

Contact Officer: Sheila Dykes

# Dewsbury Town Board

**Thursday 12th February 2026**

Present: Sophie Johnson (Chair)  
Fara Butt  
Andi Eccles  
Christine Fox  
Chief Supt Jim Griffiths  
Peter Mason  
Iqbal Mohamed  
Jackie Ramsay  
Helen Rose  
Palvinder Singh  
Councillor Graham Turner  
Martin Walsh

In attendance: Joanne Bartholomew, Service Director, Development  
Sean Baylis, Estates Consultant to Kirklees College  
Thomas Fish, Acting Head of Town Centres  
Regeneration  
James Blamires, Project Officer  
Michelle Illingworth, Project Officer, Dewsbury Town  
Investment Plan  
Steven Plumstead, Director of Curriculum for  
Construction, Engineering and Land-based studies –  
Kirklees College  
Andy Raleigh, Project Manager, Town Centres  
Charlie Wells, Programme Manager (Freelance)  
David Wildman, Service Director, Skills & Regeneration

Observers: Richard Butterfield, Historic England: Yorkshire  
Partnerships Team

Apologies: Councillor Nosheen Dad  
Paul Burnett

**32 Membership of Dewsbury Neighbourhood Board**  
Apologies were received from Councillor Nosheen Dad and Paul Burnett.

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### 33 Declaration of Interests

Sophie Johnson, Andi Eccles, and Martin Walsh, declared an interest as shareholders in the agenda item relating to the Arcade Town Deal Project Update. The report was submitted to the Board for information.

Jackie Ramsay declared an interest as Member and Chair of the Arcade Group in the agenda item relating to the Arcade Town Deal Project Update. The report was submitted to the Board for information.

Peter Mason declared an interest as Member of the Arcade Group in the agenda item relating to the Arcade Town Deal Project Update. The report was submitted to the Board for information.

Palvinder Singh declared an interest as Principal and Chief Executive of Kirklees College, in the agenda item relating to the Construction Skills Village (Kirklees Build). The report was submitted to the Board for information.

Peter Mason declared an interest in the agenda item relating to the Neil Jordan House Update and did not participate in this item, notwithstanding that it was submitted to the Board for information only.

### 34 Minutes of Previous Meeting and Action Tracker

#### RESOLVED –

That, subject to the amendment of Minute 26 to read as below, the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025, be agreed as a correct record:

‘Jackie Ramsay reported that the food festival, Dewsbury-on-sea events, clothes swaps and workshops were bringing additional footfall into the town.’

The action tracker was noted.

### 35 Admission of the Public

Agenda Items 32-48 and 50-51 were considered in public session.

### 36 Public Question Time

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, Gill Young attended the meeting and asked the following question which they had submitted in writing:

“The 10 year Regeneration Plan for Dewsbury contains a number of snapshot statistics about Dewsbury. In order that the Neighbourhood Board, and members of the public, can see the effect of any actions taken under the Plan, would the Board consider publishing data on such things as footfall, shop openings/closures, crimes against people in the town, crime against property and works to buildings at its quarterly meetings.”

A response was provided by the Chair.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, Christine Cagna attended the meeting and asked the following question which they had submitted in writing:

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What is the purpose of [info@dewsburytownboard.co.uk](mailto:info@dewsburytownboard.co.uk)?

A response was provided by the Chair.

Christine Cagna asked a supplementary question regarding an email sent on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2025 to the Dewsbury Town Board which had not received a response. The Chair asked that the email be forwarded to her for a written response.

### 37 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

### 38 Chair's Update

The Chair gave the Board an update on the timeline of activity over the following months. These included:

- March 2026: Working groups would take place
- April 2026: Further working groups, and formal funding finalised.
- June 2026: Updated terms of reference to be agreed and published

### RESOLVED –

That the Chair's update be noted.

### 39 Dewsbury Arts & Culture, Strategic Thinking - Pride in Place

Charlie Wells, Arts and Creative Producer updated the Board on Dewsbury Arts and Culture, Strategic Thinking, Pride in Place. A vision for Arts and Development Plans 2026 – 2033 was presented, with key themes being:

- Legacy – Previous projects such as Creative Town and Taking the Lead had engaged over 26,000 residents of Dewsbury and future projects would build on this success.
- Consistency – Communication would be embedded and it was hoped there would be capital funding within the events budget to support infrastructure. Specialist roles would be needed to deliver the vision of a multi-year programme. Existing arts venues such as Shove it Studios and theatre venues would be utilised and a bi-weekly Arts Trail was in development.
- Engagement – perception was a challenge, and advocates would be valuable in terms of positive communication, particularly within the Town Centre (eg: The Arcade) and encouraging ownership from local people.
- Partnership – links existed and would be built upon with enthusiastic partners eg: Woven, The Children's Art School.

Opportunities for external investment through other funding streams would be widened by partnership working, as multi-partner bids could be made for larger strategic funding such as from the Arts Council. Collaborative working would also help develop confidence in the development and submission of bids.

Outputs included:

- Bi-monthly Arts Trail (6 events per year) inc. 1–2 art commissions per cycle.
- 2 major free family friendly events delivered annually.
- Annual Food Festival with decreasing public subsidy.
- Collaboration frameworks for venues and creatives.

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- Branding, maps, digital assets for cultural tourism including a 'good news' site.
- Strengthened creative businesses (music, art, makers).

Charlie Wells outlined the short term (1-4 years) and medium term (5-9 years) outcomes which would lead to the following long-term impact for Dewsbury by 2033:

- Dewsbury as a recognised cultural destination.
- A thriving day-to-evening cultural economy in the town centre.
- Strong, resilient creative organisations leading their own growth.
- Regeneration supported by culture: improved wellbeing, pride, investment, footfall, and business vitality.
- A self-sustaining creative ecosystem embedded in the town.

During discussion of the item, the Board noted that there would be £50,000 available next year for the activity, which they felt may need to be focused on narrow objectives to achieve the biggest impact. The Board suggested that a unique selling point for Dewsbury may be useful, that funding should be front-loaded and that match funding be sought. A suggestion was also made that a map of arts venues be created to provide a visual guide to the arts in Dewsbury, as had been created in other towns. The success of events such as the Food Festival and Dewsbury on Sea was noted and that these should be undertaken again.

The Board suggested that engagement be made with traditionally excluded residents such as disabled residents or parents with young children, and that business be approached for their support in engagement activities.

Charlie Wells noted the suggestions and informed the Board that there would be a "good news site" for positive communication.

### **RESOLVED –**

That the update in respect of Dewsbury Arts and Culture, Strategic Thinking – Pride in Place be noted.

## **40 Pride in Place Update**

James Blamires, Project Officer, updated the Board on the latest position of the Pride in Place programme for Dewsbury.

The Board were informed that since the last Board meeting Dewsbury's Regeneration Plan had been submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 27 November 2025. Receipt had been acknowledged and the plan had successfully passed the government's initial triage stage. In early January 2026, information and updates requested by MHCLG had been submitted and a final approval outcome was expected by no later than the end of March 2026.

James Blamires also informed the Board that intervention development, monitoring frameworks, and evaluation models were being drafted so that project activity could commence quickly after funding was released in April 2026.

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A refreshed set of Working Groups were being established to ensure the Pride in Place programme remained community led. The 4-year Investment Plan emphasised Board led thematic working groups shaping local priorities.

The Working Groups would:

- Lead the next phase of detailed intervention design.
- Shape delivery plans and identify Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and success measures.
- Ensure continued alignment with community priorities and feedback.

Each working group would be chaired by a Board member and supported by a range of key stakeholders drawn from a range of expertise, experience and community insight.

The Working Groups were focused on:

- Safety & Security
- Place (Redeveloping Underused Sites)
- Creativity & Cultural Events / Creative Economy
- Business Support

During discussion the Board requested that a list of working group members be drawn up and made available to the public. In answer to a question on which working groups most needed additional members, the Board were informed that the Business Support Working Group needed the most input. The Board were asked to consider recommending additional members for the working groups. Governance arrangements for the groups were being considered and an update would be brought to the Board.

It was proposed that details of opportunities to take part in Pride in Place network/engagement events be shared with Board members and suggested that an update be provided in respect of communications, including information on the numbers of social media posts and the level of engagement with these.

### **RESOLVED –**

That the Pride in Place Update be noted.

**41**

### **Construction Skills Village (Kirklees Build)**

Steven Plumstead and Sean Bayliss, Kirklees College, presented an update on the Construction Skills Village to identify how Kirklees College could deliver on the objectives of the Dewsbury Town Board funding to increase constructions skills training in Dewsbury.

In 2024 initial provision was established on site to deliver Multiskills, Joinery, Level 1 Plumbing and Level 1 Electrical through external cabins and some minor internal reconfiguration, but to expand the provision, additional work was required. It was proposed that refurbishment of areas within Springfield Sixth Form, and a new build onsite, would be the best option for delivering projected growth in the curriculum.

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The curriculum would be expanded, with the introduction of Level 2 Plumbing, Level 2 Electrical and Level 1 Joinery in 2026/27, and Level 1s in Brickwork, Plastering and Painting and Decorating, and Groundworks in 2027/28.

The initial phase would be completed during the summer closure in 2026. The second phase involved the new build construction of a 538m<sup>2</sup> facility over two storeys with construction learning areas on the ground floor and classrooms to the first floor. These works would be completed in 2027 following planning and design in 2026. Indicative costs and timelines were provided for the consideration of the Board.

The Board acknowledged the legacy of the initial project, welcoming the growth from temporary modular units to College provision, and the benefits of partnership working between the Board, Kirklees College and Kirklees Council was noted. In answer to a question the Board was informed that the provision would be slightly smaller than that available in Huddersfield, however the provision in Leeds was at capacity, and so additional provision was welcomed and necessary. Students had been able to observe the specialist work involved in the refurbishment of the Arcade, gaining valuable heritage skills, which was a rare opportunity. It was noted that, despite challenges nationally, recruitment of tutors was not an issue.

### **RESOLVED –**

That the update in respect of the Construction Skills Village (Kirklees Build) be noted.

#### **42 Neil Jordan House Update**

Thomas Fish, Acting Head of Town Centre Regeneration, presented a report on Neil Jordan House to inform Board members of current progress.

The Board were reminded that Neil Jordan House was a Grade II Listed former station master's house; a two-storey stone building with a pitched and hipped blue slate covered roof incorporating ornate carved feature stonework. It had been used as office accommodation and occupied a prominent position fronting Dewsbury Ring Road (A638) at its junction with Wellington Road. The property was positioned opposite Dewsbury Railway Station.

After soft market testing in 2023 and 2024 showed limited interest, the property had been marketed for sale in April 2025. Since then:

- Three cash offers for business/office use had been received.
- Three parties have expressed interest in residential conversion, with one formal proposal currently under evaluation by Cushman & Wakefield.
- Registered Providers of affordable housing had confirmed they were not currently interested in a purchase or undertaking conversion projects.

Neil Jordan House was a key heritage asset in Dewsbury town centre. Its redevelopment supported the Dewsbury Blueprint and Kirklees regeneration aims. The transformation of Field House (Station Apartments), directly opposite, demonstrated the positive impact and viability of similar schemes.

Risks if the property were to remain unsold were:

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- Ongoing holding costs (security and maintenance).
- Further deterioration leading to higher future repair costs.
- Increased risk of anti-social behaviour, vandalism, and break-ins, impacting town centre safety and perception.

An update would be submitted to the next Dewsbury Neighbourhood Board meeting about the proposal currently being assessed by Cushman and Wakefield

Assuming the development progressed further, the preference of the Council was currently Development Partnering via Procurement Process. This would involve the development partner entering an option agreement with the Council and obtaining the relevant planning consent before entering a Building Lease for the duration of construction. Finally the freehold would be transferred to them; this enabled greater control over delivery but would require more Council resources.

During discussion the Board were informed that the site had been purchased in 2022 as part of the Daisy Hill Neighbourhood Project regeneration scheme, a decision which had been made by the Board after robust discussion, taking into account the risks of both acquiring and not acquiring the property. It had been understood at the time that the property may have to be sold, but that this would allow a level of control to be retained in respect of when, and the standard to which, the property would be redeveloped.

### **RESOLVED –**

That the update in respect of Neil Jordan House be noted.

43

### **Arcade Town Deal Project - Update**

Andy Raleigh, Strategic Partnership Lead, Town Centres, presented an update on The Arcade project. Scaffolding had now been removed, and apprentices from Kirklees College had been given the opportunity to work with a specialist stonework team from York. Stages of the project completed recently included the feature glazed and slate roofs to the central arcade, lift shaft masonry, the removal of first-floor internal render and the plastering of the event space.

Lime rendering had commenced and new external shop fronts were in manufacture. The partitioning of units and plastering was underway, as was the internal shop fronts and stone plinth installation.

Forthcoming Dewsbury Arcade dates:

- Contract Completion date - 1st April 2026
- William Birch programme date - 2nd June 2026
- Arcade Group soft launch with summer food and drink event - June/July 2026
- Grand reopening - September 2026

In answer to a question, the Board were informed that the glazing did not include solar shading, as the building was listed and limited to clear glass. A walk-round the Arcade for Board Members could be organised prior to the next Board meeting.

### **RESOLVED –**

That the update in respect of The Arcade Town Deal Project be noted.

**44 Reallocation of Town Fund Grant**

Andy Raleigh, Strategic Partnership Lead – Town Centres, provided an update to the Board regarding progress on the plan to reallocate Town Deal Grant.

The Board were invited to note the contents of this report and to approve the recommendations to reallocate Town Fund grant to support the Dewsbury Market and Town Park scheme.

The background to the decision was set out; Dewsbury's Town Investment Plan (TIP) had been submitted in January 2021 following agreement from Cabinet and the Dewsbury Town Deal Board (DTDB). The TIP had been accepted, and the Council awarded £24.8m to deliver the plan.

To maximise the full grant awarded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in line with the programme end point, it was proposed that Town Fund Grant be reallocated from the following Town Deal projects:

- Building Grant Revival Scheme
- Creative Cultural Programme
- Sustainable Transport Modes

At the August 2025 meeting of the Town Board, a funding reallocation of £1,299,081 to the Dewsbury Arcade had been approved. It had been noted that remaining unallocated grant money would be held for use within the Dewsbury Market and Town Park scheme, with the detail of any reallocation being shared at a subsequent Dewsbury Neighbourhood Board.

It was now proposed that the unspent Town Fund Grant be reallocated to support the Dewsbury Market and Town Park scheme which was in procurement and had a forecast spend of £26,161,653, requiring £3,651,627 of additional funding to be added to the original budget of £22,510,026. The increase in scheme cost was due to inflation and project prolongation.

The additional budget would be met by reallocating the unspent Town Deal grant and Council match funding from other projects within the Town Deal Programme. These projects have either been paused or had been completed under budget.

It was recommended that all £1,087,318 of the unspent Town Deal grant be reallocated to the Dewsbury Market and Town Park scheme. The underspend of Council match funding would then be reallocated to meet the shortfall in the Market and Town Park budget in line with financial procedure rules and applied within the Town Deal Programme where required.

It was established during discussion that if the underspend was not reallocated, it may have to be returned. The Board raised examples of other market towns in the region that had refreshed their markets and had varying levels of success. Officers assured the Board that the Markets Team had extensively researched and learned from other projects and that the market would have a transformative impact on Dewsbury Town Centre.

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### **RESOLVED -**

- (1) That the report in relation to the proposed reallocation of Town Fund Grant be noted.
- (2) That the reallocation of £1,087,318 of unspent Town Deal Grant to support the Dewsbury Market and Town Park Scheme, as set out in Section 2 of the report, be approved.

### **45 Town Deal Project Update**

Michelle Illingworth, Project Officer, updated the Board on three of the Town Deal Projects, and advised that:

- Previous agenda items had provided updates on The Arcade and Kirklees Build.
- An update on Dewsbury Market would be brought to the next Board Meeting
- Better Spaces Civic Space Project was progressing but had been subject to delays bringing the completion date to the end of March.

A request to expand Appendix C was requested by Iqbal Mohammed to expand on the reallocation of grant funding that has previously been approved by Board.

### **RESOLVED -**

That the report providing an update in respect of the Town Deal Project be noted.

### **46 Board Member Updates**

Christine Fox, Communications Working Group, gave an update in respect of communications and producing pieces of work with Board members. It was also noted that the arrangement with Counter Context would conclude at the end of May 2026 and alternative options were being considered. It was suggested that communications be undertaken to celebrate the college improvements.

### **RESOLVED -**

That the updates from Board Members be noted.

### **47 Acquisition of Strategic Property**

Thomas Fish, Acting Head of Town Centres Regeneration, updated the Board with further information about the principle of the Council pursuing negotiations to acquire a strategic property within Dewsbury town centre. It was proposed that the Council use match funding allocated for the Town Investment Plan Daisy Hill Neighbourhood Project, to deliver part of the wider regeneration aims.

### **RESOLVED –**

That, in recognition of the strategic and wider regeneration benefits for the town, negotiation, acquisition and redevelopment of the key site in the town centre, as set out in the private appendix to the report, be supported.

### **48 Exclusion of the Public**

#### **RESOLVED –**

That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the agenda item 20 relating to the Acquisition of a Strategic Property (Minute 49 refers), on the grounds that it

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involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraph 3 (financial and business affairs) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information and providing greater openness and transparency in relation to public expenditure in the Council's decision making.

### **49 Acquisition of Strategic Property**

Exempt appendix in relation to agenda item 16.

#### **RESOLVED –**

That the Board noted the exempt information, which was an appendix to agenda item 16.

### **50 Any Other Business**

There were no other items of business.

### **51 Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2026 at Dewsbury Town Hall.