



Minutes of Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board

Friday 6 March 2026

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
Jon Julian Smith	JJS	Chief Inspector, St Helens	Merseyside Police
Community & Co-Opted Board Members			
Alex Myhill	AM	Community Representative	Willow & Ram
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			
Matthew Valentine	MV	Programme Lead	St Helens Borough Council
Rachel Bebbly	RB	Project Officer	St Helens Borough Council
Donna Wilby	DW	Finance Business Partner - Regeneration	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
Amie Louise Parsonage	ALP	Portfolio and Partnerships Officer	Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner
Joanne Edge	JE	Community Representative	Newton Sports Club
Reverend Chris Stafford	CS	Faith Representative	Team Rector at St Peters, Emmanuel

			Wargrave, and St John's
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Item	Title	Lead
1.	Welcome and Introductions	CH
2.	Declarations of Interest	CH
3.	Minutes of the previous Neighbourhood Board meeting held on 16 January 2025	CH
4.	Appointment of Branding Specialist	MV
5.	Recruitment Approach	MV
6.	Investment Theme Sub-Group Formations	MV
7.	Plan for Neighbourhoods / Pride in Place Programme Update	MV
8.	Any Other Business	All

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chris Hickey (CH) welcomed the Neighbourhood Board and advised members that due to the cancellation of last week's Neighbourhood Board, an online extraordinary meeting has been arranged to ensure decisions within the agenda pack can be taken in a timely manner.

CH acknowledged apologies received from David Baines (DB), Councillor Anthony Burns (AB), Mark Palethorpe (MP), Joanne Edge (JE), and Chris Stafford (CS).

CH stated Amie Louise Parsonage (ALP) remains on maternity leave and is anticipated to return to Neighbourhood Board meetings on her return. Matthew Valentine (MV) noted that maternity cover has been arranged for ALP, with this to be referenced further in AOB.

2. Declaration of Interest

No declarations were declared.

3. Minutes of the previous Neighbourhood Board meeting held on 16 January 2026

CH stated that the minutes are agreed and live on the Council website, and provided an overview of the key discussions and endorsements from Board including:

- The Neighbourhood Board approved the extension of the term of office of all current Board members until March 2030, in alignment with the first 4-year investment period cycle.
- The Neighbourhood Board agreed to appoint two new Board Members with specialisms of 'Health and Wellbeing' and 'Education and Opportunity' to align with the 4- Year Investment Plan priorities.
- The Neighbourhood Board noted the appointment of Ian Lewis as Deputy Chair, in accordance with the Terms of Reference.
- The Neighbourhood Board agreed the updated Terms of Reference, following updated guidance provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
- The Neighbourhood Board endorsed £0.361m of Year 1 funding for Early Delivery Projects comprising £0.203m St Johns Playground, £0.134m Earlestown Town Hall AV equipment, and £0.024m Arts on Prescription.
- The Neighbourhood Board endorsed the £1.2m funding allocation for a Earlestown town centre Building Improvement Scheme, subject to the Council's formal approvals. In addition, the Neighbourhood Board endorsed Option 1 Internal Council Delivery management approach for the Building Improvement Scheme, subject to Council's formal approvals.

4. Appointment of Branding Specialist

A summary of the progress undertaken to commission a Branding Specialist, to assist in the development of a brand for the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board, was provided.

MV confirmed that an expression of interest for joining the Branding Sub-Group was issued to all Neighbourhood Board members on 26 January 2026, with the application window closing on 3 February 2026. Following, the applications were reviewed, with appointments made to the Branding Sub-Group ahead of meeting on 11 February 2026. This Workshop provided an opportunity to develop a scope of works, including the objectives, deliverables, usage, audience and key considerations for the logo creation.

Neighbourhood Board members submitted nominations for local designers and the scope of works, developed by the Branding Sub-Group, was circulated to five candidates, with three quotes received. MV highlighted the scope of works included:

- 2 x logo – inclusive of a full title of 'Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board' and a shortened title of 'NLW Neighbourhood Board' noting the long title name.
- A 'brandmark'.
- A primary logo in full colour and a black and white version.
- Scalable vector files and PNG and JPEG formats in various resolutions.
- A style guide.

All quotes were assessed by the Project Team, ahead of presentation to the Branding Sub-Group, to approve the recommendation to appoint Notch Digital Marketing, who achieved the highest score.

MV added that this appointment would be funded via capacity funding, with the recommendation for Neighbourhood Board to endorse the associated expenditure, with an additional allocation for contingency and trademarking.

Board members discussed guidance provided on Pride in Place branding, and whether this needs to be included. MV confirmed that Branding Sub-Group had discussions on this matter, but as separate branding guidelines exist for the funder's logo, it was decided against. This approach allows for the Neighbourhood Board's individual identity whilst also complying guidance from MHCLG. MV further noted that the Government's Pride in Place branding will be included alongside the Neighbourhood Board branding in communications, as per MHCLG guidelines.

Board members discussed quotes received and asked for confirmation of views from the Branding Sub-Group on the appointment. The Programme Lead advised that the submission provided by the recommended specialist was of the graphic design quality required and the price was also acceptable. Board members discussed that due to timescales it is key to have this in place ahead of projects commencing and therefore the Branding Sub-Group will work with the specialist to achieve a logo fit for the Neighbourhood Board, to be brought back for endorsement.

Further discussion took place around the recently announced St Helens Borough Council Budget and the 'Pride in Place Grant Scheme', clarity was sought on whether this is linked to the Newton-le-Willows Pride in Place programme. It was confirmed that the funding announced via the Council Budget is separate to the Newton-le-Willows Pride in Place Programme and is funded through the Council, via smaller grant awards. MV noted that delineation will be achieved through the 'Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board' branding.

NOTE: The update on the formation of a Branding Sub-Group.

NOTE: The Branding Scope contained in the Agenda Pack appendices.

DECISION: Board endorsed the appointment of local branding specialist, Notch Digital Marketing, to create a logo for the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board.

5. Recruitment Approach

An update was provided on the progress made in the recruitment of Neighbourhood Board members with specialisms aligned to the 4-Year Investment Plan priorities, as below:

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

MV confirmed that the Project Team are launching a public recruitment exercise w/c 9 March 2026, and a nomination sheet will be circulated to key stakeholders. MV noted that this process follows the process adopted with the previous co-opted appointments. Neighbourhood Board members, senior Council officers, and Ward Councillors will be asked to nominate suitably qualified representatives.

Following approval, both the nominations and public recruitment exercise will be launched for a period of two weeks. It is a minimum requirement for those appointed to be in an active role within the specialisms they are applying for and live and/or work within Newton-le-Willows. Once the applications are received, they will then be reviewed via the Chair (CH) and David Baines MP (DB), prior to formal appointment of the successful applicants at the April Neighbourhood Board meeting.

NOTE: Board recognised the progress and approach for the recruitment of two Neighbourhood Board representatives, from an 'education and opportunity' background and from a 'health and wellbeing' background.

6. Sub-Group Formations

Following endorsement of the Sub-Group approach at the previous Neighbourhood Board meeting (via the Terms of Reference), a recommendation was provided on the formation of Sub-Groups to act as Task and Finish Groups for specific and appropriate elements of the Board's business. This will strengthen delivery capacity and reduce the time burden on the full Neighbourhood Board.

An overview was given of the responsibilities of Sub-Groups and the appointed members to:

- Be established for specific, defined purposes aligned to Board priorities at intervals necessitated by programme requirements.
- Operate under formal Terms of Reference and abide by the decision-making structures, and Code of Conduct of the Board.
- Act in an advisory and preparatory capacity, with decision-making authority remaining with the Board.
- Provide regular progress reports and recommendations to the Board, to a schedule agreed by the Board as appropriate to its agenda.

A summary was provided relating to the membership and participation of Sub-Groups, with each Sub-Group to be chaired/project sponsored by non-mandated Board positions. This will ensure that community voices can drive the strategic direction of the Sub-Group. The endorsement recommends that each Sub-Group will comprise of a maximum of 4 Board Members and be supplemented with up to 4 advisory members, where required, to ensure appropriate and proportional expertise is provided. To ensure the widest breadth of views, it is recommended that Board members are to serve on a maximum of 2 Sub-Groups at any one given time.

Any additional non-Board members (acting as advisors) will not have any voting rights and Sub-Groups do not have a decision-making authority in place of a full

Neighbourhood Board meeting. A summary of the appointment process was presented to Board.

Neighbourhood Board members recognised the importance of Sub-Groups, and the need to extend the reach and knowledge of the Board as it moves into delivery. Board acknowledged the need for them to retain the strategic decision-making authority and accountability whilst agreeing that Sub-Groups will be vital in project development and the sifting of projects to be brought to Neighbourhood Board. Clarity on the scope and capacity of the role must therefore be provided to Sub Group members.

It was confirmed that any advisors to the Neighbourhood Board will be subject to the full governance and Terms of Reference (ToR) of Board members, including declarations of interest, Nolan principles and scrutiny.

DECISION: Board endorsed the proposed governance arrangements for the formation of Sub-Groups, as outlined within the agenda item.

7. Plan for Neighbourhoods/ Pride in Place Programme Update

Neighbourhood Board members were provided with an overview of the updated prospectus for the Pride in Place initiative, which has superseded the Plan for Neighbourhoods programme and key dates as follows:

- 25 September 2025 – Publication of the Pride in Place Strategy.
- 3 December 2025 - Publication of Pride in Place guidance.
- 6 February 2026 – Government announced a further 40 places are to join the Pride in Place Programme (place details yet to be announced).

An overview was provided following Council Officers attendance at an MHCLG webinar, to understand the impact of Pride in Place on Phase 1 beneficiaries as follows:

- An updated interventions list – featuring an additional investment theme option to focus on building 'community power'.
- Greater resident representation – Boards should aim, over time, for the majority (at least 51%) of members to live or work within the boundaries of the neighbourhood.
- Importance of community engagement reiterated.
- Enhanced MP involvement – additional guidance has been published on the role of MPs in the programme.
- Shift to community-led models – Recent guidance has stated that all Boards will be expected to transition to a community-led model by year 3, with more guidance to be published by Government on the mechanisms of this. This will be reviewed with Board as further details emerge.

There are no immediate changes to the submitted Regeneration Plan or 4-Year Investment Plan.

A recommendation was given to the Neighbourhood Board to adopt the Pride in Place name change, to ensure strategic alignment with the wider Pride in Place Programme. This was agreed by Board.

It was recognised that the community development approach is positive but there will need to be a careful review of which mechanism is adopted to meet the needs of Newton-le-Willows.

NOTE: Board noted the contents of the report and the updates within the revised 'Pride in Place' prospectus, replacing the previous Plan for Neighbourhoods programme prospectus.

DECISION: Board endorsed the adoption of the new 'Pride in Place' programme name, in alignment with Government prospectus.

8. Any Other Business

CH thanked Neighbourhood Board members for their contributions inviting any other business.

Rachel Bebbby (RB) updated that Natalie Carroll will be joining the Neighbourhood Board at the April meeting, following agreement with the Chair, during the maternity leave period for Amie Parsonage. This is a permissible appointment due to exceptional circumstances.

Members were reminded that under the Terms of Reference, short-term substitutes for Neighbourhood Board meetings are not permitted.

RB added that following the creation of a Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board logo, and anticipated approval for the early delivery projects at the Council's Cabinet meeting of 18 March 2026, communication opportunities will be explored for a delivery launch via a video.

Neighbourhood Board Members were also made aware that declaration of interest forms will be circulated for population.

A request was logged by Neighbourhood Board members for inclusion of an agenda item at the next meeting pertaining to the Community Pot approach, which was noted by the Project Team. MV gave a brief update on progress to date of this item, adding that a proposal will be brought to the April Neighbourhood Board meeting.