

REPORT FROM: DIRECTOR OF PLACE

TO: NELSON TOWN DEAL BOARD

DATE: 24TH May 2024

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NELSON TOWN DEAL PROGRESS UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Board on progress of the 7 Nelson Town Deal projects

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board:

- (1) Note the project progress and programme monitoring
- (2) Note and provide comments on the key project and programme risks, outputs and outcomes

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To keep the Board informed
- (2) To be able to return appropriately authorised Town Deal monitoring forms in a timely manner

BACKGROUND

1. Overall, the programme is progressing well and mostly on track.
2. A monitoring return covering project progress, spend, outputs and outcomes and risk will be submitted to The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) before 28th May as part of the Bi- Annual return.
3. A copy of the monitoring return is attached in **Appendix 1**
4. Key project level risks continue to relate to the acquisition of Pendle Rise in the Revitalised Nelson project and the proposed investment in Wavelengths as part of the Healthy Towns project. A further risk in relation to the increasing delivery cost has also been identified.
5. The risks associated with this are being managed through the project risk registers, Project Officer meetings and quarterly monitoring.
6. Progress on each of the projects is set out below.

ACCESSIBLE NELSON

- i. The LCC manages delivery of all seven design areas, including two funded by the Town Deal. Construction phase is expected to commence in early autumn, with the NTD funded Area 5 and Area 6 commence in November 2024. The order of work is dictated by the various funding schemes and their timescales.
- ii. Steering Group meetings with LCC and their Programme Manager are held monthly to track progress and ensure continuous communication. A regular internal update meetings with the Programme Management team also continue to take place.
- iii. Findings of the public consultations held in Q3 2023 were passed onto the Steering Group to inform the final designs.
- iv. A promotional video has been developed using clips from the guided cycle ride organized in September 2023 to open the new Pendle Water Bridleway, along with other cycling activities in Nelson. This video will be shared on social media to highlight the problems people face when travelling through Nelson by bike, thereby showing the need for the Accessible Nelson improvements. It aims to raise awareness of the Accessible Nelson scheme and about the works that are due to start later in the year.
- v. On the 9th February officers met with a reporter from BBC Radio Lancashire, who is a wheelchair user. He was shown the whole Accessible Nelson route and provided some valuable feedback on the challenges he faces as a wheelchair user.
- vi. Preliminary costings of the whole scheme have been done by LCC, however they predict an overspend of circa £5m. Officers are liaising with LCC to understand what changes can be made to the scheme overall to bring the cost down but without losing quality of the scheme.
- vii. Officers continue to liaise with LCC to finalise the legal agreement prior to commencement of the works.

ADVANCED DIGITAL SKILLS

- i. Hub Phase 2 works have been finalised and practical completion certificate issued in mid-October 23.
- ii. A lease agreement for the Town Centre Spoke has been drafted and is currently being reviewed by the College solicitors.
- iii. Signing of the lease agreement has been delayed due to ongoing negotiations between the parties, however it is now nearing completion.
- iv. An estimated delay in delivery of the Town Centre Spoke is 18 months against the original target date.

BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND GROWTH

- i. Following a decision to expand the eligibility criteria to all businesses within the Nelson Town Deal boundary and develop an engagement strategy to reach new businesses, we have seen a rapid increase in enquiries and applications.
- ii. A leading officer for this project continues to engage with the businesses and has developed marketing materials to further the promote grants.
- iii. Forecast for outcomes and outputs based on the current allocations indicates that the project is on track to achieve, and in some cases, exceed these.
- iv. There are a number of businesses in the pipeline and in various stages of the application process.
- v. The remaining budget for allocations in 2024/25 is £460,000.

Healthy Towns – Parks

- i. Surface improvements have taken place across all three parks.
- ii. Various new benches and bins have been installed. Some of the existing benches have been restored which resulted in significant savings.

Walverden Park

- iii. The junior playground is almost completed, and refurbishment of Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is planned to take place over the summer.
- iv. Additional sporting equipment for the grassed area will also be installed over the summer.

Marsden Park

- v. Construction of the new playground is now complete.
- vi. Work is underway to develop a revised specification for the tennis court following an unsuccessful tender exercise.
- vii. Some cases of the anti-social behaviour in the park were reported, however, hoping that the new facilities will mitigate this.

- viii. Overall feedback from the Friends of Marsden Park group and residents has been very positive, however some individuals expressed negativity around the new proposals for the park. Officers leading this project continue to liaise with residents and local groups.

Victoria Park

- ix. The current shelter will be removed w/c 6th May. A replacement is currently in manufacture and will be installed by early June.
- x. Construction of the new playground area and a cycling track are planned for Autumn.
- xi. The park underwent a Green Flag inspection in April. Feedback from the officers involved was very positive and they are awaiting official results.

THIS IS NELSON

- i. A further £49,572 of funding from Arts Council England has been secured and will support the project until April 2025.
- ii. A curator and producer with expertise in South Asian Heritage artists was commissioned to undertake research across Nelson to further shape up this project and activity delivered under the umbrella of This is Nelson. An artist residency was also funded to develop a sound map of Nelson.
- iii. Preparation for the Pendle Festival of Culture due to take place in June 2024 is underway. Architecture Collective was commissioned to create a structure for the Festival of Culture (Nelson), which will also be used at the Festival of Making (Burnley). The structure will be created with reusable and repurposed materials (where possible) and will create a focal point and engagement feature at both events.
- iv. Development of the food strategy is well under way. A dedicated allotment space was developed to enable commencement of the regular sessions focused on the community growing. These sessions will be used as a case study for the food strategy.
- v. The Stories We Tell project which took place over 4 nights in February and March was a great success. A total of 150 people attended the audio guided walking tours of Nelson which featured the stories of over 20 residents of all ages and images projected onto the local buildings.
- vi. The first of four PRINT commissions was completed on World Poetry Day (March '24) featuring the work of local poet, Ajaz Qureshi. A celebratory event at Nelson Library was well attended and included a welcome from the mayor.
- vii. Collaboration with students at Nelson and Colne College to create a VR game is ongoing and the complete work is due to feature at the Festival of Culture.
- viii. The TIN Youth Group have worked with a variety of artists over the past months to design and build a community hub in a disused space at the 3B Systems. An opening event took place in April '24, combined with the community assembly.
- ix. The pop-up structure fabricated at UCLAN will now be established on site at the Lomeshaye Park. A celebratory spring event to launch this space took place in April '24.
- x. The branding and marketing strategy to promote the project has been implemented and is working really well. Appearances on local radio and published features in

Lancashire Life and other local new sources contributed to an increase in the project's profile.

- xi. Two key project staff have handed in their notice, a recruitment of replacement is now underway.
- xii. Discussions regarding access to Altham's are ongoing but taking longer than expected.

REVITALISED NELSON

- i. A detailed progress report will be presented to the Board as part of the separate agenda item.

YES HUB

- i. The partnership with the Department for Work Pensions (DWP) has been a success with a consistent stream of referrals coming through to the Active Lancashire team. This resulted in a target for signups being exceeded by 117.
- ii. Young people engaging in exercise for 8-week period has in the past proven difficult to achieve for a number of reasons, such as lack of motivation, having other responsibilities or moving on into employment or training before the 2-month mark. However, project officers have mitigated this by introducing incentives for young people who attend 1 activity session for 8 weeks, which has a positive outcome for the young people moving forward and making lifestyle changes and helps with achieving the required outcome.
- iii. The Hub made positive connections with the NHS talking therapies which enhance the mental health support offer available to young people.
- iv. The Hub also welcomed the addition of another job coach, a newly recruited replacement for one of the permanent members of staff.
- v. In the last few months, the Hub hosted a number of creative and digital skills courses in collaboration with the Lancashire Adult Learning, which have proved very popular with young people.
- vi. A celebratory event to mark the 3rd anniversary of the Hub will be held in May, with the mayor in attendance.

MONITORING RETURN

- i. The performance report provides an update to DLUCH on the progress of live Projects, funding profiles for each of the projects, outputs, outcomes, and the risk register, see Appendices 1 and 2 for the latest Performance Report and the Outputs and Outcomes overview.
- ii. This six-monthly monitoring return must be submitted to DLUCH around June and December each year.
- iii. The next return, covering the period 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024, must be submitted to DLUHC by Tuesday 28th May 2024 and requires a sign off from the S151 Officer and the Town Deal Board Chair.

APPENDICES

1. NTD Performance Report – October 2023 – March 2024