

Royal Sutton Coldfield Plan for Neighbourhoods

Meeting of the Royal Sutton Coldfield Neighbourhood Board

Minutes

Friday 12th September 2025

Trinity Centre, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1TF

Chair: Doug Wright MBE DL

Present:

Doug Wright MBE DL	(DW)	Rt Hon Sir Andrew Mitchell KCMG MP	(AM)
Cllr Richard Parkin	(RP)	Wasim Ali, Deputy PCC	(WA)
Nasir Awan MBE DL	(NA)	Claire Bridges	(CB)
Claire Evans	(CE)	Nicola Gould	(NG)
Chris Holt	(CH)	Lynn Jennings	(LR)
Deepak Parekh	(DP)	Becky Reeve	(BR)
Joy Scott-Thompson	(JST)	Josh Walsh	(JW)

In attendance:

Olive O'Sullivan	(OOS)	Chief Executive Officer, Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council (RSCTC)
Steve Hollingworth		Head of Open Spaces and Environment, RSCTC
Natalia Gorman		Project Manager, Events & Communications, RSCTC

Lauren Gee	Genecon
Ann Waters	Genecon

1	Welcome & Introductions The Chair welcomed Claire Evans who will represent Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust on the Board. Apologies received from Cllr Simon Ward, Cllr Ewan Mackey, Haroon Chughtai, and Paul Faulkner.
2	Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Decisions Log The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2025.
3	Matters Arising The Chair reported that civil servants from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) visited Sutton Coldfield on 23 July. The Chair thanked Cllr S Ward, Cllr R Parkin, Nicola Gould, and Paul Faulkner for attending the meeting. The Chair also extended his thanks to Our Place, The Gap and Sutton Parivaar who met with MHCLG to give an oversight of the work of their organisations within the local community. OOS reported that the Board's membership and governance arrangements, submitted to MHCLG in April 2025 had been approved.

4	Declarations of Interest None.
5	Royal Sutton Coldfield Plan for Neighbourhoods Boundary Sir Andrew Mitchell informed the Board that the Board's request for the boundary, for the Royal Sutton Coldfield Plan for Neighbourhood to be amended to reflect the same boundary as the Sutton Coldfield constituency, had been approved by Minister Alex Norris prior to his departure to his new role.
6	Plan for Neighbourhoods Government Guidance on Regeneration Plan The Board noted MHCLG's guidance on the Plan for Neighbourhoods Regeneration Plan.
7	Local Data Profile The Board noted the data on Royal Sutton Coldfield produced by MHCLG in collaboration with the Office for National Statistics.
8	MCHLG / Zencity Digital Survey OOS reported that the digital survey commissioned by MHCLG was conducted by Zencity between April – May 2025. The results of the survey will be reviewed by Genecon as part of their baseline review and used as one of the data sources to inform the Regeneration Plan. The Board noted the results of the MCHLG/ Zencity Digital Survey.
9	Royal Sutton Coldfield PfN Survey OOS reported that the Royal Sutton Coldfield PfN survey launched on 5 September via an E-newsletter to over 10,000 people on Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council's subscriber list. In addition to regular e-newsletters, the survey will be delivered via Royal Mail to approx. 45,000 households w/c 29 September 2025. RSCTC has also scheduled targeted social media posts across the Town Council's online platforms and paper copies of the survey can be found in fifteen community venues across Sutton Coldfield. OOS also confirmed that paper copies of the survey can be provided in other languages upon request. Drop-in sessions with Genecon Consultants, who are leading on the community engagement, will be held across Royal Sutton Coldfield in the next two weeks. The Board requested a communication for Board members to promote the survey within their communities. Action Communication to be provided to Board members to promote the survey. The Chair reported that that the survey would produce a powerful piece of data that will be important to the Board when developing the Regeneration Plan.

	Board members highlighted the importance of Genecon consultants engaging with those who are marginalised and disadvantaged and do not always have the opportunity to have their say. The Chair expressed his thanks to Town Council officers, for their input in creating the survey and their efforts in promoting it.
10	Community Engagement DW welcomed Lauren Gee and Ann Walters, from Genecon and invited Genecon to deliver a presentation (copy attached) on progress on the community engagement for the Plan for Neighbourhoods. Following one to one discussions with Board members throughout July and August, Genecon identified that the emerging priorities can be categorised into following themes: • Places (<i>Town Centre, Park and the Built Environment</i>) • People (<i>Communities, Youth, and Inclusion</i>) • PfN Operation (<i>Delivery, Funding and Partnerships</i>) The Chair asked Board members for their feedback on the emerging priorities and if their views had been accurately captured. The discussion was summarised as follows: Developing community assets: • Asset transfer, and the need to use buildings well. Potential for creating a youth centre that could be used not just for young people, but by everyone. • Existing assets should be utilised and enhanced, rather than building new. • Noted the difference in demographic and socio-economics across Sutton Coldfield. Roads and active travel routes: • The Board noted the recent anxiety locally following a fatality on a road in the town centre. Sir Andrew Mitchell advised that he had recently met with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) that is currently producing a report on road safety that he will provide to Genecon when completed. Town Centre Renewal: • The Board noted the importance of independent retailers as part of the new retail offer. Parks and Green Spaces: • The Board discussed issues in relation to the existing governance arrangements of Sutton Park. The Board raised areas which could be added to the 'People' priorities

	Homelessness: • Need to include homelessness, which is becoming more prevalent and particularly more women becoming homeless over the last six months. It was suggested there needs to be a recognition that this is more than poverty, and the need for a better support structure for homelessness. Education: • Noted that the reputation of education is a strength that drives people to the town. Linkage between capital and revenue: • Noted that there is a strong link between ‘Places’ and ‘People’ priorities and these should not be considered in isolation. Safety and Wellbeing: • Noted that whilst crime is reducing, fear of crime remains high. Importance of tackling fear of crime, not just actual crime, and understanding and addressing the reasons for both of these things. Quick wins: • The board discussed the need to emphasise the importance of quick wins. • Noted that the Plan for Neighbourhoods is about trying to make a range of different situations better. • Board Members expressed a wish to understand what other places are doing, and what Sutton Coldfield might learn from this. The Chair advised that arrangements are in place for The Board to learn from the experience of other areas in the PfN programme. Action – AM to share RoSPA paper with Genecon when he receives it. Genecon reported that in order to meet the Board’s commitment to establishing theme groups and to better manage and coordinate the community and other key stakeholder engagement, four theme groups had been established that align with Government’s pre-approved interventions: - - Heritage, Culture, Community & Wellbeing - Economy, Enterprise & Education - Parks, Green Spaces and Sport - Sustainability and Active Travel Genecon set out key matters for the Board to consider in relation to these themes. The Board agreed that the emerging priorities summarised by Genecon were in alignment with the overall PfN goals which are to build stronger communities, take back control and regenerate town centres and neighbourhoods. The
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	Regeneration Plan will need to make a case for change, focus on priorities as well as linking to other potential funding. The Chair thanked Genecon for the presentation but stressed to the Board that what has been presented is only six days' worth of data and the overall results could appear to be very different when more residents and businesses have had the opportunity to complete the survey.
11	Capacity Building Funding The Board noted the statement of expenditure circulated and published to date.
12	Any Other Business Given the upcoming MCHLG deadline to submit the Board's Regeneration Plan by 28 November 2025, the Chair proposed the establishment of a sub group of six board members to review the results of the survey and the community and thematic stakeholder groups and to work with Genecon on the development of the vision, Regeneration Plan and Investment Plan before they are presented at the next Board meeting for approval. The Chair advised he would contact Board members direct in relation to this.
13	Date of Next Meeting Decision – that the next meeting (<i>previously scheduled for 21 November</i>) will now be held on 20 November 2025 starting at 4pm.