

Nelson Town Investment Plan

Phase 3 – Engagement and Consultation Feedback/Summary Report

The most recent phase of engagement work on the Nelson Town Investment Plan has been focused around the development of the shortlisted projects.

For each of these projects, a working group was established consisting of the project sponsor/lead organisation and relevant local stakeholders and partners. The groups have worked up the projects in greater detail, considering local intelligence, stakeholder views and ensuring complementarity and added value to any existing or planned activities.

A summary about each of the groups and some of the work they have done in developing the project is provided below.

Revitalised Nelson project & Modernising Nelson Industrial Potential

Working group: Pendle Borough Council (Regeneration Unit), Liberata Property Services, Cushman and Wakefield and additional input from the Council's JV partner and local architects.

A single working group was pulled together to develop both of these projects to ensure synergy and complementarity between the two. Liberata Property Services (the Council's outsourcing partner) contributed local property market expertise drawing upon their experience of managing commercial properties in Nelson, the wider Pendle area and neighbouring Burnley. Through discussions they have with existing commercial occupiers, businesses on the waiting list for units and enquiries which they receive, Liberata have a good understanding on the needs of the local market. Commercial property experts Cushman and Wakefield provided input from their work developing the draft Nelson masterplan.

The group also engaged with local developer Barnfield (the Council's JV partner) who were also able to provide insight into the local property market and input into options for the redevelopment of the key vacant and underused sites identified in this project.

This is Nelson

Working Group: In-Situ, Pendle Borough Council (Regeneration Unit), Building Bridges, Creative Lancashire, Super Slow Way.

The working group brought together key grass roots delivery organisations and also strategic cultural partners working on key initiatives in the region that will contribute and enhance the delivery of the This is Nelson programme. In-Situ and Building Bridges have delivered some of the wider engagement work across the Town Deal, bringing a deeper level of conversations with diverse local people, businesses and young people in and out of education settings. The group have achieved this by building on strong existing connections within the communities of Nelson, past history of work in the area and some creative engagement even in this challenging period, working with an artist and photographer. They have been able to delve deeper into the challenges and ideas through a series of online 'Talkaoke' style conversations using visualisation to help develop thinking. This work has helped to underpin the development of the This is Nelson project as a longer term creative programme dedicated to involving people and local businesses at the heart. The next stages will see a working group grow in to include some key interested businesses and residents to help co-create the next stages of the process.

With the support of the strategic partnerships this means that the work in Nelson is connected to and strengthened by the regional thinking in the Pennine Lancashire area, both economically and culturally. The working group has a breath of input to create confidence secure the match funding and

meet the ambitions of the programme. The programme also has the benefit of being cross cutting working across others aims and objectives across the Town Investment Plan bringing a depth of local engagement to the processes.

Healthy Town

Working Group: Pendle Leisure Trust, Pendle Borough Council (Regeneration Unit, Green Spaces Manager and Policy Team).

The working group brought together the two key organisations involved in the delivery of indoor and outdoor leisure/recreation provision for Nelson/Pendle.

Their work to develop and shape the project drew upon the Trust's previous engagement and consultation work and an understanding of the issues in relation to young people's activity. Input from the Council's regular discussions with the Friends Groups for each of the 3 Nelson Parks was also considered.

Further wider and more specific engagement activities will be undertaken as the project moves forwards.

YES Hub:

Working Group: Pendle Borough Council, Dept for Work and Pensions (DWP), Active Lancashire, Lancashire Skills Hub, Nelson and Colne College Group (N&CCG).

The working group brought together a range of organisations which deliver services to young people in support of the education/training/employment. The group drew on intelligence from DWP and N&CCG which shows high levels of youth unemployment and NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). DWP reported a large increase in youth caseloads with prevalent issues including digital exclusion, social isolation and mental health issues which are preventing clients from moving into or closer to employment.

Engagement and consultation delivered through employment support initiatives have helped frame the delivery model for the Hub. N&CCG and Lancashire Adult Learning (part of N&CCG) continually engage with learners and experience and lessons learned from previous work programmes have helped the group to shape this project.

Going forward, engagement and consultation with young people will be central to the Hub's development. Through its outreach programme, young people will be encouraged and supported to be involved in planning and co-designing the Hub space and the interventions to be provided.

Business Resilience and Improvement

Working Group: Pendle Borough Council (Business Support), Boost Business Lancashire, Growth Lancashire, Private sector representation from the Pendle Vision Board.

This group brought together the key agencies involved in the delivery of business support within Nelson/Pendle, together with representatives from the Private sector. The group were keen to ensure no duplication of any existing activity and were able to consider feedback which they had all been receiving directly from businesses regarding the impact of Covid-19, and identify where support could be best targeted.

Direct consultation was also undertaken with a small number of local businesses to seek their views regarding future investment, the impact of Covid-19 on their confidence to invest and whether the availability of grant funding to make new investment would help to support the recovery/resilience of the business.

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7 out of the 8 businesses involved in the survey said their business had been put off investing in capital equipment or premises as a result of Covid-19 and just over half said that finance or access to finance is stopping them from investing in their business right now. 5 out of the 8 business said having access to a grant scheme would encourage investment and a further 2 said it would encourage them to bring forward potential investment.

Over half of the businesses said that the availability of grant funding to make new investment would help to support the recovery/resilience of the business in light of Covid-19. The main areas where the businesses would like to invest are in premises improvement (half of respondents), capital equipment (3 out of the 8 respondents) and digital (1 respondent).

This indicates that the grant support scheme would be well received and would support business recovery and resilience as intended.

Conversations were also held with business support providers including East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce and North West Aerospace Alliance to determine where their members felt investment was needed to support businesses and struggling sectors. Both organisations were in favour of the support programme proposed and felt it would help drive investment and assist with recovery to the manufacturing sectors in Pendle.

Accessible Nelson

Working Group: Pendle Borough Council (Engineers, Cycling Officer & Regeneration Unit), Lancashire County Council (Highways & Transport, Planning and Environment).

The group undertook a walking workshop of the town to identify and discuss areas for investment, drawing upon the emerging Nelson masterplan and the emerging Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan.

LCC drew upon and shared Strava Metrocount data (actual journeys undertaken and recorded by cyclists) from relevant locations across the town. The general trend from this showed an increase in cycling levels in the area from 2017/18 and a significant increase in 2020 (25,000 journeys in total) even though this only covers 10 months. This is perhaps reflects wider cycle use nationwide this year due to Covid-19 and lockdowns. It also showed that approximately 40% of journeys in 2018 & 2019 in the area were identified as commutes which is high for an app based on recreation activities and shows the real potential if cycle routes in the area are improved.

CDPP (Cycle Development Pendle Partnership) our local cycle forum including cycle providers, coaches, clubs and people generally interested in cycling have been consulted on the proposals for the Accessible Nelson. So far informal comments received have been positive in that any improvement in connectivity for Nelson is welcome. We expect to receive some formal letters responding to the proposals. CDPP includes members from Lancashire County Council, Connecting East Lancashire, Go Velo, Nelson & Colne College, Cycle Sport Pendle, Pendle School Sports Partnership, Pendle Leisure Trust, Pendle Forest Cycle Club, Cycle Touring Club Burnley and Pendle (Cycle England) amongst others and so it covers a diverse range of cycling interest across Pendle.

Pendle Council's cycling officer has also had discussions with Nelson and Colne College who are keen to encourage students to walk and cycle more to and from College rather than drive. Improving safety on the pedestrian links between the College and the town centre is important for them.

Digital Skills Hub

Working Group: Nelson and Colne College Group, Pendle Borough Council (Regeneration Unit).

Nelson and Colne College Group led on the development of this project with some input from Pendle Council regarding potential premises within the town centre. Further input on the work of the group is to come from the College.

Wider Community and Stakeholder Engagement

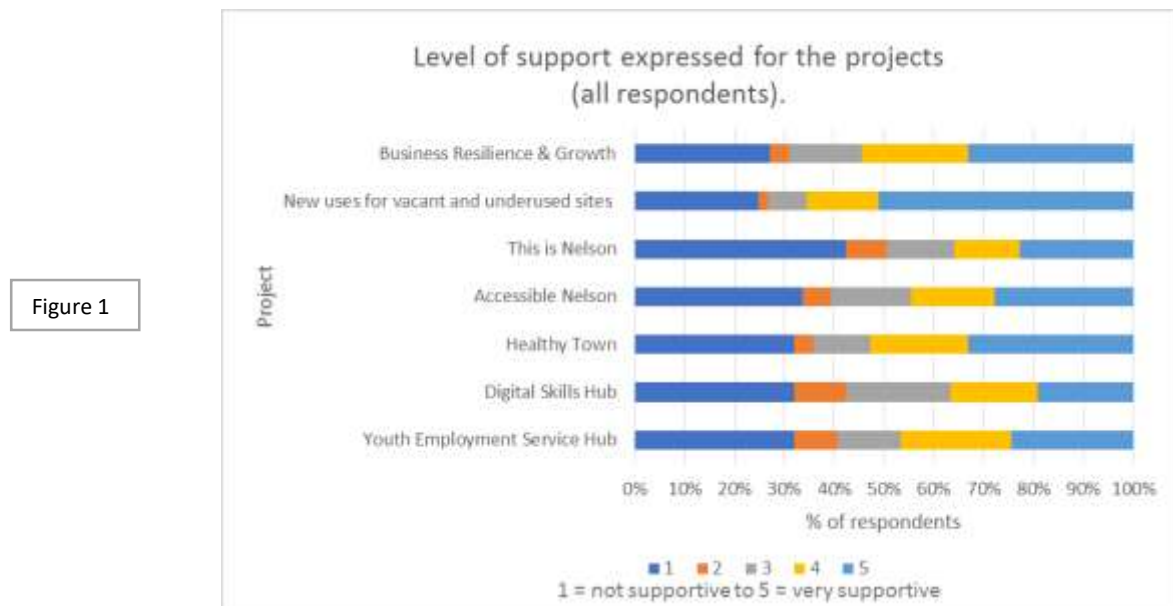
Feedback regarding the general level of support for the shortlisted projects was also invited via the 'have your say' page on the Nelson Town Deal website.

The opportunity for people to have their say was promoted through:

- The Town Deal Board members and their networks/channels of communication,
- Pendle Council's online newsroom, facebook page and twitter account,
- The 'Business in Pendle' facebook page and twitter account
- Press release to local news agencies
- An electronic mail shot sent to 700+ residents on the Council's consultation forum.

A total of 229 responses were received.

The results from all respondents are shown in Figure 1 below. This shows broad overall support for all of the projects.



Interestingly, when the responses were analysed depending upon whether the respondents lived in Nelson, whether they came to Nelson for work, or whether they lived elsewhere and visited Nelson, e.g. to shop or to visit friends and family, the general level of support varied.

The level of support to the projects was highest from people who live in the town (Fig 2), followed by people who come to the town for work (Fig 3). Support was generally lower from people who live elsewhere and visit the town, e.g. for shopping, to visit family or friends, etc, (Fig 4). This response reflects what we know about the poor perceptions of Nelson from people who live elsewhere.

Figure 2

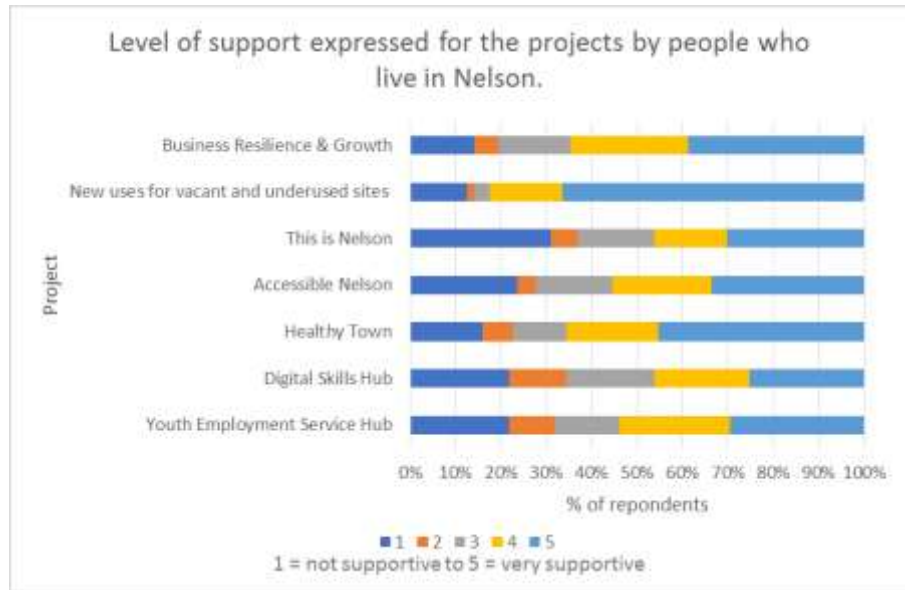


Figure 3

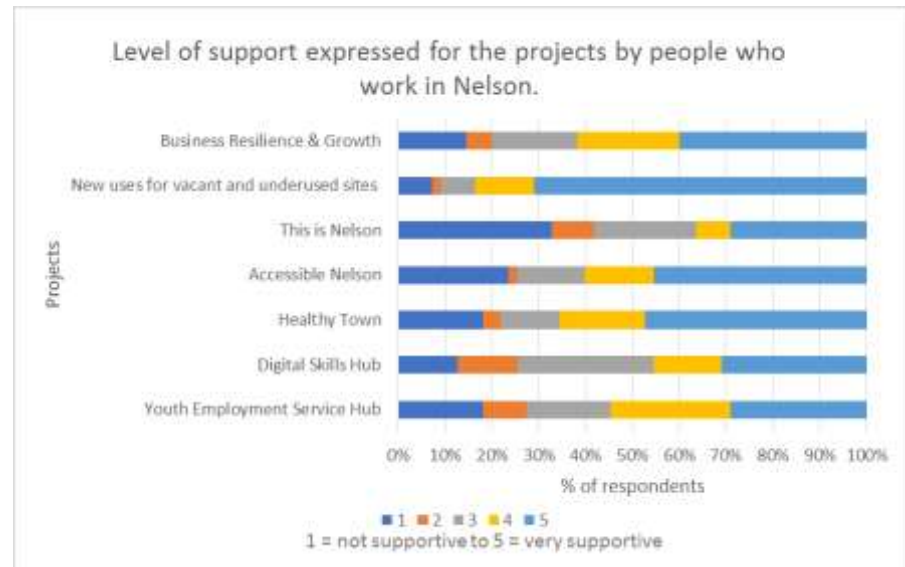
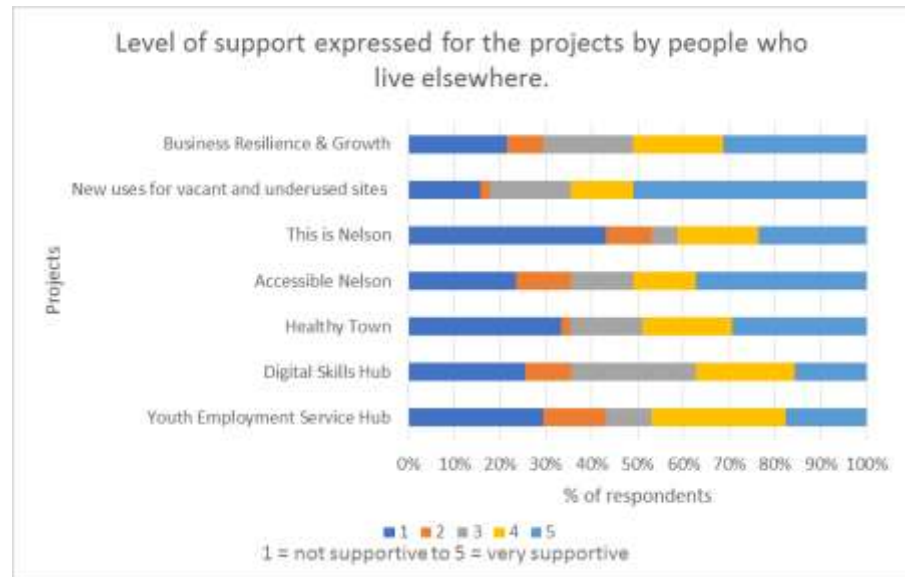


Figure 4



Echoing the results of the Phase 2 consultation, the projects which seek to deal with vacant and underutilised sites received the highest level of support across all respondents irrespective of their

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relationship to Nelson. The need to support business resilience and growth received the second highest level of support.

There was then some subtle variation in views amongst the different groups regarding the other projects. Amongst those who live and work in the town, the Healthy Town project received the 3rd highest level of support¹ followed by Accessible Nelson and the skills projects (the YES hub and the Digital Skills Hub). Accessible Nelson ranked as high as the Healthy Town and skills projects in terms of support from those who live elsewhere. This could be because the project seeks to improve the quality of the environment and experience moving around key parts of the town; both of which will be factors influencing the negative perceptions this group have of the town.

People were also invited to comment on each of the projects and a summary of the responses is provided below.

The Pendle Youth Employment Service (YES) Hub

- Confirmation from many people that they felt this was a good idea,
- There are limited opportunities so it is great to encourage young people - they need all the help and support they can get,
- This project is needed to support the future of the town. Nelson has underutilised potential and this project could help unlock this.
- In addition to advice and guidance, focus needs to be placed on education too.
- Some concerns were expressed about overlapping / duplication of support other organisations such as DWP and Nelson and Colne College are providing. However both of these organisations are involved in the project working group that have developed the project and will co-ordinate its delivery. This will ensure that there is no duplication of activities, but that existing services/opportunities are better co-ordinated and enhanced.
- The importance of having employment opportunities for young people benefitting from this service was also stressed.

“There will be an overwhelming amount of young adults needing reassurance of their future after Covid 19”.

“We need to invest in the youth to provide a better future.”

Quotes from Phase 3 consultation

¹ Counting those who answered '3' to '5'.

Addressing Vacant & Underused Sites/Premises and modernising Nelson's Industrial Potential

- Agreement that this is one of the key issues that needs addressing.
- Currently we have too many empty sites and buildings that need to be brought back into use.
- Empty buildings create a bad impression/image of the town, make the town centre look run down and investment is needed to modernise them.
- Respondents emphasised the need for a better offer in the town centre by addressing the number of empty spaces/buildings and having new uses. Trafalgar House was specifically mentioned by several respondents.
- People recognise that these vacant and underused sites/buildings provide an important opportunity for new employment uses to create jobs and new opportunities for housing (with housing that is affordable being important)
- It's important that development should be on brownfield not greenfield sites.
- Old boarded houses also need to be brought back into use, to improve the look and feel of Nelson.

“I think this is the best use of the money as it both provides employment and improves the environment.”

“It is not good for the morale of the town having all these underused and derelict buildings around.”

“If a town looks unused it will keep on being unused.”

Quotes from Phase 3 consultation

Business Resilience and Growth

- Responses expressed support for encouraging sustainable business growth.
- Investment to support start-ups/ entrepreneurs is also needed.
- The importance of creating sustainable new jobs was stressed.
- Need to support and consider green growth too.
- Business growth and jobs are key to unlock the future growth of Nelson and the local economy.

“Employment is vital to keep the town from further decay.”

“If a town is to grow jobs are needed within it.”

Quotes from Phase 3 consultation

The Digital Skills Hub and Academy

- A great idea, building for the future.
- The town centre facility will be useful for access but the service should also be brought into wards and the wider community.
- The project will help with embracing the modern age.
- Need to try and link the service and skills into jobs.
- Many were surprised this kind of provision was not already available.

“I think this would be a brilliant innovation and would support local businesses.”

Quote from Phase 3 consultation

Healthy Town

- A definite need for this project but it is important it benefits everybody not just young people.
- Agreement that investment in parks is needed.
- Any new facilities at Wavelengths need to be affordable to people using them.
- Tackling poor health issues is recognised as important, and many felt addressing the number of fast food takeaways in Nelson town centre alongside the project is also important.

“During the Covid crisis the parks have been invaluable.”

Quote from Phase 3 consultation

Accessible Nelson

- Agreement that safer cycling and walking routes should be a priority to encourage take-up. The positive links to health and the environment were recognised and highlighted.
- Whilst access improvements will help, the quality of the offer in the town centre and addressing the ‘run down’ feel of the town is key.
- Some people felt allowing traffic back through the centre of town would help.
- Existing free parking is seen as a positive and must remain, but parking needs to be easy and accessible.
- Alongside this, there is also need to deal with people who flout the traffic regulations, e.g. parking where they shouldn’t.
- Some respondents were sceptical – that traffic flows have been changed a few times over the last 40 years with little improvement.

“Nelson is a difficult town to get around. Improving this could make a huge difference to business in the area.”

“Work needs to be put into gateways and principal routes, e.g. Scotland Road. The buildings look run down and the shop fronts tawdry, making the town less investable.”

Quotes from Phase 3 consultation

This is Nelson

- It’s important to engage with the whole community including hard to reach groups.
- Events which reflect the social and economic heritage of the area should be included in an annual calendar of events, e.g. Cotton manufacture/heritage and Kashmiri community social heritage, street entertainment and cultural offerings, increasing the sense of cultural distinctiveness in East Lancashire.
- It’s important to recognise the diversity of the community and have more mixed cultural events.
- Events could help make Nelson a fun and interesting place to visit like other towns nearby, e.g. Skipton, Saltaire.
- It’s important to help build bridges between communities and create a shared identity.
- Some respondents were sceptical, and felt other activities should be a priority.

“Collaboration and engagement are key to success.”

“We are so much less without arts and culture. This has been highlighted during Covid.”

Quotes from Phase 3 consultation

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Full details of the comments that were made will be shared with the project working groups so that they can be considered as the projects are developed further (moving into business case development stage).