

The Bishop Auckland Town Board

Terms of Reference

1. Status of this document

1.1 The purpose of these Terms of Reference is to establish and govern the operations of a partnership of voluntary, community and statutory agencies, cooperating together under the name **'The Bishop Auckland Town Board'**

1.2 This document does not create a binding legal relationship between the Town Board's members, nor is it intended to result in the creation of a new organisation.

2. Property and contracts

2.1 As the Town Board is established as a means of co-ordinating the activities and resources of its member agencies in the furtherance of common aims, and not as a discrete organisation, the Town Board shall have no powers to acquire property, assets or liabilities or to enter into contracts in its own name.

3. Purpose

3.1 The purpose of the Town Board is to contribute positively to the social, economic and physical regeneration of Bishop Auckland and its environs, by enabling its member agencies to submit joint funding bids and contract tenders for projects that further their own objectives and to which they can contribute effectively as well as supporting greater collaborative working.

4. Membership

4.1 Membership of the Town Board shall be open to voluntary, community and statutory agencies that have an interest in the purpose of the Town Board and have been admitted to membership by a majority vote of the Board.

4.2 An organisation shall cease to be a member of the Town Board if it:

- a) resigns in writing to the Town Board;
- b) is removed from membership by a majority vote of the Town Board for conduct prejudicial to the Town Board provided that any member to be so removed shall have the right to make representation to the meeting at which the decision is to be made;
- c) is wound up.

5. Joint bidding, accountable body and implementation

5.1 The Town Board may identify and facilitate joint bids for contracts, grants and other resources which will assist its members to further the purpose of the Town Board.

Signatories to such bids shall be all or some of the Town Board's members and may also include non-members who have an interest in a particular project proposal.

5.2 Where circumstances require, it shall be standard practice for the Town Board to nominate one organisation or agency as the Accountable Body in respect of a joint bid. The role of the Accountable Body shall be to hold or channel the funds relating to the bid, and to enter into any necessary legal agreements with the funder. The Accountable Body shall also enter into agreements with such of the Town Board's members and others who are to deliver any part of the project or programme to which the bid relates.

5.3 The Board is responsible for

- a) upholding the **Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles)**,
- b) developing and agreeing an evidence-based Town Investment Plan,
- c) establishing a clear programme of interventions,
- d) embedding arrangements in local plans (where appropriate)
- e) undertaking Environmental Impact Assessments and fulfilling duties on public authorities under the Equalities Act, in particular, and the public sector equality duty.
- f) coordinating resources and engaging stakeholders
- g) ensuring communities' voices are involved in shaping design and decision-making at each phase of development
- h) ensuring diversity in its engagement with local communities and businesses
- i) helping develop detailed business cases
- j) overseeing each step of agreeing a Town Deal, and overseeing compliance with the Heads of Terms Agreement with government

6. The Town Board

6.1 Each member, and the Accountable Body may separately nominate persons for the Town Board and each such person will be assessed by the Accountable Body in accordance with the Accountable Body's Board selection process which has been agreed from time to time by the Town Board.

6.2 The Board selection process will take into account the need for the Town Board to have an appropriate balance of skills, knowledge and experience, appropriate gender representation, an appropriate level of diversity in accordance with the Accountable Body's Equality and Diversity Policy, the need for specific representation for specialist roles, and ensuring compliance with the expectations of

the Secretary of State for Communities, Housing and Local Government with regard to representation on the Board from time to time.

6.3 Members are only entitled to have one nominee appointed to each position on the Town Board at any time.

6.5 The Town Board may at any time co-opt additional persons to the Board, who bring with them skills or experience useful to the Town Board, provided that at no time shall more than one-third of the membership of the Board comprise co-opted persons. Co-opted Board members shall have full voting rights.

6.6 The proceedings of the Town Board shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among their number or by any failure to appoint or any defect in the appointment or qualification of a member.

7. Meetings and proceedings of the Town Board

7.1 The affairs of the Town Board shall be co-ordinated in such manner as the Board may see fit, including – as appropriate – meetings, electronic networking, newsletters, and telephone contact.

7.2 Members of the Board shall meet together and may adjourn and otherwise regulate their meetings as they think fit. At the request of the Chair or of two or more Board members, a meeting of the Board can be summoned at any reasonable time by giving at least seven days' notice to its members.

7.3 The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Board. If there is no Chair or if she/he is absent fifteen minutes after the time set for the commencement of the meeting, the members of the Board present shall choose one of their number to chair the meeting before any other business is transacted.

7.4 No meeting of the Board shall proceed unless a quorum is present. A quorum shall be one-third of the Board.

7.5 It is hoped that decisions will be reached by consensus, but in situations where this is not the case, decisions shall be decided by a majority of votes of the members of the Board present and voting, and in the case of an equality of votes the Chair of the meeting shall not have a second or casting vote and the resolution shall be deemed to be lost.

7.6 The Board may from time to time make and alter rules for the conduct of their business and the summoning and conduct of their meetings. No rule may be made which is inconsistent with these Terms of Reference (noting para 10).

7.7 The Board shall ensure that proper minutes are kept of the proceedings at all meetings of the Board. Durham County Council will provide the secretariat function to the meeting.

8. Conflict of Interest

8.1 Board members are obliged to declare a conflict of interest if they, or the organisations they represent, stand to gain financially from any decision taken by the Town Board.

8.2 Should such a conflict of interest occur, the member concerned will not be able to participate in or vote on the decision in question and may, at the discretion of the Chair, be requested to leave the meeting while the issue is being discussed and decided. This clause shall not apply when the conflict of interest is shared with a majority of the other Board members present.

9. Removal of Board members from office

9.1 A member of the Town Board shall cease to hold office if she/he:

- a) is the nominee of an organisation that ceases to be a member of the Board;
- b) is absent without good cause from three consecutive Board meetings he or she shall cease to hold office for this reason.
- c) notifies the Board a wish to resign.

10. Alterations to the Terms of Reference

10.1 These Terms of Reference may only be altered by a resolution passed at a meeting of the Board. The notice of the meeting where the resolution is to be considered must include details of the alteration(s) proposed.

11. Communications

11.1 Any media activity/communications about the actions of the Town Board should be agreed by the Chair prior to circulation.

12. Termination

12.1 These Terms of Reference shall cease to have effect, and the Town Board governed by this document shall no longer exist, if no quorate meetings of the Board are held in any period of 12 months or if it is decided to terminate these Terms of Reference by a resolution of the Board, at a meeting of which not less than 21 days' notice has been given stating the resolution to be proposed

Membership:

- Durham County Council x2
 - Portfolio Holder Economy and Partnerships
 - Corporate Director
- Registered Housing Provider
- Bishop Auckland College
- The Auckland Project x2
- Member of Parliament (Bishop Auckland Constituency)

- Bishop Auckland Town Council
- Bishop of Durham
- Business and Community Reps x 4
 - Business
 - Community

Dated December 2025

Membership - December 2025

Durham County Council (2 members)

1. Cllr Karen Allison – Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Tourism, Regeneration and High Street
2. Tony Hanson – Corporate Director

Registered Housing Provider – Nik Welsh

Bishop Auckland College – Shaun Hope (Chair of Board)

The Auckland Project (2 members)

1. Jane Ruffer
2. Jonathan Ruffer

Member of Parliament (Bishop Auckland Constituency) – Sam Rushworth MP

Bishop Auckland Town Council – Cllr Sam Zair (Mayor)

Bishop of Durham – Rev Chris Knight

Business and Community Representatives (4 members)

1. Brian Sutton
2. Jack Short
3. Phil Harnby
4. Rob Yorke