

**NOTE OF A MEETING OF THE  
NELSON TOWN DEAL BOARD  
HELD AT NELSON TOWN HALL,  
AND VIA TEAMS  
ON 24<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024**

*PRESENT*  
*S. Barnes – (Chair)*

**Members of the Board**

<i>Councillor N. Ahmed</i>	<i>Pendle Borough Council (PBC)</i>
<i>Councillor M. Iqbal</i>	<i>PBC</i>
<i>Councillor A. Mahmood</i>	<i>PBC</i>
<i>Councillor Z. Ali</i>	<i>Nelson Town Council</i>
<i>P. Hartley</i>	<i>In-Situ</i>
<i>C. Bennett</i>	<i>Positive Action in the Community</i>
<i>A. Patel</i>	<i>East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust</i>
<i>D. Rothwell</i>	<i>Nelson and Colne College</i>
<i>D. Gordon</i>	<i>Lancashire County Council</i>
<i>N. Rockett</i>	<i>Nelson Nutrition, Pendle Rise</i>
<i>T. Smith</i>	<i>Lancashire Constabulary</i>

**Consultants/Advisors**

<i>S. Blenkinsopp</i>	<i>Department for Work and Pensions</i>
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**Officers in attendance**

<i>D. Lawrenson</i>	<i>Interim 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>R. Savory</i>	<i>Project Manager, RAISE Partnership</i>
<i>D. Dixon</i>	<i>Group Operations Manager, RAISE Partnership</i>
<i>K. Wood</i>	<i>Project and Programmes Officer, PBC</i>
<i>R. Gifford</i>	<i>Senior Regeneration Officer, PBC</i>
<i>J. Eccles</i>	<i>Committee Administrator, PBC</i>

**Also in attendance**

<i>M. Nuttall</i>	<i>Property Director, Brookhouse Group</i>
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*(Apologies for absence were received from D. Mendoros, R. Bashir, A. Stephenson MP, L. O'Loughlin, R. Rouse, L. Oddie, J. Rosenblatt and C. Schofield.)*

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were reminded of the requirement to declare any interest they had on any item of business on the agenda. There were no declarations of interest.

## **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024 were submitted for approval.

### **AGREED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **3. REVIEW OF BOARD MEMBERSHIP AND THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **(a) Membership and Terms of Reference**

At the last meeting the Board reviewed its Terms of Reference including its membership which was increased to 3 business representatives. It was also agreed to search for a new Board member who operated a business in the town centre or Pendle Rise Shopping Centre. The Board were informed that a business owner operating in Pendle Rise who was interested in joining the Board had been found and invited to this meeting.

### **AGREED**

That the Terms of Reference be amended to increase the number of business representatives on the Nelson Town Deal Board from 3 to 4.

### **(b) New Appointment**

It was recommended that Neil Rockett, owner of Nelson Nutrition, be appointed to the Board as a representative for a business operating in the Town Centre or at Pendle Rise, as it was felt he would add real value.

### **AGREED**

That Neil Rockett be appointed a Member of the Board as a representative for a business operating in the Town Centre or at Pendle Rise and he be welcomed to the meeting.

## **4. PROGRESS ON BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND GROWTH PROJECT**

The Head of Economic Growth submitted a report on the Business Resilience and Growth Grants Programme. This was a £2m project which started in 2022 to assist businesses and the wider economy in the Nelson Town Deal (NTD) area focussing on 3 priority areas - investment in new plant or machinery, energy efficiency/carbon reduction and premises improvements or adaptations. Originally only manufacturing businesses could apply for the grants but the criteria were extended to cover all business sectors in September 2023.

The report set out the budget allocations for each year and the outputs and outcomes expected to be met which, in most cases, had already been exceeded. Table 1 gave details of the grants paid in 2022/23 and the number of jobs created or safeguarded, CO2 tonnes saved and premises adapted. Table 2 gave details of the grants

allocated, but not yet paid out to businesses, in 2023/24. The remaining uncommitted funding available for 2024/25 was £442,750. The report included case studies for each category which gave more details of the project, the grant the company received, and the benefits this had brought.

In the last few months, the lead officer had been targeting smaller companies. A marketing programme was underway focusing on micro and small businesses including shopkeepers to further promote the funding available and encourage grant applications. This would include a press release and an update on the PBC website.

Members agreed that the spend and outputs to date were encouraging and welcomed the recent focus on smaller businesses.

## **5. PROJECT UPDATES AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

The Director of Place submitted a report highlighting progress on the 7 NTD projects.

### **a. Accessible Nelson**

LCC was managing delivery of 7 design areas in Nelson, including 2 funded by the NTD. Construction was expected to commence in the autumn, with the NTD funded Areas 4 and 6 commencing in November. Preliminary costings of the whole scheme currently predicted an overspend of £5m – £2m in Areas 4 and 6. Officers were liaising with LCC to look at possible changes to the scheme overall to bring the cost down without losing any quality of the scheme.

At a meeting earlier in the week LCC/PBC officers were looking at using high-quality materials in the town centre and concentrating on functionality heading out of town, rather than using the same palette throughout the scheme. They were also hoping to protect the traffic calming element of the scheme on Manchester Road. The Director of Place assured the Board that there was a willingness from all those involved to make the scheme work and for the work to commence as soon as possible.

### **b. Advanced Digital Skills**

A lease agreement for the Town Centre Spoke element of this project was with Nelson and Colne College solicitors and hopefully would be signed soon. D. Rothwell said that the College hoped to take occupancy in July. They would then undertake a programme of works including improved connectivity so that the building would be fit for purpose. The Board looked forward to the intake of new students bringing more young people into the town centre.

### **c. Business Resilience and Growth (See Minute 4)**

### **d. Healthy Towns - Parks**

Surface improvements had taken place across all three parks – Walverden Park, Marsden Park and Victoria Park. Various new benches and bins had been installed. Some benches had been restored. Significant works in each park were detailed in the report and the progress welcomed. A further improvement planned for Marsden Park,

not mentioned in the report, was the creation of a community garden, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Scheme, which Newground would be delivering.

**e. This is Nelson**

It was noted that a further £49,572 of funding from Arts Council England had been secured and would support the project until April 2025. Details of the various events and projects funded recently, underway or planned were set out in the report including preparations for the Pendle Festival of Culture in June. P. Hartley informed the Board that 2 key project staff were leaving In-Situ. Strong candidates to replace them had been shortlisted but in the meantime he would be spending more time on the project. In-Situ hoped to have access to Althams soon and use the empty space temporarily to have a presence in the Town Centre and to engage more directly with the public.

**f. YES Hub**

The partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions had been a success with a consistent stream of referrals coming through to the Active Lancashire Team. This resulted in a target for sign ups being exceeded by 117. A wide range of engagement activities to support young people into employment continued to be delivered. A celebratory event to mark the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Hub would be held in May with the Mayor in attendance.

Members were asked to approve the six-monthly monitoring return covering progress on each of the live projects, funding profiles, outputs, outcomes and risks at Appendix 1 of the report for submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) before 28<sup>th</sup> May.

It was noted that the key project level risks continued to relate to the acquisition of Pendle Rise in the Revitalised Nelson project. This would be discussed in Part 2 of the agenda. Also the proposed investment in Wavelengths as part of the Healthy Towns project. A further risk in relation to the increasing delivery cost had also been identified.

**AGREED**

- (1) That the progress for each of the NTD projects be noted.
- (2) That the key project and programme risks, outputs and outcomes and mitigating actions outlined in the 6-monthly monitoring return at Appendix 1 of the report be approved and submitted to the DLUHC before 28<sup>th</sup> May.
- (3) That a report come back to the Board on the implications of the potential shortfall of £2m for Areas 4 and 6 of the Accessible Nelson project.

**6. COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**

The Project and Programmes Officer gave a verbal update on communications work ongoing and engagement opportunities.

There had been a big focus on updating the Nelson Town Deal website, which would be used more to raise the profile and provide updates on the various projects including more case studies on the YES Hub and the Business Resilience and Growth Grants. Nelson and Colne College taking possession of the building for the Advanced Digital Spoke project would be a big news story. There would also be photo opportunities and good news stories going out about the park improvements for the Healthy Town project. LCC had indicated that they intended to appoint a PR/Comms person dedicated to the Accessible Nelson project to engage with businesses and the public and keep them fully informed of works as they progressed.

It was agreed that any significant news on Pendle Rise would be welcome and communication with the public and businesses crucial, but this would depend on the outcome of negotiations and the period of purdah prior to the General Election.

## **7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was proposed that the next meeting be held in September sometime, but the Board thought that this was too long to wait for updates on key projects.

## **AGREED**

That a light touch Teams Board meeting be held in July to receive verbal updates on key projects, to give the Board the opportunity to give direction or consider any decisions required, prior to a full Board meeting with reports in September.

## **8. RELATED PROGRAMMES UPDATE**

The Head of Economic Growth submitted a report for information on the progress of other externally funded programmes supporting the regeneration of Nelson. This included the Long Term Plan for Nelson (an allocation of £19,510,000 over a 10-year period) for the following intervention schemes: Safety and Security; High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration; and Transport and Connectivity.

The report gave details of the Membership of its Board and the work underway developing the Long Term Investment Plan for Nelson, which was due to be submitted by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

The Board noted that C. Bennett, a NTD Board member, had been appointed Chair, and some other members of the Board were also members. PBC would be recruiting a programme manager to support this new area of work. Ekosgen consultants had been appointed to support the Council and the Board for this programme. The first meeting took place on 19<sup>th</sup> April and were being held monthly.

C. Bennett said that the strong message to come out of her initial meeting with the other Chairs of Town Boards, was that whilst the Plan could build on, match and dovetail other projects, their Plan was to be led by the community.

In 2022 Pendle was also awarded an allocation of £3,626,135 over a 3-year period from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The Programme comprised 3 themes of: Community and Places, Supporting Local Businesses, and People and Skills. Many of the projects were being supported borough wide and as such supported the

residents and businesses of Nelson. The Chair was assured that officers were talking to LCC about their commitment to provide more EV charge points across the county so that Nelson would benefit from this infrastructure which was crucial for businesses and residents.

The report acknowledged that Wavelengths Leisure Centre formed a key element of the overall NTD programme as part of the Healthy Towns strand of work. This was one of three leisure centres operated by PBC. Following various consultancy studies and consultation exercises a steer on the way forward on the overall portfolio was expected shortly and a report on the way forward would be brought to a future Board meeting as soon as possible.

## **AGREED**

That the report be noted and the Long Term Plan Town Board for Nelson be given the full support of the NTD Board.

## **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 – PROGRESS UPDATE**

### **(a) Pendle Rise**

The Director of Place submitted a progress report on the Revitalised Nelson programme. It set out the latest position on the Pendle Rise CPO and the parallel negotiations to acquire the shopping centre by negotiated settlement. R. Savory talked Members through the next steps in terms of the purchase process, the Council decisions required and the redevelopment proposals. M. Nuttall gave more detail about what was involved with the implementation of the relocation property strategy and future management of the Centre. It was hoped that the position would become much clearer in the next few weeks.

### **(b) Relocation Properties**

The former Althams building 1-3 Scotland Road was acquired in November 2023 and the temporary use of the building was being progressed with In-Situ for an initial 3-month period. 3 other properties were being looked at for feasibility.

### **(c) Trafalgar House**

Officers continued to work with Penbrook and appointed consultants Strategic Leisure on a business case and investment proposals for Trafalgar House. A report would be

submitted to the Executive at the end of June and an update given at the next Board meeting.

## **AGREED**

- (1) That the progress detailed in the report be welcomed and the work of those involved in the Revitalised Nelson project be acknowledged.
- (2) That the Board receive more detailed information and costings in due course on the resources needed to be assured that the project was viable and deliverable, and for any proposed changes to the project be brought back for approval.

## **11. DEEP DIVE REVIEW**

The Head of Economic Growth submitted a report on the outcome of the DLUHC-led deep dive review of the Nelson Town Deal and the next steps. This was a review of the governance, decision making and delivery associated with the Town Deal funding, part of the assurance process outlined in the Levelling Up Funds Local Authority Assurance Framework.

The report concluded that the Council was managing a wide-ranging portfolio of projects, including Town Deal and Levelling Up funding with a complex governance structure involving a number of delivery partners. Whilst there were policies and systems in place, some issues with capacity and resources had been raised. The report outlined a series of recommendations for the Council along with the remedial action required to demonstrate appropriate oversight.

PBC's Director of Place presented the report and explained the discussions which had taken place and various assurances that had been given. The Director of Resources (Interim) reiterated that a procurement review had taken place and concluded some administrative tweaks were needed and that wider procurement training would be made available for non-finance managers. The Chair also recognised the need for this type of review to take place on all major programmes which the Director of Resources concurred with and stated had already started to take place. The Director of Resources advised that his successor, who was taking over next month, would continue to review the procedures and governance in place. A financial accountant was being recruited who would be responsible for this programme.

## **AGREED**

- (1) That the update be noted and thanks given to officers for providing DLUHC with all the information they needed and putting in place the required procedures.
- (2) That the Council ensure that going forward, there were sufficient resources in place to deal with the recommendations and oversight of the Town Deal programme.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_