

## **Leigh Town Board**

**10.00 am, 20 September 2024**

### **Present at the meeting**

Karen Cox (Chair), Spinning Gate Shopping Centre Manager  
Adele Adjeley, Senior Policy and Partnerships Officer  
Councillor Dane Anderton, Portfolio Holder for Police, Crime and Civil Contingencies  
Councillor Yvonne Klieve, Lead Member for District Centres & Night Time Economy  
Dorothy Bowker, Founder and Trustee – The Bridge  
Jo Platt, MP for Leigh  
David Proctor, Assistant Director – Planning and Regeneration  
Alison Rushton, Vice Principal – Wigan & Leigh College  
Steven Tomlinson, Director – Nemiah and Leigh Means Business  
Lloyd Jolley, Director – WJ Structures Ltd  
Alex Grundy - Owner - Café Stella

### **Apologies:**

Danny O’Neil – Greater Manchester Police

### **In Attendance:**

Carwyn Evans, Team Leader – Regeneration  
Luke Bollard, Project Officer – Major Projects  
Paul Blinkhorn Constituency Support Officer  
Kate Mitchell, Project Manager – Creative Heritage  
Melanie Lamb, Service Manager – Regeneration  
Martin Ledson, Team Leader – Regeneration Strategy and Transformation

### **1. Welcome - attendance and apologies**

The Chair opened the meeting, welcoming all board members.

Apologies were received from Superintendent Danny O’Neil

Introductions were provided. The MP introduced herself and praised how everyone has come together with an opportunity to make a real difference, and confirmed her own commitment to the Board.

### **2. Minutes and actions from last meeting**

The Chair advised that there were no outstanding actions from the previous meeting.

### **3. Long Term Plan for Towns Programme update**

#### **Submission deadline correspondence of 19 July 2024**

The Service Manager – Regeneration informed the Board that formal notification was received on 19<sup>th</sup> July that the submission date for the Long Term Plan was suspended, and further announcements are yet to be made by the government.

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**Update on current position**

The Chair updated the Board that since the last meeting in July, there has been continued correspondence with Government to provide feedback on the process so far.

The Chair advised that a letter from David Molyneux, leader of Wigan Council & the Chair was written to the Secretary of State, Angela Rayner MP, to ask for a formal update. The Chair read the reply to the Board, which noted the financial constraints of new government.

The Service Manager – Regeneration also shared positive feedback from Genecon that the Board are working well together and noted their offer of continued support.

**Financial update**

The Service Manager – Regeneration advised the Board that there have been no substantive changes to the budget since the last Board meeting. It was noted that the consultants are still in contract and there is still some funding available from the consultants' fees to finalise the plan.

The Service Manager – Regeneration advised that the Project Manager position previously approved by the Board has now been filled, subject to necessary checks and paperwork being completed. This has initially been offered as a 12 month full time contract due to current uncertainties around future funding, but the term can be reviewed if further funding is confirmed. The start date is expected to be November 2024. The salary has been funded by the remaining balance of the £250k revenue funding.

The budget position was therefore noted as:

- £250,000 revenue funding to progress engagement and the preparation of the Long Term Plan
- £157,537 committed or spent (including consultant fees, marketing, printing, expenses and staffing)
- £92,463 remaining

The Board will need to decide how the remaining funding is used but may choose to wait until there are further announcements on the funding from the government.

**Next steps discussion**

The Chair formally thanked Wigan Council's Regeneration Service for its support provided to the Board.

Councillor Anderton asked for the Long Term Plan to be circulated to Board members in its current draft form. The Assistant Director – Planning and Regeneration confirmed that this could be circulated.

Agreed:- The draft Plan will be circulated with the meeting notes.

The Service Manager – Regeneration advised that if additional flexibility were to be provided to the Long Term Plan for Towns fund, the priority would be to change the split between capital and revenue (overall or in tranches) to reflect that many

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interventions – particularly early stage projects – were revenue scheme, and noting that revenue support could be given to groups seeking to develop projects.

Action:- Jo Platt MP to raise this as a written point to the Minister.

#### **4. Briefing of Leigh Levelling-Up Programme**

The Service Manager – Regeneration informed the Board that the LUF projects were developed from previous consultation and background work (prior to the establishment of the Town Board), and there has been lots of mobilisation work over summer in parallel with LTPT. The timeframe for LUF funding is tight from April 2024 to March 2026.

##### **Civic Square and Market Place Corridor**

The Board considered a verbal update and presentation, provided by The Team Leader – Regeneration and Project Officer – Major Projects about the proposed public realm improvements to Civic Square, King St, Market St and Market Place. This project aims to reduce severance and vehicle dominance and reallocate road space to make it safer and more attractive, as well as creating a focus for civic activity and events in the square.

The Team Leader – Regeneration advised the Board that community engagement specialists have been appointed to assist with the public engagement and several events and workshops have taken place with the outline design consultation programmed to be carried out in mid-November 2024.

The Board discussed concerns around safety and security. The Team Leader – Regeneration informed the Board that the police are engaged, and efforts are being made to design out crime and improve safety with natural surveillance and improved lighting.

The Service Manager – Regeneration advised that the Board will have an ongoing role as a key stakeholder in an advisory capacity and the LUF funding is all capital.

Councillor Dane Anderton requested that the design and materials used are sustainable, in terms of future repair and maintenance.

Action:- The Team Leader – Regeneration to feed back to the design team about security concerns.

##### **Shopfront and Building Grant Scheme**

The Board considered a presentation from the Project Manager – Creative Heritage, which outlined the work to date on the grant scheme, as well as an overview of previous work the Creative Heritage has completed in Tyldesley.

The priority area is Bradshawgate, followed by the streets off Bradshawgate. The scheme is currently in phase 1 with expressions of interest to be submitted by end November 2024 and full applications will be due by June 2025.

The Project Manager – Creative Heritage advised the Board that open days are to take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> October with an opportunity to find out about scheme and share stories about the history of the town. Information will be sent out with the meeting notes and all Board members were invited to attend.

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The Service Manager – Regeneration informed the Board that they will be invited to play a role in reviewing applications.

**Market Refurbishment**

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

**5. Communications & Engagement**

**Update on recent activity**

The Service Manager – Regeneration informed the Board that there was nothing further to report and a full update would be provided at the next meeting.

The Director – Nemiah and Leigh Means Business, Steven Tomlinson, requested that future public communications about Levelling Up Fund and other funding streams should provide clarity on the role of Leigh Town Board, as it does not have any direct control or governance over these projects and should not be linked to them.

Agreed:- The secretariat agreed to take this point offline and provide a position to the Board prior to the next meeting.

**Shaping future engagement programme**

The Chair informed the Board that the no announcements are expected from the Government until end October. The Chair suggested that the Board continue to meet monthly until further information and updates from Government are received.

Agreed:- The Chair is to work with Jo Platt MP to consider the Board composition.

**6. Reflections on the meeting**

The Board agreed that the meeting venue was liked, and the Chair advised that future meetings could be potentially located in the same venue.

**7. Any other business**

Jo Platt MP offered to provide an overview of what constituents are saying about the town (anonymised) as a future agenda item. The Chair suggested this should feature as a regular agenda item.

Agreed:- The Board agreed for an MP update to be added to future agendas.

The Chair thanked all Board members for their continued support and for the work they are doing for the town. The Chair encouraged all Board members to continue to promote their positive news stories to help change negative perceptions of the town

The meeting concluded at 11:40am