

PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS BOARD MEETING

13th Of NOVEMBER 2025 @ 9.30PM

MINUTES

Present:

Present	Apologies
Board Members	
Paul Gray (PG) –Chair	Councillor Brent Carter (BC)
MP Gerald Jones (GJ)	MS Dawn Bowden (DB)
Lis Mclean (LM)	Geraint Williams (GW)
Sharon Richards (SR)	Daniel Jones (DJ)
Councillor David Jones (DJ)	
Karen Courts (KC)	
Elizabeth Bedford (EB)	
Simon Evans (SE)	
Robert Davies (RD)	
Board Advisors	
Ellis Cooper (ES)	Steven Jones (SJ)
Craig Flynn (CF)	Ceri Dinham (CD)
Zoe Thomas (ZT)	
Judieth Jones (JJ)	
Laura Willcox (LW)	
Paul Lewis (PL)	
Victoria Parry (VP)	
Rob Miles (RM) *In replacement of Steven Jones	
Guest Presenter	
Keith Thomas (KT) / James Brown (JB) & Florence Bell (FB)– the urbanists	

Items Discussed

Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

PG opened the meeting, welcoming and thanking all members for their attendance

LW updated on apologies for absence

Actions of the Previous Meeting:

The actions from the October board will be addressed at the December Board

Purpose of interim Board Meeting:

LW set the context for the meeting, emphasising that the primary objective was to secure agreement in principle for the Regeneration and 4-Year Investment Plan from the Board, given the imminent submission deadline of November 28th

It was stressed that this endorsement is not a commitment to a static, rigid blueprint. The PfN programme is a flexible, 10-year programme designed for long-term navigation, with continuous community consultation serving as the mechanism to guide future project expenditure and priorities.

LW reiterated to Board that the programme is capital-heavy and that while the need for corresponding revenue is high, the Board must work within the current financial parameters for this initial submission. The interventions proposed are based on recent local consultations, and the plan is designed to be a living document that will be refined in the coming months. The critical step is achieving consensus today

KT highlighted that the national programme operates under 8 themes, 30 sub-themes, and 148 interventions. It was noted that while not all are relevant locally, the Board retains the flexibility to tap into any of them as the programme progresses.

For Merthyr, the three initial strategic focus areas were confirmed as:

- Safety and Security; Regeneration
- High Street and Heritage
- Work, Productivity and Skills.

LM queried the consideration of the Welsh Language in the plan. KT confirmed that while the PfN is a UK-wide programme without a specific Welsh Language mention, it is deemed essential to include local policies and programmes to ensure compliance and alignment at the delivery level.

KT presented the high-level financial structure, covering Capacity Funding, Revenue, and Capital allocations, with a detailed focus given to the Year 1 Capacity Funding.

KT outlined that UK Government requires the programme to spend at least 25% of the cumulative allocation by the end of Investment Period 1, 50% by the end of Period 2, and 100% by the end of Period 3.

KT noted that programme evaluations will be carried out centrally by the UK Government as a national approach.

PL highlighted that existing successful programmes that are due to terminate soon, and which align with consultation priorities, should be proactively prioritised within the PfN plan.

KT confirmed that under the Capital element, design and professional fees are eligible if the work translates directly into a capital project.

RD inquired whether Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) would be allowed to bring long-term empty properties back into use for homelessness purposes. KT answered that CPOs are eligible under the Programme's capital funding.

GJ reiterated the flexibility built into the plan. LW outlined that Natalie Nolan the UK government representative agreed that the programme is flexible and the principle agrees

LM raised the need for the Third Sector (e.g., food banks, citizens advice) to be able to deliver on the Board's behalf. KT confirmed that working with the Third Sector is covered within the Revenue element of the funding.

ZT suggested future meetings discuss aligning the plan with the Empty Properties Strategy and other Welsh Government programmes

RM felt that for Safety and Security the percentage given would not be enough cover CCTV considering the costs of equipment.

ZT highlighted the benefit of blending themes, giving the example of town centre regeneration (e.g., building improvements) can be combined with Safety and Security interventions (e.g., Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, working with Police to design out crime).

Plan Proposals and Member Vote:

Capacity Funding: KT presented the proposal for two posts (Programme Manager and Project Officer to support the Programme Manager) for Period 1. The potential to capitalise the Project Officer role was discussed but deemed difficult; the role will initially be funded through Capacity Funding and reviewed over the next two years. No issues raised by board.

PG felt that the roles were of greater value than appointing external consultants going forward.

Revenue Funding: KT presented the proposed Revenue element.

LM raised concerns about the weighting, desiring a higher allocation for Education and Opportunity and Transport due to child poverty concerns.

KT responded that Transport is primarily a capital item that is currently addressed through external funding streams (Active Travel, Regional Transport Plans, CCR opportunities). It was agreed to use task and finish groups to explore wider poverty and education alignment opportunities as well as other opportunities as part of the overall PfN programme.

DJ supported the high weighting given to Safety and Security as a foundational requirement for all other regeneration efforts, particularly in the town centre.

Revenue Proportions: It was agreed to add proportional allocations for Education/Opportunity into later years within Period 1, and throughout Periods 2 and 3, to allow time to work up the corresponding strategies

Capital Funding: The Board confirmed they were satisfied with the proposed Capital allocation for the first investment period.

KT will populate the final figures and work on shaping the educational piece and project alignment for the next meeting.

Decision Items

A vote was taken on whether the Board members agreed with the "in principle" ethos and structure of the plans. It was unanimously agreed by all Board members

The Board agreed that the draft plans should be sent to the UK Government Delivery Lead for review and assurance before the final November 28th submission

AOB

LW outlined that actions from the October meeting would be addressed in the December / January meetings

LM mentioned that two prominent derelict buildings were recently discussed at a Heritage meeting for possible inclusion in the PfN programme. ZT confirmed the Local Authority is aware of these buildings.

An agenda item covering Local Authority priorities and external programmes will be added to the New Year meeting to ensure PfN alignment

LM expressed thanks to the team for the due diligence and challenge undertaken in preparing the plans

PG noted the recent meeting with Coalfields Regeneration Trust and confirmed they will be invited to the January Board meeting to discuss potential collaboration

SR suggested engaging the Lloyds Bank Foundation as a potential collaborator, given their People & Communities Programme of work locally

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in person on November 21st at the Orbit Business Centre, with the key focus being the final sign-off of the plans

