

Simplification Pathfinder Pilot Board: Minutes

Monday 28th October 2024, 2.30pm - 4pm

Wallasey Town Hall, Committee Room 1

Attendee	Role, Organisation
Cllr Tony Jones (Chair)	Wirral Council (New Brighton ward)
Rebecca Lowry	AD Chief Regeneration Officer, Wirral Council
Kate Pierce	Principal Economic Development Lead, Wirral Council
Sinead Griffiths (minutes)	Grants Officer (Regeneration), Wirral Council
Charlotte Carroll	Grants Manager (Regeneration), Wirral Council
Alison McGovern	Member of Parliament
Cllr Graeme Cooper	Wirral Council (Liscard ward)
Cllr Paul Stuart	Wirral Council (Leader of the Council; Seacombe ward)
Cllr Brian Kenny	Wirral Council (Deputy Civic Mayor; Bidston & St. James ward)
Cllr Ruth Molyneux	Wirral Council (Bromborough ward)
Cllr Pat Cleary	Wirral Council (Birkenhead and Tranmere ward)
Cllr Phil Gilchrist	Wirral Council (Eastham ward)
Andrew Ellams	Wirral Metropolitan College
David Millar	Heap & Partners Ltd
Andrew Grimshaw	Eureka!
Ian Lewis	Liverpool City Region
CI David Morgan	Merseyside Police
Nicki O'Connor	DWP

	Item
1.	Welcome, Introduction and apologies

	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Rachel Beesley, Liam Kelly, CI Matthew Moscrop, Gill Banks and Cllr James Laing.</p> <p>Deputies were in attendance for SI Matthew Moscrop (CI David Morgan), James Laing (Cllr Grame Cooper) and Cllr Kaitlin Stuart (Cllr Paul Stuart).</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of interests</p> <p>Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and any other relevant interest and to state the nature of the interest.</p> <p>N Coles: Woodside Area CIC. Project name: Woodside Ferry Village.</p> <p>The Chair reminded members to submit their declaration of interest forms and to nominate a deputy.</p>
3.	<p>Review of previous actions</p> <p>Actions completed since last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update to the terms of reference • A letter to Town Deal Board to say thank you has been sent. • Glossary of terms circulated to the Board. <p>Actions outstanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration of interest forms and deputy nominations to be completed by all Board members.
4.	<p>Programme Overview</p>

Key updates

New grants team is now in post and consists of Charlotte Carroll (Grants Manager) and Sinead Griffiths (Grants Officer). The team will now be responsible for the grant management of the Simplification Pathfinder Pilot (SPP) programme.

There has been a delay from central government regarding the deadline for the next expected reporting submission. The report compiled by the grants team will be circulated to the board for information before submission to central government.

Positive news stories

- Future Yard: Phase one is now complete and has been signed off.
- Egerton House: Works are now completed, and the project is operational.
- Start-Yard: has now spent all their originally allocated grant funding.

Review of portfolio

- 5 projects rated green for both spend and delivery.
- 10 projects rated amber for either spend or delivery.
- 3 projects rated red for both spend and delivery.

Red rated projects

New Ferry Public realm: red for spend, ongoing conversations with the team regarding what can be delivered within available budgets. This is also part of reallocation recommendation for additional funding.

Price St: Partnership with Wirral Growth Company to progress this project. A senior Project Manager has been appointed with a start date in December who will provide internal management of this project.

Woodside Ferry Village: to be discussed in agenda item 5. It was noted that following circulation of the Board papers, further correspondence had been received from the Delivery Partner, Woodside Area CIC and the update no longer reflected the current position of the project. Members were asked to disregard the original update circulated prior to the Board meeting and to note that Woodside Area CIC wished to forward with the project (Woodside Ferry Village) following internal approvals.

Rising construction costs across the portfolio was a key theme for the amber rating on spend. It was noted that the reallocation process will improve amber RAG ratings in projects included in this process.

It was reported that the priority for the grants team remains to support project leads to contractually commit spend, to assure the Board and central government that the funding will be fully spent by March 2026. An update relating to Levelling Up Fund tranche 3 (LUF 3), Liscard funding, is expected following the Autumn Budget announcement on Wednesday 30th October.

Members sought clarity regarding RAG ratings and communication of funding sources to residents. Assurance was given to members by R Lowry regarding RAG rating definitions and members were assured by the Chair that a new communications officer has recently been appointed.

5. **Reallocation of unspent funding**

R Lowry presented an overview of the process that Members agreed at the last meeting (22nd July 2024), to gather funding requests from project leads to be considered by the Evaluation Panel which was made up of officers from across the organisation, including regeneration, finance, audit, planning and legal. C Carroll, Grants Manager reported on the recommendation of the proposed allocation by project, including full details of the requests and the associated conditions of the proposed offers. Details could be found in the appended table.

Members sought clarity regarding tourism promotion and the viability of projects. It was reported that the regeneration team were working with the

place, culture and visitor economy team and Merseytravel for wider destination marketing. Assurances relating to viability of projects was given and members were asked to note that a large majority of projects had already been value engineered, due to rising costs of material. It was noted that further details should be provided in the Economy Regeneration and Housing (ERH) committee report to assure members of value for money and viability of proposed allocations to projects.

Actions:

- S Griffiths to update Cllr Kenny's register of interests (ROI) submission to include their involvement with the planning committee.
- C Carroll to update members on LUF3 at the next board meeting.

N Coles departed the meeting due to the declaration of interest raised regarding WFV.

Woodside Ferry Village:

R Lowry presented an overview of the Woodside Ferry Village request. It was reported that at the time of circulation of the Board papers, officers had received notification from Woodside Area CIC that the project would no longer be part of the Pathfinder programme. Following conversations between officers and Woodside Area CIC, a conclusion was drawn that, with conditions, Woodside Ferry Village would remain part of the Pathfinder programme.

The conditions included Woodside Area CIC gaining a minimum ten-year lease with Merseytravel and confirmation of match funding from Merseytravel for external works. The deadline for conditions to be met is 20th January 2025 or the offer will be withdrawn. There will be no extension to this deadline.

Members sought clarity on timescales. Noted that the ideal position would be to have a prioritized list of projects to present at ERH.

Action: R Lowry to discuss The Priory's listed status with the planning team to provide assurance on deliverability of the project.

It was agreed by members that N Coles was to stay absent for subsequent discussion due to his declaration of interest.

Recommendation:

The Simplification Pathfinder Pilot Board recommended that;

1. Unspent sums from Transport Shed and Sustainability Central projects to be reallocated to 7 projects within the Simplification Pathfinder Pilot as set out in the proposed allocation column table in Appendix to the report.
2. Should the conditions of the relevant grant funding not be complied with by 20 January 2025 such funds be released back into the Simplification Pathfinder Pilot programme for reallocation.
3. Should future funds become available, the public realm project at New Ferry be the priority recipient for this funding to enable the delivery of the public realm scheme in full (with a total request of £5.2m).
4. Following full funding of the New Ferry public realm project, future available funds be prioritised by the Evaluation Panel with onward recommendations being considered in accordance with the Council's internal governance processes
5. The project at Woodside Ferry Village as set out in the Full Business Case attached as exempt Appendix 2 of the report be approved.

All of the above will be presented for Decision at the next ERH committee on 4th December 2024.

N Coles returned to the meeting room.

6.	<p>Communications and PR plan</p> <p>It was reported that there is a newly appointed communications officer in post, who will specifically support the SPP. They are currently meeting with directors and assistant directors to produce a communications plan for Regeneration and Place, including the SPP.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> C Carroll and S Griffiths to meet with communication officer prior to next board meeting to gather an update and extend an invitation to the next meeting on 27th January 2025.</p> <p>The Chair noted Cllr Cleary’s concerns on level of communication of town centre works to residents.</p>
7.	<p>AOB</p> <p>Request for RAG ratings to be printed in colour for future meetings.</p>
8.	<p>Date and time of next meetings confirmed.</p> <p>Monday 27th January 2025, 2.30pm and Monday 28th April 2025, 2.30pm.</p>
9.	<p>Summary of actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S Griffiths to update Cllr Kenny’s register of interest submission to include their involvement with the planning committee. • R Lowry to discuss The Priory’s listed status with the planning team to provide assurance this is deliverable. • C Carroll and S Griffiths to meet with communications officer prior to next board meeting to gather an update and extend an invitation to the next meeting on 27th January 2025. • C Carroll to update summary reallocation request table to include conditions for each project.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• S Griffiths to resend meeting pack and agenda to A McGovern.• C Carroll to update members on LUF3 at the next board meeting. |
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