

Dewsbury Town Board

Tel: 01484 221000

Please ask for: Nicola Sylvester

Email: nicola.sylvester@kirklees.gov.uk

Tuesday 18 March 2025

Notice of an Extraordinary Meeting

Dear Member

Dewsbury Town Board

The **Dewsbury Town Board** will meet in the **Reception Room - Town Hall, Dewsbury** at **12.45 pm** on **Wednesday 26 March 2025**.

The items which will be discussed are described in the agenda and there are reports attached which give more details.



Keith Ramsay
Chair

The Dewsbury Town Board members are:-

Member	Responsible For:	
Keith Ramsay	Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS	Chair
Councillor Graham Turner	Cabinet Member - Finance and Regeneration	Local Authority
Chief Supt Jim Griffiths	West Yorkshire Police	Central Government
Paul Burnett	Empire House – Targetfollow	Business Sector
Fara Butt	Shire Beds Ltd	Business Sector
Anis Dadu	Managing Partner, XYZ Law	Business Sector
Charlie Dunn	Director - Charles Neil Advisory Ltd	Business Sector
Natalie Liddle	Steering Group Member, The Arcade	Business Sector
Martin Walsh	Martin Walsh Associates	Business Sector
Sam Heaton	Charity Representative, Outlookers	Community Sector
Sophie Johnson	Director, Northfield Consulting	Community Sector & Deputy Chair
Anum Rehman	Youth Voice Champions Group	Community Sector
Peter Mason	Managing Director, Mood Developments	Developer Sector
Helen Rose	Director of External Relations, Kirklees College	Education Sector
Palvinder Singh	Principal and Chief Executive, Kirklees College	Education Sector
Christine Fox	Director of Customer and Community Service, Connect Housing	Housing Sector
Iqbal Mohamed	Member of Parliament	Central Government

Agenda

Reports or Explanatory Notes Attached

Pages

1: Membership of Dewsbury Town Board

To receive apologies for absence from Board Members who are unable to attend this meeting.

2: Minutes of Previous Meeting

1 - 8

To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 6th February 2025.

3: Declaration of Interests

Members will be asked to say if there are any items on the Agenda in which they have any disclosable pecuniary interests or any other interests, which may prevent them from participating in any discussion of the items or participating in any vote upon the items.

4: Admission of the Public

Most agenda items take place in public. This only changes where there is a need to consider exempt information, as contained at Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. You will be informed at this point which items are to be recommended for exclusion and to be resolved by the Board.

5: Public Question Time

The meeting will hear any questions from the general public.

Questions should be emailed to executive.governance@kirklees.gov.uk no later than 5:00pm Friday 21 March 2025 .

Members of the public can ask questions relating to the work of the Town Board or issues set out on this agenda.

6: Deputations/Petitions

The Board will receive any petitions and/or deputations from members of the public. A deputation is where up to five people can attend the meeting and make a presentation on some particular issue of concern. A member of the public can also submit a petition at the meeting relating to a matter on which the body has powers and responsibilities.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, Members of the Public must submit a deputation in writing, at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting and shall subsequently be notified if the deputation shall be heard. A maximum of four deputations shall be heard at any one meeting.

7: Acquisition of strategic property

9 - 10

To consider a report on acquisition of strategic property.

Contact: David Wildman, Acting Head of Town Centres,
Michelle Illingworth, Project Officer, Dewsbury Town
Investment
Plan.

8: Plan for Neighbourhoods

11 - 14

To consider a report for the Plan for Neighbourhoods.

Contact: David Wildman, Acting Head of Town Centres,
Michelle Illingworth, Project Officer, Dewsbury Town
Investment
Plan

9: AOB

To discuss any other business.

10: Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 1st May 2025

Location: Dewsbury Town Hall

For Terms of Reference please visit

<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/regeneration-and-development/pdf/dewsbury-town-board-terms-of-reference.pdf>

11: Exclusion of the Public

To resolve that under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

12. Acquisition of Strategic property

15 - 16

To consider exempt information in relation to Agenda item 7.

This page is intentionally left blank

Contact Officer: Nicola Sylvester

Dewsbury Town Board

Thursday 6th February 2025

Present: Keith Ramsay (Chair)
Iqbal Mohamed (MP)
Councillor Graham Turner
Chief Supt Jim Griffiths
Paul Burnett
Fara Butt
Charlie Dunn
Martin Walsh
Sophie Johnson
Anum Rehman
Peter Mason
Helen Rose
Christine Fox
Iqbal Mohamed
Rosalind Arden
Sam Heaton (Virtual)
Palvinder Singh (Virtual)

In attendance: Joanne Bartholomew, Kirklees Council
David Wildman, Kirklees Council
Thomas Fish, Kirklees Council
James Blamires, Kirklees Council
Andy Raleigh, Kirklees Council
Helen Jakes, Kirklees Council
Joanne Tansley, Kirklees Council
Martin Wood, Kirklees Council
Elisa Fielding, Kirklees Council
Michelle Illingworth, Kirklees Council

Apologies: Anis Dadu
Sue Baker

- 1 Membership of Dewsbury Town Board**
Apologies were received on behalf of Sue Baker. Rosalind Arden substituted on behalf of Anis Dadu.

2 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

**3 Minutes of Previous Meeting
RESOLVED –**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2024 be approved as a correct record.

4 Admission of the Public

All items were considered in public.

5 Public Question Time

Question from Gill Young:

- 1) I have raised before my personally perceived impact of the closing of the Leisure Centre on the level of footfall in the town. With more empty retail and business units now than at the start of the town improvement plan, could we have the base footfall data for 2021/22, at the start of the plan when the Leisure Centre was open, the regular 6 monthly assessments of progress against this base, with a review of the current measured position of the town's footfall after the interventions already committed and made under our town investment plan.

RESOLVED –

A response was provided by the Chair.

6 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

7 Chairs Update

The Chair provided an update on the following:

- A Strategy Day for Board Members to attend was being planned for March.
- Martin Wood, Head of Public Protection, was present to observe issues of safety and security in the centre of Dewsbury.
- A recent visit had been undertaken by Board Members to the Construction Skills Village, who commented on the positivity, commitment and enthusiasm of course tutors. Board Members had observed that the modular build was effective and that there had not been an overspend. It was noted that, given more resources, there could be opportunity to expand the project, to meet local need for the training provided.
- A visit for Board Members was to be arranged, to visit the Arcade which was nearing completion. The Board acknowledged that this was one of the first projects delivered by the Town Board.

RESOLVED –

That the Chair's Update be noted.

8 Board Member Update

The Board was advised that Councillor Cathy Scott had resigned from Dewsbury Town Board at the end of 2024. The Chair thanked Councillor Cathy Scott for the various roles she had undertaken, and the support she had given to the Board, and wished her well in her future endeavours. A replacement for Councillor Scott would be nominated by the Council and announced at the next Board meeting.

During discussion the Board considered comments made by Iqbal Mohamed (MP) as below:

- There were suggestions from the community that the impact of the closure of the Dewsbury Sports Centre should be considered in the Long-Term Plan.
- Mr Mohamed supported a proposal put forward by his constituents, that up to 30% of the Town Investment Plan funding could be repurposed for projects and activities which could include Dewsbury Sports Centre.
- Mr Mohamed had written to the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, The Chancellor, and the Prime Minister, to ask for the funds to reopen Dewsbury Sports Centre.
- If funding was not provided by Central Government, Dewsbury Town Board should consider at least funding £400,000 capital costs to reopen the dry side, and that the £1.13 million revenue costs may potentially be covered by membership fees and ad hoc user fees, depending on how those costs were calculated.
- Mr Mohamed advised that he may submit a proposal or motion to the Board to explore the funding around Dewsbury Sports Centre further.

It was agreed that Joanne Bartholemew, Kirklees Council, would provide the Board with a report outlining the reasons why Town Board funding could not be allocated to the reopening of Dewsbury Sports Centre, which would be shared with Board Members and the public. The Board was advised that Richard Thorpe from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had provided an update on how the funding could be allocated at the November meeting, and that the Kirklees Council Cabinet decision and Cabinet papers for Dewsbury Sports Centre were available on the Kirklees Council website and included details of all costs involved in reopening the dry side. The Board noted that the decision to close the Sports Centre had been taken by Kirklees Council, and that there was no capacity within the forthcoming budget to provide revenue or capital costs required for a re-opening. The Chair suggested that the matter could be discussed at the strategy meeting in March and Members of the Board were offered a Teams meeting with officers to understand the technicalities of the Dewsbury Sports Centre building.

The Board noted that the closure of Dewsbury Sports Centre could impact footfall in the Town Centre and agreed that measures to bring people into Dewsbury for leisure activity should be a topic for discussion at the strategy meeting, which was to include the possibility of repurposing existing buildings.

RESOLVED –

That the Board Member Update be noted.

9 Communication Update

The Board received an update from the Communications Working Group as below:

- Counter Context had been working on a schedule of social media posts for publication on a variety of social media platforms. Board Members were asked to share these posts on their social media.
- The Board were asked for feedback on what information they would like to see shared on social media, and a monthly request would be sent by Counter Context to prompt this feedback.
- James Blamires, Project Officer, had provided text for the frequently asked questions (FAQs) and facts page for the Dewsbury Town Board website, which had been reviewed by the working group.
- The working group had met with officers to review a number of options on how to spend the budget allocated at the last meeting of the Board, including how to best reach residents of Dewsbury and update them on the work of the Dewsbury Town Board.
- The working group's preferred options were advertisements on buses and bus stops, window vinyls, billboards and local radio, to reach as wide an audience as possible.
- Further costings on these options were to be provided at the next meeting of the working group.
- One third of the £12,500 budget for communications activity would be saved for later in the year.
- Translation costs of communications into community languages had been considered, as well as how to reach residents who did not access digital technology. These communication activities were being prioritised.

During discussion the Board noted that information regarding the Board's position on the Dewsbury Sports Centre would be provided on the Dewsbury Town Board website, and that the website would clarify how the public could ask further questions and engage with the work of Dewsbury Town Board. It was noted that there was the potential to use of WhatsApp as a channel of communication, however it was deemed to be unsuitable due to issues of data protection. The Communications Team invited further ideas from the Board on how to reach out to different groups within the community.

RESOLVED –

That the Communication Update be noted.

10 Long Term Plan Update

The Board received an update on the Long-Term Plan by David Wildman, Strategic Partnership Lead, which included the following key information:

Dewsbury Town Board - 6 February 2025

The updated guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government had not yet been published but was expected to be received by the end of the financial year. The guidance was expected to set out details of the following:

- The name of the plan, as it was unlikely to remain as the Long-Term Plan
- Funding, including values, timescale and capacity funding for 2025/26
- Priorities and Investment themes
- Requirements of the submission and content
- Timescales for submission

The Board were reminded of the five key areas identified for the Long-Term Plan during the engagement phase of 2023/24, which were:

- Bringing empty buildings and derelict spaces back into use including new homes
- Improving safety & security to tackle current issues and enable longer-term prevention
- Making the town more attractive
- Supporting businesses
- Providing more things to do including events, cultural programmes and sports for younger people

The Board were advised that £200,000 capacity funding was expected to be available for 2024/25, which would be allocated by Government to prepare for the delivery of capital and revenue interventions in 2025/26.

The Board recognised that more could be done with the funding. A number of Board Members and Council officers who worked in Dewsbury had completed a survey to identify priorities for this funding, and commonality had been found in the results of the two groups. Four of the top five priorities in both groups were:

- A Multi-disciplinary Safety and Security team
- Events
- Housing and Economic Action Plan
- Meanwhile-use Strategy

It was proposed that a plan for the capacity funding would be drawn up, for discussion at the next meeting.

RESOLVED –

That the Long-Term Plan Update be noted.

11

Project Update

Thomas Fish, Acting Head of Housing Growth at Kirklees Council, provided the Board with a presentation on the Dewsbury Living Town (Daisy Hill development).

Dewsbury Town Board - 6 February 2025

This included a retrospective look at the project, and the future of housing in and around Dewsbury Town Centre.

The presentation covered the following key points:

- The Dewsbury Blueprint outlined the ambition for greater numbers of people living in Dewsbury Town Centre to promote an associated increase in footfall and investment.
- The Daisy Hill Neighbourhood Project was one of nine projects funded by the Dewsbury Town Investment plan, to provide first steps towards creating 200 quality homes, attracting occupiers with disposable incomes to help support the town centre economy.
- A map of the Daisy Hill Neighbourhood showed the buildings owned and in the process of being acquired by Kirklees Council. It was a long-term strategy due to the process of acquiring a critical mass of properties.
- Fieldhouse Station apartments, opposite the Station, had now been redeveloped and was a catalyst project, setting a precedent in terms of high-quality apartments.
- Neil Jordan House was the next building to be sold as a residential development.
- Developers had indicated that Daisy Hill Neighbourhood was not a big enough site for investment.
- The Local Plan update provided further opportunities for wider town centre living opportunities.
- Riverside Strategic Housing Site was a larger scale investment opportunity, already in the Local Plan as a new community of 4,000 homes. south of Thornhill Lees / Ravensthorpe.
- A new Ravensthorpe train station was being built on the site as part of Trans-Pennine Route upgrade.
- A funding bid of £53 million to Homes England Brownfield Infrastructure Land Fund had been submitted, for the Riverside site, to fill the funding gap and create the infrastructure to open up the site.
- It was hoped that the site would go to market to secure a master developer, and an update on this to be brought to the Board in July.

Timescales for next steps were outlined:

During discussion the Board noted that the Council was looking for land for industrial or housing development to include in the Local Plan.

The Board raised the issue of communication about the long-term plans with owners of properties in the town centre so that they were fully informed. The Board was advised that this would part of the overall communications by Dewsbury Town Board as outlined in the Communications Update.

The Board questioned the amount of social and affordable housing that would be made available in the new developments and were advised that the baseline would be to meet the Local Plan targets for at least 20% affordable housing, and the planning process would support this.

In response to a question about the potential strain on infrastructure caused by extra homes, especially traffic on Huddersfield Road, the Board were advised that when the site was allocated for housing in 2019, evidence that had informed the Local Plan was used to assess the traffic impact across the whole district. West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) and Homes England funding had since been used to update that evidence. A requirement for significant investment in transport was expected, and this was being considered during conversations with WYCA about future strategic transport investment.

The Board discussed concerns over the Daisy Hill Neighbourhood whilst the process of building acquisition took place in terms of public health and safety. It was agreed that this would be a topic for discussion at the Strategy Day in March.

RESOLVED –

That the Project Update be noted.

12 AOB

The Board was advised that the Old Police Station in Dewsbury Town Centre would become vacant by the end of the year and would be put on the market. A discussion too place regarding ways in which this could create an opportunity for the key outcomes that the Town Board wanted to deliver. The Board noted the suggestion that a case be made around how differing decisions on the future building's use would impact on the outcomes for Dewsbury's economy and residents.

The Board discussed empty buildings in the Town Centre, particularly the Old Post Office, and it was suggested a position statement be provided on the ability of the Council to take action on derelict buildings. The Chair suggested that funding for enforcement could be considered by the Board.

RESOLVED –

That Any Other Business items be noted.

13 Date of Next Meeting

1st May 2025

Location: Dewsbury Town Hall

This page is intentionally left blank

Dewsbury Town Board | Extraordinary Meeting – 26 March 2025

Acquisition of strategic property

This is a public report with a private appendix.

Exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It was considered that the disclosure of the information would be contrary to confidential terms and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and providing greater openness and transparency in relation to public expenditure in the Council's decision making.

1.1 Background

It is considered that the acquisition and repair of a strategic property using Building Grant Revival Scheme (BGRS) funding is the best option to help safeguard investment in the town.

1.2 Progress

As requested by Board, discussions regarding the acquisition and repair of the building with MHCLG have taken place, they agreed this was within scope of the BGRS as the funds are intended to support the reinstatement of shop fronts to support wider regeneration and improve the image and appearance of the town centre.

As part of the council's assurance process the recommendation to negotiate with the owners for the purchase of the property was discussed at the Council's Town Centre Programme Board.

Negotiations with the owner have taken place and a purchase price has been agreed.

1.4 Capital Costs

It is proposed that the property is acquired, and a basic refurbishment is undertaken to ensure the building is repaired and made secure and watertight. Proposed works include: frontage render repair, shop front repair & repaint, window repair/replacement, ventilation for cellar, roof and gutter repair, plaster repair, and adding vinyl / artwork to the window to promote projects in the town. This does not include works to make the building useable in the short-term, but it suggested that forms part of future planning as noted in Section 1.6.

The estimated capital costs for these works are detailed in Private Appendix A, and it is proposed that the BGRS allocation is used to fund these works.

1.5 Revenue Costs

There would be annual revenue cost associated with the Council holding the property. It is anticipated this would be for a maximum of five years with a view to renovating and selling or leasing the space as part of future plans.

The estimated revenue costs are detailed in Private Appendix A, and it is proposed that the Plan for Neighbourhoods (previously Long-Term Plan for Towns) allocation is used to fund this.

1.6 Recommendations

It is recommended that Town Board:

1. Note the content of this Report
2. Confirm support for the acquisition and repair of the property using BGRS funds as part of the Town Deal allocation
3. Subject to Recommendation 2, confirm support for the use of Plan for Neighbourhoods revenue funds for annual holding costs
4. Subject to Recommendation 2 and 3, commit to further investment in the property as part of the Regeneration Plan (under Plan for Neighbourhoods fund) to facilitate the renovation and sale or lease of the property in the future.

Dewsbury Town Board | Extraordinary Meeting – 26 March 2025

Plan for Neighbourhoods

1.1 Background

On 4 March 2025 MHCLG confirmed further investment of up to £20m in Dewsbury as part of their Plan for Neighbourhoods, which builds on the previous administration's Long-Term Plan for Towns programme.

The Board, working with the local authority, will be responsible for producing a 10-year Regeneration Plan, setting out the activity that will be pursued to achieve the 3 strategic objectives of this programme, which are:

- thriving places
- stronger communities
- taking back control

Further details can be found here:

[Plan for Neighbourhoods: prospectus - GOV.UK](#)

[Plan for Neighbourhoods: governance and boundary guidance - GOV.UK](#)

Key points to note include:

- Establishing a new **Neighbourhood Board** (replacing the name for Dewsbury Town Board) by 22 April 2025
- Confirm **geographical boundary** by 22 April 2025
- The Board, working with the local authority, will be responsible for producing a 10-year **Regeneration Plan**, which is to be submitted by winter 2025, ready for agreement and funding to start in April 2026
- Following approval of Neighbourhood Board membership and place boundaries a further **£200,000 of capacity funding** will be released for the 25/26 financial year
- Up to **£20m grant funding** is available. The bulk of funding starting from 2028/2029 and approximately 25% revenue and 75% capital over the ten-year plan.
- There is a significant list of **pre-approved interventions** that can be applied for in regeneration plans, where it is evident they are needed and is a clear priority from the community.
- Further **community engagement** may be required, and previous consultative work should be built upon.

1.2 Neighbourhood Board and Place Boundary

The Council must confirm or reconfirm the Neighbourhood Board membership and place boundaries by 23:59pm on 22 April 2025.

Board members are asked to read the [new guidance on board membership](#) ahead of the board meeting so that any proposed changes can be discussed. The guidance confirms that places with a 'Town Board' set up to deliver the previous administration's Long-Term Plan

for Towns programme can fully retain that board and the agreed governance structure to deliver the new Plan for Neighbourhoods programme.

The default geographic boundary for each place is the built-up area as defined by the Office for National Statistics. This is the agreed geographic boundary as set out in the current Terms of Reference and shown below in Figure 1. Any requests to amend this boundary will need to be submitted to MHCLG. Board members are asked to consider whether they wish to alter the boundary.

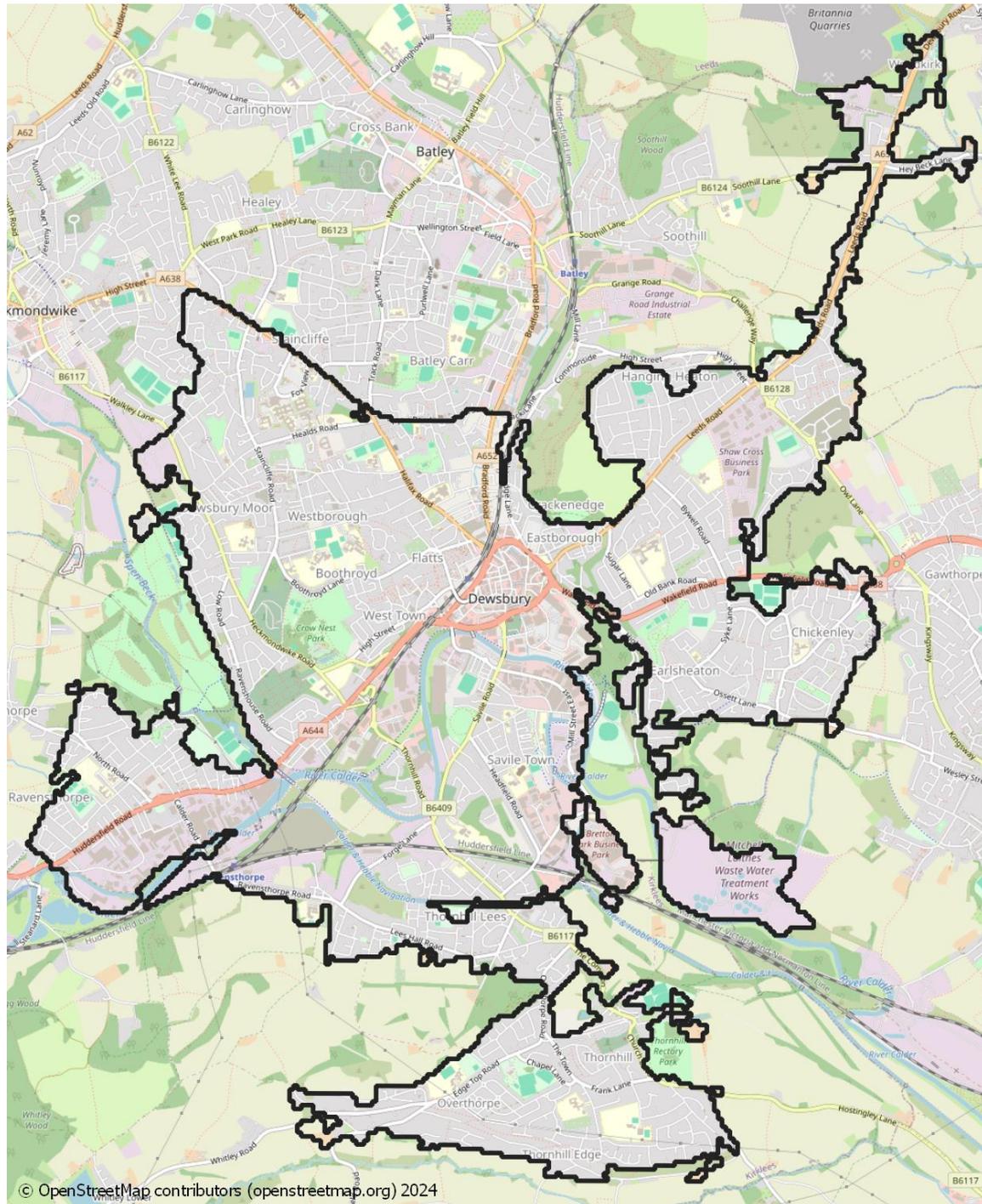


Figure 1: Geographic area for Dewsbury

The submission requirements by 22 April are as follows:

- confirmation of whether MHCLG signed off a previously agreed board and boundary
- board chair and member details (including Deputy and substitute details)
- a nominated contact for the Neighbourhood Board
- confirmation of the proposed geographical boundary
- supplementary documentation (for example, terms of reference and code of conduct)
- outline of capacity funding spends to date and plans for additional spending

1.3 Emerging priorities for 25/26 Revenue Funding

At the Board meeting on 6 February the potential priorities for capacity funding were discussed using feedback from a survey completed by Board members and Council officers. This identified a number of priorities including starting to establish a multi-disciplinary safety & security team; developing & delivering a programme of events; engaging with businesses; and developing housing and economic plans.

These priorities will need to be reviewed against the Plan for Neighbourhood guidance in terms of both the 3 strategic objectives, and the scope of the capacity funding which is intended to support:

- establishing and running the Neighbourhood Board
- performing community engagement
- developing Regeneration Plans
- securing advice and expertise
- ensuring capital and infrastructure interventions can hit the ground running
- any other activity that councils and boards consider will progress their plans

This and the Plan for Neighbourhoods will be discussed in more detail at the 1 May 2025 Board meeting, however, if the Board wish to use funding to support the development and delivery of events as part of community engagement plans, planning for those activities needs to start as soon as possible to ensure successful delivery.

A note related to Events & Engagement will be issued to Board members in advance of the 26 March meeting to enable a discussion to take place so that a decision can be made whether to progress investment in Events as part of a community engagement programme, using capacity funding.

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank