

ONE Ilfracombe Board Meeting

Date	Wednesday 4 March 2026
Time	09:30 - 12:30
Venue	Ilfracombe Centre (and Via Teams)

Attendees • Ken Miles (Chair) - NDC • Simon Kitchen – DCC • Hannah Harrington – NDC • Domine Dunbrook – NDC • Jody Le Bredonchel – Ilfracombe Junior School • Dr Sarah Williams – Combe Coastal • Cllr Sara Wilson – DCC • James Lander – NHS • Kier Duffin – DCC • Steven Seatherton – ITC • Laura Donovan – ITC • Insp Joey Lester – D&C Police • Cllr Paul Crabb – ITC • Cllr Dan Turton – ITC • Charmain Lovett – ITC • Niel Ingram – ITC • Kara Stevens – ITC	Apologies • Marc Rostock - NDH • Pete French – Independent • Andrea Beacham – NHS
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1. Welcome and Apologies

The meeting was opened by the Chair.

2. Feedback from Secretariat on Progress of the Two Theme Group Meetings

The Secretariat reported that the first two theme group sessions had generated a significant amount of useful material and that this was now consolidated into a clearer programme-wide structure for Board consideration today.

It was emphasised that the Board should now have visual overview and supporting narrative detail, so that Board Members can see not only what is already being delivered but also where work is less developed and where further decisions, resource or partner input are required. It was acknowledged that there is a marked difference in maturity between the theme areas: Economy and Skills and Futures are more advanced in terms of current activity, whereas Housing and Town Centre Regeneration still need further shaping around subgroup arrangements, membership, evidence and delivery structure.

The Secretariat further advised that a standard format will now be developed for each theme so that the Board can review them on a consistent basis. This will include the theme objective, current projects and interventions, known dependencies, gaps, resource issues, risks, and cross-cutting links to other parts of the programme.

3. Review of the Theme Plans

a. Economy and Skills

An update was provided on the Economy and Skills theme, which was identified as one of the most developed workstreams at present. The current partnership pilot has been operating over several months and involves the Town Council, District Council, Devon County Council, North Devon College, the Maritime Training Academy, DWP and other local partners. The work has focused on end-to-end support within economy and skills, including engagement with local employers, understanding business needs, delivering training, and supporting residents into further learning or employment.

It was reported that approximately 200 people have engaged in upskilling or training activity through the partnership, with around one third already progressing into positive outcomes such as employment or further training. In addition, around 100 businesses have received support, advice or direct engagement. An agreed KPI framework is in place and can be supplied to support future Board reporting.

Members noted that the employment and training side of the theme is relatively strong, but that the business development and sector development elements need further refinement. In particular, there is more work to do in defining Ilfracombe's key sectors, distinguishing between established 'bedrock' sectors and potential transformational sectors, and making sure that inward investment, growth and diversification are properly aligned with the wider economic ambitions for the town.

It was also acknowledged that this work must remain clearly rooted in local intelligence. The importance of continued community and business engagement was emphasised, especially as the partnership moved quickly in the early stages of the pilot. A round table review scheduled for 25 February was referenced as the point at which partners will reflect on what has worked well, what needs to improve, what resources are required for the next phase, and what the next six to twelve months should look like.

The Board will therefore need to receive the Economy and Skills theme not just as a record of activity to date, but as a clearer end-to-end delivery blueprint, showing partner roles, measures, sector priorities, community intelligence, and the route into the next phase of work.

- Current pilot to be documented as a replicable blueprint for future delivery.
- Sector development, inward investment and employer pathway work to be strengthened.
- Round table outputs to be used to identify gaps, risks, resources and next phase priorities.

b. Closing the Gap

The Closing the Gap theme was discussed as a practical vehicle for addressing health inequalities in Ilfracombe. The group noted that, while the title points to health inequalities, the work in reality spans broader inequalities of opportunity, access and outcomes which contribute directly to poorer health and shorter life chances. The priority cohort was described broadly in Core20PLUS terms, focusing on the most deprived communities and people facing multiple forms of social exclusion, including those involved with probation services, homelessness, substance misuse and other complex needs.

A major area of current delivery is the Health and Justice project. This enables people on probation in Ilfracombe to attend appointments locally and combine those contacts with a wider assessment of needs, including health, housing, mental health and support for substance misuse. The discussion acknowledged that the project has at times been misunderstood publicly, but reiterated that its purpose is to reduce inequality, improve access and coordinate support more effectively rather than provide unfair priority.

Considerable discussion also took place around Belle's Place, the Link Centre and the wider campus model. It was reported that Devon County Council is progressing decommissioning of the Link Centre and that options now appear to be community transfer or open market disposal. A business case is being developed to examine the financial implications of takeover, likely repair liabilities, and potential delivery models for the building. Belle's Place was identified as the strongest immediate use case, with early indications that an operating model could be made to work if the capital position can be resolved.

The wider campus model was described as one of the most important strategic opportunities under this theme. This is intended to improve access to support across the town through a more joined-up and human-centred 'no wrong door' approach. However, Board Members recognised that the campus conversation also cuts across estate planning, youth provision, regeneration and service access more generally, and therefore should be treated as a significant cross-cutting piece of work rather than a narrow single-theme project.

- Health and Justice model to continue with learning captured for wider replication.
- Belle's Place and Link Centre business case work to continue, including social value and risk of inaction.
- Campus model to be developed as a cross-cutting service access and estate issue.

c. Town Centre Regeneration

The Town Centre Regeneration theme focused on the practical condition, appearance and future role of the High Street and wider town centre. Board Members discussed whether the title should refer specifically to the High Street or the wider town centre, but agreed that the principal concern remains the central retail and public realm environment and how residents and visitors experience it.

A working objective was discussed around improving public spaces and the town centre offer so that Ilfracombe is attractive, safe and fit for purpose. It was noted that this needs to include both practical and perceptual measures, for example vacancy rates, shopfront presentation, footfall, public confidence and the general feel of the town centre.

It was reported that a significant amount of practical work is already underway. This includes a town centre property database, vacancy tracking, photographic records, grading of building condition, prioritisation of problematic sites, engagement with agents and landlords, and enforcement activity where appropriate. Board Members recognised that much of this work is not always visible publicly, even though it is important groundwork.

Alongside this practical work, the group considered the need for a more strategic conversation about the future of the town centre. Questions were raised about whether the existing scale of retail frontage is sustainable, whether some areas should evolve over time into mixed-use or residential uses, and whether there should be clearer design expectations or town centre standards. It was suggested that a wider workshop could be useful, bringing together local stakeholders and learning from similar towns that have addressed comparable challenges.

Community safety, parking, congestion, connectivity and repeated unresolved town centre issues were also highlighted as part of this theme. These matters need to be captured in a way that ensures they are progressed rather than repeatedly re-started.

- Vacancy, appearance and landlord engagement work to continue with a clearer baseline and reporting.
- Relationship with existing regeneration / IRB structures to be clarified.
- Strategic town centre workshop to be explored to develop a longer-term vision and set of options.

d. Housing

The Housing theme was framed around three linked priorities: affordability, quality and supply. Members agreed that these need to be seen together, but also acknowledged that they operate on different timescales. Quality was described as the area where shorter-term intervention is most realistic, while supply and affordability require a longer-term strategic response and stronger engagement with external housing and funding partners.

One of the principal strands discussed was the development of a Housing Charter, building from the Poverty Truth Commission work and intended to create a clearer framework around standards, expectations and relationships within the local housing system. It was noted that landlord engagement is important here, so that any charter is both meaningful and practical rather than being developed without regard to delivery realities.

The Healthy Homes and related delivery work were also referenced as important lines of activity, as was the need to understand how specific projects such as Slade and other local housing initiatives fit into the wider strategic picture. Members stressed that the evaluation of this work should not only assess whether the operational model functions, but whether it produces measurable improvements in residents' health, stability and outcomes.

There was also discussion about the wider system picture, including who is being placed into the town and by whom, the impact on local services and schools, and the need for a simple evidence pack to support Board-level decision making. Board Members felt strongly that Ilfracombe's housing challenges and innovations should be more visible within wider Northern Devon and Combined County Authority housing conversations, and that organisations such as Homes England should be drawn into the local picture more actively.

It was noted that further work is still needed on subgroup structure, representation and future governance under this theme so that the work can move from a broad framing discussion into a more consistent delivery model.

- Housing Charter work to continue with appropriate landlord engagement.
- Simple housing evidence pack to be prepared for Board use, including pipeline, placements and key interventions.
- Subgroup membership and representation to be clarified.

e. Ilfracombe Futures

The Ilfracombe Futures theme was described as focusing on three related aims: supporting families, addressing barriers to academic potential, and improving opportunities for young people to thrive. While some family and education related work is taking place elsewhere through partners, the strongest current activity under this theme is around youth provision, youth engagement and broader opportunities for young people.

Members heard that dedicated youth work provision in Ilfracombe remains limited outside school settings, but that valuable work is already being delivered through partners such as Exeter City Community Trust with young people who are disengaged from school or at risk of exclusion. There was broad agreement that maintaining and strengthening this type of support should be a key priority.

A positive update was given on progress towards re-establishing youth provision through a youth club model. A venue has been identified, volunteers have been recruited, and introductory youth work training is being supported by Space Youth Services. A launch event is planned, with live delivery intended to follow shortly after. There was also discussion about longer-term youth work capacity, including a possible future lead role subject to funding.

The theme also referenced culture and participation opportunities, including activity linked to a culture offer for young people and the Into the Blue project. Funding remains a challenge in the short term, but the value of these activities to confidence, belonging and participation was strongly recognised.

A particularly important part of the discussion related to youth voice. Previous engagement has shown that many young people do not feel that they belong in Ilfracombe, yet at the same time many want to contribute positively to the town. It was agreed that more structured ways of capturing youth voice and involving young people in shaping the town's future are required, especially for those who are not in mainstream education or who are otherwise least likely to be heard.

- Youth club and youth work plans to continue to implementation stage.
- Funding solutions to be pursued for youth provision and Into the Blue.
- Youth voice arrangements to be strengthened and embedded.

4. Cross Cutting Agenda

a. Poverty Truth Commission

The meeting discussed the need to ensure that the outcomes and commitments arising from the Poverty Truth Commission are not treated as a separate legacy exercise, but are instead explicitly embedded within the ongoing One Ilfracombe programme. This was particularly relevant in relation to adult education, housing, health inequalities, youth and service design.

Board Members recognised that lived experience must continue to shape the work, but that this should happen in a way that is meaningful and practical rather than tokenistic. Not every operational meeting will be the right environment for participants with lived experience, particularly where the discussion is heavily logistical. The preferred approach discussed was that people with lived experience should help shape the design brief at the beginning of work, and then be invited back to review and challenge what has been developed.

There was support for making the continuation route clearer, so that the wider community can see where Poverty Truth related projects now sit, how they are being carried forward, and how accountability will be maintained.

b. Coastal Navigators Network

The Coastal Navigators Network was discussed as an important cross-cutting framework, particularly in relation to Economy and Skills, town development, culture and investment. Board Members agreed that One Ilfracombe should not duplicate work already underway through that process, but should instead make sure that its own local priorities and project activity are clearly aligned with it.

The Network's work on priority sectors, evidence, enablers, shared priorities and partnership coordination was seen as highly relevant. It was also noted that, where there are specific gaps or strategic questions that One Ilfracombe identifies locally, the Coastal Navigators Network may be able to help address them or strengthen the case for wider support and investment.

The Board should therefore receive future updates in a way that shows how local theme activity connects into the wider coastal, economic and investment conversation for the town.

5. 2026/27

a. Finances

The Programme Manager reported positively on the currently state of the One Ilfracombe Finances. After all the money ringfenced is taken into account, the estimated total in the bank on 31.03.27 is £21,281.47.

During this the meeting the financial implications were threaded through several themes. In particular, Board Members discussed the capital and revenue implications of the Link Centre opportunity, the need for realistic project costings, the funding requirements for youth provision and Into the Blue, the capital-intensive nature of housing delivery, and the need for clearer resource mapping across the overall programme.

It was therefore understood that the next stage of programme reporting will need to set out, more explicitly, where financial pressures and opportunities sit across the themes, what is already funded, where external funding is being pursued, and where Board decisions may be needed on prioritisation.

b. Project delivery

Project delivery was a consistent thread throughout the meeting. Members were clear that the programme now needs to move into a more structured delivery phase, supported by standard theme papers, a programme dashboard, clearer owners, and stronger reporting. The discussion highlighted that some themes are already delivering live projects, while others require more definition before delivery can progress at pace.

There was broad agreement that the Board paper should therefore focus not only on thematic narrative, but also on practical delivery architecture: who is leading what, where the current delivery forums are, where overlap

needs to be streamlined, and how cross-cutting dependencies such as community safety, public estate and access should be managed.

c. Commissioned work - Primary Care Network Contract

This contract is due to end in May 2027 and contract negotiations will start with the PCN at the end of May 2026.

Currently we employ 6 well-being coordinators who deliver 158 hours of social prescribing in Ilfracombe and South Molton. This also brings in a regular income into One Ilfracombe or around £14,000 per year so it is a vital contract not only for the community but also for the sustainability of One Ilfracombe.

6. Board and Governance

a. Independent membership

Governance and Board composition were discussed in the context of the wider programme. Board Members noted the importance of ensuring that the Board has the right mix of representation, skill and independence to provide challenge, support delivery and connect with key sectors. The potential role of independent members, civic commissioners and stronger NHS neighbourhood leadership links was referenced during the discussion.

It was also recognised that the reporting route needs to be made much clearer. The desired model is for theme groups to feed into a more consolidated programme structure and then through into the Board using consistent templates and a shared performance language. This will help avoid duplication, strengthen accountability and ensure that emerging issues are visible at the right level.

7. Next Steps

The meeting concluded by agreeing that the immediate next step is to convert the detailed theme discussions into a Board-ready set of documents. This will include a visual dashboard of the overall programme and a standard paper for each theme. These papers will capture objectives, current work, cross-cutting issues, gaps, dependencies, risks, resources and links to the wider strategic plan.

It was also agreed that cross-cutting matters - especially community safety, public estate, Poverty Truth Commission continuity and Coastal Navigators Network alignment - must be clearly visible within the next Board pack rather than being left implicit.

The Secretariat will now pull the material together and circulate draft outputs so that theme leads can check their respective sections before they are finalised for the Board.

8. AOB

No Noted.

Appendix 1 - Action Log

Ref	Action	Lead	Timing / note
A1	Prepare a consolidated programme dashboard and standard theme papers for Board review.	Secretariat	Before next Board Meeting
A2	Incorporate Economy and Skills KPI data, pilot learning and sector development priorities into the Board report.	Economy & Skills leads	Following round table outputs
A3	Continue Belle's Place / Link Centre business case work, including capital liability, social value and delivery options.	Relevant leads	Ongoing / next decision point
A4	Clarify how the campus model will be developed and how it interfaces with wider public estate planning.	Theme leads / partners	For next programme draft
A5	Confirm Town Centre Regeneration reporting route and produce a simple vacancy / appearance baseline.	Town Centre leads	Next reporting cycle
A6	Progress Housing Charter work and prepare a simple housing evidence pack.	Housing leads	Next reporting cycle
A7	Continue development of youth provision and strengthen arrangements for youth voice and engagement.	Futures leads	Ongoing
A8	Map Poverty Truth Commission continuity and ensure it is clearly embedded across relevant theme areas.	Secretariat / relevant leads	Before next Board Meeting
A9	Show clear alignment between local programme activity and the Coastal Navigators Network in future reporting.	Secretariat / relevant leads	Before next Board Meeting
A10	Bring forward a clearer programme for reporting from theme groups to Board.	Chair / Secretariat	Before next Board Meeting