

## Leigh Neighbourhood Board

6.00pm, 19 August 2025

### Present at the meeting:

Alex Grundy (Chair) - Owner - Café Stella  
 Jo Platt, MP for Leigh and Atherton  
 Councillor Yvonne Klieve, Lead Member for District Centres & Night Time Economy  
 Councillor Dane Anderton, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families  
 Councillor Keith Cunliffe, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health  
 Sam Davies – Greater Manchester Police (substitute for Danny O’Neil)  
 Dorothy Bowker, Founder and Trustee – The Bridge  
 Lloyd Jolley, Director – WJ Structures Ltd  
 Maxine Mealey, Wigan & Leigh College – Assistant Principal  
 Steven Tomlinson, Director – Nemiah and Leigh Means Business  
 Matt Collier, JJ Harrison PVC Products Ltd  
 Paul Costello, Leigh Spinners Mill / Leigh Preservation Trust  
 Danny Melling, Premier Education  
 Khaya, Youth Board Representative  
 Elena, Youth Board Representative  
 Natalie Hatton – Deputy Head – St John’s Primary School

### Apologies:

Adele Adjetey, Senior Policy and Partnerships Officer  
 David Proctor, Assistant Director – Planning and Regeneration  
 Liam Owens, Edge Hill University  
 Jo Francis, Lillies Cocktails & Small Plates  
 Danny O’Neil, GMP  
 Kevin Parker-Evans, Wigan, Wrightington & Leigh NHS Foundation Trust  
 [Dave Radley, DMR Training]  
 [Stewart McGarrie, Absolute Leigh Facebook Group]

### In Attendance:

Paul Blinkhorn, Constituency Support Officer  
 Melanie Lamb, Service Manager – Regeneration  
 Martin Ledson, Team Leader – Regeneration Strategy and Transformation  
 Joanne Berry, Neighbourhood Manager  
 Graeme Collinge, Genecon Consultants Ltd  
 John Rigby, Genecon Consultants Ltd

## 1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chair, Alex Grundy, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## 2. Minutes and actions from last meeting

The Service Manager – Regeneration reminded all Board members to ensure they have read and signed the terms of reference and completed and returned the declaration of interest form. Board members are also asked to send the Secretariat a photograph and paragraph about themselves.

*Leigh Neighbourhood Board (21.08.25)*

The Service Manager – Regeneration said that government have confirmed that the capacity funding can be used on pilot projects and small-scale projects.

The Chair also reminded Board members about the request from the previous meeting for ideas around safety and security and potential “quick-win” projects, and listed some ideas including:

- 1) Mobile CCTV units
- 2) Community safety hubs
- 3) Improved lighting / safe spaces
- 4) Knife and weapons amnesty – already actioned
- 5) Pub watch
- 6) Tackle broken signage and overflowing bins
- 7) Better access from town centre to bus station and Leigh Sports Village.
- 8) Any ideas emerging from the Youth Board

The Service Manager – Regeneration said that government has produced two pieces of work to support all PfN areas. The 1<sup>st</sup> is a data pack with baseline information across various indicators. The 2<sup>nd</sup> is results from engagement by Zen City commissioned by government to supplement engagement activity, this was recently circulated to Board members for their information.

The Genecon team provided an overview of key messages from both. Genecon highlighted potential flaws in the information – notably the data pack not always drawing from the most current sources and the small sample size for the survey. Genecon are preparing a bespoke dataset for Leigh which will cover a wider range of indicators and provide more effective to support the strategic narrative in the Regeneration Plan. It was noted that the engagement undertaken in Leigh last spring/summer (under LTPT) had a much larger sample size than the Zen City survey.

The Chair stated that in order to ensure that the Board make the most of the funding there is an opportunity for the Board to become constituted as a vehicle for acquiring land/property and generating income that can be reinvested in the regeneration of the town.

Jo Platt MP noted that good progress is being made regarding Leigh taking part in High Street Rental Auctions (HSRA) which is a new power available to local authorities to tackle long term vacant properties, and that this is being taken through Council’s Cabinet.

Paul Costello, Leigh Spinners Mill / Leigh Preservation Trust, noted that he has experience of various types of delivery vehicles including Community Interest Companies (CICs), Community Benefit Societies and Cooperatives. He noted that an existing vehicle, Leigh Community Benefit Society, is in existence (currently dormant) and this may be a suitable type of vehicle for the Board to consider.

Graham Collinge stated that there is mention (albeit currently limited) on Boards reconstituting as CICs in the government’s PfN guidance.

*Leigh Neighbourhood Board (21.08.25)***3. Workshop: Projects**

The Service Manager – Regeneration introduced the workshop exercises. She noted that background material provided to the Board to inform the workshop included project ideas generated under the previous guidance (LTPT) from a “call out” for projects through a public survey and from sessions with the LTPT Board. In addition, information has been collated in draft form to on existing activity under the 8 PfN themes, in order to assist the Board to consider potential gaps and ideas for activity which PfN could potentially support.

Board Members participated in two workshops where they were asked to consider whether previous project ideas are still valid, identify any gaps and also new ideas for projects/activity. Board Members were then asked to prioritise potential activity and also identify which themes they consider to be most important.

The workshop feedback is to be typed up, categorised and issued back to the Board before the next meeting.

Steve Tomlinson, Nemiah and Leigh Means Business, suggested that quick win/ low-cost projects could be kept on a separate list to make project selection easier.

Danny Melling, Premier Education, suggested that an overall “blueprint” for investment is required to help determine which projects should be taken forward. The Service Manager – Regeneration explained that this will be covered at the next Board meeting, which will take a step back and look the wider picture of where the Board want to be in 10 years’ time and how this will be shape the Regeneration Plan and the Investment Strategy.

The Chair suggested that some of the PfN funding should be used to attract external investment. This was also supported by Councillor Keith Cunliffe who stated that the funding should act as a “catalyst” for investment, noting that businesses could be asked what would encourage them to invest in Leigh. Graeme Collinge, Genecon, said that PfN funding could help to de-risk projects so the private sector can invest. Lloyd Jolley, WJ Structures, said that feasibility studies could provide a useful tool to encourage investment. Steve Tomlinson, Nemiah and Leigh Means Business, said that Leigh Means Business has been approached by several investors over the past few years who have chosen not to invest, so could provide some useful information on the barriers to investment.

Paul Costello and Steve Tomlinson offered to pursue this by consulting with Leigh Means Business and private investors they have had contact with to understand what the perceived barriers to investment are and how they could be overcome.

[Note: apologies from Cllr Anderton for remainder of the meeting]

**4. Financial Update**

The Service Manager – Regeneration provided an update on and expenditure to date and the current financial position.

*Leigh Neighbourhood Board (21.08.25)*

The Service Manager – Regeneration said that the Council has agreed to provide a secretariat role to the Board and one dedicated post is currently charged to PfN budget to support the Board, although wider support from the Council is provided. The Board (under LTPT) previously took a decision to appoint a full-time member of staff for 12 months to support the Board, which currently runs to October 2025. The Board are now asked to extend the post and consider alignment with the period of the Investment Plan to provide continuity.

Discussion took place on where the post will be based. The Service Manager – Regeneration stated that the post will be based at the Wigan Life Centre, but the post holder will be encouraged to work from Leigh as much as possible recognising the importance of building relationships and knowledge.

**Vote:** Extend the current post for a further 4 ½ years to align with the 4 year Investment Plan period (until 31 March 2030)

**Result:** Board members voted unanimously extend the current post for a further 4 ½ years (until 31 March 2030)

**Decision:** Funding for the post to be extended until 31 March 2030.

## **5. Overview of constituents' representations**

Jo Platt MP reported that:

- A litter pick by businesses on Bradshawgate on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2025 has been well received by public.
- There has been a downturn in reports of ASB problems, due to getting better at working together to highlight issues.
- Businesses have been pushing back against negativity on social media, as they are tired of town being talked down.

Sam Davies, Greater Manchester Police, said that an operation to target illegal use of e-bikes has been successful and will be made a regular activity. Positive comments have been received.

The Chair praised local police who quickly resolved a theft from his business premises.

Jo Berry, Neighbourhood Manager, said that there have been issues with Community and Street Hubs being used in an antisocial way. This has been resolved with the functionality being changed only to allow emergency calls.

## **6. Reflections on the meeting**

Not covered due to time constraints.

## **7. Any other business**

The Chair thanked all Board members for their attendance.

## **8. Next meetings**

*Leigh Neighbourhood Board (21.08.25)*

Monday 15 September, 6-8pm

Monday 13 October, 6-8pm

Monday 3 November, 6-8pm

The meeting concluded at 20.10pm