

MINUTES OF CHEADLE TOWNS FUND BOARD MEETING

Date	2 nd October 2026	
Venue	MS Teams	
Present	Board Members Brian Bradley - Chair, Director, Cowgills Sharon Seville - President, GM Chamber (Stockport) Cllr Ian Hunter - Cheadle West & Gatley Cllr Cllr. David Meller - Cheadle East & Cheadle Hulme North Cllr Robert Botwright - Procurement Director, Circle Health Simon Elliott - Network Director - Rail, TfGM Observers / Presenters Matt Jones - Head of Capital Delivery, SMBC Paul Batho - Development Manager, SMBC Matthew Worman - Head of Rail Integration, TfGM Christopher Palmiotto - Programme Support Manager, DfT Louis Manifould - Regeneration Officer, SMBC	
Apologies	Paul Richards - Deputy Chief Executive, SMBC Tom Morrison MP - Member of Parliament, Cheadle ward	
	Item	Actions
1.	Welcome and Introductions	
	Introductions and apologies received.	
2.	Conflicts of Interest and Declarations Register	
	No conflicts were declared by those present.	
3.	Actions from Last Meeting / Board Matters	
	An update was provided on outstanding actions from the previous meeting. Work is ongoing to fill vacant positions on the board. SS is leading discussions with SEDA Pharmaceuticals regarding an identified individual. Discussions remain ongoing. BB announced that Paul Richards will leave his role at Stockport MBC in November and will therefore step down from the board, leaving a vacancy from SMBC to be filled. PR/MJ will pick this up and propose a replacement member.	BB PR

4A.	Station Project Update: Matt Jones, SMBC	
	Rail industry endorsement MJ confirmed that a letter was received on Monday 29th September 2026, confirming rail industry endorsement of the Cheadle Rail Station Scheme. SE explained how the decision had been reached. This followed a final two weeks of intensive work with the rail industry to identify risks and potential solutions or mitigations. The industry is now in a pragmatic position, with further work (referred to as a “Sprint”) required over the next two months on three areas that could mitigate performance impacts and the effect of skip stops outside Greater Manchester. SE noted proposals for signalling improvements in 2029, which should provide greater flexibility in the timetable. He emphasised the importance of taking a risk-based approach and continuing to work with the industry to mitigate the identified risks. Skip stops and timetable implications SS asked for clarification on what a skip stop entails. SE explained the reasons for skipping stops at Ashley and Plumley, to enable trains to stop at Cheadle within the existing timetable. CP outlined what had changed since the previous meeting. The industry is now focused on solutions, and the letter published earlier in the week sets out the key options. The main message is that the project is moving into a delivery phase, as Network Rail works through solutions to the remaining blockers and risks. CP added that further work is required to explore the impact of single-track sections of the line and the implications for timetables. He also noted that the transition to Great British Railways will affect compensation arrangements between operators, which will become an internal matter within GBR rather than across the industry. Next steps and programme MJ outlined the next steps and confirmed that SMBC has recruited a new project manager, Mike Baldwin, to replace Gerrard Kelly. MJ summarised Mike Baldwin’s relevant experience in station delivery. MJ announced that the first phase of highway works on Manchester Road will commence in mid-October. He noted the potential for programme creep. Ecological surveys have resumed on site, cost reviews are under way, and Network Rail is continuing its sprint work to confirm how the timetable can operate. SE commented that MJ and MW need to ensure that both SMBC and Cheshire East Council are clear on the available options. CP clarified that the solutions need to work for both authorities.	

	Programme timing and communications BB asked when the station may be fully operational. MJ advised that a full and detailed programme will need to be developed before a date can be confirmed. IH asked when the physical station may be built. MJ again advised that a full and detailed programme will need to be developed before a date can be confirmed. BB asked whether hoardings publicising the scheme would be erected. MJ agreed that this is a matter for the board to discuss, including agreement on an appropriate location. BB concluded by thanking colleagues for their work and patience in bringing the project to its current position.	
4B	Cheadle Eco Park Project Update: Paul Batho, SMBC	
	PB provided the board with an update on the progress of the Cheadle Eco Park project: • Construction commenced on site in March 2026 and the programme has now reached the halfway stage. • Groundworks are approaching completion. • Construction of the units continues, with the largest beams due to be installed imminently. PB outlined the key programme dates, with an estimated practical completion date of April 2027. Marketing and occupier interest PB confirmed that marketing activity is continuing. Eleven enquiries were received in September 2026, and two viewings are booked over the next two weeks. An update will be provided at the next board meeting. SS asked what type of occupier is preferred and whether she could offer any support. PB advised that a financially stable company with a focus on sustainability would be preferred, although any company able to meet the rent requirements would be considered. Risk and communications PB presented the risk register. PB confirmed that hoardings will be installed later in the month and reminded the board of the scheme's sustainability goals. SS asked how many buildings make up the site. PB confirmed that the marketing brochure for the park, which includes this information, would be shared after the meeting.	
5.	Looking Ahead/AOB	

	The next board meeting was proposed for 6th November 2026. It was agreed that this should be moved to a later date, towards the end of November or in early December. Cllr Meller thanked the board for its hard work in pushing the station to a positive conclusion.	
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