



MEETING OF THE NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS TOWN BOARD

Date:	Friday, 28 June 2024	
Time:	13:30 – 15:30	
Location:	Centrix House, Crow Lane East, Newton-le-Willows, WA12 9UY	
Invitees		
Name	Role	Organisation
Board Members		
Chris Hickey	Chair	Mercury Hampton
Conor McGinn MP	Member of Parliament, St Helens North	Member of Parliament, St Helens North
Councillor Anthony Burns	Leader of the Council	St Helens Borough Council
Councillor Richard McCauley	Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth and Regeneration	St Helens Borough Council
Kath O'Dwyer	Chief Executive	St Helens Borough Council
Ian Lewis	Investment Manager	Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Amy Louise Parsonage	Portfolio and Partnerships Officers	Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner
Local Authority Representatives		
Lisa Harris	Executive Director, Place Services	St Helens Borough Council
Mary Jefferson	Head of Regeneration and Growth	St Helens Borough Council
Mark Bingley	Programme Lead – Earlestown	St Helens Borough Council
Dean McGauley	Project Officer	St Helens Borough Council
Apologies Received		
Rachael Buckley	Partnerships Officer	St Helens Borough Council



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS TOWN BOARD

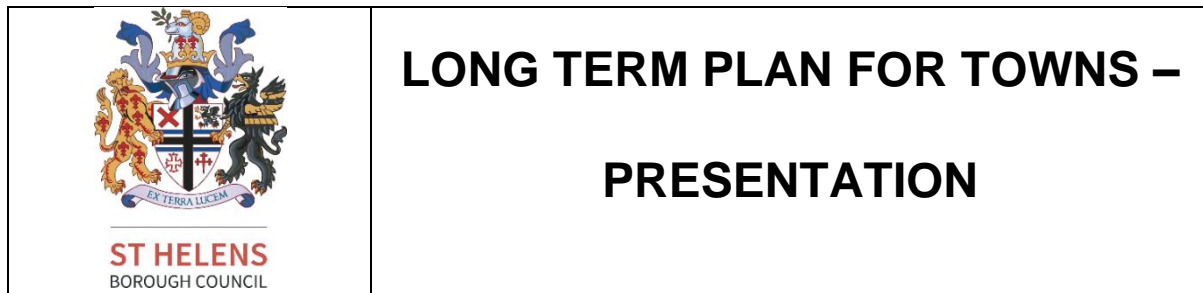
Friday, 28 June 2024

AGENDA

Item	Title	Lead
1.	Welcome and Introductions	Chair
2.	Long-term Plan for Towns Presentation	MB
3.	Governance	Chair
4.	Board Recruitment	Chair
5.	Programme Resources	Chair
6.	Any Other Business (Future Agenda Items)	All
7.	Date of Next Meeting: 13:30-15:00, Friday 2 August 2024	Chair

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ITEM 2



1. Purpose of the Report

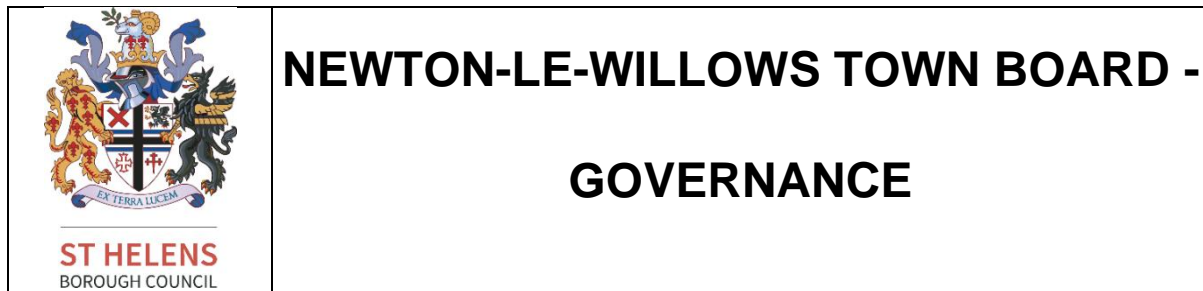
- 1.1 The purpose of this presentation is to provide Board members with an overview of the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme, including key milestones and next steps for the Board.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Board is recommended to:

- 1) Note the contents of the presentation.

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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 Town Board.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Board is recommended to:

- 1) Agree the Terms of Reference and Roles & Responsibilities for the Newton-le-Willows Town Board as set out at Appendices A and B respectively.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Long-term Plan for Towns Programme requires St Helens Borough Council, as the accountable body for the fund, to establish a Newton-le-Willows Town Board in consultation with the Member of Parliament for St Helens North.
- 3.2 Guidance issued by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) outlines the governance requirements that will underpin and support the operation of the Town Board (see Appendix C).
- 3.3 The Terms of Reference (see Appendix A) and Roles and Responsibilities (see Appendix B) provides the framework for adherence to the guidance and ensures the appropriate governance arrangements are in place for the Board to fulfil its obligations.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Terms of Reference and Roles and Responsibilities will support the operation of the Newton-le-Willows Town Board in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles) and Long-term Plan for Towns Programme assurance and governance requirements.

Appendices

Appendix A: Draft Newton-le-Willows Town Board Terms of Reference

Appendix B: Draft Newton-le-Willows Town Board Chair and Board Member Role Descriptions

Appendix C: Long-term Plan for Towns: Guidance for Local Authorities and Town Boards (18 December 2023)

**DRAFT NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS TOWN BOARD
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Background

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.

Each town is required to establish a new Town Board and develop a Long-Term Plan. Town Boards to '*be run by local people for local people and bring together residents, business and community leaders to devise and agree a shared vision for the future.*' St Helens Borough Council will be the accountable body for funding and will work with the Town Board who will be responsible for developing the Long-Term Plan in consultation with local people.

The 10-year Long Term Plan must contain a three-year investment plan aligned to the intervention themes based on local priorities. The three-year investment plan will set out how funding will be spent and delivery milestones.

Towns will also benefit from a new High Streets and Towns Taskforce that will provide bespoke, hands-on support from place-making experts to assist with delivery, encourage shared learning and promote networking between the Town Boards.

Objective of the Fund

The Long-Term Plan for Towns, backed by £1.5 billion overall, will drive ambitious plans to regenerate 75 towns around the United Kingdom over the long-term through Town Plans.

Each town 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, and public safety and security.

A new Town Board will be established in each town in England, bringing together community leaders, employers, local authorities, and the local MP to develop a shared vision for their town and oversee the funding together. Working with local authorities, these boards will be encouraged to use the full suite of powers and flexibilities the Government has granted places to turn their high streets and towns

around and be backed by the funding needed to do so. Learning from Town Deal Boards, the intention is to ensure that local people, not just politicians, drive change. Government expect these boards to be chaired by a local business or community leader.

In exchange for long-term, flexible funding, each town in England will be required to develop a ten-year Long-Term Plan for their town, setting out the town's vision and priorities for investment and regeneration, aligned to themes of safety and security, high streets, heritage and regeneration, and transport and connectivity.

Role of the Town Board

The role of the Town Board is to ensure the Long-Term Plan is both defined and delivered. It will meet on a quarterly basis and members will bring together a broad range of specialisms to deliver the Long-Term Plan and subsequent Investment Plans.

The Board will provide a strategic overview, direction and scrutiny of delivery against the plan and will work with the Council who is the accountable body for Long-Term Plan for Towns funding.

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).

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).

To achieve this, it will:

- **Influence decision** making and governance, using their professional expertise and local knowledge, to best deliver value for money across the Long-term 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 and 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.

Key Activities

By 1 November 2024, the Board will:

- Develop and submit its Long-Term Plan to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (comprising a 10-year Vision and a 3-year Investment Plan).

Once the Long-Term Plan and 3-year Investment Plan is approved, the Board will:

- Identify the issues and priorities to focus on the Long-Term Plan and determine how the community will be engaged
- Work with the Council to develop the Long-Term 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 Long-Term Plan
- Identify opportunities to bring in additional philanthropic or private investment to support the Long-Term Plan
- Oversee the delivery of projects in the Long-Term Plan.

St Helens Borough Council has been awarded Capacity Funding to support the creation of the Town Board and to support the Town Board in creation of the Long-Term Plan and 3-year Investment Plan.

Liverpool City Region / Local Authority Strategic Vision

This is 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 Combined Authority on a key policy area.
- Help inform investment plans into the town centre for future years.
- Use the Long-Term Plan as a framework to secure further government and private investment.

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES (SUBJECT TO CHAIRS AGREEMENT)

1. Purpose and Objectives of the Town Board

1.1 The Purpose of the Board is to assist in the facilitation of the delivery of the Long-Term Plan and 3-year Investment Plan.

1.2 The Objectives of the Board are to:

- Identify the issues and priorities to focus on in the Long-Term Plan and how the community will be engaged
- Work with the Council to develop the Long-Term 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 Long-Term Plan
- Identify opportunities to bring in additional philanthropic or private investment to support the Long-Term Plan
- Oversee the delivery of projects in the Long-Term Plan

2. Board Membership

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

Chairperson
Member of Parliament (St Helens North)
A senior representative from the Police (expected to be the Police and Crime Commissioner)
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Elected Member (Portfolio of the Council Leader)
Elected Member (Portfolio of Regeneration and Planning)
Chief Executive St Helens Borough Council
Business representative
Community representative
Faith representative
Third Sector representative
Cultural Arts and Heritage representative
Public Agency and anchor institution representative, such as local schools, higher or further education institution, relevant government agencies for the area, for example Integrated Care Board.

- 2.2 The Chairperson will lead the Board in defining, delivering and maintaining its vision and direction, whilst ensuring the appropriate procedures for governance and management are in place.
- 2.3 The Chairperson will act as a champion for the town and provide leadership for the Town Board, ensuring it is community-led and embedded within the local area.
- 2.4 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 Long-Term 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.
- 2.5 The Chairperson may choose to appoint a Deputy Chairperson from the other public (but not elected representatives) and private sector representatives.
- 2.6 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 Chair'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 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.
- 2.7 Duration of Board Membership will be for a period of 36 months initially, with options for extension with the agreement of the Board.

2.8 The Board must have a diverse range of skills and experiences, which include:

- Project Management
- Youth Engagement
- Community Engagement
- Third Sector Engagement
- Risk Management
- Contract and Procurement
- Legal Knowledge
- Heritage and Conservation
- Governance
- Budget Management
- Strategic Thinking
- Consultation and Engagement
- Education and Training

2.9 At the discretion of the Chairperson, applications for Town Board may be considered from exceptional individuals should they display skills or experiences that will complement or enhance the Town Board.

2.10 Board Members will be required to adhere to the governance standards and policies of the Lead Council 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 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 Chair. 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 Town Board per calendar year. If a Board Member's attendance falls below 50% then their position on the Board should be considered by the Town 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 consideration of papers and discussion of issues occurs before recommendations are made.

- 4.2 The Board has power to make all decisions in respect of the delivery of the Long-Term Plan. In due course, dependent on government's evaluation of the Long-Term 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 are not able to attend, they are still required to read the board papers and make their views known to the Chair of the Board in advance of the Board meeting.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.

5. Delegating Tasks and Powers

- 5.1 Sub-committees 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.
- 5.2 Additional non-Board members 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.
- 5.3 Each Sub-Committee should be chaired either by a Board Member or a Board-approved nominated representative.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 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 as 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 and a note to confirm that this has occurred recorded within the official minutes. At the AGM, a comprehensive record of conflicts of interest will be undertaken and referred to at the start of each meeting.
- 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 freedom of action is needed to reassure investors, competitors, residents, employees, and all tiers of government.
- 6.6 The Lead Authority, St Helens Council will publish the list of Board Members and registered Conflicts of Interest
- 6.7 In accordance with the Long-Term Plan for Towns Prospectus, 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.

Newton-le-Willows Town Board Roles and Responsibilities

Chairperson

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

The Chairperson will lead the Board to define, delivering and maintaining its vision, whilst ensuring the appropriate procedures for governance and management are in place.

The Chairperson of the Town Board has been invited by the Local Authority, considering who is best placed to convene partners and is a respected figure in the community with an obvious passion for the place. The local MP has been engaged as part of the process.

The Chairperson has a proven ability to meet the key responsibilities of the post and possess the skills required to effectively perform these duties.

The Chairperson must provide a minimum commitment of 75% attendance at quarterly meetings in addition to their time as reasonably agreed for associated meetings with stakeholders, agenda setting, review of papers and associated discussions which will be supported by Council and other partner resources.

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 Long-Term 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 conflict which may arise through differing viewpoints and interest
- Exercise a casting vote in Board matters if circumstances require
- Effectively engage with key stakeholder groups providing updates on Town Board activity where appropriate

Deputy Chairperson

The Chairperson may choose to appoint a Deputy Chairperson from the other public (but not elected representatives) and private sector representatives. The Deputy Chairperson will support the Chairperson in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. They have the required skills and experience to fulfil the Chairperson post if for any reason the Chairperson is unavailable.

They are a local community leader and provide varying expertise to the chair to provide for diversity.

The Deputy Chairperson provides support for Board members as required.

Board Members

The Chairperson and lead Local Authority will oversee recruitment to the wider Town Board to ensure that the Town Board has respected and credible representation from local organisations and provides for an inclusive, diverse membership with an array of areas of expertise and skills.

Board members are asked to undertake this role on a voluntary basis.

Board members have a passion for Newton-le-Willows, commit their time and expertise. They represent the Board and its agreed priorities aligned to a One Voice of the board approach. They will be willing to work with the Local Authority lead and other stakeholders effectively.

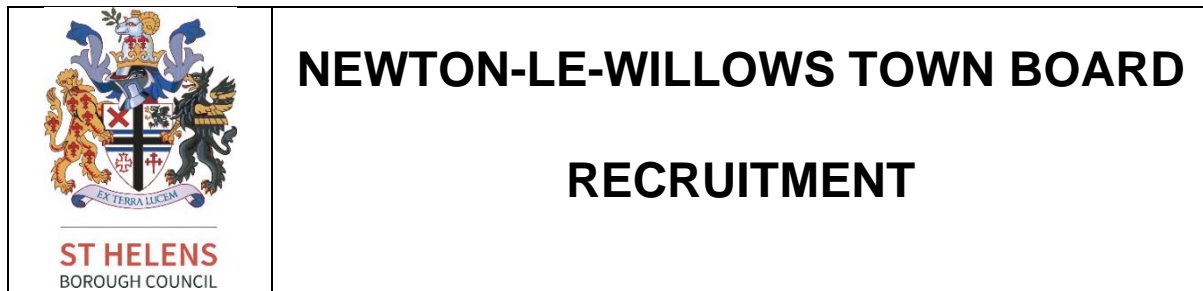
Board members will ensure that they uphold high standards of integrity and probity adhering to the Seven Principles of Public Life, known as the Nolan Principles, as defined by the Committee for Standards in Public Life. They should support the Chairperson in displaying the appropriate culture and behaviours in meetings and beyond and act to promote the Board and Newton-le-Willows. They will allow all Town Board members to contribute to discussion to allow for a range of viewpoints to be heard.

Board members' duties and responsibilities are to:

- Regularly attend meetings of the Board and associated discussions as is reasonable. Town Board members are required to attend 50% of the scheduled meetings each year.

- 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.
- Support the Chairperson and the Board by contributing their experience and knowledge to support work to collective aims and objectives.
- Be an active and effective ambassador for the Board and Newton-le-Willows.
- Exercise good and independent judgement in the consideration of matters before the Board for their endorsement.
- Consider all papers and documentation prepared for the Board in advance of meetings.
- Reflect the agreed position of the Board in all discussions.
- Comply with the Terms of Reference for the Board, the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, respecting confidentiality at all times, and adhering to the Seven Principles of Public Life, known as the Nolan Principles, as defined by the Committee for Standards in Public Life.

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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with the opportunity to review the composition of the Town Board (as outlined in the Terms of Reference) and to agree the preferred recruitment route.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Board is recommended to:

- 1) Agree the composition of the Town Board and recruitment route as presented in the table at paragraph 3.3.

3. Background

- 3.1 In accordance with the guidance issued by the Department for Levelling-Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC), St Helens Borough Council in consultation with the Member of Parliament for St Helens North, has appointed the Chair of the Newton-le-Willows Town Board.

- 3.2 The guidance prescribes that the Town Board must also contain the following representation:

- A senior representative from the Police which is expected to be the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), subject to agreement from the Chairperson a local senior representative can act as an alternative or substitute;
- The relevant local Member of Parliament; and
- Maximum of two councillors from the relevant local authority (the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Inclusive Growth & Regeneration to have equal standing and seniority with the membership of the existing Town Deal Board for St Helens)

Other membership should be tailored to the local context but might comprise:

- A representative of the Mayoral Combined Authority;
- Public sector agencies (e.g., schools, health sector, DWP) subject to local priorities;

- Local businesses and social enterprises, including key local employers and investors;
- Key cultural, arts, heritage and sporting organisations; and
- Community partners from community groups, faith groups, charities, neighbourhood forums and the local Council for Voluntary Service;

3.3 In May 2024, the Council's Cabinet endorsed the following Board membership for the Newton-le-Willows Town Board, subject to Board approval. The composition of the Board outlined below has been developed in alignment with the suggested community representation as detailed in the Long-term Plan for Town Programme guidance note.

Board Member	Recruitment route
Chair	Direct appointment
Member of Parliament (St Helens North)	Direct appointment
A senior representative from the Police (expected to be the Police and Crime Commissioner)	Direct appointment
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	Direct appointment
Elected Member (Portfolio of the Council Leader)	Direct appointment
Elected Member (Portfolio of Inclusive Growth and Regeneration)	Direct appointment
Chief Executive St Helens Borough Council	Direct appointment
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 rd Sector representative (including sports clubs)	Co-opted
Cultural Arts and Heritage representative	Co-opted
Public Agency and anchor institution representative, such as local schools, higher or further education institution, relevant government agencies for the area, for example Integrated Care Board.	Co-opted

3.4 As detailed in the Terms of Reference document at paragraph 2.6, the Board may consider the number of seats granted to each stakeholder group should it be felt that broader representation from the stakeholder group would be beneficial to the Board.

3.5 For those positions that are co-opted to the Town Board, it is proposed that the Chair, in consultation with the Member of Parliament for St Helens North, develop a short list of candidate(s) for each position. If a shortlisted candidate is interested in a Board position, they will be asked to submit an expression of

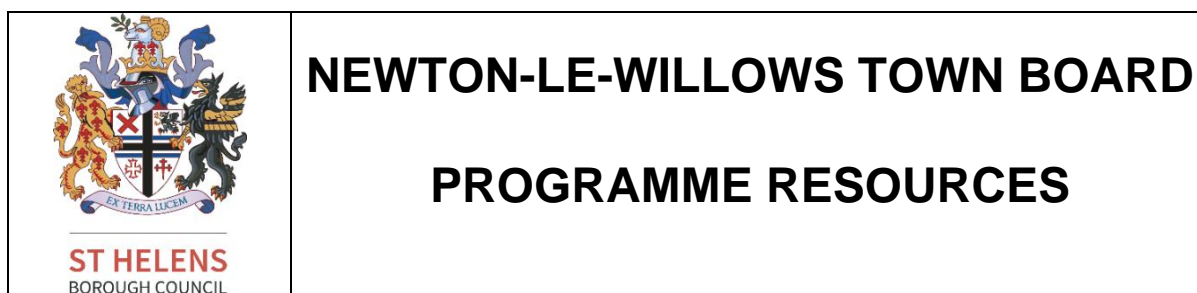
interest to the Chair and the Member of Parliament. If more expressions of interest are received than Board positions available, candidates will be asked to attend and interview with the Chair and Member of Parliament. The decision of the Chair and Member of Parliament will be final, and the Board will be formally agreed at the next Town Board meeting.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Department for Levelling-Up Homes and Communities has prescribed the core composition of the Town Board. The remaining Board positions are subject to local context at the discretion of the Board. The Board composition contained within the Terms of Reference, and outlined at paragraph 3.3 above, aligns to the suggested representation contained within the Long-term Plan for Towns guidance and has been endorsed by St Helens Borough Council as accountable body for the fund.
- 4.2 In order to progress to the next milestone in the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme the Board must now commence recruitment of the wider Town Board. A hybrid approach of co-option and advertised vacancies is recommended to ensure that the Board is serviced by experienced individuals representative of their sector whilst also providing opportunity for the wider community to help shape local priorities for the town.

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ITEM 5



1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the programme resource requirements of the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme and to seek approval from the Board for the creation of a Project Officer – Long-term Plan for Towns post to provide secretariat and programme management support to the Board.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Board is recommended to:

- 1) Note the programme resource requirements of the Town Board;
- 2) Approve the creation of a 3-year fixed term Project Officer post to support the secretariat and programme management requirements of the Town Board; and
- 3) Approve the start of a procurement process to secure additional resources for the Town Board to specifically support community consultation and creation of the Long-term Plan and 3-Year Investment Plan.

3. Assurance

- 3.1 The Long-term plan for Towns guidance note details that St Helens Borough Council will be the accountable body for the fund. Long-Term Plan for Towns funding will be assured in line with the requirements set out in the [Levelling Up Funds Local Authority Assurance Framework](#), using 3 lines of defence.
- 3.2 The first line of defence is the Council's Chief Finance Officer who'll assume financial responsibility for the programme. The Chief Finance Officer will be required to provide written confirmation that they have undertaken to actively apply all the necessary checks to ensure proper administration of its financial affairs regarding the funding programme, particularly in respect to financial administration and transparency of governance.

- 3.3 The second line of defence will be undertaken by the Assurance and Compliance Team within DLUHC. DLUHC will undertake a range of checks, on a risk and sample basis. St Helens Borough Council, as the accountable body, will be required to provide resource to engage with and support this process.
- 3.4 The third line of defence will be carried out by the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) and will take the form of a review of the activity completed by DLUHC for the second line of defence.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

4.1 The Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities have outlined the monitoring and evaluation requirements of the programme in their guidance note dated June 2024. The note details that monitoring will be undertaken at a town level with a requirement of the local authority to provide regular monitoring data at 6-monthly intervals and a more comprehensive progress overview annually. Whilst the format of reporting is to be outlined later this year it is noted to likely follow that of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for which the Council has expertise and experience of compiling.

4.2 Data points to be collected every six months:

- **Project information:** Updates to administration, investment themes and intervention-level data submitted in the three-year investment plan, and the addition of new project-level data (once available), including project title, description, value, location, the funded organisation (and sector), and subsidy status.
- **Delivery Progress:** An overview of programme and project delivery, including the progress of milestones, and the dates of Town Board meetings.
- **Finance:** A summary of actual and forecasted expenditure, additional investment leveraged, and projected underspend. Data to be allocated to an investment theme, intervention code and project or listed as unallocated funding.

Data to be collected annually (in December / January):

- **Outputs and outcomes:** Progress of high-level outputs and outcomes as set out in three-year investment plan.
- **Risks and Issues:** A summary of the key programme and project level risks and issues and how they are being managed by the local authority, and any significant instances of fraud.
- **Sign-off:** Annual assurance and Value for Money statement to be signed off by S151 officer / CFO, with accompanying narrative.

- Feedback: An opportunity to share your experience of the funding programme to support future delivery and policy making.

4.3 Whilst there is no requirement from DLUHC for Local Authorities to conduct their own evaluation of Long-term Plan for Towns funding there is an expectation that Local Authorities will participate in activities co-ordinated by DLUHC. This may include, providing administrative data, participating in interviews and workshops, and assisting with field work.

5. Administration

5.1 Further to the assurance and monitoring and evaluation requirements of the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme, a secretariat function to the Town Board is required. It is envisaged that this role will provide an administrative function to the Town Board ensuring that the Board operates in accordance with the governance requirements detailed within the Terms of Reference, This may include, but is not limited to, facilitating Town Board meetings, preparing agendas, briefings and reports for the Board, publishing minutes of the Board, maintaining the Conflict of Interest register, managing public enquiries, representing the Board at meetings, and being the main point of contact for the programme with DLUHC.

6. Programme Resource

6.1 The Long-term Plan for Towns Programme is a key regeneration programme for the Council and will complement the Council's successful Levelling Up Round 2 allocation for Earlestown Town Centre. The Council is keen to ensure that the Programme is resourced accordingly to ensure that the Town Board can deliver on local priorities that will be detailed within the Long-term Plan. To this end, the Council is currently reallocating resource where possible from within the Growth Delivering Prosperity Team to ensure that the Town Board is in the best position to create a Long-term Plan and to secure funding from DLUHC.

6.2 To date, the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme has been led by the Programme Lead for Earlestown supported by the Partnerships Officer and Project Officer for Earlestown. With the regeneration of Earlestown Town Centre gathering pace the Council cannot commit this resource to support the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme in the medium-long term without additional resources.

6.3 Given the Council's role as accountable body for the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme, coupled with our experience and expertise in not only facilitating town boards but also managing complex externally funded regeneration programmes (such as UKSPF, Levelling Up and Town Deal), it is proposed that the Council assume the programme management and secretariat responsibilities of the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme. To support this, the Council propose that the Board agree to the creation of a fixed term Project Officer – Long-term Plan for Towns post (SCP 29-32) for a

period of 3-years (aligned to the 3-year Investment Plan) to support development and delivery of the programme. This post will sit within the Growth Delivering Prosperity team at St Helens Borough Council and the postholder will be employed by the Council who will then take on all employer responsibilities. A draft Project Officer – Long-term Plan for Towns job description can be found at Appendix A and will be subject to further consultation and consideration by the Board to ensure it meets the Boards requirements particularly with regard to community engagement.

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

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 It is proposed that a 3-year fixed term Project Officer post (SCP 29-32) is created to support the Council and Town Board in their delivery of the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme. The cost of this post would be £157,000 which includes the necessary employer contributions to National Insurance and Pension contributions.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The Council is committed to the successful implementation of the Long-term Plan for Towns programme for Newton-le-Willows. This programme will complement £28m investment in Earlestown Town Centre funded via a successful Levelling Up Round 2 application and Council investment. As the accountable body for the fund, the Council has an obligation, as outlined in the [Levelling Up Funds Local Authority Assurance Framework](#), to ensure that the appropriate assurance and governance arrangements are in place for the Programme.
- 8.2 Given the Council's governance and assurance responsibilities to oversee the programme, coupled with the Council's in house expertise of managing complex externally funded regeneration programmes and Town Boards, it is proposed that a 3-year fixed term Project Officer post to service the programme is funded via the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme.

Appendices

Appendix A – Project Officer Long-term Plan for Towns



Role Description

Post Title:	Project Officer – Long-term Plan for Towns
Post Number:	
Department:	Strategic Growth – Place Services Directorate
Grade & Salary:	K SCP 29-32 (£37,336 - £40,221)
Reports To:	Programme Lead – Earlestown

Purpose

To support and assist in the delivery of the council's regeneration programmes with a clear focus on the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme and its project management for the organisation through the provision of professional advice and guidance that supports effective project management within the role

Context

St Helens Borough Council has been awarded £20m 'endowment style' funding from the governments Long-term Plan for Towns Programme. The Long-term Plan for Towns Programme will bring together community leaders, businesspeople, and local bodies to forge a Long-term Plan and 3-year Investment Plan focused on local priorities within Newton-le-Willows.

Responsibilities & Outcomes

- Provide direct project support to the programme manager and individual project leads to ensure all associated work is consistent with the Council's and Town Board's vision and priorities.
- Coordinate the work and facilitation of the Town Board, developing and overseeing the investment plan, reporting on key milestones, and liaison with the external funding body.
- Support the Chair and wider Town Board in their responsibilities to delivery the Long-term Plan for Towns and 3-Year Investment strategy.
- Support the development and implementation of projects within the Place Directorate, specifically, plans, projects, policies, systems, processes and programmes which support the achievement of departmental and organisational aims and objectives.

- Provide effective partnership working, including negotiating skills and relationship building to forge collaborative relationships across a wide range of stakeholders.
- Support the development of effective multidisciplinary partnerships to meet the required needs of the local area.
- Contribute to the cultural and transformational change agenda, supporting directorates/services as appropriate through effective partnership working and networking.
- Provide advice and guidance on all elements of the programme management cycle as appropriate from initial scoping to programme initiation, delivery, evaluation and lessons learnt.
- Support the Programme Manager in the delivery of key, strategic change programmes.
- Ensure that all necessary project documentation is developed and maintained to provide assurance of project delivery and the achievement of required benefits.
- Provide consistent, accurate and timely project management and transformation advice and guidance to services and directorates.
- Assist with monitoring progress against the stated aims and objectives of a range of programmes and projects. Ensuring this is evidenced through the completion of relevant reports
- Establish the development of assurance processes and systems for projects and programmes.
- Project manage the delivery of small and low risk projects, under the direction of Programme Managers.
- Support Directorates in their service development and performance improvement activities, commissioning business intelligence and other information to support evidence-based decision-making.
- Contribute to service reviews, gap analysis and options appraisals to identify opportunities for service improvement and efficiencies.
- Assist with arrangements for internal and external assessments at partnership, corporate and departmental levels, including self-assessment, peer review, site visits, and improvement planning activities.
- Contribute to a performance management culture that enables a framework to drive continuous improvement that enables service specific business development through appropriate support.
- Undertake relevant research and analysis to support programme delivery and identify opportunities and best practice.
- Assist with the production and dissemination of key research findings and recommendations to a wide variety of audiences and in an accessible format.
- Assist in the research and development of policies, procedures and local initiatives, including the preparation and presentation of associated management information.
- Manage arrangements for internal and external assessments at partnership, corporate and directorate levels, including self-assessments, peer review, site visits and improvement planning activities. Managing the organisation, preparation and delivery of associated training/briefing sessions.

Relationships

Within the organisation:

- Newton-le-Willows Town Board
- Chief Executive, Executive Leadership Team, Senior Leadership Team
- Leader and Relevant Portfolio Holders
- Elected Members
- Trade Union representatives
- Staff
- Cultural Champions

At a borough level

- Voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector
- Community providers
- St Helens Cares and CCG
- Registered social Landlords
- Arts culture and heritage organisations
- Education and skills providers
- Local Businesses

Generic responsibilities

- To support the implementation of the Place operating model in providing programme and project support and clearly demonstrate outcomes which meet the programme objectives.
- Ensure that the Council's overall vision and strategy has an appropriate focus on improving outcomes for the service and its stakeholders and that all senior officers understand their role in delivering improved outcomes.
- To deputise for the Programme Manager as and when required.
- To represent the Council and Town Board at corporate, regional, and other meetings and forums as directed.
- To support, develop and/or participate in projects, both within the Department, multi-agency and collaborative partners.
- To work collaboratively across all service areas with other Programme Managers and relevant teams.
- To work in accordance with the Ways of Working (WoW) programme.
- Lead by example and behave in accordance with St Helens accountabilities framework and the Council's Code of Conduct a fundamental aspect of which is the "Seven Principles of Public Life"
- To ensure compliance with the Council's Policy Framework.

- To comply with the Council's Data Protection Policy and Code of Practice within the service area
 - To comply with the Council's Equality Policy and to ensure that it is implemented.
 - To comply with the Council's Health and Safety Policy and associated safe working procedures and guidelines.
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This post is not subject to Disclosure.

This post is not Politically Restricted in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended).

The details contained within this job description reflect the content of the job at the date it was prepared. However, it is inevitable that over time, the nature of the job may change. Existing duties may no longer be required, and other duties may be gained without changing the general nature of the post or the level of responsibility entailed. Consequently, the Council will expect to revise this job description from time to time and will consult the post holder/s at the appropriate time.

Date Prepared: July 2024