

**NOTE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
NELSON TOWN DEAL BOARD
HELD REMOTELY VIA TEAMS
ON 4TH FEBRUARY, 2022**

PRESENT

S. Barnes (Chairman – in the Chair)

Members of the Board

<i>Councillor N. Ahmed</i>	<i>Pendle Borough Council (PBC)</i>
<i>Councillor D. Whipp</i>	<i>PBC</i>
<i>Councillor Z. Ali</i>	<i>Nelson Town Council</i>
<i>A. Stephenson</i>	<i>Member of Parliament</i>
<i>D. Mendoros</i>	<i>Pendle Vision Board</i>
<i>C. Smith</i>	<i>Pendle Engineering Ltd</i>
<i>L. Oddie</i>	<i>Oddie's Bakery</i>
<i>C. Bennett</i>	<i>Positive Action in the Community</i>
<i>D. Gordon</i>	<i>Lancashire County Council</i>
<i>R. Bashir</i>	<i>Building Bridges</i>
<i>P. Hartley</i>	<i>In-Situ</i>

Also in attendance

<i>Councillor M. Aslam</i>	<i>PBC</i>
<i>D. Rothwell</i>	<i>Nelson and Colne College (N&CC)</i>
<i>M. Davis</i>	<i>N&CC</i>

Consultants/Advisors

<i>B. Zhang</i>	<i>Cities and Local Growth Unit</i>
<i>L. Newby</i>	<i>Hatch</i>
<i>H. Murray</i>	<i>Department for Works and Pensions</i>

Officers in attendance

<i>R. Rouse</i>	<i>Chief Executive, PBC</i>
<i>P. Mousdale</i>	<i>Corporate Director, PBC</i>
<i>J. Whittaker</i>	<i>Housing, Health and Engineering Services Manager, PBC</i>
<i>J. Stockton</i>	<i>Regeneration Manager, PBC</i>
<i>S. Lee</i>	<i>Communications Officer, PBC</i>
<i>M. Williams</i>	<i>Economic Development Officer, PBC</i>
<i>J. Eccles</i>	<i>Committee Administrator, PBC</i>

(Apologies for absence were received from C. Parker and Councillor M. Iqbal.)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were reminded of the requirement to declare any interest they had on any item of business on the agenda.

2. MINUTES

AGREED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th January, 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. REVIEW OF BOARD MEMBERSHIP & THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The Housing Health and Engineering Services Manager submitted a report for the annual review of the membership of the Town Deal Board and its Terms of Reference and Operating Principles.

A number of minor updates and changes were proposed relating to the Board's functions and responsibilities, its membership and the appointment of officers. The changes reflected the current position of the board in the Town Deal process and the support provided by the Council.

Overall, there was agreement that the current make-up of the Board offered a strong cross community/sectoral representation. Although there was a suggestion that a further business representative working in the town centre could strengthen the Board.

It was noted that, going forward, as projects were agreed, the focus would be more on delivery. It was proposed that the East Lancashire Health Trust should be formally represented on the Board rather than invited to attend in an advisory capacity. It was felt that next year their involvement would be more important, and they should be encouraged to take a more active role. N&CC's involvement would also be key and there should be a specific place on the Board for them.

AGREED

- (1) That the updates to the functions and responsibilities of the Board be approved.
- (2) That the Board membership, representation and appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman be approved and, prior to the next meeting, further enquiries be made about possible additional representation on the Board from the business community.
- (3) That the appointment of officers be confirmed.
- (4) That membership be reviewed in 12 months.

4. DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The Housing Health and Engineering Services Manager submitted a report seeking agreement for a Communications Strategy for the Nelson Town Deal for the next 6-12 months, which was attached at Appendix 1. The Strategy set out the aims and objectives as well as key messages that could be used in news stories, social media communications and in media interviews.

The Board was also given a presentation by S. Lee from the PBC Communication Team which highlighted the main points. It was proposed that 'This is Nelson' be used as the main strap line that could be used to brand communications and events. Examples were given of the type of positive phrases and engagement that could be used to promote the message that the Town Deal

was aiming for a better quality of life for everyone. The intention was to appoint “We Love Creative” a local PR agency, who had a good track record of giving grassroots people a voice. They would help with the positive engagement work and get local people involved in developing a bank of positive images of Nelson.

The purpose of the strategy was to establish regular communication around the Nelson Town Deal and ensure that was well co-ordinated amongst partners in order to maximise reach and positive impact.

There was a positive discussion about the developing strategy. It was suggested that the visuals needed to be less corporate and engage young people. Members thought that ‘We are Nelson’ or was a more inclusive, active strapline. This would fit in with the ‘We are Lancashire’ campaign. ‘We are new Nelson’ was another suggestion. Other comments included having a face of the Board in the Strategy; including statistics in the evaluation of its reach and impact and using the opportunity for more real time checks of projects; the importance of retaining highly skilled people in Nelson as well as attracting them; keeping the brand consistent and stripped back; and managing expectations, so that people were inspired and optimistic but realistic about the time it would take for some of the projects to be implemented and the impact felt.

AGREED

That the Board’s comments be taken back to the Communication and Engagement sub-group and the Communications Strategy be submitted to the next meeting for final approval.

5. PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

This was an opportunity for Board members to ask questions and inform the development of the three following projects at this stage. The project working groups were aiming to have the draft business cases ready for appraisal in early March. The business case appraisal reports were scheduled to come to the Board meeting on 13th May.

This is Nelson

A presentation was given by P. Hartley, the Lead on this project. He gave an overview of the project and talked about the next steps.

This was a 5-year arts and culture programme engaging Nelson’s communities in the town’s development to facilitate ownership, pride and a shared identity. This would be achieved through programmes of activity, events and the re-activation of places and spaces. It would capitalise on the natural asset of the canal and reintroduce people to under-used spaces which could be used for green or temporary purposes. It would aim to raise the profile of Nelson as a place to live, work, study, invest and visit and enhance the arts, culture and heritage offer. He gave examples of recent projects, building on the town’s heritage, which had created the space to engage the community. Artists could also be brought in to put a spotlight on Nelson. Key partners included Building Bridges, Creative Lancashire and SuperSlowWay. The presentation set out the project outputs and outcomes and details of the budget. The total Towns Fund allocation was £727,966 with anticipated match funding of just over £301,500, some of which had been secured. The Town Deal element of funding was predominantly revenue focused with a 33% capital spend.

Comments from the Board included the desire to have some permanent installations, particularly at key gateways, and for there to be visual connections between the industrial legacy and strong manufacturing presence in the area to the community with long-term benefits. Shahida Ahmed

(Nelson Town Deal Board 04.02.2022)

was mentioned as a world renowned artist who had recently moved back to Nelson and should be involved.

Digital Skills Hub Academy

A presentation was given by M. Davis and D. Rothwell which set out the vision for the Advanced Digital Skills Hub and Academy. This project would create a new world-class digital skills facility within Nelson and Colne College's main building (the Hub) and a smaller facility within the town centre (the Spoke). Facilities that were very much needed to address the digital skills gap in the north of England. As well as creating new learning facilities, the project would provide high-quality creative workspace that inspired, supported and encouraged enterprise in service and digital technology.

The College were already well progressed with some key elements of the Hub design work required for the Business Case. Further, more detailed work had been commissioned to enable 'Phase 1' Hub works to begin in late spring/early summer, and open at the start of the next academic year. The plans for 'Phase 2' would be finalised in the summer, and would include performance theatres, a black box, conference centre and business hub, and a virtual reality igloo. Before and after images showed IT media rich training suites and a digital 'street' to industry standard, of the highest quality.

The Spoke would join the geographical disconnect between the College and town centre. It would increase footfall in the town centre, upskill residents and create an innovative environment to support these skills. Discussions were ongoing with the Council and other parties regarding a suitable town centre location. JW said that there would be more to report on this at the next meeting. The Towns Fund allocation for this project was £2.25m with £1m of match funding secured from DFE and the College.

The Board was very excited about this project and the many benefits it could bring, including the creation of a skilled workforce for local businesses and encouraging new business growth. They looked forward to further developments being reported to the next meeting.

Business Resilience and Growth

A presentation was given by M. Williams, the Lead for this project which was aimed at enhancing the resilience and growth of the manufacturing sector in Nelson. He outlined the grants that would be available - up to a maximum of £100k - the criteria, who they were aimed at and the projected outputs.

The Towns Fund allocation was £2m (£1.9m grant funding and £100k for admin, marketing etc.) with match funding coming predominantly from the private sector and £13k from Boost Business Lancashire and Growth Lancashire. He would be working with the Communications Team to make sure that the grants were well publicised so that companies had the opportunity to bid for them.

The Board welcomed this support for businesses. C. Smith said it was important for the grants to be able to benefit all companies in a position to grow, not just the cash-rich ones. There was a discussion about how best to help some of the shops on the high street in Nelson e.g. Scotland Road and Manchester Road. Premises Improvement Grants were already available for any business wanting to improve their shop fronts and they had also been able to benefit from Welcome Back Funding. However, it was noted that these were relatively small amounts. Maybe going forward, opportunities on the high street in the town centre could be looked at if there were spare resources.

AGREED

That the project leads take the comments of the Board back to their respective project working group.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Friday, 4th March at 10.00a.m.

7. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

AGREED

That in pursuance of the power contained in Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the next item of business on the grounds that if a member of the public and press were present during consideration of the item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information which was of a commercially sensitive nature.

8. PROGRAMME UPDATE AND RISKS

The Housing Health and Engineering Services Manager submitted a report which gave a detailed update on the Nelson Town Deal projects, the development of project business cases and the key risks. Appendix 1 set out the current timetable/plan for the development and assurance of business cases for each of the Town Deal projects. Appendix 2 provided a Project Status Update and Red, Amber, Green report which indicated whether the development of the project was on track or at risk. A summary of the status of each project was provided in the report.

Discussions focused on the risks and external factors associated with some of the larger projects due to the changing position with the schemes within these projects and the impacts that these might have on their development delivery. Members also discussed how best to use and allocate funding within the project due to a scheme not being progressed as originally envisaged in the Town Investment Plan.

AGREED

- (1) That the current status and risks associated with the development of the Town Deal projects be noted.
- (2) That in response to the changed position with one of the sites, consideration of revising or merging the “Revitalised Nelson” and the “Modernising Nelson’s Industrial Offer” projects be deferred to the next meeting and, in the meantime, officers have further discussions with the project leads, C. Smith and with BEIS about the possible project change request.
- (3) That officers report back to the next meeting following their meeting with the Council’s new joint venture development partner, Brookhouse, and they invite Brookhouse to a future meeting.