

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 13th November 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Deputy Leader

SUBJECT: Plan for Neighbourhoods Fund, Runcorn

WARD(S) Runcorn Wards

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Plan for Neighbourhoods (PfN) report presented in July 2025. It will be accompanied by a presentation from the consultancy Hope Street Strategy Company who are drafting the Vision and Regeneration Plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board note the update and associated presentation.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In the 2024 Spring budget the then Government announced Phase 2 of their Long-Term Plan for Towns (LTPT) programme which identified Runcorn as one of 20 additional towns across the country which would benefit from an allocation of £19.5m to invest over a 10-year period in local priorities.
- 3.2 Selection for the funding allocation was undertaken by then Government according to the Levelling Up Needs Index which considered metrics covering skills, pay, productivity, and health, as well as the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).
- 3.3 In March 2025 the LTPT was renamed Plan for Neighbourhoods (PfN) by the new Government administration and the timeline for commencing delivery was pushed back to April 2026. The intention remains that the £19.5m funding (25% revenue/75% capital) over a 10-year period will provide long-term certainty to deliver a range of interventions. **A funding profile is provided at Appendix 1.**
- 3.4 These interventions have been updated under the following headings:
- Regeneration, High Streets, Heritage
 - Housing
 - Work, Productivity and Skills
 - Cohesion

- Health and Wellbeing
- Transport
- Safety and Security
- Education and Opportunity

- 3.5 A full list, including Sub-Interventions is provided at Appendix 2.
- 3.6 The list of interventions have been assessed as having a strong case for investment, value for money and benefit-to-cost ratio. Should the Board pursue these interventions, a business case will not be required, but a robust assessment process for determining which projects are taken forward will need to be developed. This will be undertaken by a sub-panel of the RTN Board alongside HBC officers. This currently consists of Dan Price (Police Crime Commissioner), Cllr Rosie Leck, Chris Bastock (Cultivate), Sally Yeoman (VCA), Andrew Darron (Groundwork) and a number of HBC Officers.
- 3.7 To access the funding Halton will need to produce a Regeneration Plan for the agreed area by 28th November 2025, along with a four-year investment plan. Hope Street Strategy Company have been employed to develop the Regeneration Plan and are working with HBC officers and the subgroup to produce this.
- 3.8 The funding will be devolved directly to Halton Borough Council. The Council will be the accountable body and will remain responsible for ensuring good use of public funds through the Programmes Office and the Section 151 officer.
- 3.9 MHCLG has directed that the name of the Board be revised to a Neighbourhood Board and that the Terms of Reference be updated to reflect this and this was ratified by the Board in April.
- 3.10 The updated arrangements include a further £200k capacity funding in 2025-26 and £150k in 2026-27 to undertake further consultation and feasibility work. The capacity funding is to support the Board's ability to engage the local community, to build the capacity of the Board and the local voluntary and community sector, to support the development of the Regeneration Plan or the technical elements of plan development and delivery. It can also be used towards the management costs and for branding and publicity activity.
- 3.11 Key roles and responsibilities in the delivery of the programme include:
 Officer lead – Director EEP
 Member lead – Deputy Leader
 Secretariat for Board – Programmes Office, HBC
 Monitoring and Compliance – Programmes Office, HBC
 Project Delivery – Regeneration Team, plus partners
 Project shortlist/decision-making – Sub-panel of Board/HBC officers

– see above.

Communications and Publicity, including Reconnecting Runcorn website - Vivid.

- 3.12 Board Membership: chairs should work with the local authority to consider the wider membership of the Neighbourhood Board, ensuring an inclusive and representative selection of people from across the local community.
- 3.13 The Board membership is currently representative of the above; a number of new members were invited to join the Board when the Long Term Plan for Towns was originally announced; **a full list of Board Members is included at Appendix 3.**
- 3.14 Document development and Timelines:
- 3.15 A Regeneration Plan must be submitted to HMCLG by 28 November 2025. This Plan must be underpinned by evidence of engagement to reflect local investment priorities for the short, medium and long-term. The plan must be reviewed and approved by the Neighbourhood Board. The Chief Finance officer must also review the plan, however there is no requirement by MHCLG for sign off by elected members. The Combined Authority and MP also need to be consulted during the development of the plan.
- 3.16 The programme will be divided into 3 investment periods with a formalised progress review at the end of each investment period. These periods are:
 - Period 1 financial year 2026/27 to financial year 2029/30 (4 years)
 - Period 2 financial year 2030/31 to financial year 2032/33 (3 years)
 - Period 3 financial year 2033/34 to financial year 2035/36 (3 years)
- 3.17 Each period will have an investment plan developed in consultation with the community. This will detail the priorities and the interventions that the Board in consultation with the community wishes to pursue and how these fit with the delivery of the 10 year vision as well as outline the funding spend. Boards are strongly encouraged to explore opportunities to access additional funding.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As reported at the Executive Board in July 2025, the potential significant investment described in this report will align with the Council's strategic policies contained in the Local Plan, the Mersey Gateway Plus Regeneration Strategy, The Cultural Strategy and the Local Transport Plan.
- 4.2 These strategic documents are supported at a more detailed level by documents that capture the Council's ambitions at a more focused scale, for example, the Runcorn Station Quarter

Masterplan, Runcorn Vision documents and The Runcorn Town Investment Plan.

Projects and initiatives to be presented in the Investment Plan are a culmination of a detailed consultation and engagement process which began over 12 months' ago where local people, groups and local Councillors have had an opportunity to share ideas for Runcorn Old Town to help shape where investment is made feeding into a sub-group of the Neighbourhood Board as outlined above.

In practical terms, an interactive website has been established, as well as drop in sessions which have ultimately helped the Council prioritise proposals that will have the greatest impact for the town.

4.3 The vision for Runcorn in the Town Investment Plan is building on our strong local economy and strategic location, we will reconnect the Old Town to Runcorn and the wider region so that it becomes an attractive and vibrant place to work, live in and to visit.

4.4 The ambition for the Runcorn Old Town area is:

- Build a stronger town centre.
- Improve linkages, accessibility and movement.
- Utilise assets, waterways, culture and heritage.
- Grow the residential offer.
- Realise the full potential of the mainline station and
- Connectivity to major cities.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Plan for Neighbourhoods Regeneration Plan when submitted in November 2025, will cover an initial four-year period of investment. This Plan will be reviewed after that four year period and it may become necessary to prepare a revised plan.

5.2 When the initial four year plan is finalised, the financial implications will be clearer. If applicable as part of the project proposals, they will be asked what the future (on-going) service costs are and how they will be funded.

5.3 There is no match funding requirement; however, opportunities for drawing in additional funding should be considered to add value.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The Plan for Neighbourhoods interventions include Health and

Wellbeing and the programme of projects has the opportunity to support a range of activities which meet this theme to the benefit of local communities.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

The Plan for Neighbourhoods interventions include Work, Productivity and Skills and in the long-term there are strong prospects of new job creation as a result of the potential projects bought forward by this funding, in particular as the funding comprises 25% revenue.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The Plan for Neighbourhoods interventions include Education and Opportunity which could support a range of activities targeted at children and young people.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

There is no specific intervention covering inequality; however, there are a range of sub-interventions aimed at supporting those most in need, including tackling homelessness and poverty-related inequalities.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

There is no specific intervention covering environmental or climate change; however, a number of sub-interventions cover this area, including; creating and improving green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments in the local area, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces; support for non-domestic energy efficiency measures and decarbonisation in local businesses, high streets, and community infrastructure; provide healthy and climate-resilient homes support locally; reducing vehicle emissions.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The guiding principle for the Plan for Neighbourhoods funding programme is to meet local needs and attract further investment into the town. This will ensure social value through place making and job creation and support existing businesses and will proactively support the provision of social value outcomes. One of the interventions for funding is Regeneration, High Streets and Heritage.

In addition, the funding will be top sliced each year to provide a pot of grant funding that can be bid into by community groups and local residents.

7.0 Risk Analysis

7.1 With any funding and regeneration programme there are risks associated with uncertainty arising from various aspects of the process, such as securing further funding, material availability and

fluctuating prices, severe weather, securing regulatory consents, environmental factors and from unexpected issues when work starts (such as contamination, uncharted utilities) and delays in recruitment. These risks are impossible to eradicate and are dealt with by the inclusion of contingencies to draw upon. If any of these key risks arise in project delivery, the consequence usually translates into increased costs and extended programmes for completion of the works.

- 7.2 To mitigate these risks, detailed project planning and survey work is always undertaken.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 While the programme is foreseen to have significant and positive impact on people, the Plan for Neighbourhoods Regeneration Plan has not yet been developed. Equality and diversity implications will continue to be considered in the development of the Regeneration Plan, and it is likely that Equality Impact Assessments will be part of the delivery stage.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The development of the Regeneration Plan and the initial four year investment strategy will look to ensure that proposals make a positive contribution towards the Council's commitment to achieving "Net Zero" emissions, supporting the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

'None under the meaning of the Act.'

Appendix 1: Funding Profile

Appendix 2: Interventions and Sub-Interventions

Appendix 3: List of Board Members