



Minutes of Newton-le-Willows Town Deal Board

13:30 – 15:30, Friday 28 June 2024

Centrix House, Crow Lane East, Newton-le-Willows, WA12 9UY

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Chris Hickey	Chair, Mercury Hampton
Conor McGinn MP	Member of Parliament, St Helens North
Councillor Anthony Burns	Leader of the Council, St Helens Borough Council
Councillor Richard McCauley	Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth & Regeneration, St Helens Borough Council
Kath O'Dwyer	Chief Executive, St Helens Borough Council
Ian Lewis	Investment Manager, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Amy Louise Parsonage	Portfolio and Partnerships Officers, Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner

LOCAL AUTHORITY REPRESENTATION

Lisa Harris	Executive Director of Place, St Helens Borough Council
Mary Jefferson	Head of Regeneration & Growth, St Helens Borough Council
Mark Bingley	Earlestown Programme Lead, St Helens Borough Council
Dean McGauley	Project Officer, St Helens Borough Council

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Rachael Buckley - Partnerships Officer, St Helens Borough Council.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chris Hickey (CH) welcomed all attendees and round-table introductions took place.

2. LONG-TERM PLAN FOR TOWNS PRESENTATION

Mark Bingley (MB) presented the Long-Term Plan for Towns to the board. This provided Board members with an overview of the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme, including

key milestones and next steps for the Board.

MB provided an overview of Newton-le-Willows and the background to the formation of the Board in accordance with the Long-term Plan for Towns Guidance note. £19.510 million in endowment style funding has been allocated to the Newton-le-Willows to invest in local priorities over the 10-year span of the programme.

Cllr. McCauley (CllrM) asked if government have provided the data and map of the red line area that the Long-Term Plan for Towns funding covers. MB informed (CllrM) that this issue would be covered in more detail later in the meeting, advising that this is a priority issue which must be confirmed urgently.

ACTION: MB to share with DLUHC the ONS Built-up Area map based red line boundary for confirmation, with a view to confirming with Board at the next meeting on 2 August 2024.

ACTION: MB to share Newton-le-Willows Town Demographics with the Board.

MB discussed the requirements of the Town Board stating that the Board must oversee the development of a 10-year Long-term Plan and 3-year Investment Plan, which must be agreed by Council and subsequently submitted to DLUHC. The Long-term Plan and 3-year Investment Plan must be developed in consultation with the local community. To support this activity capacity funding will be released to the Town Board to conduct public consultation.

The Board may also want to bring in other stakeholders to carry out this piece of work. Lisa Harris (LH) stated that consultation would add to that which has already taken place in relation to the regeneration of Earlestown Town Centre during winter 2023 with public exhibitions and feedback sessions across Earlestown, Newton-le-Willows and Wargrave.

MB reminded the Board that Members must complete a declaration of interests to be held by the Council. Board members must advise the secretariat of the Town Board at the earliest opportunity should their interests change. The declaration of interest form has been circulated to Board Members for completion.

ACTION: All board members to complete and return declaration of interest form to MB.

MB presented the three key investment themes:

- Safety and Security
- High Streets Heritage and Regeneration
- Transport and Connectivity

A discussion took place around Parkside and the opportunities that this will bring to the wider Newton-le-Willows Long-Term Plan for Towns Programme. Connor McGinn MP (CM) commented that there will be opportunities to attract private investment on the back of developments at Parkside positively impacting the Long-Term Plan for Towns Programme.

Councillor Burns (CllrB) talked about the strategic benefits and importance of the transport links in the area and the opportunities that Parkside will bring to Newton-le-Willows and the surrounding areas.

Cllr. McCauley (CllrM) provided a brief overview of the Parkside programme and informed the Board of the phasing of the programme and aim to maximise advanced manufacturing and the associated quality employment opportunities that would bring.

CH commented that many businesses are moving out of larger cities such as Manchester and the geographical position of Newton-le-Willows presents a wonderful opportunity for those companies and organisations looking to relocate. KOD commented that this also presents an opportunity for the workforce of Parkside to reinvest their spend in the local economy.

ACTION: MB to add a presentation on the Parkside Programme to a future Newton-le-Willows Town Deal Board meeting.

MB presented the financial implications of the programme to the Board. £19.510m (£14.936m Capital and £4.574m Revenue) will be awarded to the Board to invest in local priorities over 10-year span of the programme. Subject to DLUHC acceptance of the Long-term Plan and 3-Year Investment Plan, funding for financial years 24/25 and 25/26 will be released at the start of the 25/26 financial year. A table detailing funding profile was also presented to members. MB informed the Board that there may be some degree of flexibility around the profiling once the plan is agreed.

The 1st tranche of Long-Term Plan for Towns money will be allocated in April 2025. St Helens Borough Council (SHBC) will provide regular financial updates to Board.

DECISION: The Board noted the contents of the presentation.

3. GOVERNANCE

MB presented the item and provided the Board with the opportunity to review and approve the governance arrangements for the creation and operation of the Newton-le-Willows Town Board.

MB informed Board that the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme requires St Helens Borough Council, as the accountable body for the fund, to establish a Newton-le-Willows Town Board in consultation with the Member of Parliament for St Helens North.

Guidance issued by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) outlines the governance requirements that will underpin and support the operation of the Town Board as detailed in Appendix C.

The Terms of Reference (Appendix A) and Roles and Responsibilities (Appendix B) provides the framework for adherence to the guidance and ensures the appropriate governance arrangements are in place for the Board to fulfil its obligations.

KOD commented that the Terms of Reference for the Newton-le-Willows Long-Term Plans for Towns Board aligns with the St Helens Town Deal Board Terms of Reference.

DECISION: The Board agreed the Terms of Reference and Roles & Responsibilities for the Newton-le-Willows Long Term Plans for Towns Board as set out at Appendices A and B, respectively.

4. BOARD RECRUITMENT

MB presented the item which provided the Board with the opportunity to review the composition of the Newton-le-Willows Long-Term Plan for Towns Board and to agree the preferred recruitment route.

MB stated that the DLUHC has prescribed the core composition of the Board. The remaining Board positions are subject to local context at the discretion of the Board. The Board composition contained within the Terms of Reference, and outlined at paragraph 3.3, aligns to the suggested representation contained within the Long-term Plan for Towns guidance and has been endorsed by St Helens Borough Council as accountable body for the fund.

MB informed the Board that to progress to the next milestone in the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme the Board must now commence the recruitment of the wider Board. A hybrid approach of co-option and advertised vacancies is recommended to ensure the board has the right skills and expertise, and views across important sectors are captured. Whilst also providing opportunity for the wider community to help shape local priorities for the town.

In May 2024, the Council's Cabinet endorsed the Board membership for the Newton-le-Willows Long Term Plan for Towns Board, subject to Board approval. The composition of the Board has been discussed with the Chair and will be developed in alignment with the suggested community representation as detailed in the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme guidance note.

For those positions that are co-opted to the Town Board, it is proposed that the Chair, in consultation with the Member of Parliament for St Helens North, develop a shortlist of candidates for each position. If a shortlisted candidate is interested in a Board position, they will be asked to submit an expression of interest to the Chair and the Member of Parliament. If more expressions of interest are received than Board positions available, candidates will be asked to attend an interview with the Chair and Member of Parliament. The decision of the Chair and Member of Parliament will be final, and the Board will be formally agreed at the next Board meeting in August.

Ian Lewis (IL) asked if the Board could appoint co-opted members for a period of 12 months as the needs of the board may change over time. Board members agreed with this proposal. CM asked for more information on the co-opting proposal. MB advised a hybrid approach of co-option and advertised vacancies is recommended to ensure that the Board is serviced by experienced individuals' representative of their sector whilst also providing opportunity for the wider community to help shape local priorities for the town.

Amy Louise Parsonage (ALP) suggested that Merseyside Police should have a representative on the Newton-le-Willows Long Term Plan for Towns Board to provide a policing operation voice alongside the PCC (Police Crime Commissioner).

CllrM agreed with this proposal from ALP recommending that this needs to be someone at a senior/ strategic level, such as an Inspector or Superintendent. The Board agreed that it should request for most senior representative to join the Board as the public agency representative.

KOD also informed that Board members should now start to suggest nominees for the various Board positions outlined in the report.

ACTION: All Members of the board to suggest nominees with relevant skills and expertise for the Board positions outlined in the report and CH in consultation with

the Member of Parliament for St Helens North to approve the list of nominated people for appointment.

DECISION: Board Members agreed:

- 1. The composition of the Long Term Plan for Towns Board and recruitment route as presented in the table at paragraph 3.3.**
- 2. Co-opted Members to be elected for a 12-month term.**
- 3. That Merseyside Police be asked to nominate a strategic level representative at Superintendent or Inspector rank.**

5. PROGRAMME RESOURCES

MB highlighted the programme resource requirements of the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme and to sought approval from the Board for the creation of a Project Officer to provide secretariat and project management support to the Newton-le-Willows Long Term Plan for Towns Board.

MB informed the Board that the Long-Term Plan for Towns guidance note details that SHBC will be the accountable body for the fund. The Long-Term Plan for Towns funding will be assured in line with the requirements set out in the Levelling Up Funds Local Authority Assurance Framework, using 3 lines of defence.

The first line of defence is the Council's Chief Finance Officer who will assume financial responsibility for the programme. The second line of defence will be undertaken by the Assurance and Compliance Team within DLUHC. DLUHC will undertake a range of checks, on a risk and sample basis. SHBC, as the accountable body, will provide resource to engage with and support this process.

MB stated that further to the assurance and monitoring and evaluation requirements of the Long-Term Plan for Town's Programme, a secretariat function to the Board is required. It is envisaged that this role will provide an administrative function to the Board ensuring that it operates in accordance with the governance requirements detailed within the Terms of Reference. This may include facilitating Board meetings, preparing agendas, briefings and reports for the Board, publishing minutes of the Board, maintaining the conflict-of-interest register, managing public enquiries, representing the Board at meetings, and being the main point of contact for the programme with DLUHC. MB asked for Board approval to create the post and commence recruitment thereafter.

By 1 November 2024, the Board must prepare and submit a Long-term Plan and a 3-year Investment Plan for Newton-le-Willows to the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities. These plans should be based on consultation with the local community to identify local priorities. To help the Board meet this ambitious deadline and to provide the necessary technical expertise in project and business case development for the 3-year Investment Plan, it is proposed to undertake a procurement process to secure specialist support. The quotations received from this process will be presented to the Board for approval at its next meeting.

DECISION: The Board:

- 1. Noted the programme resource requirements of the Long-Term Plan for Towns Board.**
- 2. Approved the creation of a 3-year fixed term Project Officer post to support the secretariat and programme management requirements of the Board.**
- 3. Approved the commencement of a procurement process to secure additional resources for the Board to support community consultation and the creation of the Long-term Plan and 3-Year Investment Plan.**

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Date of Next Meeting: 13:30-15:00, Friday 2 August 2024.

Location: Centrix House, Crow Lane East, Newton-le-Willows, WA12 9UY.