



Minutes of Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board

Friday 3 October 2025

Invitees			
Name	Initials	Role	Organisation
Board Members			
Chris Hickey	CH	Chair	Mercury Hampton
Councillor Anthony Burns	AB	Leader of the Council	St Helens Borough Council
Mark Palethorpe	MP	Chief Executive	St Helens Borough Council
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
Jon Julian Smith	JJS	Chief Inspector, St Helens	Merseyside Police
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
Reverend Chris Stafford	CS	Faith Representative	Team Rector at St Peters, Emmanuel Wargrave, and St John's
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 Bebbby	RB	Project Officer	St Helens Borough Council
Glenn Taggart	GT	Project Manager	St Helens Borough Council

Donna Wilby	DW	Finance Business Partner - Regeneration	St Helens Borough Council
Matthew McHale	MM	Principal Accountant	St Helens Borough Council
Apologies Received			
David Baines MP	DB	Member of Parliament, St Helens North	Member of Parliament, St Helens North

Item	Title	Lead
1.	Welcome and Introductions	CH
2.	Declarations of Interest	CH
3.	Minutes of the previous Neighbourhood Board meeting held on 18 July 2025	CH
4.	Regeneration Plan and Draft 4-Year Investment Plan	MB
5.	Any Other Business	All

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chris Hickey (CH) acknowledged apologies received from David Baines MP.

CH welcomed Donna Wilby (DW) and Matthew McHale (MM) to the Neighbourhood Board as they will be observing today's Board meeting as they will support the programme going forward. DW and MM introduced themselves to the group, and CH welcomed Members and introductions were given around the table for their benefit.

2. Declaration of Interest

CH informed members that no declarations had been received ahead of the meeting and invited Neighbourhood Board Members to present any new declarations relevant to the agenda items. The following declarations were raised (relating to the workshop taking place):

- Paul Romanko - Trustee of Sankey Canal Restoration Society.
- Chris Stafford - Team Rector across the Church of England Churches within Newton-le-Willows.

No further declarations were declared.

3. Minutes of the previous Neighbourhood Board meeting held on 18 July 2025

CH noted the minutes from the previous Neighbourhood Board meeting on Friday 18 July 2025 are agreed (and published on the Council website). CH provided an

overview of the key discussions and endorsements from the previous Board, including:

- Full Board noted the updates in a change in Board membership, Plan for Neighbourhoods programme update, and the consultation findings.
- Full 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.

4. Regeneration Plan and Draft 4-Year Investment Plan

Mark Bingley (MB) gave an overview of the development of the Regeneration Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan development, including:

- Providing an update on funding allocations for each Investment Theme for Investment Period 1
- Management costs sought and the governance approach for the programme as detailed within the Regeneration Plan
- Recommendations and endorsements sought by Board

Regeneration Plan

MB detailed that the development of the Regeneration Plan (and 4-Year Investment Plan) is a key output from 10 months of work, capturing views of the community and stakeholders through an extensive consultation period and numerous workshops undertaken with stakeholders and the Neighbourhood Board.

Management Cost and Funding Allocations

MB reminded Board that within the Plan for Neighbourhoods prospectus Neighbourhood Board can allocate a proportion of funding towards 'Management Costs' for expenses including but not limited to a secretariat function.

MB referenced that at the first Board meeting in June 2024, Board agreed to fund a Project Officer post on a 3-Year fixed term contract, with the recommendation today to move this expenditure from previously utilised capacity funding to a dedicated management fee.

Further support has been provided to Plan for Neighbourhoods by MB as Programme Lead, and the Finance Business Partner, without any recovery of costs.

MB detailed that the recommended management fee of 6% includes key professional services essential to facilitate the programme. It ensures adequate professional oversight of the programme into project delivery.

MB shared how the Council's Financial Management Service team, in consultation with the Project Officer (Rachel Bebbby) and Programme Lead (MB) have detailed the cost of the required resource (inclusive of legal and finance resource) to manage the programme to equate to the 6% fee. This fee aligns with St Helens Town Deal and UKSPF and equates to £0.399m in the first 4 years of the programme.

Management fees will be fully audited and reviewed on an annual basis and brought back to Board for review.

The Delivery Funding Profile details the allocations for the top three priority investment themes, alongside a community pot allocation of a £0.250m enabling a grant fund for community projects, an approach previously endorsed by Board (in line with the public prioritisation of themes). It was recommended that an allocation of £250,000 be made to include £25,000 available in Year 1, with £75,000 allocated per year after for Year 2, 3, and 4.

Fiona Ruddy (FR) asked for clarification on the community pot and MB explained that the management fee covers the facilitation of the programme. It will be a Board decision if they wish to decide to appoint external support for this theme, which could be funded from capacity funding, therefore the full £25,000 would be available to the community.

KG asked if there was any guidance provided by Government on the management fee? MB confirmed whilst there is no guidance, the fee should be proportionate to deliver the programme and the collective experience of delivering programmes has informed the recommended fee.

Paul Romanko (PR) confirmed that the management fee is, from his professional experience, within reasonable boundaries. CH endorsed this view.

KG further asked if there will be public outreach following the submission of the Regeneration Plan and if copies can be provided within libraries. MB advised of the timeline following endorsement by the Board, with the Regeneration Plan to gain Council's Cabinet approval on 19 November 2025. Following this, the Project Team will work with the Council's Communications Team to ensure maximum public exposure.

CH gave thanks to MB for a detailed overview, and asked Neighbourhood Board Members if they endorse the below via a vote:

- The Newton-le-Willows 10-Year Regeneration Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan.
- The funding allocations for each Investment Theme for Investment Period 1.
- The 6% 'Management Cost' to be applied across Investment Period 1 for costs associated with programme management.
- The governance approach of the Plan for Neighbourhoods programme, as detailed within the Regeneration Plan.

The above decisions were passed unanimously.

PR added a thanks on record to RB and MB for their responses back to queries on the Regeneration Plan, as the level of information provided within the edits ahead of circulating to the Specialists, enables the Board to gain value for money.

DECISION: Board endorsed the Newton-le-Willows 10-Year Regeneration Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan.

DECISION: Board endorsed the funding allocations for each Investment Theme for Investment Period 1.

DECISION: Board endorsed the 6% 'Management Cost' to be applied across Investment Period 1 for costs associated with programme management.

DECISION: Board endorsed the governance approach of the Plan for Neighbourhoods programme, as detailed within the Regeneration Plan.

NOTE: Public outreach on the Regeneration Plan is to be investigated via communication opportunities.

NOTE: Management fee to be reviewed annually.

5. Any Other Business

CH thanked Board Members for their contributions and asked Board to state any other business.

CH gave a congratulations to Amie Parsonage (AP) as she takes her maternity leave. MB reinforced these thanks, highlighting Amie has been a key voice in developing the programme, providing best practice from her experience on the Kirkby Neighbourhood Board.

NOTE: Further recruitment and Board position extension to be brought back to Board for review and endorsement.