NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Newark Town Executive Board** held Online on Monday, 7 July 2025 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT:	Louise Casey	Newark & Sherwood CVS (Co-Chair)
	Penny Taylor	Lincoln College Group (Co-Chair)
	Tony Aspbury	Newark Showground (Vice-Chair)
	Cllr. Dawn Campbell	Newark Town Council
	James Carpenter	BB Mortgages
	Cllr. Rowan Cozens	Newark & Sherwood DC
	Neil Cuttell	Newark & Sherwood DC
	Joelle Davies	Nottinghamshire County Council
	Joshua Farmer	Newark & Sherwood DC
	Andrew Fearn	St. Mary Magdalene with St. Leonards
	Sarah Husselbee	Newark & Sherwood DC
	David Inger	Newark College
	Sanjiv Kohli	Newark & Sherwood DC
	Kathryn Sharp	Environment Agency
	Rose Thompson	Historic England
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:	Insp. Charlotte Elam	Nottinghamshire Police Authority
	Matthew Gleadall	Newark Town Council
	Jane Hutchinson	Newark & Sherwood DC
	Claire Ward	EMCCA

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None submitted.

10 CHAIR'S WELCOME AND UPDATE ON PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS GOVERNMENT WORKSHOP

The Co-Chair, Louise Casey (N&S CVS), welcomed everyone to the online meeting and provided an update on the Westminster briefing she had attended. She noted that the Board’s regeneration plans were to be submitted by 28 November 2025. She highlighted that there had been an emphasis on promoting community involvement and the avoidance of using external consultants where possible, noting the importance of community hubs. It was also noted that the Newark Board had made significant and positive progression in developing plans in comparison to some other areas.

Tony Aspbury (Newark Showground) stated that he was a strong advocate of using local knowledge and expertise but raised concerns about how this approach might impact the Council's obligation to ensure best value for money. In response, Neil Cuttell (NSDC) referred to the Board's evidence base that had been collected the previous year using consultants and in-house teams. He mentioned that NSDC officers were currently drafting the Regeneration Plans for the Board's approval, using the findings gathered previously as well as more recently available information. Sanjiv Kohli (NSDC) pointed out that reliance on local experts would depend on the availability of volunteers with the necessary skills for sometimes complex projects. He also added that involving NSDC officers had implications for resources and capacity.

11 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 3 JUNE 2025

AGREED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2025 be accepted as a true record.

12 PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS REGENERATION PLAN - UPDATE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board considered the report and presentation in relation to the Plan for Neighbourhoods (PfN) scheme which provided an update on progress together with identification of the priorities to inform the development of the local Regeneration Plan.

Sarah Husselbee (NSDC) provided the Board with the background to the launch of the PfN programme in March 2025 which had replaced the previous Long-Term Plans for Towns initiative. The PfN had 3 strategic objectives of: building thriving places; strengthening communities; and empowering people of take back control. The scheme would provide Newark, together with the same towns selected through the long-term plans for towns, with a share of the funding, which was based, for the most part, on areas of deprivation. It was a 75% capital scheme with the delivery funding commencing in April 2026. The programme was to be governed by Neighbourhood Boards in each of the areas who would act as fund decision makers, approved to be overseen locally by the Newark Town Board. This Board is required to work with the local authority to develop the Regeneration Plan which had a deadline of 28th November 2025 for submission.

The Board were advised that progress had been made by Officers with the analysis of existing data sets, such as information gathered last year through specialist support, as well as additional data provided by the Government in June 2025. This would be reviewed together alongside the findings from the community engagement, undertaken from 2020 until recently.

Proposed Geographical Boundaries

On 9 April, the Board had approved, with one minor tweak, the re-submission of the boundary submitted to the previous Government though the long-term plan for towns programme. It was updated that this Boundary had subsequently been rejected by the latest Government due to the changes the proposed extension had upon the data sets and methodology for which the towns had originally been selected for funding. Following the rejection of the boundary submitted April 2025, a second boundary was proposed by Officers in June 2025, as shown in Appendix A of the report provided.

Sarah Husselbee, NSDC advised that a very recent update had been provided by Government to inform the Board that the second proposed boundary amendment of June 2025, was also unable to be accepted by the Government. An urgent Chairs decision was therefore taken in the week prior to the Board meeting to accept the red-line boundary as prescribed by Government in June 2025, for the purpose of the PfN scheme, and in order to meet the timescales set by Government. This results in a PfN boundary that excludes the wider proposed areas of Hawton, Balderton and Fernwood.

It was noted that despite these areas being excluded from the formal funding boundary, there was still the opportunity to work closely with them to identify priorities for the Town, albeit any benefits of the investment must be felt within the boundary line. The accepted boundary was presented to Members and was to be included within the draft Regeneration Plan and circulated to all Board Members for completeness.

It was noted that recommendation 'A' in the report provided was to be discounted by the Board, as this recommendation was superseded by the latest updates provided by Government regarding Boundary arrangements.

<u>Development of Regeneration Plan</u>

The Board were advised that further guidance had now been published by Government regarding Regeneration Plans. This includes a requirement to create a 10-year high level vision that would include a more detailed 4-year investment profile for 2026-2030. The structure of the Plan was currently being developed by the accountable body (NSDC) on behalf of the Board following analysis of a variety of different local data-sets engagement and insights, details of which were provided in appendix 2 of the report. The Plan's structure was set by the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) with the final approved document to be published on the Board's website in the future. The Plan must also contain information in relation to alignment to alternative funding streams, local investments and strategies.

It was intended to submit the draft Plan to the next meeting of the Board in September 2025, following which it would be presented to NSDC's Cabinet for approval in November 2025 before being submitted to Government thereafter. The timeframe is for April 2026 being the date for the initial delivery funding to commence with final tranche of capacity funding for 2026/2027.

The report provided sought approval from the Board of the draft PfN investment priorities interventions, vision statement and 4-year funding profile, to help form the basis of the draft Regeneration Plan document. It was noted that this detail would be formally confirmed once the Regeneration Plan was approved by Government, and subject to usual local assurance processes.

<u>Vision Statement</u>

In considering the draft Vision Statement, as set out in the report provided, the Board were asked for their feedback and to put forward any amendments they might wish to be included.

Board members suggested that reference be made to: the importance of the town's heritage and culture and how this would be protected for future generations; and specific comment about the environment. Board members were advised to forward any further suggestions to Sarah Husselbee by the end of July. These would then be worked into a revised vision statement for presentation and approval to the September board meeting.

Initial Draft and Indicative 4-Year Investment Profile

It was reported that the Regeneration Plan should be complemented by an initial Investment Plan which detailed more specific funding plans for the first 4 years of the scheme (2026/2030). The projects were not required to be fully defined, more so the type of project and interventions the Board would wish to pursue. The draft investment profile was included at Table 2 of the report for the Board members consideration. This included potential funding for operational expenses such as programme management, town centre events, residential conversions and a neighbourhood grant scheme.

In considering the investment profile Penny Taylor noted that, in relation to the neighbourhood grant scheme, she was aware that these were run by local CVS's in other areas, querying whether it was the intention for Newark to run the scheme in the same way. Louise Casey advised that the Newark CVS would be willing to explore the possibility to administer the scheme in partnership with the Council, noting that it would prevent people from thinking it was a Council grant. In noting that the funding for events could be administered by the college and the neighbourhood grant scheme by the CVS, Penny Taylor suggested that it may be beneficial for smaller sub-committees to consider applications, rather than a single person. Sarah Husselbee added that further planning was needed to agree the criteria and appraisal process for all grant schemes within the local PfN programme.

In summarising the funding schemes, Sarah Husselbee advised that the intention was to provide two different levels of grant based on previous Board discussions. An annual grant scheme that would be predominantly for community and voluntary sector organisations and a single capital grant call to enable some of the larger transformation projects to be brought forward over the first 4 years, adding that this would form the development of the regeneration plan.

The Board were asked to consider if their preference remained to deliver the grants through this two-tier approach, to enable a variety of project values to be supported through the scheme, or if the preference was to award smaller grants only. It was agreed that the preference was to offer a variety of grant sizes through the scheme, where possible.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

a) the updates relating to the PfN geographical boundary, as detailed in the report be noted and that the latest proposed local boundary being considered by the Government (Image 2 of Appendix A) be endorsed. **– recommendation discounted due to boundary updates provided above.**

b) the draft vision statement for the purpose of developing the PfN Regeneration Plan, as detailed in the report and the above suggested amendments, be noted and that Board members forward any further suggestions to Sarah Husselbee with a final vision statement to be agreed in advance of submitting the Regeneration Plan;

c) the Board's preferred draft priority investment themes and interventions to support the development of the local Regeneration Plan, as detailed in the report, be confirmed;

d) the Board's initial draft and indicative 4-year investment profile to support the development of the local Regeneration Plan, as detailed in the report, be confirmed; and

e) the release and commitment of any future funding within the indicative 4-year investment profile remains, subject to approval of a final Regeneration Plan by the Board, Accountable Body and Government, be noted. This was in addition to completion of all local assurance processes, such as the development of project Business Cases and subsequent approval from both the Board and Accountable Body's S151 Officer, as detailed within the report.

13 EVENTS AND ENGAGEMENT UPDATE - NEWARK COLLEGE

The Board considered the verbal report of David Inger (Newark College) which provided an update on events and engagement activities, which included plans for summer and autumn events. He advised that he had been tasked with liaising with local businesses and stakeholders to ascertain ways in which to bolster engagement in the town with a view to encouraging people to dwell, increase expenditure in the town and encourage them to return. He noted that there was a different concerns dependant on the type of business.

In relation to the Plan of Events, he advised that businesses had welcomed the document which could be displayed in their businesses, rather than having to scroll through Facebook or numerous websites. He added that the use of flyers was also welcomed by businesses in the town and that the District Council's relaunch of the What's On Guide had been well received.

A summary of planned activities was reported, including: demonstrations by a celebrity chef; beach in the market place; workshops in relation to sustainable eating provided by NSDC; information on composting; a festival at the end of the summer (details to be confirmed); dragon boat race; record fairs; half marathon; and heritage open days towards October. In the run-up to Halloween, it was proposed to have a two-week programme of activities which would include a monsters' trail with potentially nine different businesses being involved culminating in a community fun day on 1 November with Radio Newark broadcasting from the marketplace. The YMCA had expressed an interest in having a stand or to host some events. Other events planned were gym demonstrations; dance group demonstrations; boxing demonstrations; demonstrations and community engagement by the Police and Fire Service and an idea of a flash mob in the marketplace was also being considered on a regular market day. Consideration was also being given to decorating disused shops in Newark with a spooky theme and students from the college and scare actors from Circus Starlight standing in the shops as a statue. Circus Starlight had also indicated that they could provide jugglers and stilt walkers etc. to add to the entertainment.

In noting the programme of events developed by Newark Creates, David Inger commented that it was hoped that the Newark Town Board's initiative would link together and work collaboratively to create the 2026/2027 programme. He added that after the college's summer break je would be visiting schools, community hubs and parish councils to promote engagement with the Board.

In noting the above, the Board were advised that the development of an Event Plan was nearing completion and that this would be shared with the Board when approved, further noting that this would provide structure to the events as mentioned above. The Board were also advised that work on the specification and development of the plan for 2026/207 was required, ideally by October/November alongside the Regeneration Plan so that the booking of planned activities and events could be secured.

AGREED that the verbal update provided by David Inger (Newark College) be noted.

14 ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK UPDATE - NSDC

The Board considered the verbal update in relation to the Local Assurance Framework Review. Sarah Husselbee advised that within the Government's prospectus, there was a requirement for all local boards to ensure that their local assurance framework was fit for purpose for any existing funding streams as well as the PfN initiative, noting that for Newark this included Newark Towns Deal.

In noting that the revised framework would be formally provided to the Board in September 2025 for consideration, the proposed key changes were highlighted including: a threshold-based approach to ensure the plans met the needs of the local authority, the accountable body and the Government's prospectus. In developing the threshold approach, 3 different values of grants had been identified as:

High	£1m or more (total grant)
Medium	£250k to £999k (total grant)
Low	£249k (total grant)

The proposals would ensure that the updated local assurance framework set out requirements for business case development, approval and funding arrangements for projects falling within each of the above three value thresholds. It was noted that the value of grants would influence the assurance process required, and the proposed requirements for each were presented to the Board and discussed further.

The Board were advised that regardless of the proposed changes to be presented in September, the focus was to ensure activity will would remain compliant. Value for money for each application would be assessed whilst using a robust and uncomplicated process.

Neil Cuttell added that the Government had announced that they would be issuing new guidance in January to March 2026 on the new model green book business cases that would not necessarily champion the benefit cost ratio but would more so have a general approach of place shaping which would offer more flexibility.

Sarah Husselbee suggested that assurance requirements be clearly communicated to project promoters in advance of any call for projects to ensure that anyone wishing to submit an application was aware of the required process to be followed.

15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Penny Taylor (Newark College) advised that Dave Inger and some students had been working closely with the new owner of the old Wetherspoons. They were currently decorating the boards with themes of Newark which were to be placed in the windows. The boards would also include information in relation to events planned over a two-month period.

In noting that the Newark Town Partnership had now come to the end of its three-year period, Penny Taylor suggested that two of the people involved now be invited to participate in the Board's Steering Group meetings. This was accepted and **AGREED** by the Board members.

Councillor Rowan Cozens (NSDC) raised a concern in relation to a lack of a physical Tourist Information Centre (TIC) in the town. She referred to the White Hart building, noting that it dated from the 14th Century and was described as one of the most paramount examples or urban timber framed architecture, dating back to 1312. She noted that it was currently for sale on the open market as a commercial premise for £250,000, suggesting that consideration be given to purchasing it as it was the only surviving example in the UK, urging the Board to prioritise buildings of importance in their medieval walled town.

In response, Rose Thompson (Historic England) advised that her organisation had expertise in such acquisitions and would be willing to assist, should the Board wish to progress that.

Tony Aspbury (Newark Showground) queried whether it was possible for the Board to actually own such an asset, or whether the Board could lease it, should it be purchased by someone else, and perhaps use it as a TIC.

Penny Taylor stated that the Board's plans for the future would require consideration, adding that the building would work well as a community space but the question raised by Tony Aspbury in relation to ownership required clarification.

Neil Cuttell (NSDC) sought to clarify some of the issues such a purchase could raise. These included: the bulk of capital funding was for 2027/2028 onwards and therefore PfN investment would not be available in the immediate future based on the existing preferred profile. It was also added that project proposer would be required and a business case written; the business case would not just require detail of the purchase price, but must also include the cost of refurbishment, citing the costs of bringing the Stodman Street building back into use; there would be a need for a degree of survey work to be undertaken and due diligence prior to proceeding with such an acquisition; this would be revenue expenditure.

Rose Thompson advised that Historic England could assist with things like condition surveys and reiterated that they had offered to fund certain things in the past so could assist with acquisition grants.

In closing the discussion, Louise Casey thanked everyone for their attendance and input.

16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday, 26 September 2025 @ 13:30 hours

Meeting closed at 11.36 am.

Chairman