

**NOTE OF A MEETING OF THE
NELSON TOWN DEAL BOARD
HELD REMOTELY VIA TEAMS
ON 17TH JULY 2024**

PRESENT

S. Barnes – (Chair)

Members of the Board

<i>Councillor N. Ahmed</i>	<i>Pendle Borough Council (PBC)</i>
<i>Councillor A. Mahmood</i>	<i>PBC</i>
<i>Councillor D. Whipp</i>	<i>PBC</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>A. Stephenson</i>	<i>Departing Member of Parliament</i>
<i>N. Rockett</i>	<i>Nelson Nutrition, Pendle Rise</i>

Consultants/Advisors

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

<i>D. Lawrenson</i>	<i>Director of Resources (Interim), 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>R. Gifford</i>	<i>Senior Regeneration Officer, PBC</i>
<i>A. Shahbazi</i>	<i>Project and Programmes Officer (Interim), PBC</i>
<i>S. Whalley</i>	<i>Engineering Manager, PBC</i>
<i>J. Robinson</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 Borough Councillor M. Iqbal, Town Councillor Z. Ali, R. Bashir, D. Gordon, P. Hartley, D. Mendoros, L. Oddie, L. O'Loughlin, J. Rosenblatt, R. Rouse and R. Savory.)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillors A. Mahmood and D. Whipp declared non-prejudicial interests owing to being Directors of PenBrook Developments Ltd.

2. ANDREW STEPHENSON

The Chair led the thanks to the departing MP for the former Pendle Constituency, Andrew Stephenson, for his service and contributions to the Board since its establishment. The Chair also proposed that a formal letter of thanks, on the behalf of the Board, be sent to Andrew following the meeting.

Whilst Andrew was in attendance at this meeting, constitutionally, it would be his last meeting. The Nelson Town Deal area was now covered by two MPs, Jonathan Hinder, MP for the Pendle and Clitheroe Constituency and Oliver Ryan, MP for the Burnley Constituency. Both MPs should, therefore, be appointed as Members of the Board and be invited to attend all future meetings.

AGREED

- (1) That a letter of thanks be sent from the Chair, on the behalf of the Board, to Andrew Stephenson, the departing MP for the former Pendle Constituency.
- (2) That Jonathan Hinder, MP for the Pendle and Clitheroe Constituency and Oliver Ryan, MP for the Burnley Constituency, be appointed to the Board and invited to attend all future Board meetings.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th May 2024 were submitted for approval.

An update was requested on minute number 11, Deep Dive Review, specifically whether DLUHC had now been given the assurances they required. The initial high priority recommendations DLUHC had made had now been implemented and an action plan was currently in development for the implementation of the lower priority recommendations.

AGREED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24th May 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. KEY PROJECTS PROGRESS UPDATES

Verbal updates were given on progress with six of the seven Nelson Town Deal projects. Revitalised Nelson and the Wavelengths element of the Healthy Towns project, would be discussed later as part of separate updates.

o Accessible Nelson

Negotiations were continuing with Lancashire County Council (LCC) Highways regarding the costs of the Accessible Nelson (AN) scheme, which formed areas 4 and 6 of an integrated transport and travel infrastructure improvement programme being implemented by LCC utilising Levelling Up, Active Travel and Town Deal Funds. The AN elements of LCC's overall scheme were £1.3million over budget and the programme as a whole was only £482k over budget.

A high-level briefing note on the AN project had been circulated to Board Members prior to the meeting. Approval for elements of the project to be funded through funding overlaps with other Nelson Town Deal (NTD) projects to offset the shortfall in the overall LCC programme costs, whilst remaining compliant with Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) rules, was being sought.

Opportunities for utilising funding in other NTD programmes had been identified in the Pendle Rise Shopping Centre, Trafalgar House and Relocation Properties elements of the Revitalised Nelson project and the Public Realm Improvements element of the This is Nelson project. There was no current opportunity for funding to be vired from the Long-Term Plan for Nelson programme.

A total of £455,000 was all PBC could realistically find. It was suggested that this amount be collected as follows:

Revitalised Nelson	Pendle Rise Shopping Centre	£215,000
Revitalised Nelson	Trafalgar House	£25,000
Revitalised Nelson	Relocation Properties	£65,000
This is Nelson	Public Realm Improvements	£150,000

Concerns were expressed about the potential impact not providing the required funding for the AN elements might have on the overall quality of the scheme particularly on the Manchester Road gateway into Nelson. Although there had been some changes proposed to the materials to be used they would, where possible, retain quality elements but be more functional and cost effective. For example, it was proposed that the paving material be changed from natural stone to a concrete product that mimicked natural stone. It was not felt there would be significant impact on the scheme as a whole. There was also confidence that the scheme would still be able to deliver on its outputs.

Assurances that the scheme would deliver value for money would be required particularly as the Board had previously been challenged on processes and costs by the then DLUHC. PBC had already made representations to LCC through the value engineering process regarding the high level of fees, optimism bias and contingencies they had applied to the cost plan. LCC had since advised that all fees were standard and had not offered any reduction. LCC would now need to demonstrate the value for money of their fees and no decision on the virement of NTD funds would be made until that information was made available.

It was asked if there was any way of moving the high priority elements of the scheme into delivery pending a response from LCC given the limited progress made to date. Works were scheduled to commence in September / October 2024 anyway. It was hoped there could be more flexibility around funding once actual costs were known.

○ **Advanced Digital Skills**

The main Digital Skills Hub was now complete and open at the Nelson and Colne College main campus.

(Nelson Town Deal Board 17.07.2024)

The signing of the lease for the ACE Centre where the Town Centre Spoke element was to be situated was expected by 1st August, 2024. There were, however, still some ongoing issues which would need to be resolved before the lease could be signed. Responsibility for resolving these issues lay with PBC and their urgent action was now required to avoid any further delays. It had been hoped that occupancy could have been taken in July 2024 and a programme of works undertaken. It had also been hoped that a full suite of courses could have been offered from September 2024 but it was now likely that the majority would not start until 2025.

○ **Healthy Towns (Parks Projects)**

The parks element of the Healthy Towns programme continued to be delivered in line with the Town Deal bid. The new shelter at Victoria Park was now completed. Improvement works to the MUGA and tennis courts at Marsden Park would take place in August / September 2024. The MUGA at Walverden Park would be refurbished at around the same time.

○ **This is Nelson**

Good progress continued to be made with the This is Nelson project.

○ **YES Hub**

The YES Hub project was proceeding well. Expenditure and output targets were being met and there were no key issues to report.

○ **Business Resilience and Growth**

The Business Resilience and Growth grant programme was proceeding well. Expenditure and output targets were being met and there were no key issues to report.

AGREED

- (1) That the progress with each of the six Nelson Town Deal projects be noted.
- (2) That Lancashire County Council be requested to demonstrate the value for money in relation to their fees for the Accessible Nelson (AN) elements of their overall programme prior to any virement of Nelson Town Deal funds being considered.
- (3) That progress with the AN project be reported at the next Board meeting.
- (4) That Pendle Borough Council urgently progress any outstanding works at the ACE Centre to ensure there would be no further delays to the delivery of the Advanced Digital Skills project.

5. COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

The Group Operations Manager gave a verbal update on the communications work ongoing and engagement opportunities.

The period of purdah in the run up to the General Election had impacted somewhat on comms but the Communications Team had continued to meet fortnightly with the all the Programme Managers to monitor project progress and discuss future milestones to input into the Communications Plan.

The Accessible Nelson project was not currently at a stage where comms were needed, however, there had been some proactive engagement with Lancashire County Council's Communications Team and the approach for communicating a consistent message to the public was being discussed.

The Council were sharing all Yes Hub's press releases.

Designs for a plaque for the Digital Skills Hub at the Nelson and Colne College main campus were being considered.

Officers were liaising with existing tenants of the Pendle Rise Shopping Centre (PRSC) to ascertain their relocation wants and needs. A comms plan to make the public aware that PRSC was still open for trade and would continue to be for some months was in development. Going forward it would be vitally important to ensure that tenants and the public were kept fully informed of developments and timescales at every stage of the process. A phased closure and demolition strategy would be drafted in August 2024 and would be presented to the Board for comment at its next meeting. Details of the strategy would then be communicated more widely subject to the Board's agreement.

A public consultation event on the proposed pump-track in Marsden Park had taken place on 11th July, 2024. A press release for the unveiling of the new shelter at Victoria Park was due to be issued imminently.

In-Situ continued to effectively promote the This is Nelson project on social media. The Pendle Festival of Culture had been promoted on BBC Radio 4's The Today programme and also on BBC Radio Lancashire.

Leaflets for the Business Resilience and Growth (BRG) grant programme had been very well received. A beneficiary of a BRG grant had won an award at the recent Pendle Business Awards.

AGREED

- (1) That the updates on the ongoing communications and engagement work be noted.
- (2) That the draft phased closure and demolition strategy for Pendle Rise Shopping Centre be presented to the Board for comment at the next meeting.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday, 13th September 2023 at 10.00 a.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. REVITALISED NELSON AND HEALTHY TOWNS (WAVELENGTHS) – PROGRESS UPDATES

The Director of Place submitted a briefing note on the Revitalised Nelson (RN) and the Healthy Towns (Wavelengths) programmes.

REVITALISED NELSON

○ Pendle Rise Shopping Centre (PRSC)

Pendle Borough Council (PBC) had successfully completed the purchase of PRSC on 20th June, 2024. A Managing Agent had since been appointed and had been instructed to immediately commence a rolling programme of works to ensure that progress towards demolition could be made as soon as possible.

Consultation had started with PRSC tenants, with conversations as to their future needs and aspirations underway which would link in with the Relocation Properties programme.

Progress towards potentially making a CPO in parallel to mop up other interests was continuing with the intention of taking a report to PBC's Executive Committee in September.

The Chair said a transparent view of the costs associated with PRSC was now required given the challenges or opportunities they could bring. An up-to-date demolition cost quotation was currently being obtained and was expected to be available by the next Board meeting. Tenants' aspirations, once known, might also have implications for costs.

○ Relocation Properties

It was not currently known which retailer or retailers would occupy the former Althams building 1-3 Scotland Road following In-Situ's temporary occupation. This would be decided upon through the consultation with PRSC tenants.

Conversations with PRSC tenants were now directly influencing and expediting exploration of other potential property purchase options in the Town Centre. An offer had been made and accepted for premises in the vicinity of Althams and enquiries were also being made with respect to other premises close by.

Further updates would be provided in due course.

○ **Trafalgar House**

Strategic Leisure had completed their work on the business plan for leisure / recreational use of Trafalgar House (TH) and had concluded that such a use would not be viable.

Proposals for car parking and electric vehicle charging provision in the Town Centre that could potentially link with the original Town Deal proposal for TH were now being developed. In an extension to this proposal, the provision of an open or indoor market as an anchor to the car park was suggested as an option to be explored.

A strong case for retaining TH's façade was made, TH was one of the last remaining heritage buildings in Nelson which had historical significance. This was already being considered as an option as was full demolition.

It was anticipated that some new proposals for TH's future use could be considered at the next Board meeting.

HEALTHY TOWNS (WAVELENGTHS)

Proposals for a Town Deal budget compliant extension to Wavelengths were being formulated and would be considered by PBC's Executive Committee on 1st August, 2024. The extension would be more modest in scale than the one originally proposed but would still provide more capacity in the centre to allow for the additional participation outputs to be met.

An update would be provided at the next Board meeting.

AGREED

- (1) That the progress detailed in the briefing note be noted.
- (2) That a further update, in relation to the costs associated with Pendle Rise Shopping Centre, be provided at the next Board meeting in the interests of transparency.
- (3) That new proposals for the future use of Trafalgar House be available for the Board to consider at the next meeting.

Chair _____