

**REPORT  
FROM:****DIRECTOR OF PLACE****TO:****NELSON TOWN DEAL BOARD****DATE:****13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024****Report Author: Sue Rae, Azadeh Bayat Shahbazi, Richard Savory, Daisy Dixon****Email: Susanrae@pendle.gov.uk****KEY PROJECTS PROGRESS UPDATES****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update the Town Deal Board on progress with Nelson Town Deal projects.

**RECOMMENDATION**

To note the progress updates.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

For information.

**1. PROJECT UPDATES****2. REVITALISED NELSON**

3. See separate report.

**4. ACCESSIBLE NELSON**

5. The Accessible Nelson project forms Areas 4&6 of a programme of works designed to

improve public realm, travel routes, infrastructure and accessibility in an integrated and seamless way throughout Nelson. The programme, which is being managed by Lancashire County Council, covers seven areas in total, and is being funded from multiple sources including Levelling Up Fund and Active Travel Funds.

6. The initial design put forward by Lancashire County Council resulted in a significant programme-wide overspend. Value engineering was then undertaken in conjunction with the PBC Engineering Department and Nelson Town Deal Programme Managers.
7. Although following the value engineering Lancashire Highways were still showing a funding shortfall of £1.32 million for the Accessible Nelson areas, the overall programme deficit was reduced to £455,000. The Town Deal Board recently approved proposals to vire an equivalent sum across to meet this shortfall.
8. Lancashire Highways are currently mobilising and at a meeting with the Programme Management team on 23rd August 2024 advised that the intention was to start works in Sagar Street (Area 5) as soon as October 2024. Confirmation of this – and of the timeline for the wider programme of works - is awaited.
9. Works in Sagar Street and Holme Street need to be consistent with the proposals for the redevelopment of Pendle Rise which has planning permission and the Programme Management team are currently working with Lancashire Highways to ensure this.
10. The PBC Communications Team is liaising with Lancashire County Council to provide for a comprehensive communications plan to manage public expectations during the construction phase. This plan will include public notices, a robust social media campaign, and targeted press releases to highlight the project's long-term benefits. Communication resources applied to the works programme by Lancashire County Council will include someone 'on-the-ground' during works to lead day to day dialogue with traders, residents and others being affected by the works.
11. The strategy is designed to address any potential disruptions caused by construction work and to maintain a positive public perception of the project's outcomes: a primary challenge is ensuring that the public views the short-term disruptions caused by construction activities in a positive light. The Communications Team is focused on effectively conveying the long-term benefits of the project, which include enhanced mobility for all residents and increased foot traffic for local businesses.

## **12. ADVANCED DIGITAL SKILLS**

13. The Advanced Digital Skills project is a pivotal initiative aimed at improving digital literacy and enhancing employment prospects within the local community.
14. The main Hub at the College is complete, however, the second phase – 'the spoke' – at The Ace Centre has been delayed due to challenges in finalising the lease, which is required to be in place before 'the spoke' can be installed.
15. The Lease is expected to be signed by 30<sup>th</sup> September at which point the project will enter the development phase and a comprehensive delivery programme will be created
16. The delivery programme will include the design and implementation of training courses, workshops, and other digital skills enhancement activities, all aimed at improving the employability of local residents. A public launch is tentatively planned for early 2025, which will mark the official start of the Advanced Digital Skills Academy and provide an

opportunity to engage the wider community and stakeholders.

## **17. BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND GROWTH**

18. The Business Resilience and Growth project plays a crucial role in supporting local businesses by providing grants for significant upgrades. These upgrades include the installation of solar panels, the acquisition of new manufacturing machinery, and other improvements that enhance business efficiency and sustainability. The grants are part of a broader strategy to bolster local business resilience and foster innovation, ultimately contributing to the development of a more robust and sustainable local economy.
19. The budget for the project is approximately £1.9m of which only £333,500 is uncommitted. Against this there are currently seven businesses seeking to bring applications forward, which if approved for funding should commit most of the rest of the funds.
20. In terms of committed funds, £738,000 has been paid out so far. Officers are working to expedite claims and payments on the balance.

## **21. HEALTHY TOWNS - PARKS**

22. The Healthy Towns Parks projects are designed to enhance the quality of green spaces in Nelson, promoting healthier lifestyles and fostering greater community cohesion. The projects are progressing well and within the available budgets.
23. Several new playgrounds and enhancements to recreational facilities are already completed. Over the last few weeks, a new shelter has been constructed at Victoria Park, and the current project in progress is improvement works at Marsden Park.
24. Public consultations have taken place on the proposed pump track and Bowling Green projects at Marsden Park. These consultations, which concluded in August 2024, generally received positive feedback from the community. However, a petition against the pump track was raised, prompting the project team to engage directly with the petitioners. This proactive engagement led to a significant change in public opinion, with many initial concerns being addressed through open dialogue and transparent communication. Plans for these projects are now being finalised and these will be advised to the next Town Deal Board meeting together with a confirmed programme of works.

## **25. HEALTHY TOWNS - WAVELENGTHS**

26. The Wavelengths Project has been restructured to focus on a more cost-effective and feasible design consisting of a modest extension and improvements to the wave machine and beach area to include some new facilities. The total estimated project cost is £1,730,292, excluding VAT. This is budget compliant and was approved by the PBC Executive Committee at their meeting of 1st August 2024.
27. These works will be integrated with further investment from successful funding bids by PBC for energy efficiency measures and the decision by PBC to make funds available for urgent repair and maintenance works to its leisure centres. As a result Wavelengths will also benefit from comprehensive upgrades to the facility's infrastructure and installing modern energy-efficient systems
28. The project is proposed to be managed by PBC Property Services. The Programme

Team has met to initiate the project and immediate next steps include the issuing of a programme and finalising the appointment of architects and a Quantity Surveyor. A progress report will be brought to the next Town Deal Board.

## 29. THIS IS NELSON

30. The "This Is Nelson" project continues to focus on community engagement, the enhancement of public spaces, and the promotion of cultural activities in Nelson. The project involves a collaborative effort among key partners, including In Situ, Building Bridges, and Super Slow Way, with substantial support from Pendle Borough Council. A deliberate branding strategy has been employed to maintain a unified project identity, avoiding the inclusion of individual partner logos to prevent the perception of competing interests and reinforcing the collective effort.
31. The Project Team is currently working with In-Situ to review the shape of budgets following the decision to integrate its budget for public realm works with supporting the Nelson-wide improvements to public realm and transport infrastructure of which Accessible Nelson forms a part. A further update will be provided to the next meeting.

## 32. Recent Activities:

- **Stories We Tell (July 2024):** In July 2024, the project hosted the "Stories We Tell" event in Pendle, which was developed in collaboration with Breaking Barriers. This innovative audiovisual event featured guided walks where participants listened to local stories via headphones, complemented by visual projections of historical figures and landmarks such as Pendle Hill. The event was a success, receiving positive feedback and highlighting the cultural richness of the area.
- **3B Systems Hub (August 2024):** By August 2024, a former technology shop had been successfully transformed into the 3B Systems Hub, a vibrant art space and youth hub. This new community centre provides a cozy and creative environment for young people, quickly becoming a focal point for youth engagement. The hub offers a variety of workshops and art-related activities, further contributing to the cultural landscape of Nelson.
- **British Textiles Biennial (August 2024):** In the same month, the project team collaborated with local businesses to create an art space prominently featured in the British Textiles Biennial. This collaboration attracted significant interest from both local residents and visitors, underscoring Nelson's growing reputation as a hub for cultural and creative industries.

## 33. Upcoming Plans:

- **Summer Feast in Lomeshaye Park (September 2024):** In September 2024, the project will hold a summer feast in Lomeshaye Park as part of its ongoing community engagement efforts and pop-up café programme. This initiative aims to create a relaxed environment where community members can gather, enjoy refreshments, and participate in arts activities and events designed to foster social interaction and cultural appreciation. The Summer Feast will mark the culmination of the Food Strategy and serve as an informal community assembly.
- **New Art Installations (October 2024):** Planning is underway for the installation of new public art pieces, scheduled for unveiling in October 2024. These installations, developed in collaboration with local artists, are intended to enhance Nelson's public

spaces, further transforming the town into a centre of artistic and cultural significance.

### **34. YES HUB**

- 35. The YES Hub initiative focuses on young people in areas such as employment support, mental health, and community engagement.
- 36. The YES Hub project continues to progress well, consistently meeting its expenditure and output targets.
- 37. Regular monthly communications meetings have improved the alignment of messaging and ensured that success stories and case studies are regularly shared with the public.

### **38. GENERAL UPDATES**

### **39. COMMUNICATIONS**

- 40. The Programme Management team continue to meet with PBC Marketing Team fortnightly to ensure that the website, news releases and social media are up to date with notable stories resulting from the Town Deal Programme. Most recently efforts have concentrated around Pendle Rise to include new banners and signage around the centre promoting the forthcoming transformation and an 'open for business' message in support of the retailers.
- 41. Integration with communications from projects such as This is Nelson and The Yes Hub has been improved and dialogue is ongoing with Lancashire Highways in terms of coordinating communication relating to Accessible Nelson.
- 42. On 12th September 2024, the Cities and Growth Unit is scheduled to visit Nelson to review the impact of the Town Deal Programme. This visit represents a key opportunity to showcase the tangible benefits of the Town Deal investments. The project team has organised a series of media engagements to capture high-impact stories and images that will be used to promote the project's success.

### **43. RESOURCES**

- 44. Following the departure of PBC Programme Manager Kate Wood, Azadeh Bayat Shahbazi was appointed on an interim basis and will be leaving the Council in the next few weeks. Sue Rae has been appointed to replace Kate on a permanent basis. Sue is already working with Azadeh and RAISE to ensure seamless integration and consistency of approach. A focus for the Programme Management team going into the last eighteen months of the programme will be an increased focus on progress with achieving spend targets before the March 2026 deadline. In general outputs and outcomes are tracking well.