**Mansfield Place Board**

**Core Group Meeting**

**3rd April 2025**

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| Agenda Item No. |  |
| Presenting Organisation | Mansfield DC |
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**Plan for Neighbourhoods – Proposed Management and Capacity Funding**

**1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To propose an outline management structure for the Mansfield’s Plan for Neighbourhoods (PfN) and how the capacity funding would be used to support the programme’s operation and development.

1. **Background** 
   1. Under the Long Term Plan for Towns, an initial amount of capacity funding was released, prior to its suspension following the election. The PfN prospectus confirms the continued availability of further capacity funding to a maximum of £600,000, released in phases over the initial years to and including 2026/27 financial year.
   2. While the capacity funding looks generous, this will have to last the programme’s 10-year lifetime, offer additional capacity to Mansfield District Council (MDC) to resource the programme’s operation and accountable body functions, alongside resourcing the community engagement and participation aspects. This report offers the initial perspective on how the capacity funding may best support the programme’s delivery.
2. **Requirements**

3.1 The following outlines the key requirements of programme management, reflecting on the prospectus, the Council’s operation of its existing and previous externally funded programmes and good practice, and noting too that further guidance is anticipated on the required submission of a Regeneration Plan which may bring additional expectations.

* 1. As it stands, the key responsibilities and tasks associated with the PfN programme may be summarised as follows:
* Developing the Regeneration Plan (and Plans over the investment period), including collaboration with the Neighbourhood Board and wider stakeholders to draft a comprehensive plan addressing specific local needs and opportunities in line with the guidance.
* Engaging with the community / communities, including implementing strategies to involve the community and developing projects.
* Raising awareness including educating and supporting community groups and residents and facilitate proactive participation in and development of local initiatives.
* Building capacity including providing training and resources to local groups
* Facilitating programme management and reporting arrangements in line with community, partners and MHCLG expectations.
* Business case development, ensuring a satisfactory process is in in place given the accountable body and Neighbourhood Board responsibilities.
* Managing budgetary and financial management and reporting responsibilities.
* Project development and technical input to ensure project business cases are well-defined and deliverable.
* The accessing of support for the independent assessment and evaluation project business cases.
* Reporting to the Board and Council.

1. **Considerations**

4.1 In very broad terms, £600,000 over 10 years equates to £60,000 pa but this does not account for the likely peaks and troughs across the programme’s lifetime. The initial phase over the course of 2025/26 and the immediate successive years is a particularly intense period, given the establishment of the programme management functions; the community engagement / participation activities; the development of the Regeneration Plans and the independent assessment of project business cases. Capacity funding may be rolled over financial years to support this process.

* 1. The section on Community Engagement in the PfN Prospectus is arguably the most enhanced from the previous guidance. It looks to go beyond the usual consultation methods and actively engage with localities within the defined area. The focus on the most deprived areas within the defined area merits reflection on how that might best be enabled.
  2. This particular section and the best practice examples offered merit consideration with partners, not least Mansfield CVS. It is suggested that this offers an opportunity to reflect on how an active participation in the process and how capacity / ownership can be facilitated in communities in the longer term, acknowledging this places a stress on the capacity funding available.
  3. Some of the costs associated with individual projects may be capitalised eg fees, planning consents etc, minimising the impact on the capacity funding, but only following project business case approval. Costs will have to be met to ensure a due transparent process is followed for individual project appraisal and assessment to support decision-making.
  4. As with existing external funding programmes, some of the support may be offered via the Council in-kind, such as the overall financial management of the PfN. Place / Neighbourhood Board partners will likely be required to support the Board’s operations to ensure it acts within the expectations of the programme and the wider Deep Dive assurance requirements as referenced in a separate report to this meeting.

1. **Outline Proposals**

5.1 In this light, it is proposed that the capacity funding is front loaded over the initial first 4 years of the programme which will see (figures are indicative at this stage):

* The appointment of a **PfN Programme Co-ordinator**, employed by MDC under the Regeneration Manager at c.£40,000 pa under a fixed term 4 year contract, subject to renewal.
* **In kind support** via MDC for financial programme management, aspects of Board administration, marketing and communications and any associated legal / contractual requirements.
* The commissioning of a **Community Capacity and Engagement role**, based within the Mansfield CVS working collaboratively with neighbourhood based groups and the Place Board sub-group leads as set out within the original Long Term Vision, enhanced by the expectations within the PfN prospectus at c. £30,000 pa under a fixed term 4 year contract, subject to renewal. This will be supplemented by a community capacity development budget of c.£30k over 2025-27.
* **Specialist independent support** to be commissioned offering support for the development of the Regeneration Plans; business case development; independent assessment and appraisal; UK Subsidy Control compliance; due diligence requirements; audits; evaluations etc. at c.£150,000.
  1. It will be noted that the Place Board Manager role is supported from the PfN Capacity funding for an extended 6-month period to the maximum of £20,000 within 2025/26 with this being the subject of further discussion amongst the partners.

1. **Recommendation**

6.1 It is recommended that the Board considers the above outline proposals and endorses the approach set out in Section 5, being subject to refinement and a final proposal being offered to the Board for consideration.