

**NOTE OF A MEETING OF THE
NELSON TOWN DEAL BOARD
HELD AT THE YES HUB,
SCOTLAND ROAD, NELSON
AND VIA TEAMS
ON 1ST SEPTEMBER, 2023**

PRESENT

S. Barnes (Chair)

Members of the Board

<i>Councillor A. Mahmood</i>	<i>Pendle Borough Council (PBC)</i>
<i>Councillor D. Whipp</i>	<i>PBC</i>
<i>C. Bennett</i>	<i>Positive Action in the Community</i>
<i>D. Gordon</i>	<i>Lancashire County Council</i>
<i>P. Hartley</i>	<i>In-Situ</i>
<i>A. Patel</i>	<i>East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust</i>
<i>D. Rothwell</i>	<i>Nelson & Colne College</i>

Consultants/Advisors

<i>C. Schofield</i>	<i>Cities and Local Growth Unit (CLGU)</i>
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Officers in attendance

<i>R. Rouse</i>	<i>Chief Executive, PBC</i>
<i>R. Gibson</i>	<i>Director of Resources, PBC</i>
<i>P. Spurr</i>	<i>Director of Place, PBC</i>
<i>I. Bokhari</i>	<i>Head of Economic Growth, PBC</i>
<i>D. Dixon</i>	<i>Group Operations Manager, RAISE Partnership</i>
<i>S. Farnell</i>	<i>Programme Manager, PBC</i>
<i>K. Wood</i>	<i>Project and Programmes Officer, PBC</i>
<i>J. Robinson</i>	<i>Committee Administrator, PBC</i>

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Zafar Ali, Mike Nuttall, Lara Oddie, Lisa O'Loughlin, Christine Parker, Claire Pearson, Richard Savory, Helen Warren and Neil Watson).

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th May, 2023 were submitted for approval. Councillor A. Mahmood had given his apologies for the last meeting but they had not been recorded in the minutes.

It was reported that Chris Smith of Pendle Engineering Ltd. had recently resigned as a Member of the Board with immediate effect. The Chair proposed that a letter be sent on the behalf of the Board to thank Chris for his service to the Board and to wish him well for the future. A SME Business representative would now need to be appointed to fill the vacant seat on the Board.

AGREED

- (1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 19th May, 2023 be approved as a correct record subject to Councillor A. Mahmood's apologies being recorded and subject to the date of the next meeting being changed from 25th August, 2023 to 1st September, 2023 and signed by the Chair.
- (2) That a letter of thanks be sent, on the behalf of the Board, to former Board Member Chris Smith of Pendle Engineering Ltd.

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

There were currently no nominations for a second Vice-Chair for the Board from the Business sector. However, the PBC Chief Executive had been making enquiries in the business community and had been liaising with the Chief Executive of the East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce to identify potential nominees. She recommended that Board Members appoint a Vice-Chair who would be able to assume a leadership role on the Board and further get involved in succession planning into the future.

RESOLVED

That the appointment of a second Vice-Chair for this Board be deferred to a future meeting.

4. PROJECT UPDATES AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Director of Place submitted a report which updated Board Members regarding project progress, outputs and outcomes and project risks of the seven Nelson Town Deal projects all of which were now embedded in the delivery stage. Further detail on each project was given verbally at the meeting and Board Members were invited to provide comments.

It was asked if Lancashire County Council (LCC) had now been commissioned to undertake works on the Accessible Nelson project. They were undertaking some additional modelling work and will be undertaking a public engagement exercise in December, 2023. The scheme would be delivered in phases to minimise disruption but some disruption was unfortunately inevitable. Members of the public would be advised of any disruption through communications issued by the Communications Teams at LCC and Pendle Borough Council (PBC). Concerns were expressed about whether the design for the scheme took account of the bottleneck at the junction of Holme Street and Chapel Street, Nelson and traffic flow around the town centre in general. Assurances were given that careful

consideration had already been given to these issues by LCC. A commencement date for the works was enquired about. A clear programme of works was not currently available but would be submitted to the next meeting.

It was reported that the Advanced Digitalised Skills project was now expected to be completed in mid-October, 2023.

The Healthy Towns Wavelengths project is currently on hold pending the outcome of the Overview and Scrutiny Review of Leisure. Clarity on PBC's intention for Wavelengths was requested given the risk to the project. Consolidating provision had been an option but there had been a change in political control following the May, 2023 Elections and Members had instructed to retain all three leisure centres in the Borough. A number of other options were now being considered including retrofitting the centres and Energy Audits were being conducted. It was expected that an Options Appraisal would be considered by PBC Members at the December meeting of the Executive. The Board would await the outcome and would consider revising the project accordingly, if required.

It was reported that The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) had recently introduced some additional outcomes for the This is Nelson (TiN) project that were not originally part of the Business Case. Overall the TiN project was progressing well and a lot of people were engaging with it. One issue, however, was with this being a front facing project the delivery body, In-Situ, was receiving questions relating to the other six projects that it was unable to answer. It was suggested that further communications were needed to address this.

An update on Trafalgar House (TH), a Revitalised Nelson project was requested. The Board had supported providing EV Charging Points on the TH site whilst retaining the front part of the building facing Market Street but were now aware that a leisure option was being considered. This would involve a change of strategy for the Board. Enhanced leisure provision had been favoured in the Public Consultation on TH and was now being explored alongside a review of town centre parking. A potential scheme for using TH for indoor cricket, boxing, badminton and modern gaming whilst retaining its façade was being looked at. The potential for providing car parking and EV charging points at the rear of Number One Market Street was also being explored. A concept design for the leisure option for TH was not currently available but would be submitted to the next meeting. Board Members expressed concerns about sustainability and the impact on existing leisure provisions/providers and asked that they be taken into account in decision making. Assurances were given that careful consideration would be given to all the issues. In the interim TH had been cordoned off and its technical issues were being assessed. Quotes for scaffolding and tarpaulin covering were being obtained to prevent the building's further deterioration.

Board Members watched a short video which gave a flavour of the YES Hub's work and its achievements.

A Programme and Project Level Risk Register was provided in Appendix 1 attached to the report. Key project level risks continued to relate to the acquisition of Pendle Rise in the Revitalised Nelson project and the outcomes of the Strategic Leisure

Review and the Overview and Scrutiny Review of Leisure and how these might impact on the proposed investment in Wavelengths in the Healthy Towns project. These risks, however, were being managed through the project risk registers, Project Officer meetings and quarterly monitoring.

Board Members were advised that a monitoring return covering project progress, spend, outputs and outcomes and risk had been submitted to DLUHC in June, 2023 as part of the Bi-Annual return. The next monitoring return to DLUHC would be submitted in December, 2023. This return would form part of the progress report submitted to the next Board meeting.

AGREED

- (1) That the progress of all seven Nelson Town Deal projects be noted.
- (2) That the key project and programme risks and mitigating actions be noted.
- (3) That a clear programme of works for the Accessible Nelson project be submitted to the next meeting.
- (4) That a further project progress and monitoring report for all seven Town Deal Projects which incorporates the December, 2023 monitoring return to The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities be brought to the next Board meeting.
- (5) That the current position with Trafalgar House (TH) be noted.
- (6) That the concept design for the leisure option for TH be submitted to the next meeting.

5. UPDATE OF PROJECT CONDITIONS

The Director of Place submitted a report which updated Board Members on the discharged and outstanding funding conditions for all seven Nelson Town Deal projects.

It was reported that an audit review of the Nelson Town Deal had been finalised in July, 2023. In response to this review the monitoring of all outstanding conditions would now be discussed at monthly checkpoint meetings between the Programme Management Team and the Project Lead and this would replace the work of the Project Appraisal Sub-Group (PASG). The PASG previously had delegated authority from the Policy and Resources Committee, as recommended by the Board, for ensuring that funding conditions stipulated in the Business Case Assurance and Funding Recommendations report in respect of each project were being met. The report also proposed that going forward any outstanding conditions be reported in the quarterly progress update reports to the Board.

Updated tables for each of the projects with their present position regarding the funding conditions assigned to them were provided in Appendix 1 attached to the report.

AGREED

- (1) That the updated funding conditions tables for each of the seven Nelson Town Deal projects provided in Appendix 1 attached to the report be noted.
- (2) That it be noted that the Programme Management Team and the Project Lead and not the Project Appraisal Sub-Group would now ensure that funding conditions stipulated in the Business Case Assurance and Funding Recommendations report in respect of each project were being met.
- (3) That any outstanding funding conditions be reported in the quarterly progress update reports to the Board.

6. REVIEW OF BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND GROWTH

The Director of Place submitted a report which updated Board Members on the Business Resilience and Growth Nelson Town Deal project.

It was reported that the project had been successful in Year One. Applications had been progressed from eleven local companies. Of the total Year 1 allocation of £497,943, £278,653 had now been paid out and the remaining £219,289 was committed and waiting to be claimed. It was projected that 60 new jobs would result and a further 127 jobs would be safeguarded. Approximately £2,000 of 2022/23 funding would be carried over to 2023/24.

Currently in Year 2 a further three companies were being helped with an allocation of £209,043 and two applications were pending. However, the interest in Grants had now declined significantly and £493,000 needed to be allocated before the end of March, 2024. Reasons for this decline in interest included businesses being reluctant to invest due to the current economic climate and interest rates having risen from 4.5% to 5.25% in August, 2023.

The pool of businesses eligible for the scheme was small owing to the geographic boundary and manufacturing sector restrictions that applied. The report proposed that the creation of a buffer zone be reconsidered as it would allow businesses within 0.5 mile of the official Nelson Town Deal boundary as the crow flies to become eligible. In August, 2022 the Board had approved a buffer zone in principle, provided that only businesses within the existing boundary were able to apply for Grants in Year One of the project which had ended in March, 2023. It further proposed that the manufacturing criteria be removed to allow for Grants to be open to all sectors within the eligible area. According to the Office for National Statistics of the 1,306 businesses in the eligible area only 123 (9.5%) were in the manufacturing sector. Applications from the manufacturing sector would, however, be prioritised above those from other sectors. Board Members supported this as although manufacturing was the jewel in Nelson's crown there appeared to be a clear demand for other sector jobs which had been demonstrated in the YES Hub's video.

AGREED

- (1) That the report be noted.

- (2) That Pendle Borough Council's Executive be recommended to:
- (a) Approve the creation of a buffer zone 0.5 mile from the official Nelson Town Deal boundary as the crow flies for the Business Resilience and Growth project only as, on review, the evidence had shown that demand for the Grants was low.
 - (b) Approve the removal of the manufacturing criteria to allow businesses from any sector within the eligible area to apply for the Grants.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair proposed that a celebration of Nelson's heritage and its key people be incorporated into one of the Nelson Town Deal projects. He specifically mentioned Sir Learie Constantine a renowned Cricketer who had played for Nelson Cricket Club and suggested that a monument to commemorate him be built. The possibility of this was already being explored by the Director of Place.

AGREED

That the possibility of incorporating a celebration of Sir Learie Constantine, as a key Nelson person, in one of the Nelson Town Deal projects be explored by the Director of Place further.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be held in Late November / Early December, 2023. Date to be confirmed.

9. 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.

10. REVITALISED NELSON/PENDLE RISE UPDATE

(a) Pendle Rise CPO

A verbal update was given on the current position on the Pendle Rise CPO and the parallel negotiations to acquire the shopping centre by negotiated settlement. The next step was for the CPO's Statement of Reasons to be audited by an External Advisor.

The Chair expressed concerns about the progress being made and enquired about the expected timescales and milestones for the acquisition of Pendle Rise by both

routes. A clear plan with timescales was needed as this particular project was crucial to the Board's overall strategy.

AGREED

That a clear plan with timescales for the Pendle Rise CPO and the parallel negotiations to acquire the shopping centre by negotiated settlement be submitted to the next meeting.

(b) Pendle Rise Design

In a verbal update Board Members were advised that the planning application for Pendle Rise was considered by the Nelson, Brierfield and Reedley Committee on 31st July 2023 and that a delegation was issued to Officers to approve the application upon acceptable resolution of all matters.

It was also reported that the design for Pendle Rise had been aligned with the Accessible Nelson project and that there were no issues.

(c) Pendle Rise Programme

In a verbal update Board Members were reminded that all Town Deal funding would need to be spent by March, 2026 and were advised that Pendle Rise would need to be acquired by March, 2025.

(d) Pendle Rise Relocation of Tenants

In a verbal update Board Members were advised that the relocation of Pendle Rise Tenants was being taken very seriously. A mapping exercise had recently been undertaken within a 500m radius of Pendle Rise and 16 potential relocation properties had been identified. Furthermore, an offer for the purchase of a prime vacant town centre property had recently been submitted and accepted. The Chair requested clarification on the Board's commitment to this acquisition in the interests of transparency.

AGREED

That clarification on the Board's commitment to the acquisition of the prime vacant town centre property be provided at the next meeting.

Chair _____