**Mansfield Place Board**

**Core Group Meeting**

**3rd April 2025**

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| Agenda Item No.  |  |
| Presenting Organisation | Mansfield DC |
| Report Author and Contact Details  | Geoff George, Regeneration Managerggeorge@mansfield.gov.uk(01623) 463 283 |

**Plan for Neighbourhoods – Briefing Note**

**1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To offer the Core Group members an overview of the Plan for Neighbourhoods (PfN) Prospectus and the associated guidance.

**2 Background**

2.1 The 'Plan for Neighbourhoods' (PfN) is a £1.5 billion programme aimed at investing in 75 areas over the next decade. This long-term strategy seeks to address disparities by revitalising communities that have been left behind, ensuring equitable opportunities across the country.

2.2 This is long promised successor to the Long Term Plan for Towns (LTPT) and marks the moment when the new government has placed its mark on the programme which it previously confirmed as still being available at the Budget in November 2024, subject to a new Prospectus and guidance now received and can be reviewed [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-for-neighbourhoods-prospectus-and-tools#:~:text=%E2%80%8B%E2%80%8BThe%20prospectus%20sets,to%20invest%20in%20their%20priorities.).

2.3 The Prospectus includes much of what was in the previous guidance but crucially offers a distinct shift in tone and focus on its strategic aims. Importantly too, the prospectus references that specific additional pieces of guidance are awaited.

2.4 This briefing focuses on the main content; the key dates and timeline and offers a commentary on what are considered to be the key expectations and issues to review.

**3 Key Components**

3.1 Funding Allocation

* Up to £20 million allocated to each of the 75 selected areas over 10 years. In effect, this will mean £19.537M in total, broken down as follows:
	+ £3.99M revenue
	+ £14.936M capital
	+ £600,000 (revenue) capacity funding of which £250k has already been released under the previous LTPT programme, with an additional £350k referenced as available in 2025/26 and £150k in 2026/27.
* This confirms that the split of grant is 75% capital, and 25% revenue as previously referenced.
* While the allocation will be released in phases over the duration, flexibility is offered by for example, the ability to borrow against future grant, assuming the costs of borrowing can also be met.
* Actual grant will not be available until 2026/27 financial year but note the flexibility as reference above.

**4 Programme Objectives**

4.1 The opening statements and introduction to the Prospectus reflect an important shift from the LTPT. The focus is very much on communities, on disadvantage and deprivation and on building up not just community engagement but community capacity and leadership. Strong references are made throughout to previous initiatives including New Deal for Communities and neighbourhood renewal.

4.2 The prospectus confirms that every encouragement is given “…to focus the funding and interventions into those neighbourhoods and communities within their boundaries that have the greatest need.”

4.3 It will be noted that the boundary previously proposed under the LTPT remains at this stage but there is an opening to review that as referenced below.

4.4 The three strategic objectives, with what are suggested key messages from the Prospectus, are as follows

**Thriving places** – noting:

*“Every part of the UK deserves to have vibrant neighbourhoods and communities with busy high streets, a good range of local amenities, and high-quality physical infrastructure.” and*

*“Places should be able to design public services that are accessible, responsive, and tailored to local need. Investing in our young people’s futures and in preventative measures now will ease pressure on services over the longer-term.”*

**Stronger communities** – noting:

*“We want to empower boards to tackle the root causes, rebuild relationships, and restore a collective sense of belonging to their community, bringing people together so they can feel proud of their area and safe in their neighbourhood.” and*

*“Tackling this division will have a direct, positive impact on growth. Improving social capital is a virtuous circle across many areas of public life.”*

**Taking back control** – noting:

*“We will empower people to enter the workplace, workers to progress, and businesses to grow. This will in turn help kickstart local economic growth” and*

*“Empowered people will also have more of a say in how their local area is shaped, a central component of this programme and this government’s vision for communities.”*

**5 Governance**

5.1 The expectation is that **Neighbourhood Boards** are to be created. The Place (Town) Board was agreed as the vehicle to develop this under the LTPT – and as exists for the Towns Fund. There are some subtle messages as to expected changes and equally messages about not replacing or undermining existing arrangements.

5.2 It will be noted that separate additional guidance has been issued on this matter but within the Prospectus at least, the following points merit note:

* local people are expected to be at the centre of defining their town’s future, with responsibility for developing their Regeneration Plan – in partnership with the local authority - to deliver the strategic objectives of the programme.
* They should include “…residents, local businesses, grassroots campaigners, workplace representatives, faith, and community leaders and those with a deep connection to their area.” This suggests a widening brief and a ToR that reflects the requirements.

5.3 The “governance and boundary guidance” covers:

* accountable bodies and Neighbourhood Board roles and responsibilities
* governance structure requirements for Neighbourhood Boards
* the process and timelines to confirm their Neighbourhood Board arrangements and boundary
* geographical boundaries for places in receipt of funding
* the associated MHCLG review and approval process

5.4 Fundamentally, all Boards must confirm their proposed chair, membership and boundary by **22 April 2025**.

**6 Regeneration Plans**

6.1 Further guidance is promised, covering the content, form and submission timetable for Regeneration Plans but the following is reflected in the Prospectus:

* Neighbourhood Boards must work with local people and the local authority to draft a Regeneration Plan.
* Boards should work in partnership with their respective local authority and ensure EMCCA has been consulted.
* Boards will need to provide a detailed investment plan for the first 4-year investment period cycle, which will include the interventions the board would like to pursue over the period and how that activity delivers across the 3 strategic objectives.
* Boards will want the opportunity to iterate their proposals in response to community feedback, and establishing good governance and trust within the community takes time to build.
* The timeline is broad at this stage, confirming **Spring to Winter 2025** for the submission of Regeneration Plans to MHCLG for assessment and approval.

6.2 The Place Board developed a Vision and Investment Plan in readiness for the LTPT. While this can and will be reviewed in the light of the anticipated guidance, it offers the basis for progressing the Plan.

6.3 Important too; the list of **“pre-approved interventions”** has been greatly extended. The idea with this (published as a separate document) is that it offers a degree of autonomy such that, if that activity can be evidenced as a clear priority of the community, it can be pursued without the need to provide a lengthy business case to MHCLG.

6.4 The fact that so many interventions are included is a positive but also a challenge in that:

* As the accountable body with responsibility for managing the finances in line with its Financial Regulations and constitution, appropriate due diligence is required.
* Offering so many potential projects in this way may lead to increased expectations, especially as most of the interventions largely require revenue rather than capital funding which is already fixed.

**7 Community Engagement**

7.1 This section is arguably the most enhanced from LTPT. It looks to go beyond the usual consultation methods and actively engage with localities within the defined area. The focus on the most deprived area merits discussion within the defined (or to be redefined) area and how that might be enabled.

7.2 This section and the best practice examples offered merit consideration with partners, not least the MCVS. It is suggested that this offers an opportunity to reflect on active participation in the process and how capacity / ownership can be facilitated in the longer term.

**8 Wider Aspects**

8.1 The following aspects merit reference at this stage.

**Powers.** Accompanying the Prospectus is a list of wider powers that generally already exist but, in this context, could be used to maximise impact. It will be noted that many of these are exercised by the Council.

**Data Pack.** The LTP saw the production of a data pack to support the decision-making process. It is understood this is being refreshed and re-issued, but in part, relates to the next point.

**Area Definition.** Under the LTPT, an area was agreed with MHCLG essentially comprising the (tightly defined) built up area of Mansfield plus the contiguous areas of Forest Town and Mansfield Woodhouse. The first deadline date for submission looks to offer the opportunity to change this if agreed.

**Capacity / Capacity Funding.** Under the LTPT, some capacity funding was released, prior to the suspension following the election. While the Capacity Funding looks generous and will be enhanced up to the maximum of £600k, this will have to last the programme’s lifetime, offer additional capacity to MDC to resource the programme’s operation and resource the community engagement aspects.

8.2 Equally some business case developments will have to be met to ensure a due transparent process is followed for individual project development, appraisal and decision-making.

8.3 This will be scoped out to ensure it is suitably resourced and is the subject of a separate report.

**9 Summary Timeline and Requirements**

9.1 **22 April 2025:** Neighbourhood Boards to finalise membership and propose any boundary adjustments.

9.2 **Spring to Winter 2025:** Submission of Regeneration Plans to MHCLG for assessment and approval.

9.3 **From April 2026:** Release of programme delivery funding to local authorities, marking the commencement of the delivery phase.

1. **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Core Group notes the briefing, and sets itself a meeting week commencing 14th April to consider the finalisation of any revisions to the membership of the Neighbourhood Board, the confirmation of the Chair and any proposed boundary amendments prior to submission before the 22nd April deadline.