



# MEETING OF THE NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD

Date: Friday, 16 January 2026

### Invitees

Name	Role	Organisation
<b>Board Members</b>		
Chris Hickey	Chair	Mercury Hampton
David Baines MP	Member of Parliament, St Helens North	Member of Parliament, St Helens North
Mark Palethorpe	Chief Executive	St Helens Borough Council
Ian Lewis	Investment Manager	Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Jon Julian Smith	Chief Inspector, St Helens	Merseyside Police
<b>Community &amp; Co-opted Board Members</b>		
Alex Myhill	Community Representative	Riddling Rack
Debbie Taylor	Business Representative	Es Paradis Salon & Domestic Abuse WA12 CIC
Paul Romanko	Business Representative	United Utilities Water Ltd
Fiona Ruddy	Third Sector Representative	Newton Community Centre
John Unsworth	Cultural, Arts, and Heritage including Sports Groups Representative	Sea Cadet Corps
Reverend Chris Stafford	Faith Representative	Team Rector at St Peters, Emmanuel Wargrave, and St John's
<b>Local Authority Representatives</b>		
Mary Jefferson	Head of Regeneration and Growth	St Helens Borough Council
Matt Valentine	Programme Lead	St Helens Borough Council
Rachel Bebb	Project Officer	St Helens Borough Council
Glenn Taggart	Programme Manager	St Helens Borough Council
<b>Apologies</b>		
Amie Louise Parsonage	Portfolio and Partnerships Officer	Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner
Councillor Anthony Burns	Leader of the Council	St Helens Borough Council
Councillor Kate Groucutt	Cabinet Member for Business & Inclusive Growth and Deputy Leader	St Helens Borough Council
Joanne Edge	Community Representative	Newton Sports Club



**ST HELENS**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# MEETING OF THE NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD

**Friday 16 January 2026**

## **AGENDA**

<b>AGM AGENDA</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Lead</b>
1.	Welcome and Apologies	CH
2.	Declarations of Interest	CH
3.	Neighbourhood Board Progress Report	CH
4.	Neighbourhood Board Membership	MV
5.	Plan for Neighbourhoods Finance Report	DW
6.	Updated Terms of Reference	MV

<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD AGENDA</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Lead</b>
1.	Welcome and Apologies	CH
2.	Declarations of Interest	CH
3.	Early Delivery Projects	MV
4.	Building Improvements Scheme	MV
5.	AOB	All



## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. This report demonstrates the progress made by the Newton-le-Willows Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme, highlighting key achievements, milestones and future priorities.

## **2. Recommendations for Decision**

- 2.1. **The Board is recommended to note the contents of this report.**

## **3. Purpose of this Report**

- 3.1. To highlight to Board Members the positive progress that has been made with the Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme over the past twelve months, as shown in Appendix 1.

## **4. Progress Summary Since May 2024**

### Board Recruitment

- 4.1. In May 2024, Chris Hickey was appointed as the Chair for the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board, following the Council (as the accountable body) and local MP appointing to this role. Guidance at the time, under the previous programmes name of 'Long-Term Plan for Towns', outlined that Neighbourhood Boards must be chaired by a local community leader or local businessperson, who must act as a champion for the area and provide leadership for the Neighbourhood Board.
- 4.2. Following the appointment of a Chair, the first Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board meeting took place on 28 June 2024, with mandated Board Members agreeing four key recommendations:
- Board composition and recruitment.
  - Terms of reference.
  - Recruitment of a 'Project Officer' to support delivery of the initiative.
  - A procurement exercise to appoint specialist support for the Board in their development of the former Long-Term Plan, now known as a

## 'Regeneration Plan'.

4.3. Over the course of Summer 2024, expansion of the Neighbourhood Board was prioritised, with MP David Baines and Neighbourhood Board Chair, Chris Hickey, leading the review of both community applications and nominations for positions. The outcome of this process identified candidates for the positions listed below, selecting two candidates from a public recruitment exercise for community positions, alongside co-opted appointments for the remaining positions:

- Two business representatives
- Two community representatives
- One faith representative
- One third sector representative
- One cultural, arts, and heritage including sports club representative

4.4. The recruitment process for sitting Neighbourhood Board members concluded in October 2024 and the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board first met in its full capacity in December 2024.

### First Milestone – Board Composition and Boundary Area

4.5. Government published its new 'Plan for Neighbourhoods' prospectus on 4 March 2025, which contained the first milestones for the initiative to 'confirm finalised membership and proposals to alter the 'default' area boundary' to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) by 22 April 2025.

4.6. At the full Neighbourhood Board meeting on 21 March 2025, Neighbourhood Board approved the proposals to alter the 'default' area boundary to include key green spaces, and to freeze Board membership until such time that the Regeneration Plan was developed. It was agreed that once the Regeneration Plan had been developed, a Board Skills Audit would be undertaken to identify any skills gaps in relation to the priorities of the first investment period.

4.7. Accordingly, the first milestone set for Neighbourhood Board – requiring the submission of governance arrangements, board composition, and a boundary map – was successfully met by the deadline of 22 April 2025 and submitted by the Project Team.

### Community Engagement and Consultation

4.8. Prior to the delivery of public and stakeholder engagement activities, an Engagement Strategy was established following endorsement at Neighbourhood Board, to inform and guide the engagement approach. This strategy was driven by an Engagement Sub-Group, established in January 2025, made up of four members of the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board with a passion for engagement.

- 4.9. Throughout January to March 2025, a series of workshops were undertaken with the Engagement Sub-Group to review the proposed engagement approach and clarify expectations, shaping the consultation through local knowledge and insights and ultimately adding additional consultation activity.
- 4.10. The Engagement Strategy was endorsed by the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board at its meeting of 21 March 2025 and informed the comprehensive public and stakeholder engagement that has been delivered to date. The Sub-Group ensured there was appropriate geographic distribution of events, tailored engagement activities, and that the hardest to reach communities in Newton-le-Willows were considered and engaged.
- 4.11. Following endorsement of the Engagement Strategy, a six-week consultation was undertaken between Monday 7 April 2025 and Sunday 18 May 2025. The consultation invited contributions from residents, businesses, visitors, and stakeholders to inform the development of the Regeneration Plan. Its purpose was to identify priority areas for investment and to ensure that the projects proposed within the 4-Year Investment Plan were underpinned by evidence of need and supported by the community.
- 4.12. The consultation period included a series of public-facing events, including two pop-up events at the Pop-Up Market in Earlestown and Newton High Street Market, six drop-in sessions targeted for specific stakeholders, alongside two school workshops, and an online platform inclusive of an online survey, interactive map, and ideas wall. In addition, promotion and reach were wide and involved various methods, including flyers, which were hand-delivered to businesses and organisations across Newton-le-Willows. In addition, flyers were distributed more widely by Board members alongside; a press release; social media; an 'education piece' video explaining engagement opportunities; self-led engagement boards which held information on the scheme; direct email correspondence; posters across Newton-le-Willows; and digital flyers distributed to local schools.
- 4.13. As a result, the consultation reached circa 60,000 people (this includes website views, promotional materials distributed, and social media impressions), 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.
- 4.14. On 29 July 2025, the [Public Consultation Findings Report](#) and [Engagement Summary](#) were released. Both documents outline findings of the consultation exercise and detailed how the responses would inform the Newton-le-Willows Regeneration Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan.

#### Regeneration Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan Submission

- 4.15. At the Neighbourhood Board meeting of 3 October 2025, Board members were informed of the development of the Regeneration Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan, and how this has been shaped through an evidence base

utilising socio-economic data, strategic insights and public priorities from the consultation to build the strategic case for change for Newton-le-Willows.

4.16. The Plan sets out the vision for Newton-le-Willows across the next 10 years and outlines the priority investment themes which will be focused on for the first four years of the programme. The investment themes detailed below are prioritised for investment in Period 1 (from April 2026-March 2030):

- Regeneration, High Streets and Heritage
- Education and Opportunity
- Health and Wellbeing
- Cohesion

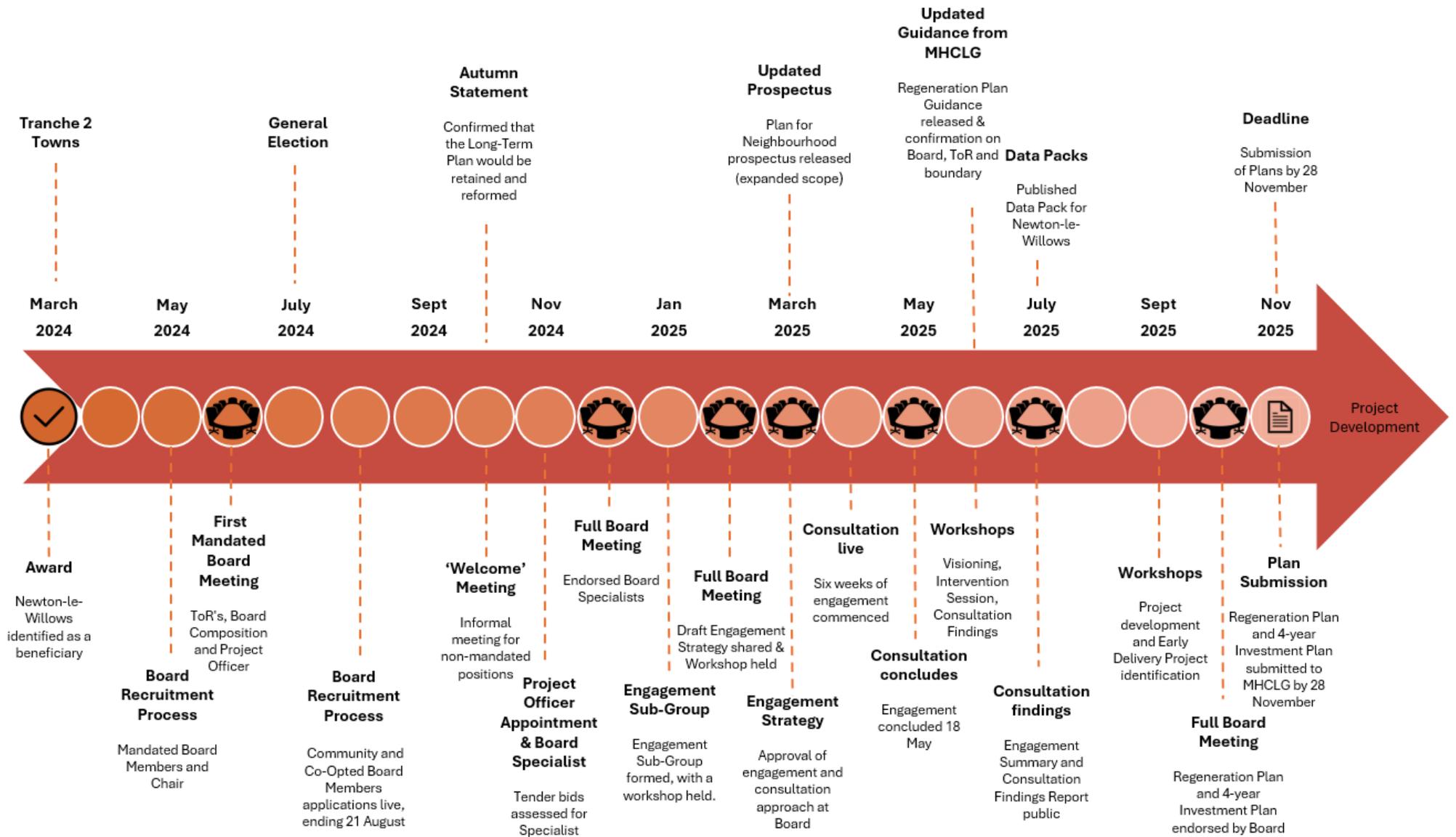
4.17. Following Board endorsement for the Regeneration Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan at the 3 October 2025 Neighbourhood Board meeting, and subsequent Council Cabinet approvals secured on 19 November 2025, the Plans were submitted to Government ahead of the 28 November 2025 deadline, symbolising a key milestone for the programme.

## **5. Conclusion**

5.1. Newton-le-Willows Plan for Neighbourhoods has made excellent progress over the past year, which can be seen through Appendix 1, with several major milestones complete and the next stage in delivery advancing as delivery funding is released from April 2026. With further project development workshops to be scheduled, the programme is on track to drive the economic regeneration of Newton-le-Willows.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Programme Timeline to Date



**Appendix 1: Programme Timeline to date**

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## **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Membership as of 16 January 2026 and outlines proposed updates to the Neighbourhood Board membership and governance.

## **2. Recommendation for Decision**

### **2.1 Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Mandated Board is recommended to:**

- 1) Approve the extension of community positions for a period of 12 months in line with existing Terms of Reference**

### **2.2 Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board is recommended to:**

- 1) Approve the extension of the term of office of all current Board Members on the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board until March 2030, in alignment with the first 4-year investment period cycle.**
- 2) Agree the composition of the Neighbourhood Board and the recruitment route presented in paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7 for the appointment of Board Members with specialisms aligned to the 4-Year Investment Plan priorities. This follows a skills analysis of the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board in relation to project development and delivery for the first investment period cycle.**
- 3) To note the Deputy Chair appointment of Ian Lewis, in accordance with the Terms of Reference procedures.**

## **3. Background / Reason for the recommendations**

- 3.1 The current Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Terms of Reference (due to be updated within Agenda Item 6 of this meeting) state that the duration of Board Membership for Mandated members will be for an initial period of 36 months, with options for extension on agreement of the Board. The Terms of Reference also state that those Board Members who have been co-opted to the Neighbourhood 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.

- 3.2 Due to Government publishing the 'Plan for Neighbourhoods' programme on 4 March 2025, new milestones for the initiative were introduced. These included requiring the Board to 'confirm finalised membership and proposals to alter 'default' area boundary' to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) by 22 April 2025. In respect of this, at the full Neighbourhood Board meeting on 21 March 2025, and following the governance guidance published, which details that the Plan for Neighbourhood Board membership may be refreshed at the end of the first 4-year investment period cycle, Neighbourhood Board agreed to freeze Board membership until such time that the Regeneration Plan was developed. In addition, it was agreed that a Board Skills Audit would be undertaken to identify any skills gaps in relation to the priorities of the first investment period.
- 3.3 The following Board Members have resigned from the Board over the past 12 months due to a change in St Helens Borough Council's Chief Executive, and Cabinet and Portfolio Holder responsibilities for the Plan for Neighbourhoods initiative:
- Kath O'Dwyer - former Chief Executive of St Helens Borough Council (resigned from the Neighbourhood Board in March 2025).
  - Councillor Richard McCauley - former Portfolio Holder of Inclusive Growth & Regeneration (resigned from the Neighbourhood Board in May 2025).
- 3.4 In accordance with the current Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Board, the new Chief Executive and Portfolio Holder for Business & Inclusive Growth (with the remit for Plan for Neighbourhoods) occupy positions within the Neighbourhood Board. For clarity, it is the post holder of these positions that occupies a seat on the Neighbourhood Board rather than the individuals themselves. Consequently, the Chief Executive (Mark Palethorpe) and the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Business & Inclusive Growth (Councillor Kate Groucutt) now occupy their respective positions within the Neighbourhood Board, replacing Kath O'Dwyer and Councillor Richard McCauley.
- 3.5 Following the development of the Regeneration Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan, shaped by community consultation, the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board have created and submitted their 10-Year Vision for Newton-le-Willows and 4-Year Investment Plan priorities to Government ahead of the 28 November 2025 deadline. The investment themes below have been identified as priorities for Investment in Period 1 (from April 2026 to March 2030):
- Regeneration, High Streets and Heritage
  - Education and Opportunity

- Health and Wellbeing
- Cohesion

3.6 Following submission of the Plan for Neighbourhoods Regeneration Plan Vision Document, the programme is entering into a new phase, with the programme moving into a delivery phase, once the initial funding tranche is received in April 2026. To ensure the Neighbourhood Board has appropriate knowledge and skills when developing, assessing and selecting projects, a skills analysis was undertaken of the existing Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board. It is proposed, because of the analysis, that the Board explore recruitment opportunities with the aspiration to appoint to the below roles:

- 1 representative from an 'Education and Opportunity' background.
- 1 representative from a 'Health and Wellbeing' background.

3.7 The current Terms of Reference states that 'at the discretion of the Chairperson, applications for Board may be considered from exceptional individuals should they display skills or experiences that will complement and enhance the Board'. Accordingly, Neighbourhood Board Members, senior internal officers, and elected members will be invited to nominate representatives within the above specialisms.

3.8 The selection and appointment process of Board Members should be invitation-led, and the following criteria taken into consideration:

- Demonstrable passion and commitment to the development of Newton-le-Willows future.
- Record of commitment of time and resources into local social and economic infrastructure.
- Willingness to engage with the Local Authority and Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board, abiding by the Terms of Reference of the Newton-le-Willows Plan for Neighbourhoods Neighbourhood Board and its Code of Conduct and decision-making processes.
- Respected and credible local community leader.
- Ability to meet the time commitments of the Board and attend Board meetings regularly.
- Domain knowledge or expertise, pertinent to the business of the Board, in specialisms of Education and/or Health as applicable to the respective position.

3.9 The table below shows the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Membership past and present, as of the 16 January 2026. To ensure consistency and continuity across the Board, it is proposed that all current Board membership positions, in addition to the new specialisms aligned to the investment priorities, have their terms extended to March 2030, aligning the full membership under a single renewal cycle.

#### 4. Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Membership – Past and Present

Name	Role	Organisation	Commencement Date	Term of Office End Date
Chris Hickey	Chair	Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board	23 May 2024	23 May 2027
Conor McGinn	Former Member of Parliament	Former Member of Parliament, St Helens North	23 May 2024	30 May 2024
David Baines, MP	Member of Parliament	Member of Parliament, St Helens North	4 July 2024	4 July 2027
Councillor Anthony Burns	Leader of the Council	St Helens Borough Council	29 June 2024	29 June 2027
Councillor Richard McCauley	Cabinet Member for Regeneration	St Helens Borough Council	29 June 2024	14 May 2025
Kath O'Dwyer	Former Chief Executive	St Helens Borough Council	29 June 2024	31 March 2025
Councillor Kate Groucutt	Cabinet Member for Business & Inclusive Growth and Deputy Leader	St Helens Borough Council	14 May 2025	14 May 2028
Mark Palethorpe	Chief Executive	St Helens Borough Council	3 April 2025	3 April 2028
Ian Lewis	Investment Manager	Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	29 June 2024	29 June 2027
Jon Julian Smith	Chief Inspector, St Helens	Merseyside Police	13 December 2024	13 December 2027
Amie Louise Parsonage	Portfolio and Partnership Officer	Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner	29 June 2024	29 June 2027
Joanne Edge	Community Representative	Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board	13 December 2024	13 December 2025
Alex Myhill	Community Representative	Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board	13 December 2024	13 December 2025
Debbie Taylor	Business Representative	Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board	13 December 2024	13 December 2025
Paul Romanko	Business Representative	Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board	13 December 2024	13 December 2025
Fiona Ruddy	Third Sector Representative	Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board	13 December 2024	13 December 2025
John Unsworth	Cultural, Arts, and Heritage including Sports Groups Representative	Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board	13 December 2024	13 December 2025
Reverend Chris Stafford	Faith Representative	Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board	13 December 2024	13 December 2025

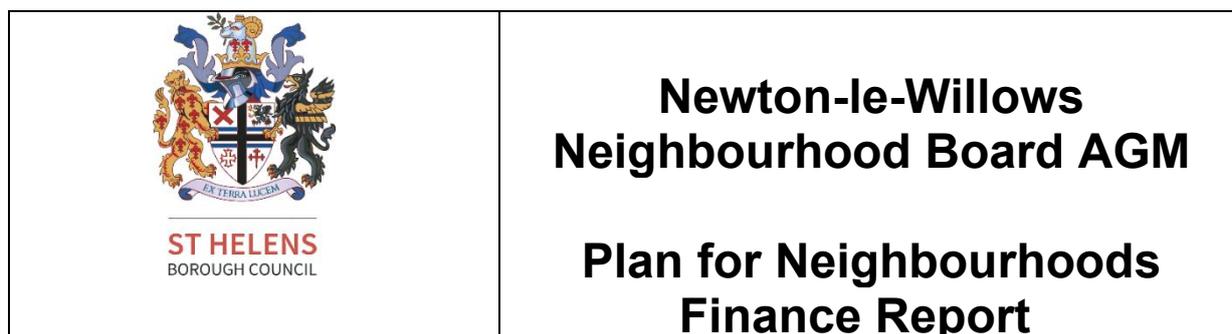
#### 5. Conclusions

5.1 This report includes a series of recommendations and proposed updates to the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board membership. By endorsing new appointments and the recruitment approach following a skills analysis, and

extending current membership, it is envisaged that the Board will be well positioned to maintain effective governance and successfully deliver the priorities of the 4-Year Investment Plan within the Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme.

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## ITEM 5



### **1 Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides Board with an update on the financial position in relation to the Plan for Neighbourhoods capacity funding given by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
- 1.2 A total of £450,000 capacity funding has been received to date by the Council for use by the Neighbourhood Board, ahead of delivery funding to support community engagement to date and local capacity building. Full revenue and capital delivery allocations will be confirmed following the Government's approval of the Regeneration Plan and Investment Plan for the first four years, and subject to this, funding will be available as per the annual profiling from April 2026.

### **2 Recommendations for Decision**

- 1) The Board is recommended to note the financial summary detailed in the report.**

### **3 Purpose of this Report**

- 3.1 This report records the current financial position in relation to capacity funding for the Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme.

### **4 Expenditure to Date**

- 4.1 It is usual for an AGM meeting to review a backward-looking performance position for the financial year that has ended. Due to the date of this meeting and the Council providing the accounting within its financial statements due on 31 March 2026, a position statement as of December 2025 has been provided.
- 4.2 To date, the Council has received £450,000 funding in capacity funding to afford beneficiaries of the programme the time and space to embed the necessary governance structures, grow their presence within the local area and build local capacity and capability to hit the ground running. Table 1

shows the breakdown of capacity funding expended to date as of 31 December 2025.

**Table 1**

<b>Expenditure Description</b>	<b>Revenue Grant Expenditure 2024/25 (£)</b>	<b>Revenue Grant Expenditure 2025/26 to 31 December 2025 (£)</b>	<b>Total Capacity Funding Expenditure to 31 December 2025 (£)</b>
Salary Costs	17,356	39,413	56,769
Room Hire	298	1,060	1,358
Transport & Travel	0	691	691
Printing	0	421	421
Consultancy Services (Hatch)	24,132	92,382	116,514
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,786</b>	<b>133,967</b>	<b>175,753</b>

- 4.3 In alignment with the recent guidance published by MHCLG on 3 December 2025, the Council as the accountable body for the programme will report to MHCLG on a 6-monthly basis, in addition to a 12-month basis, on finances related to pre-delivery activity completed to date and programme delivery and pre-delivery spend in financial year broken down by capital and revenue spend. The first reporting submission will be in April 2026 as a full 12 monthly monitoring return.

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 The Board is recommended to note the contents of the report and the current financial position of the Plan for Neighbourhoods income and expenditure.

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## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To provide the Board with the opportunity to review and approve the governance arrangements for the creation and operation of the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board, following updated guidance.

## 2. Recommendations for Decision

**Board is recommended to:**

- 1) Agree the updated Terms of Reference, following updated guidance provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).**

## 3. Background

- 3.1. At the inaugural Neighbourhood Board meeting of June 2024, Mandated Board Members approved the Terms of Reference and Roles & Responsibilities for the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board, in relation to the former Long-Term Plan for Towns guidance.
- 3.2. Published on 4 March 2025, the Government announced its 'Plan for Neighbourhoods' programme and released the prospectus, pre-approved interventions, and list of powers to replace the Long-Term Plan for Towns Programme.
- 3.3. On 25 September 2025, Government launched the 'Pride in Place Programme' rebranding the Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme as 'Pride in Place Tranche 1'. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has since advised that it is for Neighbourhood Boards to decide if they wish to rebrand the programme or to retain the Plan for Neighbourhoods name. To provide familiarity, this report continues to reference Plan for Neighbourhoods, with the Neighbourhood Board to be consulted on the rebranding, ahead of the programme launch in April 2026 (when the first tranche of delivery funding is released).
- 3.4. Following this rebranding, the [Pride in Place Programme Prospectus](#) was released on 3 December 2025, alongside funding profiles and timelines, governance and boundary guidance, monitoring guidance and a list

of indicative interventions. Whilst the expanded programme retains the core components from the existing 75 Tranche 1 areas within the Pride in Place Programme, there are some slight differences for Tranche 2 beneficiaries.

3.5. Accordingly, in alignment with recent guidance, it is an appropriate time for the Neighbourhood Board to refresh the Terms of Reference (see Appendix 1) and strengthen the framework for adherence to the guidance, ensuring the appropriate governance arrangements are in place for the Neighbourhood Board to fulfil its obligations. Key amendments to the Terms of Reference include:

- Strengthening the Board's strategic role and responsibilities.
- Declaration of Interest forms to be populated yearly.
- Strengthening the Board's representation to ensure a resident focus.
- Extension of Board membership.
- Inclusion of a Neighbourhood Board meeting quorate.

#### **4. Conclusion**

4.1 The Terms of Reference will support the operation of the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board in accordance with the recent guidance and with the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles) and Pride in Place Programme assurance and governance requirements.

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Updated Terms of Reference

## **Appendix 1: Updated Terms of Reference**

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

### 1 Background

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 As part of the Autumn Statement of October 2024, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) confirmed that the Long-Term Plan for Towns initiative would be retained but reformed as part of a new regeneration programme.
- 1.3 Published on 4 March 2025, the Labour Government announced its 'Plan for Neighbourhoods' programme and released the prospectus, pre-approved interventions, and list of powers to replace the Long-Term Plan for Towns programme.
- 1.4 Each Neighbourhood Board (formerly known as Town Board) will, in partnership with their local authority, develop a 'Regeneration Plan', (previously known as a Long-Term Plan) setting out its vision for the next decade including a detailed Investment Plan for the first 4-Years of the programme (previously set out as 3-Years).
- 1.5 On 25 September 2025, Government launched the 'Pride in Place Programme', rebranding the Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme as 'Pride in Place Tranche 1'. MHCLG has since advised that it is for Neighbourhood Boards to decide if they wish to rebrand the programme or to retain the Plan for Neighbourhoods name. To provide familiarity, this report continues to reference Plan for Neighbourhoods, with the Neighbourhood Board to be consulted on the rebranding, ahead of the programme launch in April 2026 (when the delivery funding is released).
- 1.6 Following this rebranding, the [Pride in Place Programme Prospectus](#) was released on 3 December 2025, alongside funding profiles and timelines, governance and boundary guidance, monitoring guidance and a list of indicative interventions. Whilst the expanded programme retains the core components from the existing 75 Tranche 1 areas within the Pride in Place Programme (inclusive of Newton-le-Willows), there are some slight differences for Tranche 2 beneficiaries.

## **2 Objective of the Fund**

- 2.1 Taken together, the two tranches of the Pride in Place Programme represents one of the largest investments in deprived neighbourhoods – up to £5 billion over 10 years to support 244 places, representing a long-term strategy to fix the foundations of communities across the country.
- 2.2 Neighbourhood Boards will co-create a Regeneration Plan (or Pride in Place Plan for Tranche 2 beneficiaries), together with their community, setting out how up to £20 million will be spent over the course of a decade. It is up to the Board – alongside the local MP and Council – to decide what is in the Plan, but they must be able to show that it's a genuine reflection of what local residents want.
- 2.3 While success will look different in every place, MHCLG have set three overarching aims of this programme:
  - Stronger communities
  - Thriving places
  - Taking back control
- 2.4 To deliver on these objectives, Neighbourhood Boards need to be established bringing together representatives from the community, local businesses, sports clubs, third sector, faith groups, community leaders and those with a deep connection to their area.
- 2.5 Each beneficiary 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, safety and security, transport and connectivity, housing, work productivity and skills, cohesion, health and wellbeing and education and opportunity.
- 2.6 In exchange each beneficiary will be required to produce a 10-year plan for their town, setting out the activity that will be pursued to achieve the 3 strategic objectives of this programme, alongside investment plan priorities for each Investment Period.

## **3 Role of the Neighbourhood Board**

- 3.1 The role of the Neighbourhood Board is to ensure the Regeneration Plan is both defined and delivered. It will meet on a quarterly basis, and Board Members will bring together a broad range of specialisms to deliver the Regeneration Plan and subsequent Investment Plans.
- 3.2 The Board will provide a strategic overview, direction and scrutiny of delivery against the plan, providing decision-making on strategy, policy and project performance. The Board will work with the Council who is the accountable body

for the Pride in Place Tranche 1 funding (also known as Plan for Neighbourhoods).

- 3.3 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).
- 3.4 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).
- 3.5 To achieve this, it will:
  - **Influence** decision making and governance, using the Board's professional expertise and local knowledge, to best deliver value for money across the Regeneration Plan projects, as well as actively attracting other funding, be it from the private or public sector.
  - **Champion** the Board's vision and promote bold, deliverable interventions that will generate maximum economic and social benefits for Newton-le-Willows, St Helens Borough and 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 and seek clarification on mitigation where progress is not as expected.

## 4 Key Activities

- 4.1 By 28 November 2025, the Board will:
  - Develop and submit its Regeneration Plan to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (comprising a 10-Year Vision and 4-Year Investment Plan).
- 4.2 Once the Regeneration Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan is approved, the Board will:
  - Identify the issues and priorities to focus on in the Regeneration Plan and agree how the community will be engaged.
  - Work with the Council to further develop the Regeneration Plan, and set out how partner agencies will use their knowledge, powers, assets and new funding to deliver the Plan for the community.

- Identify opportunities to utilise specific powers (such as neighbourhood planning) to drive forward the Regeneration Plan.
- Identify and assist in harnessing opportunities to bring in additional philanthropic or private investment to support the Regeneration Plan.
- Oversee the delivery of projects in the Regeneration Plan.

4.3 St Helens Council was awarded Capacity Funding to support the creation of the Neighbourhood Board and to support the Neighbourhood Board in creation of Regeneration Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan. It is from April 2026 that delivery funding is released.

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

5.1 There exists 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 the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority on a key policy area.
- Help inform investment plans for the township for future years.
- Use the Regeneration 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 Neighbourhood Board

1.1 The purpose of the Board is to assist in the facilitation of the delivery of the Regeneration Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan.

1.2 The objective of the Board is to provide strategic leadership, oversight and decision-making. The Board focuses on strategic outcomes and assurance, not operational delivery.

1.3 The objectives of the Board are to:

- Set the strategic direction and identify the issues and priorities to focus on in the Regeneration Plan, agreeing the community will be engaged.
- Work with the Council to develop the Regeneration Plan and set 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 Regeneration Plan.
- Identify opportunities to bring in additional philanthropic or private investment to support the Regeneration Plan.
- Oversee the delivery of projects in the Regeneration Plan.

### 2. Board Membership

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

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Recruitment method</b>
<b><i>Mandated Members</i></b>	
Chairperson	Direct appointment
Member of Parliament (St Helens North)	Direct appointment
A senior representative from the Police (expected to be the Police and Crime Commissioner or their agreed delegate)	Direct appointment
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (Senior Officer)	Direct appointment
Elected Member (Portfolio of the Council Leader)	Direct appointment
Elected Member (Portfolio of Business and Inclusive Growth)	Direct appointment
Chief Executive (St Helens Borough Council)	Direct appointment
<b><i>Community and Co-opted members</i></b>	
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	Co-opted
Cultural Arts and Heritage representative (including sports clubs)	Co-opted
Merseyside Police Representative (Super-Intendent or Chief Inspector for St Helens)	Direct appointment
Health and Wellbeing representative	Co-opted
Education and Opportunity representative	Co-opted

2.2 The Chairperson will lead the recruitment of members of the Neighbourhood Board, ensuring an inclusive and representative selection of people from across the local community in line with the published requirements. The Chairperson should be supported by the local authority and local MP to identify and recruit suitable candidates for the Board. In alignment with the programme governance, the Chairperson should be guided by the following criteria:

- Boards must have at least eight members, to ensure a broad range of voices and perspectives.
- The majority (at least 51%) of members should live or work within the boundaries of the neighbourhood, ensuring that the Board is resident-led.
- Members should broadly reflect the range and diversity of people who live in the area – for example, in relation to age, ethnicity, gender, faith, disability or income levels.

2.3 The Chairperson will lead the Board in defining, delivering and maintaining its vision, integrity and direction, whilst ensuring the appropriate procedures for governance and management are in place.

2.4 The Chairperson will act as a champion for the town and provide leadership for the Neighbourhood Board, ensuring it is community-led and embedded within the local area.

2.5 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 Regeneration 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.
- 2.6 The Chairperson may choose to appoint a Deputy Chairperson from the other public (but not elected representatives) and private sector representatives.
- 2.7 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 Chairperson'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 the 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.
- 2.8 Duration of Board Membership will be for a period of 36 months for all mandated and directly appointed members initially, with options for extension with the agreement of the Board. Those Board Members who have been co-opted to the Neighbourhood Board or those appointed via a public recruitment exercise (discretionary Board positions) will serve a term of 12 months that may be extended subject to Board approval.
- 2.9 Following the initial Board membership period, government guidance recommends that the most appropriate time to refresh Board membership may be at the end of the first 4-Year Investment Period cycle (March 2030). Any updates are to be communicated to MHCLG, and the appropriate conflict of interest checks completed.
- 2.10 The Board must have a diverse range of skills and experiences which include (list not exhaustive):
- Project Management;
  - Youth Engagement;
  - Community Engagement;
  - Third Sector Engagement;
  - Risk Management;
  - Contract and Procurement;
  - Legal Knowledge;
  - Heritage and Conservation;
  - Construction;

- Governance;
- Budget Management;
- Strategic Thinking;
- Consultation and Engagement;
- Education and Training; and
- Health and Wellbeing.

2.11 At the discretion of the Chairperson, additional applications for the Neighbourhood Board may be considered from exceptional individuals, should they display skills or experiences that will complement or enhance the Neighbourhood Board, in accordance with the programme's governance and the Regeneration Plan priorities.

2.12 Board Members will be required to adhere to the governance standards and policies of the Council, as the accountable body, 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, as a minimum, 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 Chairperson. 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 Neighbourhood Board per calendar year. If a Board Member's attendance falls below 50% then their position on the Board should be considered by the Neighbourhood 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, with distributed papers reviewed before each meeting.

4.2 The Board has power to make all decisions in respect of the delivery of the Regeneration Plan. In due course, dependent on government's evaluation of the Regeneration 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 cannot attend, they are still required to review the board papers and make their views known to the Chair of the Board in advance of the Board meeting.
- 4.4 A meeting of the Board is quorate when a majority of directly appointed members (at least 50%) are present, as well as at least 50% of representatives that have been co-opted or publicly appointed. Only filled positions will be counted for the purpose of determining a quorum and requirements will be rounded down to the nearest whole number in the event of an odd number of filled positions. Where a meeting is not quorate, discussion may occur, but no decisions may be made.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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. Decisions to be taken by Board will be recorded in each pre-circulated agenda pack to inform Board members of meeting content.

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

- 5.1 Operational responsibility for implementing Board decisions and managing day-to-day activities is delegated to the Council as the accountable body, or responsible persons for individual projects as appropriate. The Board is then responsible for strategic oversight in relation to delivery and performance of projects.
- 5.2 Sub-committees (or Sub-Groups) 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.
- 5.3 Additional non-Board members (acting as advisors) 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.
- 5.4 Each Sub-Committee should be chaired either by a Board Member or a Board-approved nominated representative. Sub-Committee members will work under remit from the Board to develop allocated projects for recommendation, to be brought back to Full Board meetings for strategic decision. Sub-Committees do not have a decision-making authority in place of a full Board meeting.
- 5.5 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.

5.6 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 must 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, with new conflict of interest forms populated immediately following each calendar year and prior to the next formal Board meeting. Completed conflict of interest forms are required for Board members to obtain full voting rights on Board matters.

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 is important to maintain the integrity of the Board to the public, investors and all tiers of Government.

6.6 The Lead Authority, St Helens Council will provide a list of Board Members declared Conflicts of Interests in the minutes of each Board meeting in which they are declared.

6.7 In accordance with the Plan for Neighbourhoods Prospectus (now referred to as Pride in Place Tranche 1), 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.



**ST HELENS**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

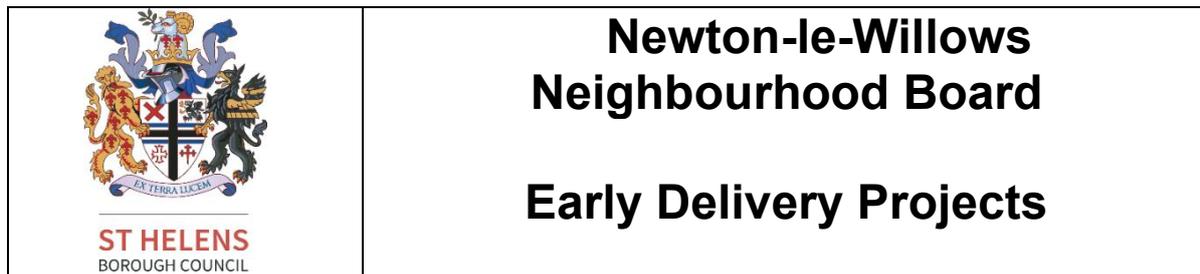
# MEETING OF THE NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD

**Friday 16 January 2026**

## **AGENDA**

### NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD AGENDA

Item	Title	Lead
1.	Welcome and Apologies	CH
2.	Declarations of Interest	CH
3.	Early Delivery Projects	MV
4.	Building Improvements Scheme	MV
5.	AOB	All



## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1. The purpose is to advise the Board of the progress made in the development of 'Early Delivery Projects' for Year 1 of the Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme.

## **2. Recommendations for Decision**

### **2.1. Board is recommended to:**

- 1) Note the progress relating to the development of 'early delivery projects' as part of the Plan for Neighbourhoods initiative.**
- 2) Approve £0.361m of funding for Early Delivery Projects for Year 1 of the programme, as described in paragraph 4.1 below.**

## **3. Background**

- 3.1. At the Neighbourhood Board meeting of 21 March 2025, Board Members reemphasised their aspiration for some early delivery projects and to identify projects that could be developed for immediate delivery, allowing the community to see the impact of the programme from the outset. It was noted at this meeting that although the funding allocation from government is weighted from Year-2 onwards, in recognition that further project development would be required during the first 12 months of the initiative, the initial tranche of delivery funding within the first year allows for high-impact early delivery projects to be considered by the Board.
- 3.2. At the Neighbourhood Board Workshop on 4 July 2025, following the selection of a series of priority interventions for Investment Period 1 (from April 2026 to March 2030), Neighbourhood Board requested that the Council provide a list of immediately deliverable projects within 'Regeneration, High Streets, and Heritage' interventions, to be presented and considered by the Board, to meet their aspirations for launching the programme with early deliverable projects.
- 3.3. Accordingly, the Project Team engaged with relevant council services and Neighbourhood Board members to identify projects under the following interventions:

- Projects related to improvements to town centres, neighbourhoods, and high streets (with costs including capital spend and running costs).
  - Enhanced support for arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities, projects and facilities, and historic institutions that make up the local offer.
  - Creating and improving green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments in the local area, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.
- 3.4. Council services and the Board Members were instructed that any immediately deliverable projects or activities that were to be considered by the Neighbourhood Board needed to fit under the above interventions and must be ready for delivery from April 2026 onwards with a strong business case. In addition, Neighbourhood Board Members were given the opportunity to input into the early deliverable project list.
- 3.5. Following the formal Neighbourhood Board meeting on 3 October 2025, Neighbourhood Board members took part in a 'Early Deliverable Projects Prioritisation Workshop', to review a list of projects shortlisted for the Board's consideration with a strong economic and social case for investment. This involved Neighbourhood Board Members prioritising projects through a sticker system, with an ask for those ranking highly to be brought back to Neighbourhood Board for consideration.
- 3.6. Following the 3 October Workshop, the Project Team provided feedback from the Neighbourhood Board to relevant parties on the discussions and prioritisation exercise of their projects. Those projects that ranked highly were invited to submit a presentation including further information in respect of the following:
- Project Description
  - Location(s) - or a mechanism for deciding project location i.e. Inclusive Playground
  - Project Timeline
  - Outputs
  - Outcomes
  - Financial Profile
  - Key Risks and Mitigations
  - Photos / Examples
- 3.7. The presentations were reviewed by the Project Team in consultation with Finance Service colleagues to ensure compliance with the capital/revenue requirements of the programme. Following this, the Project Team undertook an independent scoring exercise, ahead of a moderation meeting on Wednesday 5 November 2025, to review scoring of projects in accordance with the developed scoring matrix as outlined below:
- Strategic Alignment (40%)

- Deliverability (40%)
- Budget Justification (10%)
- Legacy (10%)

3.8. The scoring results from the Project Team had oversight provided by the Executive Director of Place Services to ensure those projects put forward for consideration were feasible and deliverable.

3.9. At a Neighbourhood Board Workshop on 5 December 2025, the outcome of the prioritisation exercise was presented by the subject matter experts from the Council's Greenspaces Team, Regeneration & Growth Team, and the Culture & Arts Team, with the Neighbourhood Board given opportunity to ask questions and discuss the proposals. The projects listed below were recommended:

#### **Capital**

- St Johns Playground
- Earlestown Town Hall AV and Lighting Enhancements

#### **Revenue**

- Arts on Prescription

3.10. It was agreed at the Neighbourhood Board Workshop on 5 December 2025 that the development progression of early delivery projects should continue, with the intention that they be brought back to a formal Board meeting for decision. Further information is provided below on the 'Early Delivery Projects' put forward to Board for consideration and endorsement.

#### St Johns Playground

3.11. St Johns Park, located within Earlestown, is a green space which serves the local community, but the existing equipment is reaching an end-of-life stage. Earlestown sits within the top 10-20% of most deprived super output areas in England, with deprivation being a key component of the PfN programme.

3.12. Installation of a new playground at St Johns would enable access to free recreation for young people at the heart of the community, with accessibility to Earlestown Town Centre and future improved facilities at Earlestown Town Hall.

3.13. The playground would be branded as a 'Children's Playground' but also include inclusive equipment alongside standardised play equipment to offer opportunities for all.

3.14. Key elements of the project would include up to 100+ features able to accommodate 80 users aged from 2 to 14. The playground may be themed to reflect the heritage and community of Newton-le-Willows, with an expanded footprint of the current play area.

- 3.15. The cost of the project would total £0.203m, with an allocation of £0.165m for the playground and equipment with an additional allocation of £0.038m for wider accessible footpaths and landscaping improving accessibility. Funding would be exclusively from the capital allocation.

#### Earlestown Town Hall AV and Lighting

- 3.16. Delivering high quality Audio-Visual (AV) and lighting infrastructure to the main hall of Earlestown Town Hall, this project represents key additionality to the Earlestown Regeneration Programme by broadening the offer to local community groups and facilitating a wider range of needs and uses.
- 3.17. The installation of professional AV and lighting will transform the main hall into a fully functional cultural asset for local community use. This would serve various groups such as NADOS, school and youth groups, community organisations and wider uses for local resident and visitors seeking evening and weekend entertainment, with ongoing development reflecting consultation and engagement with target groups.
- 3.18. Installation will include an audio system, lighting system, video system, stage drape package and associated equipment to meet professional standards while remaining flexible and user-friendly for community groups.
- 3.19. Alignment with the Plan for Neighbourhoods objectives can be noted through Thriving Places, Stronger Communities and Taking Back Control. The three objectives listed are achieved through revitalising the main hall to meet the needs of community organisations, empowering local groups to deliver events and activities within the main hall and introducing footfall to the Town Centre helping to grow the Earlestown nighttime economy.
- 3.20. Without the funding secured, Earlestown Town Hall would reopen as a fantastic, flexible multi-use space, but without permanent AV and stage lighting. Users would need to bring or hire their own equipment, which risks excluding smaller or grassroots groups who lack the resources, confidence, or technical support to do so, and could limit the range and quality of performances, activities and community events. With endorsement from the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board, this project will install accessible, easy-to-use AV and lighting infrastructure, providing a dedicated, inclusive space that supports the individual needs of local leisure and performance groups, schools, and voluntary organisations thereby reducing barriers to participation and maximising the building's community benefit. This represents clear additionality beyond the base provision.
- 3.21. The specification has been developed in consultation with local organisations, to ensure the space would suit the usability of a range of cultural, leisure and social activities. Accordingly, the indicative cost basis of the project (subject to full tendering) would total £0.134m, exclusively funded from the Capital allocation.

- 3.22. An additional contribution of a minimum of £7,625 is to be provided by St Helens Borough Council through structural surveys, enabling works and the commission of a specialist consultant to support with system design.

#### Arts on Prescription

- 3.23. This project would launch a trial of the Arts on Prescription programme in Newton-le-Willows, offering a 12-week programme of arts and creative workshops for adults experiencing mild to moderate mental health issues such as stress, anxiety and depression, providing a creative route to wellbeing.
- 3.24. The Arts on Prescription project can be described as a non-clinical approach to improving wellbeing for people with mild to moderate mental health conditions, with a proven track record of over 10 years of delivery within St Helens Town Centre. This project presents an opportunity to create a satellite programme within Newton-le-Willows as previous feedback and consultation has shown that applicants from the area have found difficulty in travelling to St Helens to engage.
- 3.25. Provision is proposed to take place in Newton Library and will allow for three cohorts of 10 people to engage with the programme across May 2026 to March 2027, fully delivered within the 26/27 financial year.
- 3.26. All participants are individually evaluated following completion via the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) to gauge progress in terms of their mental health and inform project evaluation.
- 3.27. An allocation of £0.024 within the Revenue programme is required to facilitate the project.

## **4. Finance**

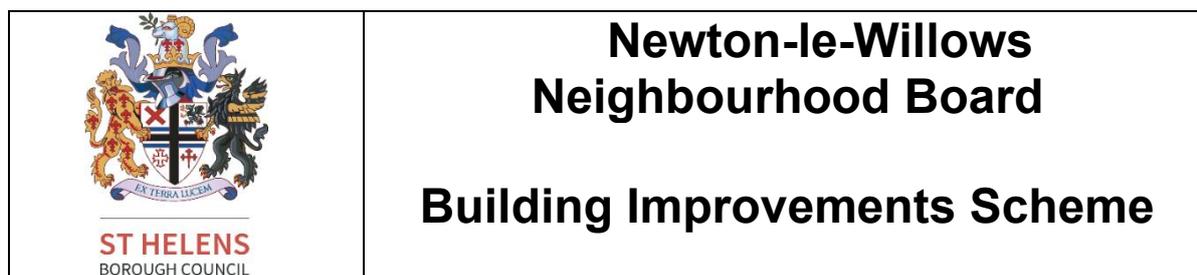
- 4.1 Should the Neighbourhood Board approve delivery of the recommended projects contained within Section 3.9 of this report, the total unallocated funding for Year 1 would be £0.007m Capital and £0.102m Revenue as shown in the table below.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Capital</b>	<b>Revenue</b>
Children's Playground	£0.203m	
Earlestown Town Hall AV and Lighting	£0.134m	
Community Pot	£0.015m	£0.010m
Arts on Prescription		£0.024m
<b>Subtotal Allocated</b>	<b>£0.352m</b>	<b>£0.034m</b>
<b>Unallocated Funding</b>	<b>£0.007m</b>	<b>£0.102m</b>
<b>Total available</b>	<b>£0.360m</b>	<b>£0.136m</b>

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 In conclusion, the allocation of funding as outlined in this report would allow for impactful and meaningful 'Early Delivery Projects' to be undertaken within the funding allocations provided for Year 1 of delivery. Each project represents key additionality to the area of Newton-le-Willows, allowing the local community to benefit from an immediate impact of project pipelines due to the Plan for Neighbourhoods programme.

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## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1. The purpose is to advise Board on the development of a Building Improvement Scheme for Earlestown town centre, following site visits to neighbouring comparable shop front improvement scheme initiatives.

## **2. Recommendations for Decision**

### **2.1. Board is recommended to:**

- 1) Note the progress relating to the development of a Building Improvement Scheme for Earlestown.**
- 2) Endorse the management approach associated with managing a Building Improvement Scheme, with the recommendation for Option 1 Internal Council delivery.**
- 3) Endorse the funding allocation associated with a Building Improvements Scheme for Earlestown town centre, subject to the Council's formal approvals.**

## **3. Background**

- 3.1. At its Board meeting of 18 July 2025, the Neighbourhood Board was presented with an [Engagement Summary](#) that set out the high-level findings from the public consultation. This was subsequently endorsed by Board. In addition, the Board were notified that a comprehensive Public Consultation Findings Report would be released by the end of July 2025, as part of a wider engagement pack. The findings from the public consultation saw the investment themes ranked as below:

- Regeneration, High Streets and Heritage (with 20% of the vote).
- Education and Opportunity (with 19.5% of the vote).
- Health and Wellbeing (with 16.7% of the vote).
- Safety and Security (13.9% of the vote).
- Transport (13.5% of the vote).
- Cohesion (6.2% of the vote).
- Work, Productivity and Skills (5.4% of the vote).

- Housing (4.9% of the vote).
- 3.2. Reported within the [Public Consultation Findings Report](#), the key outcomes of all engagement outputs included participants identifying Earlestown town centre as requiring urgent regeneration, with numerous comments suggesting that the area appears run down and unwelcoming. Many participants suggested that shop frontages need improvement and that there is an overabundance of vape shops, barbers, and takeaways. Participants proposed introducing greater retail diversity, with suggestions for independent cafés, clothing shops and quality dining establishments. It was also suggested that a more balanced investment was needed between Newton and Earlestown.
  - 3.3. In addition, those who engaged in the consultation process were asked for their priorities for potential project ideas. Suggested place and people projects were linked to capital and revenue projects in alignment with the funding allocation. Consultees were made aware that this was not an exhaustive list but was used to spark conversation and to steer priorities. 'High Street development was the 'place project' with the highest number of votes overall with 14.9% of responses, further highlighting the local communities need to invest in regenerating run-down areas.
  - 3.4. Accordingly, the Board has been guided by consultation and best practice, with Neighbourhood Board Members having site visits to a neighbouring shop front improvement scheme in Tyldesley, Wigan.
  - 3.5. Following this, at a Neighbourhood Board Workshop on 8 January 2026, Board Members were provided with an insight into what an Earlestown Building Improvement Scheme could look like, informed by local case studies from Tyldesley and Southport (see Appendix 1), and endorsed the progression of a Building Improvement Scheme to be brought to a Board meeting for a formal decision.

### Overview

- 3.6. Earlestown is home to a proud and resilient community, yet the town faces longstanding social and economic challenges. A building improvement scheme would revitalise Earlestown's Conservation Area, which is at risk (as stated on the Historic England Risk Register), by restoring the historic character of its buildings. Many of the town's older buildings have suffered from poor quality alterations which detract from the original heritage of the townscape. The town centre therefore fails to capitalise on its potential as a destination, with its historic townscape, and presents an impression of degeneration. Through grant support, business owners and landlords can enhance their shopfronts and reinstate historic architectural features, boosting individual property values and collectively transforming the conversation area into an attractive, vibrant destination for visitors and locals alike.
- 3.7. The key objectives of the programme are as follows, with a strong strategic link to the Plan for Neighbourhoods core objectives:

- Boost Economic Activity – by attracting more footfall and revenue through new/enhanced retail spaces and hospitality venues.
- Improve Connectivity – supporting the wider regeneration efforts in Earlestown which aim to enhance connectivity between the rail station, Town Hall and Market Square.
- Support Local Businesses – provide grant funding to independent businesses/landlords to improve their facilities and spaces for local enterprises to thrive.

3.8. The strategic outcomes for the programme are as follows:

- Diversify – Diversification of the high street offer.
- Reduce Vacancy – Vacant properties reactivated.
- Heritage – Heritage features reinstated.
- Gateway – Improved key gateway sites.
- Local Economy – support local businesses and generate new job opportunities.
- Safety – Reduce anti-social behaviour.
- Cohesion – Improve stakeholder relations.

3.9. A heritage focussed Building Improvement Scheme will enable independent businesses in Earlestown town centre, situated within the Conservation Area boundary, the opportunity to apply for a grant to improve their shop frontage and undertake physical improvements to increase trade and (if vacant) to encourage occupation and investment in the town. It is partly through improving the appearance of our historic retail areas that we can attract more investment and stimulate economic growth. Consequently, these areas will become livelier and visually appealing.

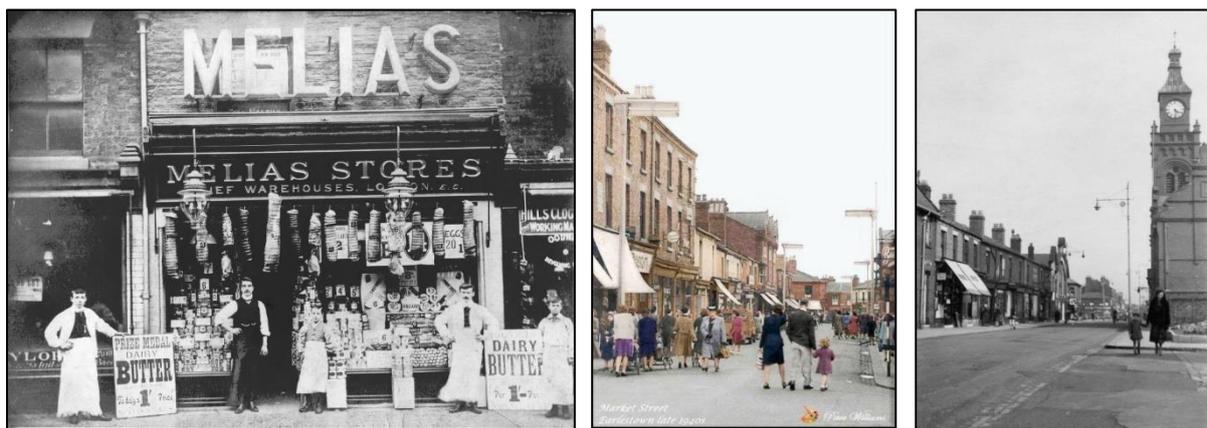


Figure 1 - Historic photographs of Earlestown Town Centre

### Assessment Criteria and Priority

3.10. The scheme will prioritise small and independent businesses within the conservation area, with regard given to retail and hospitality uses. Market

Street, Oxford Street, Stanley Street and Bridge Street have been identified as key corridors for investment due to their strategic connectivity between public transport and the Market Square. The priority area is outlined below in Figure 2 below and it is recommended engagement is based upon the following parameters:

- Conservation area - Boundary as designated in 2016.
- Priority area - buildings within this area are eligible to apply for the grant.
- Target buildings - building owners who will be actively engaged with to attempt to bring the building forward, to be identified throughout project development.

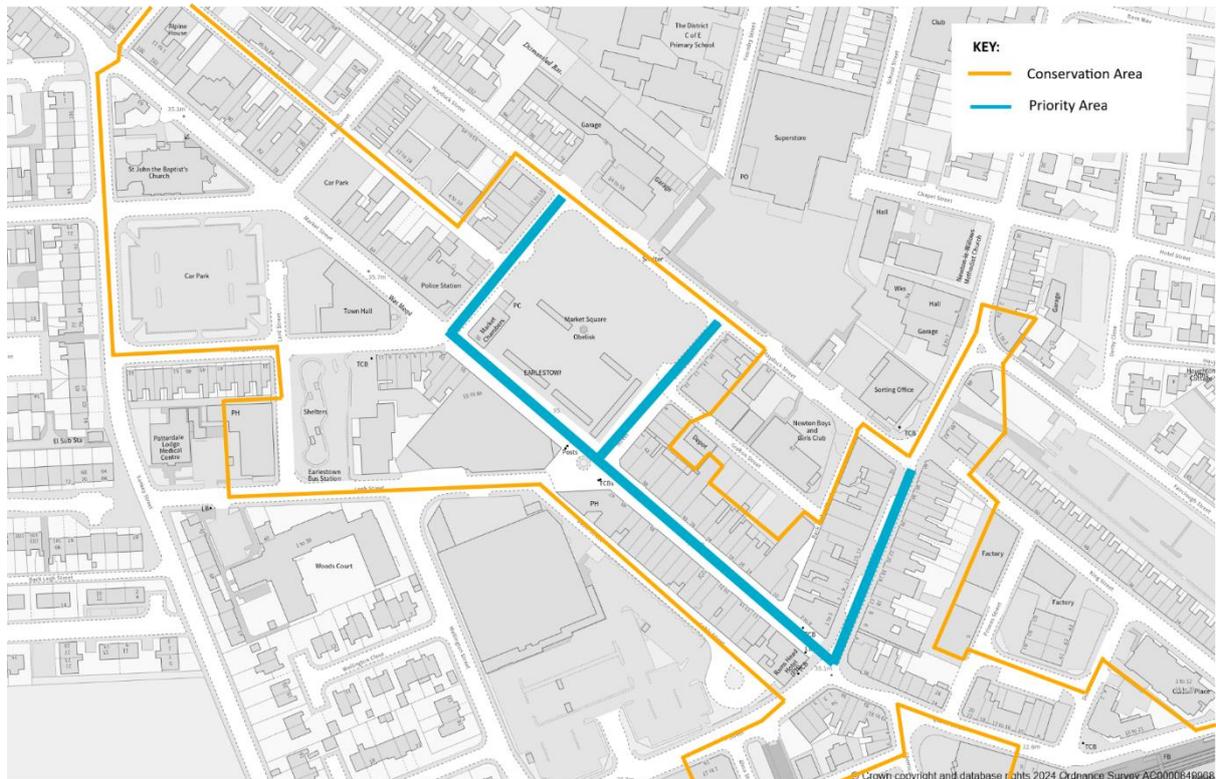


Figure 2 - Draft Priority Area Map

3.11. It is common for Building Improvement Schemes to use a matrix-based scoring system to assess grant funding eligibility. These systems help ensure transparency, consistency, and strategic decision making. Accordingly, a scoring matrix will be developed for Earlestown Conservation Area to provide support with identification of properties.

What is typically funded?

3.12. Grant funding could support a range of works that enhance the character and usability of historic buildings. Typically Building Improvement Schemes fund the repair, reinstatement or enhancement of traditional shopfront elements that contribute positively to the character and appearance of a town centre or conservation area.

- 3.13. The schemes place a strong emphasis on heritage-led design, using traditional materials and craftsmanship that respect the character of the building. Accordingly, works are often more specialist in nature and can be more costly than standard modern alternatives such as uPVC windows or off-the-shelf shopfront systems.
- 3.14. The works generally fall into two main categories, with alignment needed with the Council's published planning and conservation guidance:
- Historical Shopfront Restored – reinstatement of architectural and heritage details.
  - Historical Building Repairs – essential repairs to bring vacant or underused units back into active use.
- 3.15. Further to the building works, there are costs which may be appropriate to grant fund, including:
- Professional fees – architectural, planning, or surveying services required to deliver the project.
  - Preliminaries – site setup costs such as scaffolding, hoarding, and health and safety measures.
  - Contingency – a reserve budget to manage unforeseen issues during construction.
- 3.16. Following endorsement, further preparatory guidance will be developed in advance of the launch of the scheme in Spring 2027 providing further clarity for applicants and ensuring a consistent approach to design and delivery. This guidance will set out eligibility criteria, design principles, and examples of good practice, with a particular focus on heritage-led building improvement design and the use of appropriate materials.

## **4. Finance**

- 4.1 At the Board meeting of 3 October 2025, ahead of the submission of the 4-Year Investment Plan priorities to Government, the Board agreed the funding allocations for each of the 4 priority Investment Themes. Whilst the Ministry of Communities, Housing and Local Government has advised that there is flexibility to move funding across investment areas as projects are developed, the below funding approach to allocate funding within Investment period 1 (April 2026-March 2030) as a proportion of their public vote from public consultation was endorsed:

- Regeneration, High Streets and Heritage – £2.139m
- Education and Opportunity - £2.085m
- Health and Wellbeing - £1.785m
- Community Pot - £0.250m

- 4.2 Accordingly, the Neighbourhood Board have allocated £2,139,033 to the theme of Regeneration, High Streets and Heritage over the first four years (from April 2026).
- 4.3 A funding allocation of £1.2million (split between capital and revenue management costs) is recommended for the Building Improvements Scheme in the Earlestown Conservation Area, informed by previous experience and best practice. To ensure the funding pot supports as many eligible projects as possible, the scheme would require a financial contribution from building or business owners, with the contribution rate to be determined. A tiered contribution rate will be explored as this approach offers flexibility and can offer a higher grant percentage for early applicants, gradually reducing to a standard rate over time, incentivising early engagement, and helping to build momentum and deliver visible improvements quicker.

#### Management Model

- 4.4 A Building Improvement Programme can be managed either through the appointment of an external delivery partner or by a designated and specialised Project Officer at the Council. An external partner can offer additional capacity and specialist expertise; however, this will result in higher management costs and reduced direct control over programme priorities and decision making. An internally delivered model enables closer alignment with wider regeneration, planning and conversation objectives, and greater oversight of quality and spend, and closer stakeholder relationships. On balance, it is recommended that the Board consider an internal delivery model, subject to appropriate resourcing, as this is likely to provide better value for money and ensure consistent, heritage-led approach to building improvements. Internal delivery management offers a lower-cost baseline, while retaining flexibility to supplement with external expertise if required. It ensures Board optimise spend without limiting the ability to respond to changing needs.
- 4.5 An indicative cost is detailed below for both management models, based upon previous experience and knowledge.

#### **Internal Delivery Partner – Option 1:**

- Based on a 3-day/week commitment led by the Council's Heritage Project Officer.
- Costs are indicative subject to inflation and will be reviewed annually.
- Provides flexibility to Board, to supplement with external expertise if required.
- Cost to the Board at 13% of £1.2million budget = £159,000

#### **External Delivery Partner – Option 2:**

- Based on local case study examples, with an external provider leading the project, with fee totalling approximately 27% of the budget.

- Costs are indicative subject to procurement, with possibility that costs may be higher.
- Cost to Board at 27% of £1.2million budget = £324,000
- However, the Board does not have sufficient revenue funding remaining within the Regeneration, High Streets and Heritage allocation to cover the 27% fee; therefore, the maximum revenue allocation for an external delivery partner could be up to 24.7%. This provides further risks to the Board if procurement cannot be met and means there will be no revenue allocation for further projects within this theme.
- Cost to Board at 24.7% of £1.2million budget = £297,445

#### Proposed Strategy: Funding Allocation

- 4.6 If a funding allocation of £1.2million was accepted, alongside the recommended internal council delivery model, and the recommended Early Delivery Projects, as described in Agenda Item 3 of this report, then the remaining capital of £0.440m and revenue of £0.138m would require allocation to Regeneration, High Streets and Heritage theme, as detailed in the table below:

<b>Regeneration, High Streets and Heritage Proposed Investment in Period 1 (April 2026-March 2030)</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Capital</b>	<b>Revenue</b>
Children's Playground	£0.203m	
Earlestown Town Hall AV and Lighting	£0.134m	
Arts on Prescription		£0.024m
Building Improvement Scheme	£1.041m/£0.903m (dependent on delivery management model)	£0.159m/£0.297m (dependent on delivery management model)
<b>Unallocated Funding</b>	<b>£0.440m/£0.578m</b>	<b>£0.138m/£0.0m</b>

- 4.7 The proposed funding strategy contained in Section 4 of this report therefore enables the Board to:
- Develop a strategic, long-term project that supports the long-term vision with lasting impact.
  - Begin early discussions with funding partners ahead of launch in April 2027.
  - Enables early project scoping, building momentum in delivery from April 2027 onwards.
  - Work towards full allocation of grant spending within the Regeneration, High Streets and Heritage for Investment Period 1.

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 The allocation of funding as outlined in this report to invest in a Building Improvement Scheme for Earlestown town centre would help create a more attractive, welcoming commercial area that encourages footfall, supports local

businesses, and strengthens community identity. If endorsed, the scheme would commence from Year 2 of the programme (April 2027 onwards).

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Local Shopfront Scheme Examples

## **Appendix 1: Local Shopfront Scheme Examples**

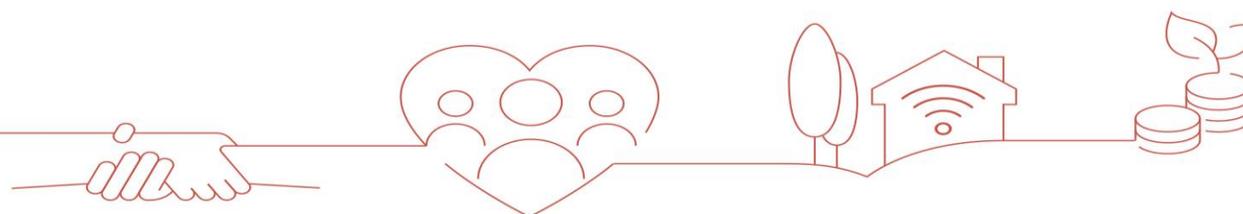
# Learning from Tyldesley

Capital Investment			
Total	Historic England	Wigan Council	Private
£2.2 million	£1.5 million	£0.4 million	£0.3 million

External Project Management (4 years):  
£0.6 million (27% of total Capital Investment)

**Average Project Costs** (Grant Contribution of up to 90%)

16 Capital Projects delivered between 2020 - 2024





Before

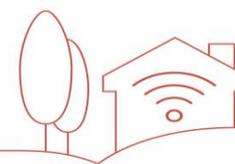
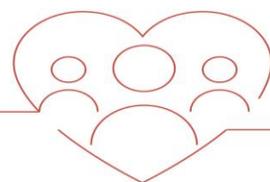


After

## Pen to Paper

### Works Undertaken:

- Removal of external roller shutter
- Installation of timber shopfront with hand-painted signage
- Glazed brick slips and internal security screen
- Refurbishment of discovered historic awning mechanism





Before



After

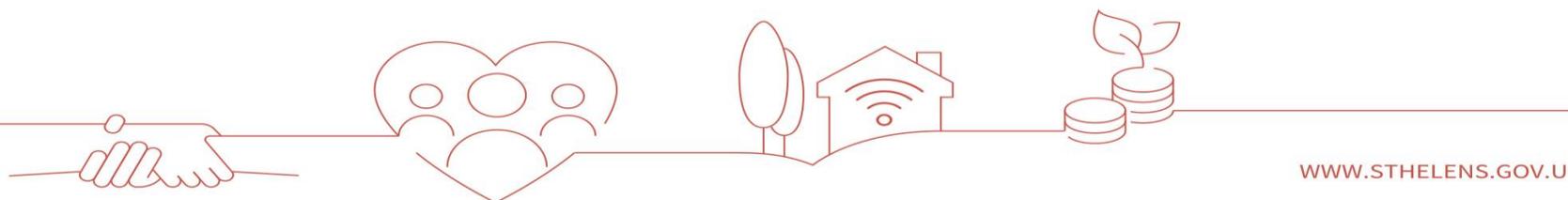
## Cellar Five:

### Emergency Structural Repairs:

- Replaced failed timber lintel with steel beam
- Installed internal steelwork to support compromised floors
- Tied internal walls to rebuilt gable
- Reroofing and chimney repairs

### Shopfront Restoration:

- Second grant secured for reinstating traditional-style shopfront
- Installed two timber sash windows to first floor
- decorative timber pilasters, fascia, and corbel blocks





**Before**



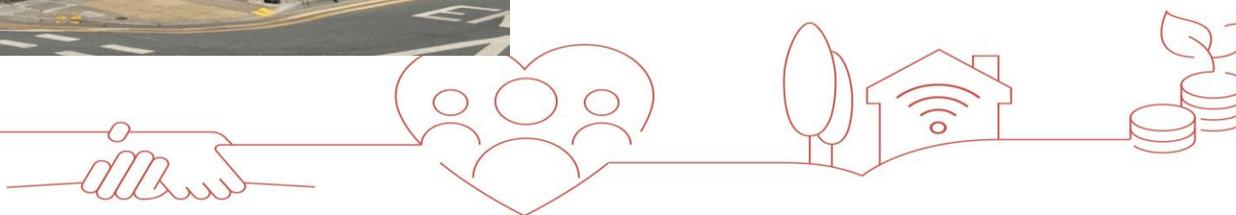
**After**

### Frank's Chippy (Corner Unit):

- Asbestos removal and structural alterations
- Reinstatement of historic shopfront details
- New shopfront installed on Lime Street
- External masonry repairs and lime rendering
- New timber windows to upper floors
- Repair of uncovered historic wall-painted signage

### Adjacent Unit (No. 119):

- Asbestos removal and new shopfront installation
- Ramped access and metal security gates
- External render and internal fit-out for separate use



# Learning from Southport

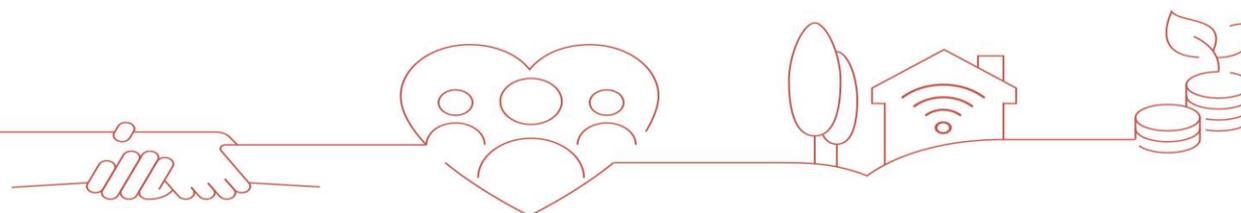
Investment			
Total	NHLF	Sefton Council	Private
£3.3 million	£1.6 million	£900,000	£775,000

## Exact Grant Costs

Grant Contribution of 69%

10 Capital Projects delivered between 2019 - 2026

Multiple projects still under construction





**Before**

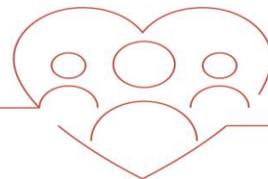


**After**

## 6 Bold Street

### Work's Undertaken:

- Re-roofed bay windows & shopfront roof with lead covering
- Renovated and refurbished the veranda
- Installed new steelwork to structurally stabilised first floor windows
- Replacement shopfront with traditional timber shopfront
- Installed sliding sash bay windows at first floor



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## ITEM 5

 <p><b>ST HELENS</b> BOROUGH COUNCIL</p>	<p><b>Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board</b></p> <p><b>Any Other Business</b></p>
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### 1. Summary

- 1.1. This report item provides opportunity for Board members to raise any other relevant business that has not been previously discussed within these papers.