

PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS BOARD MEETING

21st NOVEMBER 2025 @ 1.30PM

MINUTES

Present:

Present	Apologies
Board Members	
Paul Gray (PG) –Chair	Councillor Brent Carter (BC)
MP Gerald Jones (GJ)	Elizabeth Bedford (EB)
Lis Mclean (LM)	Geraint Williams (GW)
Sharon Richards (SR)	Daniel Jones (DJ)
Councillor David Jones (DJ)	Robert Davies (RD)
Karen Courts (KC)	
MS Dawn Bowden (DB)	
Simon Evans (SE)	
Board Advisors	
Ellis Cooper (ES)	Steven Jones (SJ)
Zoe Thomas (ZT)	Ceri Dinham (CD)
Judieth Jones (JJ)	Craig Flynn (CF)
Laura Willcox (LW)	
Paul Lewis (PL)	
Victoria Parry (VP)	
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 Board Meeting:

To receive Board approval of the 10- Year Regeneration and 4-Year Investment Plan

Opening Discussions

The Board engaged in a discussion regarding the ongoing development of the programme's governance structure.

- PL suggested to involve the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in future discussions, recognising the critical link between community safety and regeneration outcomes.
- ZT suggested engaging private businesses, as previously attempted via Town Centre Partnership
- PG and the Board agreed that a review of its current structure and membership would be undertaken. This review will aim to ensure the Board reflects current community priorities and maintains sufficient representative oversight in line with the delivery phase of the Programme.

Action: All: Review of current Board Structure

- LW confirmed that the draft version of the 10-Year Regeneration Plan had been submitted to the designated UK Government contact. Formal acknowledgement has been received, with no comments supplied to date.
- LW reminded board of deadline for the final submission of the Regeneration and 4-Year Investment Plan which is Friday, 28 November at 12:00 pm.

Regeneration & 4-Year Investment Plan

The 4-Year Investment Plan was presented for final discussion by KT. Key points included:

- Reiteration that the proposals are founded upon robust data analysis and comprehensive community consultation, explicitly designed to address the fundamental challenges identified within the target neighbourhood, aligning with the core objective of the Programme.
- It was emphasised that the final plan possesses necessary fluidity and movement, ensuring that the delivery phases remain responsive to evolving, verified community needs.
- A reminder was issued regarding the constraint that pre-approved interventions currently favour Revenue projects. The Board was reminded of the mandated Capital/Revenue split (75/25), necessitating the sensible selection of future projects to maximise funding impact.
- It was outlined that to enhance overall value, project funding packages should seek to incorporate an element of match funding.

GJ Stressed the necessity for absolute transparency on spending and robust, ongoing community engagement post-submission.

ZT confirmed that the plan is demonstrably aligned with consultation feedback and committed to continuous post-submission engagement, captured by the communication principle: “You said, we did...”

The revenue expenditure linked to each Programme theme was presented by KT. Key points as follows:

- DB raised concerns regarding interaction with emerging policy developments within Wales (e.g., the Homelessness Bill) and how projects will maintain compliance and relevance.
- LM questioned whether the funding allocation meets critical community needs, expressing concern that safety and security appeared heavily weighted. LM sought justification for the allocation for community wardens
- KT reiterated that the initial consultation highlighted significant community concerns regarding anti-social behaviour, which is not a statutory duty for the Council to provide but is a clear priority for residents. The priority therefore warrants the proposed value against this element
- PG outlined that ultimate project decisions rest with the Board but are subject to the Accountable Body's due diligence and financial scrutiny checks.
- ZT outlined that the availability of Shared Prosperity Fund enabled the successful introduction of town centre wardens. Community feedback strongly supports retaining this non-statutory service, potentially at a reduced capacity and focused specifically within the town centre.
- LM queried whether the funding would meet the needs of the Third sector. SR suggested involving the Third Sector Leaders Forum.

- EC highlighted active collaboration between the third sector and the Local Authority, citing a recent positive meeting with VAMT.
 - SR stressed the necessity for clear, consistent, and well-managed communications regarding support for the third sector and the fragility, particularly concerning the availability of match funding. Messages from all Board and related parties must be consistent.
 - SR offered to work directly with the Local Authority on optimising the use of the Local Growth Fund and to dispel the misconception that the Local Authority is solely responsible for delivering on everything.
 - KT detailed regeneration Capital project priorities, addressing critical housing challenges (which excludes new builds).
 - DB suggested broadening the scope of Health and Wellbeing interventions under the existing Culture and Heritage theme.
 - KT noted that culture is included within the regeneration theme, but its scope is constrained by initial phase requirements.
 - DB re-emphasised the legal requirement to consider devolved nations' policies within the design and delivery of the Programme.
 - KT confirmed adherence to requirements such as the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act is referenced within the plans, and that specific details are delegated to the Board for oversight.
 - PG confirmed that Merthyr's UK Government Representative is scheduled to attend the December Board meeting, providing an opportunity to raise any outstanding issues concerning devolved nations' priorities and programme scope.
 - KT clarified that the Productivity and Skills theme, by nature, does not lend itself easily to Capital projects within this funding phase.
 - Both GJ and PG stressed that all projects must fit verified local needs, with GJ proposing that the Board must retain the flexibility to select alternative projects if the initial choices prove unviable.
 - ZT proposed fostering collaboration with the other nine Local Authorities and the four that have successfully passed the first hurdle of the Programme.
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Decision Items

Description	Outcome
Approval of Draft 4-Year Investment Plan	Unanimously Agreed by Board Members
Approval of Draft 10-Year Regeneration Plan	Unanimously Agreed by Board Members

AOB

LW announced the Programme Manager role is now live; closing date 18 December.

LW mentioned that that the JD for the project officer role to be drafted

PG: Suggested forming a Task & Finish Group and reviewing board membership in the New Year.

Action: LW to place on agenda for January 2026

LW: outlined that in the new Year a roadmap for Board on next steps will be look at

SR: Suggested involving Third Sector Leaders Forum.

Actions

All: Review of current Board Structure

LW: to place Task and Finish Group Discussion on agenda for January 2026

LW: To draft a next steps roadmap for the January 2026 Board

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in person on December 19th at the Orbit Business Centre

