

Minutes of the Northstowe Delivery Group held in Northstowe on  
Friday, 11 November 2022 at 12.00 p.m.

**Group Members in attendance:**

Bill Handley,  
Paul Littlemore  
Richard Owen  
Firouz Thompson

**Others in attendance:**

Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Anne Ainsworth	Chief Operating Officer
Sophie Gerrish	Executive Assistant
Mark Nokkert	Clerk to Northstowe Town Council

**1. INTRODUCTIONS**

Apologies were noted from the two local members: Cllr Tom Bygott and Cllr Natalie Warren-Green. Those present introduced themselves. The Chair, Bill Handley, stated that he wanted the meetings to be informal.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND ACTIONS ARISING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September were agreed as a correct record subject to the amendment of the word “Board” to “Group” throughout.

It was agreed that discussion on updating residents about the community facilities would take place later in the meeting.

**3. BACKGROUND TO THE NORTHSTOWE DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting when the two newly elected councillors, Cllr Tom Bygott and Cllr Natalie Warren-Green would be present.

**4. UPDATES**

**Terms of reference**

Anne Ainsworth reported that the Committee’s terms of reference had been amended following the last meeting. Invitations to partners/other relevant organisations to attend the Committee would be decided on an issue by issue basis at the previous meeting. Meetings would be held monthly until February, when this arrangement would be reviewed.

Moving forward it may be that some meetings were held virtually, for the moment all meetings would be arranged as face to face in Northstowe.

**Communications**

It was noted that the work of the Group and the progress being made on delivering facilities at Northstowe should be communicated to residents. It would be important to keep reviewing how this is best done. The group also wanted time to consider how issues were presented, for example, it may be that joint communications with Homes England would be useful on developments such as the Town Centre and Civic Hub.

### **Meeting between Mayor and Leader**

It was noted that the Leader of the District Council had regular meetings with the Mayor of Northstowe. All agreed that it was important for local members to be kept informed of any Northstowe-related discussions. It was noted that the Leader had agreed to attend future meetings of the Group as appropriate.

### **Community building**

Anne Ainsworth updated the Group on the progress being made on the building of the interim community building. The planning application was scheduled for Planning Committee on 8 February 2023. The Group asked that we remember that these interim buildings will be used for 3 years, and it is important that we continue to remind the community of that.

It was recognised that this required a lot of work within a very tight timescale. Anne Ainsworth was clear that the planning application may slip to the following month, but that it was important to keep momentum and push as much as possible to submit a good application for planning as soon as practicable.

Paul Littlemore mentioned that sometimes delays in builds are not due to the submission for Planning but related to the number of conditions applied to the build. It can take time for these to be signed off. Paul asked that this be considered when the planning application is being put together and as part of the PPA process agreed with the LPA.

Anne Ainsworth reported that some contractors specialising in modular builds had indicated that they could erect a building in an 8 week timescale from the date of planning. This meant that a Spring opening would be possible. However, ground works investigations are being undertaken and it was too early to report on the outcomes of the Expressions of Interest process.

The Group discussed the need to inform residents which facilities were temporary and which were permanent.

### **Phase 1 – Enterprise Zone**

It was noted that the Business Survey was due to close on 14 November. Anne Ainsworth agreed to ask Kate Swan if the fact that only a third of respondents have asked for further updates was typical for a survey of this kind.

### **Phase 1 – Sports Pavilion**

Work had started on site and was due to complete in the Summer of 2023.

### **Phase 2 – Civic Hub**

It was agreed that Northstowe Town Council needed to be involved in the design of this building, as the Council meetings would be held here. It was noted that this was a complex project, which involved many partners. Councillor Firouz Thompson suggested that this project should have a “red” instead of an “amber” RAG rating, as it seemed unlikely to meet its original target date.

## **5. COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Work plan**

Anne Ainsworth explained that a work plan was being drawn up showing what was expected to happen over the next three months or so.

### **Community Forum**

It was agreed that the work of the Forum should be included on the Northstowe website, possibly in bullet points, listing what was discussed and any action points.

It was noted that less had been communicated recently, as the Council had been in a pre-election period due to the recent by-elections.

Communications would be added to future agendas as an item. The group discussed the comms concerning the times of future meetings and minutes' sharing a summary of delivery timescales; agreeing some 'key principles' for communications; including the Pavilion in the local newsletter and on SCDC and community pages; bullet points from highlight reports; and an overview of any changes that occur (and an explanation of why). The group felt it was important to always tell people 'the Plan B' so that if things do change, residents know that plans are in place.

## **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Community Forum**

It was agreed that the Group should discuss the format of the Forum at the next Group meeting. Issues raised included:

- The need to address lowering attendance.
- Suitability of venue.
- The need to ensure public attendees can engage with the meeting, without it becoming a free-for-all.
- The need for more flexibility with the agenda.
- Partners should not feel obliged to give an update if little had changed since the last meeting.
- The question was raised as to how the session could become more of a conversation, rather than a download of information.
- They could be more about 'themes' rather than just an update based on previous agendas – for example, there could be a shared item on the Town Centre and Civic Hub by the Council and Homes England.
- There could be time 5-6pm for partner agencies to meet with each other and build connections
- The agendas could be reduced to focus on key issues

## **7. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

The date of the next meeting was to be agreed.

---

**The Meeting ended at 1.20 p.m.**

---