plan for the launch of the Board to keep exiting partners engaged and to encourage new members. Stakeholder engagement will be an important element of the implementation phase.

8.7 Finance

8.7.1 The current Economy Board members are volunteers, not remunerated for their roles and there is no proposal to change this situation. There are no direct financial impacts although the provision of a dedicated Partnership Support Officer is required, it is proposed this will be funded by the Place Directorate re-organisation.

8.8 Policy Framework Implications

8.8.1 The proposals in this report will contribute to the delivery of the Borough Strategy, the Board will also provide formal partnership oversight and implementation for a number of place-based strategies including but not limited to the St Helens Growth Plan, Housing Strategy, Economic Strategy, Employment and Skills Strategy, Transport Plan and Economic Recovery Plan.

9. **Background papers**

Cabinet report Jan 2017

<http://moderngov.sthelens.gov.uk/documents/s60899/FINAL%20REPORT.pdf>

Cabinet report Feb 2017

<http://moderngov.sthelens.gov.uk/documents/s62807/22.02.17%20Cabinet%20-%20Growing%20the%20Economy%20-%20Governance.pdf>

Cabinet report Sept 2017

<http://moderngov.sthelens.gov.uk/documents/s67636/Cabinet%20-%20Growing%20the%20Economy.pdf>

10. **Appendices**

Appendix A St Helens Place Board Terms of Reference

St Helens Place Board

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The St Helens Place Board purpose is to provide a coherent and collective voice for Place based activity in St Helens. It will provide a strategic partnership ‘forum to consider the St Helens “A Balanced Plan for a Better Future” Growth Plan (to be referred to as St Helens Growth Plan), to accelerate its delivery and maximise local accountability;

The Place Board will be responsible for the communication of growth in the Borough and for the promotion of opportunity to national and international external stakeholders.

The Place Board will act in a non-decision-making advisory capacity to St Helens Council, The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in respect of the St Helens Growth Plan.

The Place Board will at all times demonstrate a collaborative St Helens Together approach by creating a forum where the public, private and voluntary sectors can meet and collaborate for the common aim of delivering place-based growth and people based economic success.

2. Aims & Objectives.

The Boards aims and objectives are:

- To oversee the creation of a modern, distinctive, economically prosperous and vibrant Borough, in which key environmental assets are protected and enhanced. The Local Plan will play an important role in achieving these aims.
- To act as a consultative body to help shape the delivery and implementation of a strategic framework for inclusive growth and development of the Borough up to 2035, this will include;
 - The St Helens Together Approach – Our Borough Strategy 2021-2030
 - St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020 -2035 A Balanced Plan for a Better Future
 - St Helens Borough Economic Reset & Recovery Plan
 - St Helens Borough Inclusive Growth Strategy (to be developed)
 - St Helens Borough Employment and Skills Strategy (to be developed)
 - St Helens Borough Housing Strategy (under development)
 - St Helens Borough Transport Plan
 - St Helens Borough Climate Change Action Plan
 - St Helens Town Deal Investment Plan
- To facilitate and promote delivery amongst partners of key projects identified within the St Helens Growth Plan and any associated activities.
- To steer the delivery of projects and guide new housing and economic development to ensure they deliver to the expected quality of Place aspirations and the quantity of economic and social outcomes.

- To help shape the investment plans of the Council, other public and voluntary organisations, and the private sector.
- To act as a consultee for Infrastructure projects that require public and private sector involvement, investment and resource.
- To engage with and obtain support from key partners and stakeholders at a strategic level to support delivery of the St Helens Growth Plan.
- To provide a strategic link between St Helens, the Liverpool City Region LEP the Liverpool City region Combined Authority and other appropriate National / sub-National forums;
- To establish formal links between the St Helens Place Board and the St Helens Peoples Board and the Public Health outcomes framework.

3. Membership

Membership of the Board shall be reviewed annually. The constituent members shall include the following;

Leader of St Helens Council	Chair of the Place Board
Chief Executive St Helens Council	Representing the Council
Portfolio Holder Regeneration and Planning	Representing the Council
Portfolio Holder Business Education and Skills	Representing the Council
Shareholder and Chief Financial Officer, SISU Capital	Representing the Investment Markets
Owner and Managing Director Brendon International Ltd	Representing St Helens business
Managing Director NGF Europe	Representing Internationally owned business
Executive Director CBRE	Representing the Property Market

Chief Executive Officer, Glass Futures	Representing Research and Innovation sector
Chair of St Helens Chamber of Commerce	Representing the SME Business Community
Group Chief Executive Officer Torus	Representing Social Housing and Property sector
Principal of St Helens College	Representing Further Education Sector
Principal of Carmel College	Representing Further Education Sector
Homes England	Representing the Housing Sector
Chair of Chairperson of the Combined Authority Transport Committee	Representing Transport Sector
Finance Director Transport for the North	Representing Strategic Transport
Director of Strategic Delivery Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	Representing the Combined Authority
Chief Executive Officer Merseyforest	Representing the Environmental Sector
Director of Public Health	Link to the People Board
Executive Director Place St Helens Council	Representing the Council, Parkside JV and EC Partnership

From time to time, the Chairman may invite 'guests' to present to the Board on specific topics of relevance to the focus of the meeting.

The Board will oversee the formation of task and finish groups whose members will be recruited to the roles appropriate to the task in hand.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

Members have the responsibility to

- Represent their organisation or partnership and to feedback information to the organisation or partnership they represent;
- Inform the Board of their organisations commitment to deliver individual projects;
- Make every effort to prioritise attendance at scheduled meetings and are asked to nominate a relevant substitute from the same organisation or partnership.
- Agree the strategic framework.
- Agree a Five-year delivery plan with annual review.
- Be prepared to represent the Board in the press.
- Ensure a regular flow of relevant information to and from the St Helens Place Board.

5. Meetings

The Board should aim to meet once per quarter or more frequently where required. The dates will be set at the Annual General Meeting of the Board. Decision making will remain in the remit of the constituent organisations and meeting dates should, where possible, coincide with partners' meeting timetables accordingly. Papers will be prepared and published 7 days in advance. Minutes will be taken and published on the Council's website.

6. Resourcing

The administration of the St Helens Place Board will be resourced by the Council. It will have one named partnership officer who will provide administration support and guidance. Meetings will be recorded by the Council's Democratic Services team and the Board will be supported by the Management team of the Place Directorate namely:

- Director of Strategic Growth
- Director of Operations
- Director of Communities
- Assistant Director Property and Economy
- Assistant Director Planning and Regeneration
- Assistant Director Housing
- Assistant Director Infrastructure
- Assistant Director Environment

7. Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually but may be amended in the interim to reflect changing priorities and resources.