

**REPORT FROM: DIRECTOR OF PLACE**

**TO: NELSON TOWN DEAL BOARD**

**DATE: 6<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

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## REVITALISED NELSON

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Town Deal Board on progress with the Revitalised Nelson Programme.

### RECOMMENDATION

To note the report.

### REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

For information.

1. The report provides updates on Pendle Rise Shopping Centre, Relocation Properties and Trafalgar House.
2. **Pendle Rise Shopping Centre**
3. Since purchasing Pendle Rise Shopping Centre (PRSC) Pendle Borough Council (PBC), in conjunction with management operator Beddows Limited, have repaired key operating systems and dealt with a vermin infestation. The centre continues operating relatively smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
4. Working in conjunction with PBC, Sarah Lee (RAISE) has been actively organising various marketing and communications activities to support existing retailers and show local people that the centre is still open for business. A summary of this is shown below:
  - A series of banners and visuals have been produced for display in and around the site and key site across Nelson to show that existing retailers are open for business and to show visuals of the proposed development.
  - The Council Leader has continued to pay visits to PRSC to meet traders and images of these visits have been used to raise awareness of the redevelopment proposals.
  - Social media campaign and digital totems featuring individual retailers.
  - Window vinyls, posters, large metal signs, banners in prominent positions in and around Pendle Rise and key locations in the Town Centre including Nelson bus rail interchange, Althams window, Pendle Wavelengths entrance and the Contact Pendle Centre.

- News releases to the media and shared on social media.
  - A six-page newsletter for Pendle Rise retailers delivered to each shop individually with a visit from the Council Leader to discuss the plans in Urdu where required.
  - Liaison with Nelson Town Council and In-Situ to encourage use of Pendle Rise for events and initiatives including the Christmas Lights switch on.
  - A November and December dot-mailer graphic emails will be issued to over 2,000 people who are signed up to news from Pendle Council.
  - New lamp post banners
  - A Christmas campaign for Pendle Rise with advertising on Pendle Community Radio in English and Urdu and studio visits plus newspaper and social media advertising.
  - A short video - filming retailers in Pendle Rise on Monday 2 December - to create a short video which flags up shop locally messages – Pendle Rise is still open for business.
  - Full page festive season advert featuring Pendle Rise retailers will appear in Leader/Times newspaper edition Friday 6 December.
  - 10 adverts a day – 5 in Urdu & 5 in English – will air on Pendle Community Radio from early December.
  - A studio visit will take place in early December to coincide with the adverts for a live 45-minute programme with three people representing different angles about Pendle Rise is open for business and flagging up plans for future for a brighter Nelson.
5. In addition to regular visits by Sarah Lee, ongoing meetings have been taking place between tenants and the PBC Estate Team regarding options for tenants going forward in terms of their rights under the CPO process (see also paragraph 19). More details are provided in a separate confidential report.
6. On the 19<sup>th</sup> September the Executive Committee at PBC approved making the CPO to acquire any remaining interests in the PRSC site and land. Since then the CPO Order has been made in line with the target timeline reported to the Town Deal Board in September as per the table below:

<b>Period / Dates*</b>	<b>Action</b>
May 2024	Acquire freehold to PRSC
June–August 2024	Complete Land Referencing and assess accurate information on tenancies and interests in PRSC
June–August 2024	Complete remaining documentation in preparation for CPO
September-- November 2024	Make and pursue confirmation of the CPO, potential for an inquiry if objections are received
August 2024 - September 2025	Rolling programme of decommissioning, tenant relocation and soft strip out across PRSC
March 2025	Estimated date for CPO public inquiry (if required)
September 2025	Target vacant possession date by agreement
September 2025	Secretary of State's decision to confirm CPO
September-October 2025	Exercise CPO powers to acquire remaining land interests
October 2025	Commence demolition where land is wholly owned by the Council
March 2026	Complete demolition and have a cleared site ready for development.

7. One objection has been received to the CPO. Eversheds-Sutherlands are currently in correspondence with the MHCLG Secretary of State Office regarding the potential for the CPO to be determined via written representations (wr) rather than a full public inquiry. If

successful this has the potential to speed up the above timeline as the wr process is quicker than the full public inquiry route.

8. The CPO is required to ensure any and all remaining rights and interests in land at PRSC are and can be assimilated so there are no impediments to the development. However, as freehold owner of the site, PBC can continue to gain vacant possession of the site and proceed with preparations to demolish the existing buildings.
9. The soft strip out of vacant shop units will be completed before the end of the calendar year as reported to the Town Deal Board in September. A full demolition schedule is now being prepared which will include starting hard strip out of vacant units and as far as possible Phoenix Chambers. This includes removal of asbestos, suspended ceilings, partitions and flooring, heating and air conditioning, and mechanical and electrical installations. We will also break through dividing walls to render individual units obsolete.
10. This process has started with the next level intrusive demolition and refurbishment survey (R&D Survey) for asbestos in unoccupied areas. This will inform the duration of the hard strip out phase. It is intended to complete this phase by June 2025. It is anticipated that once this phase is complete, subject to vacant possession, approximately a further 16 weeks would be required to achieve full demolition.
11. The project team is currently aiming to have vacant possession of the centre by the end of September 2025 with demolition complete by end of March 2026.
12. The current updated budget profile for the PRSC Town Deal funding is as follows:

Item	£	Notes
Acquisition	£ 4.3 million	Spent
CPO and Professional Fees	£ 1.2 million	Based on advice from Axis and Eversheds. Accurate estimate.
Demolition and Clearance	£1.5 million	Based on Contractor quotations
Compensation	£2.5 million	Based on initial estimate of compensation liability following tenant and telecom meetings
Upkeep, Accessible Nelson, Other, Contingency	£0.8 million	To allow for contribution to Accessible Nelson and other costs incurred including as PRSC operator pre-demolition
<b>Total</b>	<b>£10.3 million</b>	

13. Discussions are continuing with Lancashire Highways to ensure works carried out as part of their cross-Nelson highway improvements, which include Accessible Nelson, are fully consistent with the Pendle Rise Shopping Centre proposals. Works on Sagar Street will start on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

#### 14. Relocation Properties

15. Good progress has been made with the Telecommunication installations. The three companies concerned, Cornerstone, Orange EE and Airwaves, are actively working on their relocation and all have found alternative sites: Cornerstone are looking at ACE Centre, Orange EE have a ground site for a new tower and Airwaves are looking at the BT building.
16. PBC have agreed and finalised terms for the long-term rental agreement with Brookhouse for 5-7 Scotland Road, which is currently the British Heart Foundation next door to Althams. Meanwhile use of the former Althams building continues by In-Situ until mid-January.

17. Surveys are being carried out by Brookhouse on 23 Manchester Road, with a view to completing a deal to allow for the relocation of SpecSavers. Other vacant premises continue to be under review against the requirements determined from the interviews with existing PRSC tenants. One property in particular is of interest and a survey is currently being arranged.
18. PBC Estate Services have completed a Schedule of Availability for retail premises for relocation that are available within 500m of PRSC. This will shortly be issued to retailers. Accompanying this will be a letter giving details of how to express an interest in properties under PBC control and setting out criteria by which interested parties will be qualified.
19. The project team have sought to minimise disruption through the important Christmas trading period, but it is the intention to accelerate discussions around relocation and compensation in January to provide greater certainty for retailers and all other stakeholders. To support this Axis Property Consultants have been retained to provide a dedicated resource to accelerate the process.

## **20. Trafalgar House**

21. On the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 the PBC Executive Committee decided on a partial demolition of Trafalgar House. The historic front portion is to be retained and the rear portion demolished to provide for a future redevelopment site and temporary car park. The new extended permanent car park for the ACE Centre to the rear of Number One Market Street is to be included in the works package.
22. Firm interest has already been forthcoming in the retained portion of Trafalgar House for a commercial usage (offices) at ground and first floor level. Discussions with the interested party are active and Penbrook Limited are currently developing proposals and further details will be provided at the next meeting of the Town Deal Board.