

## MINUTES & ACTIONS from Board meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> July 2025

### ATTENDEES

#### Board members:

Graham Williams  
Daniel Edwards  
Caroline Bennet  
Nigel Williams  
Dawn Roberts-McCabe  
Emily Reddy

Vice Chair  
Youth member, representative of Senedd Yr Ifanc  
Senedd Yr Ifanc, support to Youth members  
WCBC  
AVOW  
On behalf of Iolanda Banu - North East Wales Multicultural Hub  
On behalf of MP Andrew Ranger  
Member of Parliament for Wrexham  
Royal Welsh, British Army  
Police Crime Commissioner

Jess Tyrer  
MP Andrew Ranger  
Lt Col Nicholas Lock  
Andy Dunbobbin

### TECHNICAL ADVICE AND SUPPORT TO BOARD:

David Fitzsimon  
Killian Troy-O'Donovan  
Owen Davies  
Mike Corcoran

Wrexham County Borough Council  
Our Future  
Owen Davies Consulting  
Independent Researcher and Consultant

## 1. WELCOME, AND INTRODUCTIONS

Vice Chair, Graham Williams (GW) welcomed all present and introductions were made.

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## 2. ACTIONS AND UPDATES

Action updates were distributed within the agenda, prior to the meeting.

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## 3. BUDGET UPDATE

Led by Owen Davies (OD) the Board were presented with an update on the Board's finances.

See Slides 3-4 in the attached slide pack.

Key points highlighted during the presentation were as follows:

- The small changes are required to individual budget lines, since the original draft budget was approved.
- That the 'Activation Fund' originally allocated £90K, should be reduced to £50K. **APPROVED** by the board.
- That the funding allocated for City Board Programme Management should be increased to permit for the recruitment of a Programme Manager. **APPROVED** by the board.

### Action

- That the Board reallocate funds from 'Activation Fund' and 'Administration' to create funds for a Programme Manager.
- That the Board key budget and use of capacity funding under review in every board meeting.

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## 4. PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS PILOT AREA OPPORTUNITY

Killian Troy O'Donovan (KTOD) presented slides 5 – 10 and explained the opportunity for a 'Fund for Wrexham' to be established.

### Key points

- UK Government (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) are interested in how Neighbourhood Boards can do things in new and innovative ways.
- They have specific interest in:
  - a. How Neighbourhood Board funding is catalysing wider change?
  - b. How people across an area are involved in shaping their places?
  - c. How the money provided can go further?
- In response to this, there is an opportunity for a 'Fund for Wrexham' to be established – created and seed funded by the Wrexham City Board and topped up by wider funders.
- It could strategically fill gaps in current funding provision and be shaped / managed by local people / organisations, working together.
- It's unclear at present whether such a fund would qualify under UK Government's 'approved list of interventions', and this would require clarification from the Ministry.
- Work is underway at present in establishing a similar fund for Grimsby.

The group discussed the importance of linking to other existing and proposed funds to prevent fragmentation, reaching people who don't normally engage and ownership by the public. The Belonging Trust was mentioned having recently worked with 20 towns and cities plus a link to the Investment Zone, Local Growth Fund and Growth Deal would be beneficial. Ensuring communities were skilled and grant ready for funding applications was also discussed. The board **APPROVED** the recommendation to create a fund.

### Action

- KOTD to raise with the Ministry that Wrexham City Board would like to explore a 'Fund for Wrexham'.

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## 5. RECRUITMENT OF A WREXHAM CITY BOARD PROGRAMME MANAGER

Graham Williams (GW) presented slide 11 to the board, detailing an update regarding the recruitment of a Programme Manager.

### Key points

- A proposal was tabled with the Board by Wrexham University at their meeting on 2nd July.
- The proposal is to take the current 0.2FTE administration/coordination role (provided by the University) and to extend/amalgamate this into a 0.8FTE programme management role, on a 3-month rolling basis.
- The cost of this to the Wrexham City Board would be £12k/quarter (with review points build in).
- This role will enable the Board to maintain momentum.
- Thanks to Moss Garde on behalf of the Board for leading on the development of this proposal.

The board discussed the £12 cost which was explained to be based on the salary band for the profile of the candidate identified to take the work forward. Non staff costs such as office hire and equipment was confirmed to be covered within the £12k by the University. The board **APPROVED** moving forward with recruitment of the role.

### Action

- The board and Accountable body to liaise with Moss Garde/Wrexham University

## 6. YOUTH HUB UPDATE

OD provided the group with an update regarding the proposed development of a new 'Youth Hub / Youth Zone' for Wrexham (please see slides 12-15).

### Key points

- The any Youth Zone development must build on Wrexham's existing youth offer and complement wider provision.
- That a 'Wrexham Youth Zone Charity' would be established to operate any new Youth Zone facility, with the expectation that a range of local organisations would be represented on the charity's board.
- Overall (based on the OnSide Youth Zone Model) an estimated £8M capital investment would be required to construct and deliver a youth zone.
- This capital investment could be split 50/50 with OnSide (if a decision is made to partner with them), or an agreement could be reached over a different balance of upfront capital investment and longer-term revenue investment.
- The Youth Zone (again based on the OnSide Youth Zone model) would have a lively operating cost of approximately £1M per year.
- It would have a direct income generating potential which would make a contribution to this running cost (via room hire etc.) estimated to be approximately 10% of the overall running cost.
- Through the Youth Zone workshops facilitated by the Wrexham City Board, the concept/proposal is being explored and scrutinised by a range of local partners.
- The aim is to complete a business case and design brief for any Youth Zone development by October 2025, in alignment with the Wrexham City Board's wider timeline.
- A high-level site options appraisal is also ongoing, and again, a preferred site would need to be determined by October 2025.
- It is recommended that in addition to the Wrexham City Board committing funding to the development of a Youth Zone, that a further £1-£2M on additional investment into wider youth facilities across the city should be made.
- In summary – this is a challenging but clear pathway, and there is a strong consensus to date that this could be flagship project for Wrexham / the Wrexham City Board.

The board discussed site acquisition, and it was stated that in almost all cases, OnSide use a site acquired by the LA. The Board would need to choose a site in public ownership or look to acquire a private site. It was explained that the WCBC Officer team can provide a technical options appraisal, but not political input as to whether the Council would be willing to hand over any site in their ownership. A conversation was had on the £1m per year running cost, the potential use of the Fund to support youth organisations around the county and the effects of a Youth Zone/Hub on community safety and ASB levels. It was reinforced that young people should be central to engagement/consultation on this project.

### Action

- To move forward with the development of the business case / design brief / site options appraisal.

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## 7. PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS

OD presented the Board with an update on the ongoing development of the 'Plan for Neighbourhoods' submission being prepared for UK Government (slides 16-31).

## Key points

- The plan is still under development.
- It is a 10-year investment programme with 3 investment periods, and broadly speaking we are currently focused on the first four years (investment period 1).
- UK Government has outlined strategic objectives (thriving places, stronger communities, taking back control), intervention categories (e.g. cohesions, education, security etc.) and 40 pre-approved interventions which can be integrated into plans with minimal scrutiny. 'Off menu' interventions are permissible but would be subject to greater scrutiny.
- At this stage, details don't have to be provided for every project to be funded – it is expected that we will refine the plan through delivery.
- For Investment Period 1:
  - o £6.8M available.
  - o £0.15M of which is capacity funding capacity.
  - o £1.35M of which is for revenue investment.
  - o £5.31M of which is for capital investment.
- If the Board (for example) choose to pursue a Youth Zone as the centre piece of their plan, this would entail an approximate £4M capital investment in Investment Period 1, leaving £1.31m (approx.) of capital funding remaining. It is proposed that post opening, the Board would make a £300K/year contribution to a Youth Zone's £1M/year running costs (so contributions from a range of other sources would be required).
- £4M cap contribution with £300K rev from 2028 onwards with other contributors required.

The board discussed that £4M of board funding would lever £4M from OnSide and that £300k of revenue funding from the Board would lever £600-£700k from elsewhere. Conversations were had on engaging the community, facilitating quick wins, smaller projects around the county, use of the Youth Hub to benefit other age groups and communities.

## Action

- DF to discuss with WCBC Chief Finance Officer, options for funding in year 4- 10
- Continued development of the 'Youth Hub/Youth Zone' project as the heart of the first investment plan, complemented by wider investment in youth provision.

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## 8. AOB

It was agreed that the engagement item, originally scheduled for this meeting, would be provided in the form of an email update by Mike Corcoran.

Next meeting of the City Board is scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> August at 8am online.