

## NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS TOWN BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Background

In September 2024, Government announced their '*Long-Term Plan for Towns*' programme, a core part of the Government's levelling-up programme, which identified 55 towns across the country that will benefit from up to £20m '*endowment style*' funding for investment in local priorities over a 10-year period. As part of the Spring Statement (6 March 2024), the Chancellor confirmed an additional £400m to extend the programme to a further 20 towns across the United Kingdom, for which Newton-le-Willows was identified as a beneficiary.

Each town is required to establish a new Town Board and develop a Long-Term Plan. Town Boards to '*be run by local people for local people and bring together residents, business and community leaders to devise and agree a shared vision for the future.*' St Helens Borough Council will be the accountable body for funding and will work with the Town Board who will be responsible for developing the Long-Term Plan in consultation with local people.

The 10-year Long Term Plan must contain a three-year investment plan aligned to the intervention themes based on local priorities. The three-year investment plan will set out how funding will be spent and delivery milestones.

Towns will also benefit from a new High Streets and Towns Taskforce that will provide bespoke, hands-on support from place-making experts to assist with delivery, encourage shared learning and promote networking between the Town Boards.

### Objective of the Fund

The Long-Term Plan for Towns, backed by £1.5 billion overall, will drive ambitious plans to regenerate 75 towns around the United Kingdom over the long-term through Town Plans.

Each town will receive a ten-year endowment-style fund, with £20 million of funding and support to give towns long term certainty to deliver projects over multiple years and the flexibility to invest in interventions based on evolving local needs and priorities. This will ensure a focus on long-term strategic transformation as well as shorter-term improvements. The funding will be focused on the issues that matter most to local people, including high streets, heritage and regeneration, and public safety and security.

A new Town Board will be established in each town in England, bringing together community leaders, employers, local authorities, and the local MP to develop a shared vision for their town and oversee the funding together. Working with local authorities, these boards will be encouraged to use the full suite of powers and flexibilities the Government has granted places to turn their high streets and towns around and be backed by the funding needed to do so. Learning from Town Deal Boards, to ensure that local people, not just politicians, drive change, we expect these boards to be chaired by a local business or community leader.

In exchange for long-term, flexible funding, each town in England will be required to develop a ten-year Long-Term Plan for their town, setting out the town's vision and

priorities for investment and regeneration, aligned to themes of safety and security, high streets, heritage and regeneration, and transport and connectivity.

## **Role of the Town Board**

The role of the Town Board is to ensure the Long-Term Plan is both defined and delivered. It'll meet on a quarterly basis and members will bring together a broad range of specialisms to deliver the Long-Term Plan and subsequent Investment Plans.

The Board will provide a strategic overview, direction and scrutiny of delivery against the plan and will work with the Council who is the accountable body for Long-Term Plan for Towns funding.

The Board will support and co-operate with the Council, as accountable body, to ensure that all activity complies with Section 151 Officer obligations (ensuring that objective, relevant and reliable financial analysis and advice is provided to the decision-making process setting out any financial implications and risks).

The Board and all Board members, in their role as Board members, must act in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life also known as the Nolan Principles (see also confidentiality and code of conduct).

To achieve this, it will:

- **Influence** making and governance, using their professional expertise and local knowledge, to best deliver value for money across the Long-term plan projects, as well as actively attracting other funding, be it from the private or public sector.
- **Champion** the Board's vision and promoting bold, deliverable interventions that will generate maximum economic and social benefits for Newton-le-Willows and St Helens Borough beyond.
- **Coordinate** plans, contributions and initiatives to make the whole greater than the sum of the parts.
- **Promote** the Board's vision for the town, being active ambassadors, working together to help realise its longer-term development and prosperity-
- **Monitor** progress in activities over their delivery period.

## **Key Activities**

By 1 November 2024 the Board will.

- Develop and submit its Long-Term Plan to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (comprising a 10-year Vision and a 3-year Investment Plan).

Once the Long-Term Plan and 3-year Investment Plan is approved the Board will;

- Identify the issues and priorities to focus on in the Long-Term Plan and how the community will be engaged
- Work with the Council to develop the Long-Term Plan, and setting out how partner agencies will use their knowledge, powers, assets and new funding to deliver for the community
- Identify opportunities to utilise specific powers (such as neighbourhood planning) to drive forward the Long-Term Plan
- Identify opportunities to bring in additional philanthropic or private investment to support the Long-Term Plan
- Oversee the delivery of projects in the Long-Term Plan.

St. Helens was awarded Capacity Funding to support the creation of the Town Board and to support the Town Board in creation of the Long-Term Plan and 3-year Investment Plan.

### **Liverpool City Region / Local Authority Strategic Vision**

This is a fantastic opportunity for the Board to:

- Influence a key LCR policy area on a topic where the issue exists throughout the UK.
- Engage with the local authority and Combined Authority on a key policy area.
- Help inform investment plans into the town centre for future years.
- Use the Long-Term Plan as a framework to secure further government and private investment.

## **APPENDIX ONE - ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES \*DRAFT SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT WITH THE CHAIR\***

### **1. Purpose and Objectives of the Town Board**

1.1 The Purpose of the Board is to assist in the facilitation of the delivery of the Long-Term Plan and 3-year Investment Plan.

1.2 The Objectives of the Board are to:

- Identify the issues and priorities to focus on in the Long-Term Plan and how the community will be engaged
- Work with the Council to develop the Long-Term Plan, and setting out how partner agencies will use their knowledge, powers, assets and new funding to deliver for the community
- Identify opportunities to utilise specific powers (such as neighbourhood planning) to drive forward the Long-Term Plan
- Identify opportunities to bring in additional philanthropic or private investment to support the Long-Term Plan
- Oversee the delivery of projects in the Long-Term Plan.

### **2. Board Membership**

2.1 The Town Board will be made up of the following representation:

| <b>Board Member</b>                                                                        | <b>Recruitment route</b>                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chair                                                                                      | Direct appointment                                                                         |
| Member of Parliament (St Helens North)                                                     | Direct appointment                                                                         |
| A senior representative from the Police (expected to be the Police and Crime Commissioner) | Direct appointment                                                                         |
| Liverpool City Region Combined Authority                                                   | Direct appointment                                                                         |
| Elected Member (Portfolio of the Council Leader)                                           | Direct appointment                                                                         |
| Elected Member (Portfolio of Inclusive Growth and Regeneration)                            | Direct appointment                                                                         |
| Chief Executive St Helens Borough Council                                                  | Direct appointment                                                                         |
| Business representative (up to 4)                                                          | Co-opted                                                                                   |
| Community representative (up to 2)                                                         | Advertised position (non-political representation only - political representation reached) |
| Faith representative                                                                       | Co-opted                                                                                   |

|                                                                                     |                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sector representative (including sports clubs)                      | Co-opted           |
| Cultural Arts and Heritage representative                                           | Co-opted           |
| Merseyside Police Representative (Super-Intendant or Chief Inspector for St Helens) | Direct appointment |

- 2.2 The Chairperson will lead the Board in defining, delivering and maintaining its vision and direction, whilst ensuring the appropriate procedures for governance and management are in place.
- 2.3 The Chairperson will act as a champion for the town and provide leadership for the Town Board, ensuring it is community-led and embedded within the local area.
- 2.4 The key responsibilities of the Chairperson are to:
- Provide strategic leadership to achieve the Board aims and objectives.
  - Lead efforts of the Board to establish, maintain and deliver a Long-Term Plan for Newton-le-Willows and provide endorsement and strategic direction to projects and activities which work to deliver the aims of the plan
  - Effectively chair meetings of the Board
  - Be an effective advocate for the Board and represent it in various forums in providing a One Voice approach for the Board to reflect its common agreement further to board discussions
  - Be an ambassador for Newton-le-Willows working with partners and other stakeholders
  - Ensure the Board adheres at all times to high standard of ethics, principles and professionalism
  - Ensure everyone's views are heard and discussed to reach a consensus position
  - Effectively manage any conflict which may arise through differing viewpoints and interest
  - Exercise a casting vote in Board matters if circumstances require.
- 2.5 The Chairperson may choose to appoint a Deputy Chairperson from the other public (but not elected representatives) and private sector representatives.
- 2.6 Outside of the requirements around the inclusion of certain elected representatives and a senior representative from the police, other Board membership should be tailored to the local context and is at the chair's discretion in relation to both stakeholder representation and number of seats granted to each stakeholder group, but may comprise:
- Community partners – local community groups, faith groups, charities, neighbourhood forums and local Council for Voluntary Services representatives.
  - Local businesses and social enterprises including key local employers and investors.
  - Cultural, Arts, Heritage and Sporting organisations.
  - Public Sector – Schools, Police, Health.

- Combined Authority representative.
- 2.7 Duration of Board Membership for will be for a period of 36 months initially, with options for extension with the agreement of the Board. Those Board members who have been co-opted to the Town Board or those appointed via a public recruitment exercise (discretionary Board positions) will serve a term of 12 months which may be extended subject to Board approval.
- 2.8 The Board must have a diverse range of skills and experiences which include:
- Project Management
  - Youth engagement
  - Community engagement
  - Third sector engagement
  - Risk Management
  - Contract and Procurement
  - Legal Knowledge
  - Heritage and conservation
  - Governance
  - Budget Management
  - Strategic Thinking
  - Consultation and Engagement
  - Education and Training
- 2.9 At the discretion of the Chairperson, applications for Town Board may be considered from exceptional individuals should they display skills or experiences that will complement or enhance the Town Board.
- 2.10 Board Members will be required to adhere to the governance standards and policies of the Lead Council including whistle blowing, conflicts of interest and complaints as well as the Nolan Principles.

### **3. Attendance at Meetings**

- 3.1 Meetings will be held quarterly for a period of approximately two hours, at an accessible and appropriate venue within the town. Meetings may also be a hybrid of both real time/place and digital engagement at the discretion of the Chair. There is also provision for the Chairperson to call an extraordinary meeting additional to these as may be required.
- 3.2 Board Members are required to attend at least 50% of meetings of the Town Board per calendar year. If a Board Member's attendance falls below 50% then their position on the Board should be considered by the Town Board at its next meeting.
- 3.3 Board Members are not able to provide a substitute. Where they are not able to attend, they must notify the Chairperson (and secretary) to the Board no later than 24 hours before the Board meeting.
- 3.4 The meetings will not be open to attendance by the press and public.

- 3.5 Agendas, decisions, and actions agreed by the Board will be made available to members of the public via the Council's website.

#### **4. Decision-making**

- 4.1 All board members have a responsibility to ensure that adequate discussion of issues occurs before recommendations are made.
- 4.2 The Board has power to make all decisions in respect of the delivery of the Long-Term Plan. In due course, dependent on government's evaluation of the Long-Term Plan, further responsibilities of the Board may be defined with respect to the delivery of specific projects.
- 4.3 Board Members are expected to attend regularly, and meetings will be diarised to ensure optimal attendance. However, if Board members are not able to attend, they are still required to read the board papers and make their views known to the Chair of the Board in advance of the Board meeting.
- 4.4 If consensus cannot be agreed by the Board, in the first instance, the Chairperson will mediate towards satisfactory resolution, based on an evidence-led approach. If the Board still cannot reach consensus, decisions will be made on the basis of voting.
- 4.5 In the event that a decision needs to be made by casting a vote, each Board member is entitled to one vote. Board Members are not entitled to cast a vote if they are not in attendance at when the decision is formally agreed at a Board Meeting.

#### **5. Delegating Tasks and Powers**

- 5.1 Sub-committees may be established by the Board to act as Task and Finish Groups for specific and appropriate elements of the Board's business. The Board should agree what Sub-Committees are required.
- 5.2 Additional non-Board members may be invited to provide skills, resources, insight, and capacity to the task but must abide by the decision-making structures, Code of Conduct and Terms of Reference of the Board.
- 5.3 Each Sub-Committee should be chaired either by a Board Member or a Board-approved nominated representative.
- 5.4 Progress on tasks of the Sub-committees should be updated and reported to the Board, to a schedule agreed by the Board as appropriate to its agenda.
- 5.5 Procurement processes will be governed by the Financial Regulations and Procurement Procedures for any goods or services procured by funds for which the Council is the accountable body.

## **6. Code of Conduct**

- 6.1 The Council's Code of Conduct for Members will apply to Board members. Council officers are subject to a Code of Conduct for Employees. This also applies to any secondees, consultants and contractors.
- 6.2 Board Members and supporting officers will be made aware of the importance and significance of upholding these standards at their inaugural Board Meeting and through regular training processes if required.
- 6.3 Subsequently, at every board meeting, Board Members will be asked to confirm their conflict of interest, and these will be publicly recorded. Where the board agrees that a conflict is inappropriate, the member should be recused from both the discussion and decision making. At the AGM, a comprehensive record of conflicts of interest will be undertaken and referred to at the start of each meeting.
- 6.4 Particular care will be taken where board members have a live, concurrent post which could give rise to conflicts of interest. Any conflict of interest for Board Members will be established at the start of the selection process and actively managed to ensure there are no material factors impeding independence of judgement.
- 6.5 Board Members will demonstrate visible independence which is vital to ensure that there is no bias or favouritism towards or against individuals or groups. This freedom of action is needed to reassure investors, competitors, residents, employees, and all tiers of government.
- 6.6 The Lead Authority, St Helens Council will publish the list of Board Members and registered Conflicts of Interest
- 6.7 In accordance with the Long-Term Plan for Towns Prospectus, Members of the Board agree to comply with the Nolan Principles, the 7 principles of public life which apply to anyone who works as a public officeholder.