PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS BOARD MEETING

24th Of October 2025 @ 1.30PM

MINUTES

Present:

Present	**Apologies**
Board Members	
Paul Gray (PG) –Chair	Sharon Richards (SR)
MP Gerald Jones (GJ)	Karen Courts (KC)
MS Dawn Bowden (DB)	Geraint Williams (GW)
Councillor Brent Carter (BC)	Daniel Jones (DJ)
Councillor David Jones (DJ)	Simon Evans (SE)
Lis Mclean (LM)	Robert Davies (RD)
Elizabeth Bedford (EB)	
Board Advisors	
Victoria Parry (VP)	Ellis Cooper (ES)
Paul Lewis (PL)	Zoe Thomas (ZT)
Laura Willcox (LW)	Craig Flynn (CF)
Judith Jones (JJ)	Ceri Dinham (CD)
Rob Miles (MC)	Steven Jones (SJ)
Claire Williams (CW)	
Guest Presenter	
Will Purdie (WP) The Urbanists & Keith Thomas (KT) Per Consulting	

Items Discussed

Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

PG welcomed all attendees and introduced Will Purdie and Keith Thomas, who were in attendance to present work undertaken to date on the Regeneration and 4-yr Investment Plan to board.

A round of introductions was undertaken by all attendees

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting: Inc Actions

The Board approved the minutes from the previous meeting held in September.

LW run through the September Board meeting actions. Actions that remain live are as follows:

Action from August Meeting	Status / Update	New Action Owner
Collect outstanding pen portraits from board members for website profiles	**Outstanding.** A final follow-up email is needed. Once all information is received, it will be sent for translation and then uploaded to the public webpage.	LW will issue a final reminder to ensure completion.
Secure a suitably experienced board member for Health and Wellbeing coverage	**In Progress.** The Board will be updated on the progress of identifying and recruiting this key member at the next meeting.	LW to send board biographies of both candidates for Board to make an informed decision via email vote. Due to focus on the Regen and 4-yr investment Plan, this action to be deferred until December

Action:

LW to circulate email reminder to board members on Pen portrait information

LW to send board a mini bio of each candidate

UK Government Strategic Updates

GJ provided an update on the UK Government Pride in Place Programme. Outlining that the Local Authority has received correspondence on this fund. In summary, this is a capital funded programme which is to be managed and lead by the Local Authority. It operates outside of the core PfN funding envelope.

Programme Update

LW informed the Board that the new UK Government Delivery Lead, Natalie Noble, has requested to attend a Board Meeting. The Board unanimously agreed to host the new representative at the December board.

LW updated the Board on the low response rate to the initial advertisement for the Programme Manager post. To increase the attractiveness of the role and add competition to acquire a suitable candidate, the following strategic adjustments were agreed:

Expanded Scope	To include line management of a dedicated PfN Project Support Officer, increasing the role's seniority and strategic importance.
Adjusted Qualifications	Amending the requirement from 'Degree' to 'Degree or experience in a regeneration or project management role.' to widen the pool to candidates with demonstrable practical experience.

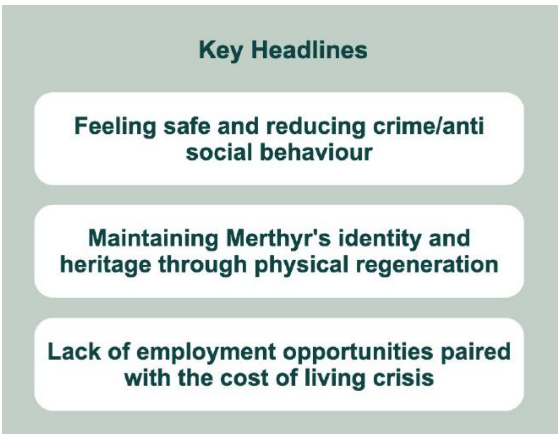
The Board unanimously approved the revised job description.

ACTION: LW to amend the job description and arrange for the re-evaluation of the post

Regeneration and 4-Year Investment Plan

Regeneration Plan Consultation Findings

WP presented the findings from the community consultations, outlining the direction of travel for the PfN programme. The report highlights **three primary strategic objectives** for the area, directly informed by community feedback. The presentation will be circulated alongside the October minutes. Key headlines include:



LM Noted the report aligns with the community work at Soar Theatr, confirming that isolation, poverty, and generational unemployment are significant, systemic issues.

It was recognised by several attendees that there is huge importance of local identity and heritage.

Cllr DJ stressed that a primary challenge remains changing the public mindset about the town and actively addressing the issue of non-engagement. It was suggested that the programme adopt a creative viewpoint to reach marginalised groups, including those affected by drug and alcohol.

The Board emphasised the need for a sustained, strategic approach to communicating the programme's benefits

LM suggested framing future efforts as continuous "conversations" rather than standalone "consultations" to build long-term trust and dialogue

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PG suggested that the Communication Strategy should focus on highlighting existing community assets and good news stories (e.g bowling, cinema, retail parks, community wardens) to counter negative perceptions and remind residents of the town's value. Board agreed

PL outlined that we need to be liaising with the larger employers to give communities meaningful job opportunities

EB advocated for a focus on a unique offer built around independent businesses and family recreational activities to drive footfall

Financial and Funding Challenges

KT detailed the significant financial pressure on revenue related activity, particularly as it accounts for a very small % under the programme.

- It was unanimously agreed that the Board must communicate to UK Government the critical need for a greater Revenue allocation within the PfN, as revenue funding (currently 25% of the total) is essential for supporting successful capital projects and long-term sustainability.

- DB suggested that the healthy state of the Capital budget *might* allow for a portion to be translated into Revenue funding, though this would require official approval from the Treasury. DB to discuss with colleagues and report back to Board. Board was reminded that for the purposes of the Regeneration and 4-yr Investment Plan to be submitted by the 28th of November, we need to align with the guidance (25% Revenue / 75% Capital)

Action: DB to liaise with her colleagues on the possibility of translating a portion of Capital into Revenue and report back to Board

Targeting Investment and Deprivation

KT presented the initial draft of the Investment Plan.

KT run through the proposed revenue projects that align to the consultation findings and associated priorities, including current initiatives that face potential funding risk due to reliance on other external programmes.

Initial proposals for Revenue projects looked at elements such as community events and warden services, that align with consultation priorities and that of the PfN programme objectives

The Board asked for more detailed information on project proposals to make fully informed decisions on the 4-year plan.

Action: KT / WP to present full plan for Board sign off in November

The Board discussed the most strategic use of the PfN funds:

- Crime and Anti-social Behaviour: How can we make the community feel safer

- Vacancy Rates: Town centre analysis indicates that high street vacancy rates have improved, but the shopping centre remains an issue.

- Geographic Focus: Discussion centred on whether the Town Centre should be the primary objective, or if greater emphasis should be placed on areas of multiple deprivation across the wider borough e.g. Gurnos. Board agreed that where there is a need and direct alignment with the programme it can be looked at.

- Drug and Alcohol Misuse: The Board acknowledged that residents affected by generational unemployment and substance abuse are the most difficult to engage.
  This area represents a missing piece of the jigsaw. It was mandated that the PfN should explore how the Capital-heavy budget can be creatively used to provide fit-for-purpose support infrastructure.

Decision Items

Board agreed to the following:

- Board meeting invitation to be sent to UK Government Pride in Place Delivery Lead
- Revision on the PfN Programme Manager Post Job Description

AOB

There were no other AOB

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for **13th November at 9.30am**

Summary of Actions

- LW to circulate email reminder to board members on Pen portrait information
- LW to send board a mini bio of each candidate – deferred to Dec Board
- LW to send board biographies of both Health and Wellbeing candidates for Board to make an informed decision via email vote
- LW to amend the Programme Manager job description and arrange for the re-evaluation of the post
- DB to liaise with her colleagues on the possibility of translating a portion of Capital into Revenue and report back to Board
- KT / WP to present full plan for Board sign off in November