

Contact Officer: Nicola Sylvester

# Dewsbury Town Board

**Thursday 7th August 2025**

Present: Keith Ramsay (Chair)  
Councillor Graham Turner  
Councillor Nosheen Dad  
Chief Supt Jim Griffiths  
Anis Dadu  
Martin Walsh  
Sophie Johnson  
Anum Rehman  
Peter Mason  
Helen Rose  
Christine Fox  
Iqbal Mohamed

In attendance: Helen Jakes, Senior Communications Officer  
Michelle Illingworth, Project Officer, Dewsbury Town  
Investment Plan  
Joanne Bartholomew, Service Director, Development  
David Wildman, Service Director, Skills & Regeneration  
Alison Lowe, Deputy Mayor of Policing and Crime  
Isabel Whitworth, Interim Town Centre Strategic Lead

Observers: Richard Butterfield, Historic England  
Andi Eccles

Apologies: Paul Burnett  
Fara Butt  
Charlie Dunn  
Palvinder Singh

- 1 Membership of Dewsbury Neighbourhood Board**  
Apologies were received on behalf of Paul Burnett, Fara Butt, Charlie Dunn and Palvinder Singh.

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### 2 Declaration of Interests

Keith Ramsay, Sophie Johnson, and Martin Walsh declared an interest as a shareholder of the Arcade.

Anis Dadu and Peter Mason declared an interest as a director of the Arcade in item 12 and refrained from voting.

### 3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025 be approved as a correct record.

Iqbal Mohammed, Member of Parliament, requested information as to when public questions and answers would be uploaded onto the frequently asked question page on Dewsbury Neighbourhoods Website.

It was noted that the footfall data was still in progress and would be added to the Dewsbury Neighbourhood website by the end of September 2025, officers suggested that an action tracker be created and updated after each Board meeting.

### 4 Admission of the Public

All items were considered in public.

### 5 Public Question Time

Question from Gill Young:

“The Town Board’s own Terms of Reference refer to the requirements that the Board will plan ‘ongoing opportunities for engagement with the community to ensure communities are involved’ and ‘being mindful of different views. Will the Board publish its plans for meeting these requirements in its Terms of Reference, its monitoring procedure, and its process for assessing performance.”

A response was provided by the Chair.

Question from Bruce Bird

“Given that the majority of the community is confused about the role of the Board will the Chair arrange for Section 7 of the new Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Board reflect the government's intentions and provide a short, succinct answer to the public's question of: What does the Board do?”

And will the Chair ensure that his answer is accurately recorded in the minutes?”

A response was provided by the Chair.

Question from Bruce Bird

“How does the Chair intent to mark the performance after 4 years of Chair on community engagement which has limited and prevented procedures by the government causing confusion to the community and conflicts with the Board.“

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A response to be provided in writing by the Chair.

### 6 **Deputations/Petitions**

The Board received a deputation from Mr Bruce Bird, on behalf of the community, in regard to public questions and answers being recorded in full in minutes.

A response was provided by the Chair.

### 7 **Chairs Update**

The Chair advised the Board that Sophie Johnson had been appointed as Chair of the Board, both Keith and Sophie would spend some time together whilst handing over and will attend briefings from Officers.

The Chair explained that in the four years he had chaired the Board, he had worked with a number of experienced people with great skills and was pleased to see the many projects were coming to fruition. The Chair personally thanked Board Members, Kirklees Officers including the Governance Officers and Regeneration Officers for the great work they had undertaken.

The Chair welcomed Cllr Dad, who was appointed as a Board Member at the last meeting and proposed to appoint Jackie Ramsay and Andi Eccles as Board Members.

Councillor Graham Turner thanked the Chair for his commitment to the Board over the last four years and wished him all the best for the future.

**RESOLVED** – That the Chairs update be noted.

### 8 **Terms of Reference**

The Board received the updated Terms of Reference which reflected the plan for Neighbourhood guidance. David Wildman, Service Director for Skills and Regeneration advised that the Terms of Reference would be further updated in line with the regeneration plan.

During discussion, community engagement was raised as a concern as it was felt the Terms of reference did not capture this. The Board noted that the Terms of Reference was a work in progress and that there would be an opportunity at a future strategy day in the Autumn to work in a positive way to input on how the Board could communicate effectively with the community. All Board members were encouraged to attend the strategy day.

**RESOLVED-** That the Terms of Reference be agreed.

### 9 **Deputy Mayor of Policing and Crime update**

The Board received a verbal update from Alison Lowe, Deputy Mayor of Policing and Crime outlining the strategic priorities of the combined authority and thriving places in Dewsbury.

Ms Lowe advised that Tracy Brabin was the Mayor of West Yorkshire Combined Authority who was the legal Police and Crime Commissioner responsible for policing

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and crime who was able to delegate some legal responsibilities to Ms Lowe who undertook 95% of the role. Ms Lowe in her devolved role was responsible for community engagement, commissioning services and held the police fund. Ms Lowe also had a national role in the association of police and crime commissioners leading on race disparities, equality, and human rights, along with transparency and integrity.

For the strategic priorities of the Mayor of West Yorkshire, there was a legal plan developed to deliver real change no later than 2040 which included five missions. There were three key areas of focus the public asked to be prioritised with one being thriving places. Ms Lowe advised the Board that government policies were aligned with West Yorkshires with an uplift of neighbourhood policing which meant that a named police officer would be in place in all areas due to recruitment of one hundred police officers and forty-five specials. From 1<sup>st</sup> July to end September 2025 resources had been asked to focus on various town streets, with dedicated resources and initiatives working with local police and businesses around retail crime. The Board noted that out of the crime areas in Dewsbury, many areas had seen a reduction in crime within the last 12 months.

During discussion, the Board asked what message could be put out to the community due to recent murders in Dewsbury. Ms Lowe advised that it was rare a homicide happened in West Yorkshire and requested that residents lived their life as normal. The mayor had just launched her serious violence consultation and requested that residents were encouraged to complete to understand how serious violence affected the community. One life lost was one too many, by completing the consultation it would help shape the serious violence strategy that will work. With regards to drugs, the biggest threat in West Yorkshire was cannabis and cocaine with an increase in ketamine. Communicating with parents and education providers was key, as part of the solution was to give health education to youngsters whilst recognising vulnerability being part in organised criminal activity.

The Board requested that the crime figures for the last 12 months be shared with Board Members.

**RESOLVED-** That the update from the Deputy Mayor of Policing and Crime be noted.

### 10 **Plan for Neighbourhoods**

The Board received an update regarding the progress on the Plan for Neighbourhoods and outlined the timeline in the run up to submission to Government.

David Wildman, Service Director, Skills, and Regeneration advised the Board that in September 2023 the UK Government launched the Long- term plan for Towns naming Dewsbury as one of the towns to receive funding. Due to a number of changes in central government, in March 2025 the programme was re-branded as the Plan for Neighbourhoods with updated guidance issued.

£200k had been received in June 2025 following a submission to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government of Board confirmation and Boundary.

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The Board had agreed to allocate £66k of this funding to support engagement led events, setting up a business network, communications and Planning and resourcing for events. Engagement led events had started to be delivered with the Food Festival event being successful. The Arcade Group were planning their first opening event in early September 25, with an externally appointed position now in post supporting engagement led events.

The Board noted that workshops would take place between August and November 2025 with 6<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> November scheduled to finalise plans. A number of working groups had been created to develop interventions, Board Members were encouraged to engage in the working groups.

During discussion, it was requested that the outcomes of the working groups be shared with Board Members.

**RESOLVED-** That the update regarding the progress on the Plan for Neighbourhoods be noted.

### 11 **Active Travel Update**

The Board received a verbal update on active travel across Dewsbury. David Wildman, Service Director, Skills, and Regeneration advised that at the last Board meeting, information was requested on active travel. Active travel was an effective transport movement around the district and sat alongside the investment of public transport. Specific schemes involved Bond Street and a trial traffic order on corporation street.

The following items were expected in the near future:

- Transforming cities funding,
- Dewsbury Town Centre Cycling schemes
- Link between Dewsbury-Batley-Chidswell corridor.

Kirklees Communications team had created a connecting Kirklees page with all details on the Kirklees Councils website.

A transport strategy was currently in development with active travel being at the heart of that strategy, this strategy was to go to Kirklees Cabinet in September 25 for approval.

**RESOLVED-** That the Active Travel update be noted.

### 12 **Project Budget Reallocation**

The Board received a report which provided an update regarding progress on the plan to reallocate Town Deal Grant.

Michelle Illingworth, Project Officer, Dewsbury Town Investment Plan advised the Board that to maximise the full grant awarded to Dewsbury Town Deal Board by Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government (MHCLG) in line with the programme end point, it was proposed that £1,299,081 of the unspent Town Fund Grant be reallocated from three Town deal projects which were, Building Grant Revival Scheme, Creative Cultural Programme and Sustainable Transport Modes to

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support the Dewsbury Arcade, as a priority. The Dewsbury Arcade scheme was in construction and required additional funds due to multiple unforeseen issues to the historic fabric of the building. Any remaining unspent grant was proposed to be held to support the delivery of the Dewsbury Market and Town Park Scheme. The proposal to reallocate funding was in line with the MHCLG guidance issued in August 2024.

During discussion, the Board raised concern around the overspend and asked if there were any reasons why this was not uncovered in the survey. It was noted that due diligence had been done when the project first started, however, when the construction took place things uncovered were a lack of foundations and issues with the metal work in the roof. It was noted that £1,299,081 was the worst-case scenario for additional funds and had been set to ensure the Board was not asked for further funding. High level costs of the Arcade were requested to be shared with Board Members.

**RESOLVED** – That £1,299,081 of the unspent Town Fund Grant from the following projects be agreed to be reallocated to the Dewsbury Arcade Scheme.

- a) Building Grant Revival Scheme
- b) Creative Cultural Programme
- c) Sustainable Transport modes

Iqbal Mohammed, Member of Parliament requested that his decision to vote against this proposal be recorded.

### 13 Dewsbury Town Deal Project Updates

Board received a report updating the current position of the following Dewsbury projects outlined in the Town Investment Plan.

- The Arcade
- Civic Spaces and Memorial Gardens
- Construction Skills Village
- Sustainable Transport Modes
- Dewsbury Market and Urban Realm – Former Town Park
- Daisy Hill Neighbourhood
- Building Grant Revival

During discussion, the economic benefit of the paving being replaced in the public realm was questioned. It was recognised that the public requested good areas that they could sit and use, with the use of yorkshire stone which was durable and part of the design that Board had approved. Officers were asked to present costings of all projects on one page which was easily digested to the public.

**RESOLVED-** That the Dewsbury Town Deal Project update be noted.

### 14 AOB

The Board was advised that there was a Dewsbury Business Network to bring in business and investment to Dewsbury taking place on 11<sup>th</sup> September, all Board Members were invited to attend.

**RESOLVED-** That the Dewsbury Business Network date be noted.

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- 15**      **Date of Next Meeting**  
Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025  
Dewsbury Town Hall