

**NOTE OF A MEETING OF THE  
NELSON TOWN DEAL BOARD  
HELD AT NELSON TOWN HALL,  
AND VIA TEAMS  
ON 13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 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 D. Whipp</i>	<i>PBC</i>
<i>Councillor Z. Ali</i>	<i>Nelson Town Council</i>
<i>R. Bashir</i>	<i>Building Bridges</i>
<i>D. Gordon</i>	<i>Lancashire County Council</i>
<i>P. Hartley</i>	<i>In-Situ</i>
<i>J. Hinder</i>	<i>Member of Parliament</i>
<i>N. Rockett</i>	<i>Nelson Nutrition, Pendle Rise</i>

***Consultants/Advisors***

<i>H. Warren</i>	<i>Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)</i>
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***Officers in attendance***

<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>S. Rae</i>	<i>Project and Programmes Officer, PBC</i>
<i>A. Shahbazi</i>	<i>Project and Programmes Officer (Interim), PBC</i>
<i>G-L Wells</i>	<i>Head of Finance, 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 C. Bennett, L. Oddie, L. O'Loughlin, J. Rosenblatt, R. Rouse, C. Schofield, K. Spencer.)*

**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 N. Ahmed, A. Mahmood and D. Whipp declared non-prejudicial interests owing to being Directors of PenBrook Developments Ltd.

## **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024 were submitted for approval.

Oliver Ryan, MP for the Burnley Constituency had been invited to be a Member of the Board but had declined the invitation due to Nelson predominantly being in the Pendle and Clitheroe Constituency and due to him being a Member of the Burnley Town Deal Board. Jonathan Hinder, MP for the Pendle and Clitheroe Constituency had accepted the invitation and was in attendance at this meeting.

## **AGREED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to Oliver Ryan, MP for the Burnley Constituency not being appointed to the Board and not being invited to attend all future meetings.

## **3. REVITALISED NELSON**

The Director of Place submitted a report to update Board Members on progress with the Revitalised Nelson (RN) programme. Part of this item would be discussed in Part II of the meeting upon the exclusion of Public and Press due to its commercially sensitive nature.

### **○ Pendle Rise Shopping Centre (PRSC)**

There had been meetings between each of the existing tenants of PRSC and Pendle Borough Council's (PBC's) Estates Team to understand their aspirations and preferences going forward in terms of business continuity and also to provide reassurance.

On 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2024 PBC's Executive Committee would be asked to approve making a CPO to acquire any remaining interests in the PRSC site and land. The CPO was required to ensure any and all remaining rights and reversionary interests in land at PRSC could be assimilated so there were no impediments to the development. The CPO would also provide protection for tenants to ensure the compensation they would receive would not be below statutory minimum levels. A full timeline for the CPO process was set out in the report. In the interim, as freehold owner of the site, PBC could continue to gain vacant possession of the site and proceed with preparations to demolish the existing buildings.

Vacant shop units were already being stripped out and a programme of decommissioning and delisting vacant units was underway with a target completion of the end of this calendar year. The delisting works would reduce the rates liability on PBC.

Up-to-date demolition cost quotations had now been provided by Specialist Contractors. The most competitive of these was at £1.35 million and the most

expensive was at £1.75 million. A budget of £1.5million had been set as a result of this exercise.

The current aim was to have vacant possession of the centre by the end of September 2025 with demolition complete by end of March 2026 at which point the site would be transferred to PenBrook Developments Ltd. for development. There was confidence that the scheme could progress and be delivered in line with expectations and be budget compliant.

It was asked if there was anything further that could be done to speed up the process and achieve vacant possession prior to September 2025 whilst the CPO was in progress. The CPO was there to mop up reversionary interests, the ones that were currently known such as mines and minerals would not affect demolition. There might be other more difficult interests that weren't currently known which could affect demolition or be affected by it but nothing was apparent at present. The demolition timeline presented in the report was cautious and there was a focus on ensuring that tenants didn't feel in any way rushed. If the tenants could be accommodated sooner and happily so, demolition could be brought forward. Efforts were already being made to shorten the demolition programme through the undertaking of the up-front decommissioning and delisting works that were already in progress.

Being mindful of maintaining community morale throughout the process was recommended. Upcoming events would be used as an opportunity to keep communities informed and it was suggested that one of the vacant units in PRSC be used as an event space to get people involved.

#### ○ **Relocation Properties**

A second relocation property at 5-7 Scotland Road, Nelson, the British Heart Foundation shop, had been acquired by Brookhouse Developments Limited (Brookhouse). PBC was currently in the process of agreeing terms for the long-term rental agreement with Brookhouse.

Other vacant premises were also under review against the requirements determined from the interviews with the existing PRSC tenants. There would be a focus on ensuring relocation properties were the 'best fit' for retailers.

It was asked how many retailers would be relocating. Thirteen retailers were currently looking to relocate either on a permanent or temporary basis. Some nationals were considering temporary closure and then coming back into the scheme once complete. There was a definite need for more properties and To Let properties would also be considered alongside those that were For Sale. There was a commitment to retaining as many businesses in the town centre as possible.

It was reported that the majority of tenants felt there had not been enough follow-up since they had been first asked about their intentions with regards to business continuity. The independent tenants also felt as though the national ones were being prioritised. This needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency and it was recommended that a meeting between the tenants and officers be convened as soon as practicable. Tenants were also encouraged to proactively reach out to officers.

○ **Trafalgar House**

On 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2024 PBC's Executive Committee would receive a report on Trafalgar House (TH) and be asked to approve either its partial or full demolition to leave a cleared site suitable for car parking and possible future redevelopment following a series of other options being explored and being found to be unviable. Visuals showing both demolition options were attached to the report at Appendix 2. The Committee would also be asked to approve the reconfiguration of the area between the rear of Number 1 Market Street and the ACE Centre by constructing additional parking to include some electric vehicle charging (EVC), as per the proposal attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The total costs of both the partial and total demolition proposals were set out in the report. Both of the proposed options would generate an underspend against the Town Deal funding of £1,615,000 available for TH. There would be an underspend of £274,306 for its partial demolition and £715,000 for its full demolition. The underspend would provide flexibility to deal other issues such as the telecommunications installations on PRSC.

The feasibility of also using the additional funds to enable the cleared site to be suitable for accommodating an extended street market was also being looked at. The outcome of this investigation would be subject to a future report.

There had been a Cities and Local Growth Unit (CLGU) visit on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2024 and the new proposals for TH had been rehearsed during that visit. The CLGU were pleased that the new proposals would deliver the component elements of the original proposal whilst keeping options open for future redevelopment. The CLGU were also positive about the EVC points being installed in a different location than originally proposed as it would support the redevelopment of PRSC and indicated they would be open to a project adjustment being made. These discussions would now need to be firmed up and the outcome reported back to the Board at the next meeting.

Concerns were expressed that if full demolition was not approved by the Executive PBC might be left with a façade that had no viable use and was very costly to maintain. There was, however, acceptance of the heritage issues and of the fact that a frontage would be required for future redevelopment. The Chair said it was of utmost importance that the Executive reached a definitive view on TH's end use on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2024 given the risk to this element of the project, time was quickly running out.

**AGREED**

- (1) That the progress detailed in the report be noted.
- (2) That a further update on progress, particularly in relation to timescales for the demolition of the Pendle Rise Shopping Centre (PRSC), be provided at the next Board meeting.
- (3) That a meeting between PRSC tenants and Pendle Borough Council officers be convened as soon as practicable to address the issues raised at this meeting.

- (4) That the Executive be recommended to approve the reconfiguration of the area between the rear of Number 1 Market Street and the ACE Centre by constructing additional parking to include some electric vehicle charging.
- (5) That the feasibility of accommodating an extended street market on the Trafalgar House site be reported at a future Board meeting.
- (6) That the discussions with the Cities and Local Growth Unit on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2024 be firmed up and the outcome reported at the next Board meeting.

#### **4. KEY PROJECTS PROGRESS UPDATES**

The Director of Place submitted a report to update Board Members on progress with six of the seven Nelson Town Deal projects. Revitalised Nelson had been discussed earlier as part of a separate update. A verbal update was given on the Nelson Long-Term Towns Plan.

##### **○ Accessible Nelson**

Following further work on the Accessible Nelson (AN) fee structure it had been concluded that Lancashire County Council (LCC) Highways' quoted fees did represent value for money. Board Members had been advised of this prior to this meeting and they had given their approval on 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2024 to vire £455,000 Town Deal funding to meet the shortfall in the funding for the overall AN programme. Work was currently underway to implement the Board's decision. It was understood that LCC would cover any further funding gap to ensure the scheme would be fully funded and viable.

LCC were currently mobilising and had 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 was awaited.

Works in Sagar Street and Holme Street needed to be consistent with the proposals for the redevelopment of PRSC and the Programme Management Team were currently working with LCC on this.

The Pendle Borough Council (PBC) Communications Team was liaising with LCC to develop a comprehensive communications plan to manage public expectations during the construction phase to address any potential disruptions and maintain a positive public perception of the project's outcomes. This plan would include public notices, a robust social media campaign and targeted press releases to highlight the project's long-term benefits of enhanced mobility and increased foot traffic for local businesses. LCC would also provide someone 'on-the-ground' during works to lead day-to-day dialogue with traders, residents and others being affected by the works.

It was reported that the underpass near Nelson and Colne College was inaccessible in places due to overgrown vegetation and also poorly lit and was impacting on connectivity with the College and students' feelings of safety. Strictly speaking that would come under the LCC and LUF funded Area 1 works but there might be scope to use some of This is Nelson's public realm works budget. LCC would also be asked to

ensure that the issues raised were properly incorporated into the whole AN programme.

- **Advanced Digital Skills**

The statistics showing the achievement of learners at the main Digital Skills Hub at the Nelson and Colne College main campus were awaited.

The signing of the lease for the ACE Centre where the Town Centre Spoke element was to be situated would now take place on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2024 at which point the project would enter the development phase and a comprehensive delivery programme would be created.

The delivery programme would include training courses, workshops and other digital skills enhancement activities, all aimed at improving the employability of local residents. A public launch was tentatively planned for early 2025, which would mark the official start of the Advanced Digital Skills Academy and provide an opportunity to engage the wider community and stakeholders.

- **Business Resilience and Growth**

The budget for the project was approximately £1.9m of which only £333,500 was uncommitted. There were currently seven businesses seeking to bring applications forward, which if approved for funding should commit most of the rest of the funds.

In terms of committed funds, £738,000 had been paid out so far and Officers were working to expedite claims and payments.

Going forward the risk around grant applicants dropping out would need to be carefully managed and it was recommended that there be conversations between them and the Project Team between now and the next meeting.

- **Healthy Towns - Parks**

The current project in progress was improvement works at Marsden Park. Overall the project was going well and all spend was within profile.

Public consultations had 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, however, a petition against the pump track was raised. The Project Team had since engaged directly with the petitioners to address many of their initial concerns through open and transparent communication. Plans for these projects were now being finalised and would be presented at the next Board meeting together with a confirmed programme of works.

How the maintenance of these facilities would be funded in the future was enquired about. PBC did not have a budget or the resources for such a forthcoming liability. This would be looked into the answer would be reported at the next Board meeting.

○ **Healthy Towns - Wavelengths**

The Wavelengths element of the Healthy Towns project had 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 was £1,730,292, excluding VAT. This was budget compliant and was approved by PBC's Executive Committee at their meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2024. A planning application was due to be submitted in October 2024.

These works would be integrated with further investment from successful funding bids by PBC for energy efficiency measures. As a result, Wavelengths would also benefit from comprehensive upgrades to the facility's infrastructure and modern energy-efficient systems installations.

The project was now proposed to be managed by PBC's Property Services Department and a further update would be provided at the next Board meeting.

○ **This is Nelson**

The "This Is Nelson" project continued to successfully focus on community engagement, the enhancement of public spaces and the promotion of cultural activities in Nelson. The project was also being used to communicate with people about Pendle Rise Shopping Centre.

The Programme Management Team was currently working with In-Situ to review the shape of budgets following the decision to integrate their 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 would be provided to the next meeting.

Recent activities included Stories We Tell (July 2024); 3B Systems Hub (August 2024); and British Textiles Biennial (August 2024). Upcoming plans included Summer Feast in Lomeshaye Park (September 2024) and New Art Installations (October 2024).

Progress on erecting a statue to celebrate Learie Constantine was enquired about. Some art form, not necessarily a statue, was still being considered but would be subject to match funding for the project's heritage programme being secured.

○ **YES Hub**

The YES Hub project continued to progress well, consistently meeting its expenditure and output targets and receiving high praise from the DWP. There had been 250 employment outcomes for young people, 230 had gone into education and over 1,000 had benefitted from the removal of barriers.

Regular monthly communications meetings had improved the alignment of messaging and had ensured that success stories and case studies were regularly shared with the public. There had been a number of recent engagement activities that had targeted women in particular.

○ **Nelson Long-Term Towns Plan**

An investment plan had been prepared in July 2024 but the programme was currently on hold and further guidance was awaited from Central Government.

The Chair of the Nelson Long-Term Town Plan Board would be sending a letter to the Deputy Prime Minister to seek clarity and advice. Jonathan Hinder MP had also been lobbying for the programme but said no further information was expected before October 2024.

**AGREED**

- (1) That the progress with each of the six Nelson Town Deal projects be noted.
- (2) That the comprehensive communications plan for the Accessible Nelson (AN) project be shared with the Board once developed.
- (3) That the college connectivity issues raised at this meeting be properly incorporated by Lancashire County Council into the whole AN programme.
- (4) That there be conversations between Business Resilience and Growth grant applicants and the Project Team to mitigate the risk of the applicants dropping out.
- (5) That finalised plans for the pump track and Bowling Green projects at Marsden Park, together with a confirmed programme of works, be submitted to the next Board meeting.
- (6) That it be ascertained how the future maintenance of the pump track and bowling green at Marsden Park would be funded.
- (7) That further progress with all of the Nelson Town Deal projects be reported at the next Board meeting.

**5. TOWN DEAL BUDGET UPDATE**

Board Members were provided with a budget update for all seven of the Nelson Town Deal projects. Details of total project value, DLUHC funding, match funding received and required, total spend to date, remaining funds to spend/pull down and forecasted over/underspends, shortfalls and surpluses were presented in a spreadsheet. Programme Management spend, however, had not been included in the spreadsheet and would need to be going forward.

There was a need for the Revitalised Nelson (RN) and Healthy Towns (HT) project budgets to be monitored closely. There was a particular need for the cashflow and match funding for the RN project to be understood going forward and the HT project would need to be monitored to ensure it would be delivered on time.

**AGREED**

- (1) That the budget update for all seven Nelson Town Deal projects be noted.



- (2) That Programme Management spend be included in all future Town Deal budget update reports.

## **6. COMPLIANCE AND TRANSPARENCY UPDATE**

The Director of Place submitted a report which presented the findings from a recent review of this Board's compliance with governance, accountability and transparency requirements as outlined by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG).

Pendle Borough Council (PBC) had received a communication from MHCLG on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2024, a copy of which was attached to the report at Appendix 1. Following its receipt a thorough review of the Board's governance, accountability, and transparency measures was conducted to identify any gaps. In the main the Board was fully compliant with MHCLG requirements with the exception Board Membership Compliance where only partial compliance had been achieved. This was due to detailed profiles outlining the roles and responsibilities of each Board Member either being incomplete or missing on the Nelson Town Deal website. It was recommended that all outstanding information be obtained by the end of September 2024. The Pendle Borough Council Communications Team would then ensure that this information was promptly uploaded to the website.

Continuous monitoring and updates would then be conducted to ensure ongoing compliance with all MHCLG requirements, guidelines and expectations and also to fully meet the terms of the Town Deal funding.

### **AGREED**

- (1) That the findings of the governance, accountability and transparency review be acknowledged.
- (2) That details of the roles and responsibilities of each Board Member be obtained not later than the end of September 2024 and then promptly uploaded to the Nelson Town Deal website.
- (3) That the need for continuous monitoring and updates to be conducted to ensure ongoing compliance with all Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government requirements, guidelines and expectations be noted.

## **7. COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**

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

The Programme Management Team continued to meet with Pendle Borough Council's Communications Team fortnightly to ensure that the website, news releases and social media were up to date with notable stories resulting from the Town Deal programme. Most recently efforts had concentrated around Pendle Rise Shopping Centre (PRSC) to promote the forthcoming transformation and an 'open for business' message in support of the retailers through banners and

signage. There were plans to produce a newsletter following the Executive Committee's meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2024.

There had been work on improving communications from projects such as This is Nelson and the Yes Hub and dialogue was ongoing with Lancashire County Council Highways in terms of co-ordinating communication relating to Accessible Nelson. The unveiling of the lakeside shelter in Victoria Park had been very well attended. Upcoming events would be used as a vehicle for engagement and to communicate messages.

Representatives from the Cities and Local Growth Unit (CLGU) visited Nelson on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2024 to review the impact of the Town Deal Programme. This visit had gone very well and had showcased the tangible benefits of the Town Deal investments to the satisfaction of the CLGU.

The phased closure and demolition strategy for PRSC requested at the last meeting had been considered earlier as part of a separate update.

## **AGREED**

That the updates on the ongoing communications and engagement work be noted.

## **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was asked if it would now be timely to consider putting together a proposal for a Nelson Business Improvement District (BID) which could be modelled on Colne's. A Nelson BID would undoubtedly complement the town's wider regeneration but it would be a consideration for Pendle Borough Council and not for the Board.

## **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 10.00 a.m.

## **10. 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.

## **11. REVITALISED NELSON**

Formal advice on compensation for Pendle Rise Shopping Centre (PRSC) tenants had been sought from Axis Property Consultancy and they had since confirmed that, reassuringly, there would be sufficient budget to ensure no-one would be disadvantaged any more than necessary by the proposals for PRSC.

(Nelson Town Deal Board 13.09.2024)

How revenue costs would be met prior to PRSC's demolition was enquired about. The revenue impact was as yet unknown but was being investigated. Costs would either be treated as capital or minimised as much as possible but ultimately Pendle Borough Council would be liable.

**AGREED**

- (1) That the update relating to compensation for Pendle Rise Shopping Centre (PRSC) tenants be noted.
- (2) That the revenue impact on Pendle Borough Council prior to PRSC's demolition be quantified and reported to a future Board meeting.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_