



Minutes of Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board

Friday 18 July 2025 14:30 – 16:30

Invitees			
Name	Initials	Role	Organisation
Board Members			
Chris Hickey	CH	Chair	Mercury Hampton
Councillor Kate Groucutt	KG	Cabinet Member for Business & Inclusive Growth and Deputy Leader	St Helens Borough Council
Ian Lewis	IL	Investment Manager	Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Amie Louise Parsonage	ALP	Portfolio and Partnerships Officer	Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner
Community & Co-Opted Board Members			
Alex Myhill	AM	Community Representative	Riddling Rack
Joanne Edge	JE	Community Representative	Newton Sports Club
Debbie Taylor	DT	Business Representative	Es Paradis Salon & Domestic Abuse WA12 CIC
Paul Romanko	PR	Business Representative	United Utilities Water Ltd
Fiona Ruddy	FR	Third Sector Representative	Newton Community Centre
John Unsworth	JU	Cultural, Arts, and Heritage including Sports Groups Representative	Sea Cadet Corps
Local Authority Representatives			
Mary Jefferson	MJ	Head of Regeneration and Growth	St Helens Borough Council
Mark Bingley	MB	Programme Lead – Earlestown	St Helens Borough Council
Rachel Bebb	RB	Project Officer	St Helens Borough Council

Matthew Valentine	MV	Project Officer	St Helens Borough Council
Apologies Received			
David Baines MP	DB	Member of Parliament, St Helens North	Member of Parliament, St Helens North
Councillor Anthony Burns	AB	Leader of the Council	St Helens Borough Council
Mark Palethorpe	MP	Chief Executive	St Helens Borough Council
Jon Julian Smith	JJS	Chief Inspector, St Helens	Merseyside Police
Reverend Chris Stafford	CS	Faith Representative	Team Rector at St Peters, Emmanuel Wargrave, and St John's

Item	Title	Lead
1.	Welcome and Introductions	CH
2.	Declarations of Interest	CH
3.	Minutes of the previous Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board meeting held on 9 May 2025	CH
4.	Change in Board Membership	MB
5.	Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme Update	MB
6.	Consultation Findings	MB
7.	Any Other Business	All

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chris Hickey (CH) acknowledged apologies received from David Baines MP, Councillor Anthony Burns, Mark Palethorpe, Jon Julian Smith and Reverend Chris Stafford.

2. Declarations of Interest

CH informed members that no declarations had been received ahead of the meeting and invited Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Members to present any new declarations relevant to the Agenda items. No declarations were declared.

3. Minutes of the previous Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board meeting held on 9 May 2025

CH reminded the Board that minutes from the previous Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board meeting on 9 May 2025 have been agreed and are live on the St Helens Borough Council (SHBC) website. CH then provided an overview of the key discussions and endorsements from the previous Board, including:

- Board noted the updates within the revised programme milestones and the progress made to date in respect of community consultation.
- Board endorsed the expenditure of capacity funding for the additional works undertaken by Neighbourhood Board Specialists due to significant expansion of the programme scope.

4. Change in Board Membership

CH noted that there would be a change in Board membership due to personnel changes in the SHBC Executive Leadership team and a restructure in the Cabinet reporting portfolios.

As such, Mark Palethorpe (MP) was welcomed to the Neighbourhood Board, in place of Kath O'Dwyer as SHBC Chief Executive, and Councillor Kate Groucutt (KG) was welcomed to the Neighbourhood Board, in place of Councillor Richard McCauley, as the Portfolio Holder for Business and Inclusive Growth and Deputy Leader of the Council.

MB added that the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board mandated positions are delegated as post holders, and not as individuals, in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board. Resultantly, the changes to Board membership reflect the positional changes in SHBC's organisational structure.

CH gave his thanks on behalf of Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board to Kath O'Dwyer and Councillor Richard McCauley for their work and efforts to date in contributing to the excellent progress made.

5. Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme Update

CH detailed that this agenda item would be split into two elements – an update on further guidance released by Government, and an update of the milestones ahead and the progress made to date.

Updated Regeneration Plan guidance

MB explained that further guidance was issued by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 9 June 2025, in relation to the development of the 10-Year Regeneration Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan. MB provided the key

highlights to this guidance, with the programme being divided into three investment periods identified below:

- Period 1 – 2026-27 to 2029-30 (4 Years)
- Period 2 – 2030-31 to 2032-33 (3 Years)
- Period 3 – 2033-34 to 2035-36 (3 Years)

MB added that there will be a requirement to develop a new Investment Plan for each investment period, completed at least 6 months prior to the next period starting.

Within each investment period, MB stated the Board must forecast to spend at least 25% of the cumulative allocation for that investment period, meaning at least £1.702m (out of the £6.808m allocation) must be spent within the first investment period. MB however advised that it would be prudent of the Board to target full expenditure within each investment period unless a significant project was identified for which the Board could rollover funds in accordance with the fund's prospectus.

Programme milestones

MB provided Board with an update that the date of submission for both the Regeneration Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan to MHCLG has been confirmed as midday 28 November 2025, with the programme well on track to meet this key milestone.

MB added the next key date for the Board is 3 October 2025, when formal approval will be sought for the final Regeneration Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan. The plans will then be presented to SHBC Cabinet on 19 November 2025 for endorsement, as accountable body for the fund, prior to submission to MHCLG on 28 November 2025.

MB gave recognition to the Board for their time committed over the previous months and thanked Board members for this contribution noting this engagement has facilitated the strong position the programme is in.

6. Consultation Findings

CH outlined that the consultation findings provided clear priorities for the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board and that the agenda item seeks endorsement of the Engagement Summary and subsequent Public Consultation Findings Report which will be published by the end of July 2025.

MB detailed that the consultation was undertaken from 7 April 2025 - 18 May 2025 and was hugely successful. MB referred the Board to a comprehensive and extensive list of engagement events and activities detailed in Section 3.3 and 3.4 of Item 6 in the Agenda Pack, which contributed to the reach of the programme.

MB added that approximately 60,000 stakeholders were reached during the consultation period, with 682 respondents providing their views through online engagement, pop-up events, drop-ins, school workshops, self-led engagement, email correspondence, and additional Council-led engagement.

MB further added that the data captured can be considered statistically reliable and representative of the population, as to achieve a 95% confidence level, the consultation would have required 379 respondents, which has been well exceeded.

MB reminded Board of the findings following a high-level Neighbourhood Board Workshop on 13 June 2025. MB highlighted that the findings presented at this Workshop have informed the Newton-le-Willows Public Engagement Summary Report (found in Appendix 1 of the Agenda Pack) which showcases the key engagement activities and number of respondents. MB explained that a detailed Public Consultation Findings Report will be released at the end of July 2025 to support the Summary document.

MB gave an overview of the Engagement Summary document and referenced the map (found in page 3 of Appendix 1 of the Agenda Pack), and praised how the consultation was dispersed around the township providing a strong geographic reach that was inclusive of hard-to-reach groups identified from the Engagement Strategy.

KG added that the consultation is a strong engagement piece and encouraged Neighbourhood Board members to share the findings.

KG enquired as to what the ongoing engagement strategy was, noting the need for it to continue throughout the programme, KG additionally asked whether different stakeholders would be engaged at key moments where expertise is required. MB responded that Board members had previously asked for a Communications Plan to be developed at an earlier Board meeting. MB stated this was developed, circulated and endorsed at Board on 21 March 2025 for the period of consultation and plan development. MB suggested this can be brought back to Board on 3 October 2025 for further refinement noting the programme progress and updated milestones received from Government.

KG noted that a SHBC toolkit for engagement is in development by Officers, and that this could be shared with the Board as consultation best practice. MB noted that Officers have reviewed the work undertaken by the Board and stated that the work of the Board was noted as exemplar, setting the standard for future SHBC consultation. Mary Jefferson (MJ) added that it is important to broadcast that the consultation work has been undertaken and the extensive approach developed.

Rachel Bebbby (RB) outlined that additional feedback loops with the community have been considered following the closure of consultation. RB stated a Consultation Summary Video is in development to showcase clips from those who engaged and/or held events and information boards. RB emphasised the video will be key to show 'this is what you told us' to the community, and how their responses and feedback will inform the Regeneration Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan. RB added that SHBC Officers met with Tesco and the Sea Cadets who engaged with the consultation, and she endeavours to engage more stakeholders in the video and showcase how the Board has responded and listened to public consultation.

MB noted how the work being done to showcase the consultation in differing mediums (summary documents, full reports, and video) will provide multiple avenues for the findings to be dispersed. The Consultation Summary Video, Engagement

Summary and Public Consultation Findings Report will ensure information is accessible and transparent.

Alex Myhill (AM) raised that the upcoming music festival (Newton Music Festival) may present an opportunity for the Board to utilise Heras fencing around the site to display the Engagement Summary in a large format. AM added the fencing will be erected from 31 July 2025 to 4 August 2025, and that the fences could be reused on other sites. MB noted this would provide a key visual impact, and that there could be opportunity to utilise the banners in Earlestown Town Centre once work is underway and Heras fencing is erected. Joanne Edge (JE) supported this and noted that the fencing could also be utilised at Newton-le-Willows Sports Club.

JE asked if a summary timeline could be included in the Public Consultation Findings Report to showcase the key milestones and achievements to date. Paul Romanko (PR) and AM agreed it would be good to have a timeline showing programme progression. CH added that SHBC has a timeline of achievements to date from a previous MHCLG presentation, with future dates that could be included. Amie Parsonage (ALP) further asked if the timeline could be digital and interactive, which could also act as a document repository, and include links to key documents such as the Consultation report, Regeneration Plan and Board papers. MB noted that a programme timeline could be produced, leading from Newton-le-Willows being identified as a beneficiary through to the submission of the Regeneration Plan. MB added this would act as a central point which pulls together all the deliverables to date, with RB noting this could be investigated through the SHBC website.

MB noted that the banners raised by AM would cost approximately £150 for two Heras fence banners (£75 each) which presents opportunity to be repurposed and reused in further future locations, and so, represents good value for money if the Board want further feedback loops with the community. Fiona Ruddy (FR) raised that given the low monetary value of these banners, it may be beneficial to purchase four banners, noting that Newton Music Festival is a large site - AM added this could be accommodated at the festival. Furthermore, AM added that additional banners could be produced to fit different display mediums that aren't just Heras fences. MB outlined that additional banners, such as a PVC (from large, durable material), would be costed up and brought back to Board, with a request for Board Members to share any local suppliers.

CH asked Neighbourhood Board Members if they endorse the expenditure for four Heras fence panels (£300 expenditure) with a quote to be brought back for PVC banners via a vote, and this was passed unanimously.

NOTE: An updated Communications Plan to be brought back to Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board for endorsement, which includes future St Helens Borough Council communications.

DECISION: Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board endorsed the expenditure of capacity funding of £300 for the printing of four Heras fence panels to be used to display consultation feedback to the community.

NOTE: A programme timeline to be produced, showcasing the key deliverables to date and future milestones.

ACTION: St Helens Borough Council will report back to Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board the cost for two additional PVC banners, with Board Members providing details of local suppliers

7. Any Other Business

CH thanked Board Members for their contributions and stated a visit to Ashton-in-Makerfield is to be arranged for September 2025, with RB requesting Board availability so this can be organised.

CH asked Board to state any other business.

MB highlighted to Board that the draft Regeneration Plan will be ready for review in the summer, with final plans to be signed off at the next formal Board meeting on 3 October 2025.

FR detailed that she has been invited to a charity event in her capacity as the Chair of Trustees for Newton Community Centre and asked if in her role as the Third Sector Representative if Council Officers could support her in delivering a presentation on the Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme. FR further raised that many issues faced in the third sector and raised at the event are related to funding and the challenges of raising revenue. MB responded that SHBC are committed to raising awareness of the programme, and that MB and RB are happy to support delivering presentations to groups and events.

ACTION: Board Members to populate the September availability spreadsheet for a site visit and Board Workshop.

NOTE: St Helens Borough Council Officers available to conduct presentations on the Plan for Neighbourhood programme.