

## Focus on Farnworth Plan for Neighbourhoods Board Meeting

Farnworth Family Hub, King Street, Farnworth BL4 7AP

Friday 5 September 2025

### MINUTES

Present: John Bradbury, Carrie Riley, Helen Clayton, Cllr Paul Sanders, Janet Pollard, Inspector Nick Bonson, Mary Devenish, Yasmin Qureshi.

In attendance: Helen Bradbury, Karen Ingham, Cathy Palmer, Paul Whittingham, Clive Gibbon.

1. John welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies received from Shauna Morton, Carlene Kirton, Superintendent Stephen Malone, Cllr Susan Howarth, Nicola Robinson, Bethan Dearden, Vanessa Barlow, Claire Southern, Clare Jackson, Wendy Greenwood.

2. **Notification of any other business**

- Helen Clayton asked for discussion about a sub-group to participate in the development of the Farnworth Fund.
- Janet Pollard asked for future dates for the diary.

3. **Minutes of the meeting of 13 June 2025**

These were agreed as a true record except that HC reminded us that it is our aim to have the Farnworth Fund up and running to receive applications from 1 April 2026.

4. **Matters arising**

- a. Release of funds for Board Secretariat and Website was agreed at the end of August. Work has started on the website, and we are aiming to have something live by end of September. We need a photograph and short bio from each of the board members. **Action: Board members to send to secretariat as soon as possible to [helenbradbury@farnworthbaptist.org.uk](mailto:helenbradbury@farnworthbaptist.org.uk)**
- b. Role descriptor and terms of reference were circulated on 13 June.
- c. Board vacancies to be advertised once website and social media is up and running. Further discussion on board make up and recruitment to be on the agenda of the next meeting.
- d. Budget has been revised and is on the agenda. Procurement process has to be in line with Council policy and procedures – need to be clear on the process as a board. **Action: JP to provide a brief summary of requirements for board members.**
- e. Outline communications plan and visuals of proposed website and social media circulated in June – not received any comment so going ahead with these

5. **Updates from MHCLG**

Meeting Readouts from 7 July and 21 July were received. JB asked what was meant by “passporting funding is encouraged especially for community groups.” It was explained that this reflects the process we are using via the Farnworth Fund.

## 6. Grant Agreement

The grant agreement was received, and it was noted that the boundary changes proposed have been agreed by MHCLG and that JP would be the only local authority officer to serve on the board. The funding allocated is £19.5 million and board members were asked to refer to this figure in all communications with the public rather than the £20 million figure which was communicated via the online consultation.

## 7. Zencity Consultation Feedback and Next Steps

Helen Clayton had attended a workshop and brought a presentation to the board. A copy of the slides is appended to the minutes.

It was agreed that we need to map the comments from the public against the boards remit, indicating what will be addressed by current or future projects, what will be addressed by the board influencing other organisations, and which items are outside of the board's remit. **Action: JB and KI to agree responsibilities for this work.** Communication via the website and social media can then report – “you asked – we did”. Ongoing community engagement is a core expectation of the programme and HC suggested that community engagement be added to the plan as a ninth project.

Discussion took place about who is responsible for actioning the decisions of the board. The role of the principal project officer (KI) is to liaise and support, the secretariat is responsible for communication, website and social media, and board members may take responsibility for certain actions according to their skills, experience and availability. **Action: Further work on this will be done as part of the board development process.**

## 8. 10-Year Vision

CP presented the 10-year vision document. This will be a public document, and all board members need to own the contents. HC asked that the text be checked for readability.

Discussions took place regarding the long-term outcomes in *Section 4 – Strategic Case for Change*. The MHCLG datapack has been used for our baseline figures set out in the *Evidence of Need*. Questions were asked regarding how we would measure progress against these outcomes. Further datapacks are likely to be available during the course of the 10 years. Short-term qualitative measures will be needed to communicate success to the wider public. The Farnworth Community Alliance may have a part to play in the communication process. PS asked that the document make clear that these long-term outcomes are the responsibility of the board and other partner agencies, and that the measures will be both quantitative and qualitative.

In *Section 6 – Match Funding*, the final paragraph requires amendment as the Farnworth Fund will encourage co-funding, but it will not be an essential criterion.

Within *Section 7 - Community and Stakeholder Engagement* and *Section 8 – Governance* references to political parties should be amended to representation by councillors from each ward. Also, within *Section 8* the Farnworth Fund is not an extension to the Bolton Fund but complements the existing Bolton Fund using similar principles.

*Section 8: Assurance* needs to be renumbered as item 9. In the third paragraph the government department is MHCLG not DLUHC.

**Action: CP to make amendments.**

#### **9. 4 Year Plan including revised budget**

CP presented the 4-year plan.

The Rock Hall graphic needs to be replaced.

Within the playspace revival project this should provide additionality to any improvements and upgrades already planned. The ongoing maintenance would need to be agreed by the Council as there is no revenue allocation for this project.

Harper Green Playing Fields – further work is needed to determine whether this is a Council owned project or a joint venture with other anchor organisations. The land will remain council owned but may be leased to a service provider. There may be issues around subsidy control if third parties are involved which would require specialist advice. This may be common across the 75 PfN areas and so we should ask if MHCLG are doing any work in this regard.

A ninth project of community engagement needs to be added.

The budget was discussed. It was felt that the existing budget for community engagement is insufficient for the input that will be needed. It was suggested that a post would need to be created to engage with hard-to-reach people through one-to-one engagement on the doorstep. There is potential to adjust the budget to reduce the allocation for bus route feasibility as this element of the plan is more of a lobbying role with Bee Network, and they may have funding available for this work. Similarly, the budget allocation for walking, wheeling and cycling could possibly be adjusted. Other budget headings will need to be considered.

**Action: CP to make necessary amendments. JP/KI/CP to review budget accordingly. KI to contact MHCLG re subsidy control.**

#### **10. Coalfields Regeneration Trust**

CRT have approached JB, at the request of MHCLG, to offer their services to the board. **Action** It was agreed that JB would pursue this dialogue and report back to the board.

#### **11. Any other business**

HC asked if board members would be interested in joining a sub-group to assist in the development of the Farnworth Fund. It was agreed that HC would schedule a Teams Meeting and offer an open invite to all board members.

JB suggested that the board meet monthly until the projects are established and quarterly thereafter. It was suggested that we aim for the first Friday of the month. Time and venue to be determined by secretariat. **Action: Secretariat to send out dates of future meetings.**

**Date of Next Meeting: Friday 3 October at The Well, Trafford Street, BL4 7PQ at 9.30am until 11.30am.**