



FOCUS ON FARNWORTH

Terms of Reference

Farnworth Neighbourhood Board

Introduction

- 1.1.1 Bolton has ambitious growth plans and the government has taken a series of actions in recent years to support towns to change the economic geography of the UK.
- 1.1.2 The release of funding streams will support the delivery of bold interventions to grow the UK's towns, devolving greater funding and empowering strong local leadership.
- 1.1.3 As part of the Pride in Place, 75 areas will receive £19.5 million of funding and support. The funding will give towns the space to build their vision for renewal, driven by the community and under the leadership of Neighbourhood Boards. The funds will ensure the focus on long-term strategic transformations as well as short-term improvements for Farnworth.
- 1.1.4 These initiatives work in tandem to create a holistic approach to the regeneration of Farnworth, addressing both immediate challenges and long-term sustainable growth and renewal to support the aspirations of our community.
- 1.1.5 These Terms of Reference set out how the Board operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that the Board operates efficiently, effectively and is both transparent and accountable.

2.0 The Role of the Neighbourhood Board

- 2.1.1 The Neighbourhood Board (NB) has been established to act as the central governing entity overseeing the plan for Pride of Place funding within Farnworth Town Centre. Aimed at driving long-term transformative change and the vehicle through which the vision and strategy for the town is defined.
- 2.1.2 The 'Board' will be a driver of positive change in Farnworth.
- 2.1.3 The Board will adopt the role of a senior strategic body working in partnership with Bolton Council as accountable body.
- 2.1.4 The Board will be the vehicle through which the vision for Farnworth are defined. It will produce an Investment Plan for Farnworth and it will oversee the delivery of projects funded by the plan. It will comment and provide input to the Bolton Towns Board in regard to Government regeneration funding programmes as far as they affect Farnworth.
- 2.1.5 The Board will exercise all its authorities and responsibilities in accordance with the law, the Council's Constitution and the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.1.6 The Board has several specific functions as set out in the Pride in Place Prospectus. The Board is not a legal entity, and its role is advisory. Its purpose is to work with Bolton Council, to which it is accountable, to:
- Oversee the implementation and delivery of funding allocated to Farnworth under the plans for neighbourhood.
 - Review any proposed major changes to projects (during the delivery phase).
 - Monitor and evaluate the progress of the implementation of projects including performance and risk as reported by Bolton Council.
 - Endorse the submission of performance and risk monitoring reports to Government.

These include (but not exclusively):

- i) Develop and agree an evidenced based Plan for Farnworth.
- ii) Develop a clear programme of interventions.
- iii) Coordinate resources and influence stakeholders.
- iv) To serve as an advisory function to Bolton Council.
- v) To identify project interfaces, opportunities and risks and develop collective plans, solutions and other responses as required.
- vi) To maintain an overview of the planning, development and delivery of development projects, providing a collective, co-ordinated response to issues, challenges and risks as appropriate.
- vii) To monitor and evaluate the delivery and impact of projects and report as required by the Council or Government department.
- viii) To provide regular updates to partner Committees, Boards and Government
- ix) To maintain the relationship with the Council as the accountable body for grant through the probity of decision making, management of funds and securing value for money.

3.0 The Board's Relationship with Bolton Council

- 3.1.1 The Board is not an incorporated body and Bolton Council will remain the accountable body for funding that has been received and any future funding that may be received by way of further funding, grants or contribution to feasibility studies that the Board may wish to commission.
- 3.1.2 Bolton Council is the accountable body for delivering the agreed projects subject to full business cases.
- 3.1.3 It is the duty of the Council's Section 151 Officer to assess each business case individually against the above requirements to confirm that projects are deliverable and are value for money or if indeed they do not meet these requirements.
- 3.1.4 On the advice of the Section 151 Officer, Bolton Council must approve full business cases and before progressing the projects. Bolton Council is responsible for:
- a. Developing a delivery team, delivery arrangements and agreements.
 - b. Ensuring that decisions are made by the board in accordance with good governance principles.
 - c. Ensuring transparency requirements are met – through publication of information on their website or a specific website.
 - d. Developing detailed business cases, agreed projects and undertaking any necessary feasibility studies.
 - e. Undertaking any required Environmental Impact Assessments or Public Sector Equality Duties.
 - f. Liaising with potential private investors in identified local projects and schemes
 - g. Ensuring that funding arrangements are appropriately signed off.
 - h. Monitoring and evaluating the delivery of individual projects and submitting regular monitoring reports as required.
 - i. Receiving and accounting for the funding allocations.
- 3.1.5 The Chief Executive will provide officer resources from the Council as necessary to enable the Board to carry out its duties.
- 3.1.6 At all times Bolton Council's Standing Orders for Contracts should be complied with.
- 3.1.7 The Board may make recommendations via the allocated Principal Project Officer by Bolton Council from time to time, if required.

4.0 The Neighbourhood Board's Composition

- 4.1.1 Mandatory requirements:
- a. An independent Chair
 - b. Member of Parliament - Local MP
 - c. Police Crime Commissioner (or senior representative).
 - d. Two Local Councillors, noting that total numbers of elected representatives should be limited to promote community leadership.
- 4.1.2 Other membership should be tailored to local context and is at the chair's discretion but may comprise of: Community Groups, Faith Groups, Local Charities, Neighbourhood Forums, Youth Groups, local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS), Local Businesses and Social Enterprises, Cultural, arts, heritage and sporting organisations and public agencies and anchor institutes.
- 4.1.3 The Board will include no less than three representatives from the private sector as Members to the Board.
- 4.1.4 The Board shall take overall responsibility for the strategy and operation of the Board and for its reporting arrangements and accountability.
- 4.1.5 Bolton Council will appoint a representative from Bolton Council as required from time to time. Bolton Council will appoint a Chair in consultation with the local MP and the Chair should hold a prominent role in the community, e.g. local community leader or local businessperson.
- 4.1.6 The Chair in consultation with Bolton Council may appoint a Vice- Chair. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will assume the responsibilities of the Chair.
- 4.1.7 At all times the Board must comprise a minimum of eight Members in order to proceed. Of those eight, at least two should be from each of the private sector and community/voluntary sector.
- 4.1.8 In appointing a person to be a Member, the Chair, in consultation with Board member must have regard to the desirability of appointing a person who has experience of, and has shown some capacity in, a matter relevant to the carrying-out of the Boards functions and must be satisfied that the person will have no financial or other interest likely to affect prejudicially the exercise of the person's functions as a Member.
- 4.1.9 Members may resign by serving notice on the Chair.
- 4.1.10 Members will agree to abide by the Principles of Public Life (Nolan principles) namely; selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership and Managing Public Money principles.
- 4.1.11 If the Chair resigns during the year, the Vice Chair will become Interim Chair. The Chair, in consultation with the Board, may determine the period for which he or she is or they are to hold office and may, in consultation with the Board, at any time remove him, her or them from office.
- 4.1.12 The Chair will have the power at any time to co-opt further members if and when an appropriate candidate becomes available.

- 4.1.13 Within 12 months the Board will aim to have a minimum female representation of 33% in line with Government recommendations.
- 4.1.14 A Board member shall cease to be a member if a:
- a. Member gives written notice to the Board of their resignation, to take effect on receipt by the Board of the notice of resignation.
 - b. Member is declared bankrupt, making of any arrangement or composition with his creditors, or liquidation, or in the case of an organisation, winding up, liquidation, dissolution or administration or anything analogous to any of the foregoing occurring in relation to a member.
 - c. Member ceases to have an office, a role, or the nature of the office or role held has materially changed, or ceasing to be employed by such organisation as entitles them to be a member.
 - d. If the role description as set out in the Board Member Role Description is not adhered to.
- 4.1.15 The membership of the Board will be refreshed at the end of a 4-year period cycle.
- 4.1.16 Sub-Groups of the Neighbourhood Board will be established to expedite a particular matter, which requires focused activity or where a more specialist membership is required. These would normally have a specific remit and period of operation to oversee or undertake a specific task, reporting directly to the Neighbourhood Board. Members of sub-groups will be bound by the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct.
- 4.1.17 The Local Authority Project Team will provide technical expertise, mentorship, and support to community and civic society groups. Their role is to enhance project implementation.
- 4.1.18 Bolton Council will provide administrative support to the Board and this will be subject to the Council's Standing Orders for Contracts.

5.0 Board Members' Duties

- 5.1.1 Board members have a responsibility to uphold high standards of integrity and probity. They should support the Chair in instilling the appropriate culture, values and behaviours in the boardroom and beyond.
- 5.1.2 Chair, Vice Chair and the Board will be bound by the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct.
- 5.1.3 Board members should take into account the views of other stakeholders, because these views may provide different perspectives on the Board and its performance.
- 5.1.4 The duties and responsibilities of a Board member are to:
- a. Attend meetings of the Board and to nominate an appropriate named alternative where attendance is not possible, subject to the prior agreement of the Chair and Bolton Council.
 - b. Reflect the agreed views of the Board and its members in all discussions with partners, stakeholders, government and its' agencies.
 - c. Support the Chair by leading on activities relevant to their knowledge and experience by representing the interests of the Board in meetings with partners, stakeholders, government and its' agencies.

- d. Actively develop an effective partnership.
- e. Contribute knowledge and expertise to the development of Farnworth.
- f. Support the development of a 10-year Investment Plan and business cases for funding.

5.1.5 The role of the Board Chair and Vice-Chair is to:

- a. Lead the Board in achieving its objectives, maintain an overview of activity, and champion and support partnership working.
- b. Ensure that decisions are made by the Board in accordance with good governance principles.

5.1.6 The Chair shall be invited by the Council in consultation with the MP and should be a respected figure in the community with an obvious passion for Farnworth.

6.0 Board Members' Conduct

6.1.1 Board members are expected to adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life, known as the Nolan Principles, as defined by the Committee for Standards in Public Life. They are:

- a. **Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
- b. **Integrity:** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- c. **Objectivity:** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- d. **Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- e. **Openness:** Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.
- f. **Honesty:** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- g. **Leadership:** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

- 6.1.2 Board members are obliged to declare any pecuniary interests which could give rise to a conflict of interest at the start of each meeting.
- 6.1.3 Guidance will be provided by Bolton Council's Monitoring Officer. When a declaration of pecuniary interest is made this will be included in the minutes of the meeting.

7.0 Conflicts of Interest

- 7.1.1 Bolton Council will maintain and publish on its website a Register of Board Member Interests.
- 7.1.2 The following provisions shall apply to all Board members including the Chair and Vice Chair:
- a. In the event that there is a conflict of interest the person so conflicted shall immediately declare the nature of the conflict or potential conflict and withdraw from any business where the conflict would be relevant.
 - b. Whenever a person has an interest in a matter to be discussed at a meeting the person concerned will not be:
 - entitled to remain present at the meeting during discussion of that matter
 - counted in the quorum for that part of the meeting
 - entitled to vote on the matter
 - c. The Board, Chair and Vice Chair, may at any time authorise a person to remain in the meeting whilst a matter in which they have or may have a conflict of interest is discussed, provided that the conflict of interest is declared and the person subject to the conflict of interest shall not be entitled to vote on the matter in any event, otherwise they shall be excluded from the meeting.

8.0 Declaration of Interests

- 8.1.1 Bolton Council shall provide guidance on:
- a. The financial and non-financial interests' individuals must declare
 - b. The process Board members must follow for declaring interests
 - c. The process for requesting an exemption.
- 8.1.2 Board members must then complete a declaration of interest form, which Bolton Council will hold.
- 8.1.3 Board members are responsible for declaring their interests before the Board considers any decision.
- 8.1.4 Bolton Council must record:
- a. Actions taken in response to any declared interest.
 - b. Any gifts or hospitality given to the Board or individual members.

9.0 Meetings

- 9.1.1 Board meetings will be held at least 4 times per year, but additional meetings may take place should the need arise. In the event of urgent items which cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting, the Chair can call an extraordinary meeting ensuring that the required notice of meeting is provided.
- 9.1.2 At least two weeks' notice will be given for holding a Board meeting and papers will be circulated five days in advance of the meeting taking place.
- 9.1.3 Meetings will be open to the public.
- 9.1.4 The Board via the secretariat role will be responsible for creating and maintaining a website that will publish agendas and minutes of Board meetings and other relevant information.
- 9.1.5 Each meeting shall be conducted in accordance with the Focus on Farnworth Board's Code of Conduct.
- 9.1.6 The administration for the Board and its meetings will be carried out by the secretariat function.

10.0 Agendas

- 10.1.1 The Board via the secretariat will publish on the Focus on Farnworth website copies of agendas and minutes that are open to public inspection at least 5 clear working days before each board meeting.
- 10.1.2 Minutes of meetings will be issued 10 working days after the meeting.
- 10.1.3 Any conflicts of interest reported to be included within the published minutes.

11.0 Voting

- 11.1.1 Decisions are expected to be reached by consensus but in the event that a vote is needed, a matter will be decided by a simple majority of those on the Board present and voting at that time.
- 11.1.2 The following conditions apply for votes to be taken:
 - a. Each Board member shall have one vote and decisions will be made on a show of hands.
 - b. Votes have to be cast in person (whether remotely on Teams or at a physical meeting) and proxy votes will not be accepted.
 - c. If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Chair or Vice Chair will have a second or casting vote.
- 11.1.3 If an urgent decision is required, which cannot be deferred until a subsequent meeting, then an extraordinary meeting can be arranged. If this is not practicable then the Chair in discussion with the Vice Chair, and Leader of the Council may take a decision jointly in consultation with the Chief Executive and is not required to be 'in person'. The decision must be reported to the next scheduled meeting of the Board.

12.0 Quorum

12.1.1 The quorum for board meetings is one quarter of the whole voting membership of the Focus on Farnworth Board and will have to be reconvened if it is not quorate. The quorum shall include a Bolton Council member and a Business/Community member.

13.0 Principles of Decision Making

The Board's recommendations must be made in accordance with the following principles:

- 13.1.1 Proportionality (meaning the action must be proportionate to the results to be achieved);
- 13.1.2 Due consultation (including the taking of relevant professional advice where appropriate);
- 13.1.3 Respect for human rights, equality and diversity;
- 13.1.4 Clarity of aims and desired outcomes;
- 13.1.5 Due consideration to be given to alternative options;
- 13.1.6 Due consideration to be given to constitutional requirements of, and adherence to, the statutory and legal framework within which Bolton Council operates.

14.0 Whistleblowing

14.1.1 The board will comply with the Whistleblowing policy of Bolton Council.

15.0 Complaints

15.1.1 The Board will comply with the complaints procedure of Bolton Council.

16.0 Publication Statement

16.1.1 Details of the following will be available on Focus on Farnworth Board website, Bolton Council's website or a specific website once published or in hard copy on request from Democratic Services:

- a. The structure of the board.
- b. Investment Plan.
- c. Board agenda in advance of the meeting.
- d. Minutes of meetings.

16.1.2 Please note that some of the information may be subject to being exempt or restricted from publication.

17.0 Review of Terms of Reference

17.1.1 It is recommended that these Terms of Reference are endorsed at the initial meeting of the Board and reviewed as necessary to take account of new or changed guidance.

17.1.2 A Director as a representative of Bolton Council has authority to approve the Terms of Reference, in consultation with the Chair of the Board and to change the Chair or Vice Chair of the Board in consultation with the local MP, if required.

18.0 Review and Dissolution of the Board

18.1.1 The Board will be reviewed from time to time in line with guidance received from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to the Plans for Neighbourhoods programme.

18.1.2 Dissolution of the Board will be considered and agreed by the Chief Executive of Bolton Council, in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair, Board members, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on achieving its objectives.