

**NOTE OF A MEETING OF THE  
NELSON TOWN DEAL BOARD  
HELD AT NELSON TOWN HALL,  
AND VIA TEAMS  
ON 6<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

*PRESENT*

*S. Barnes – (Chair)*

***Members of the Board***

<i>Councillor M. Iqbal</i>	<i>Pendle Borough Council (PBC)</i>
<i>Councillor A. Mahmood</i>	<i>PBC</i>
<i>Councillor D. Whipp</i>	<i>PBC</i>
<i>R. Bashir</i>	<i>Building Bridges</i>
<i>C. Bennett</i>	<i>Positive Action in the Community</i>
<i>D. Gordon</i>	<i>Lancashire County Council</i>
<i>R. Grey</i>	<i>Lancashire Constabulary</i>
<i>P. Hartley</i>	<i>In-Situ</i>
<i>J. Hinder</i>	<i>Member of Parliament</i>
<i>A. Patel</i>	<i>East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust</i>
<i>N. Rockett</i>	<i>Nelson Nutrition, Pendle Rise</i>
<i>J. Rosenblatt</i>	<i>Buoyant Upholstery</i>
<i>D. Rothwell</i>	<i>Nelson and Colne College</i>

***Officers in attendance***

<i>K. Spencer</i>	<i>Director of Resources, PBC</i>
<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>S. Rae</i>	<i>Project and Programmes Officer, PBC</i>
<i>P. Riley</i>	<i>Greenspaces 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>
<i>R. Macdonald</i>	<i>Local Democracy Reporting Service</i>

*(Apologies for absence were received from Borough Councillor N. Ahmed, Town Councillor Z. Ali, L. Oddie, L. O'Loughlin, R. Rouse and H. Warren.)*

**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.

C. Bennett, P. Hartley and D. Rothwell each declared an interest in Item 6 owing to their involvement with the YES Hub, This is Nelson and Advanced Digital Skills projects, respectively.

## **2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

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

N. Rockett declared a conflict of interest on Item 13 (Revitalised Nelson) owing to being a Tenant of the Pendle Rise Shopping Centre.

## **3. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2024 were submitted for approval. The accuracy of minute number 4 (Healthy Towns – Parks) relating to the proposed pump track and bowling green projects at Marsden Park, Nelson had been challenged by a member of the public and following investigation the Assistant Director Operational Services had agreed that the minute was not correct and that it should read as follows:

“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 and there were still some unresolved issues that would need to be dealt with by the Project Team. Plans for these projects were now being finalised and would be presented at the next Board meeting together with a confirmed programme of works”.

## **AGREED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to it being noted that minute number 4 (Healthy Towns – Parks) relating to the proposed pump track and bowling green projects at Marsden Park, Nelson was inaccurate and that it should read as follows:

“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 and there were still some unresolved issues that would need to be dealt with by the Project Team. Plans for these projects were now being finalised and would be presented at the next Board meeting together with a confirmed programme of works”.

## **4. MARSDEN PARK PUMP TRACK PROPOSAL**

The Assistant Director Operational Services submitted a report to update Board Members on progress with and issues around the proposed pump track within Marsden Park, Nelson.

Petitions against the pump track's proposed location had suggested several other sites as potential locations for the facility but these had consequently been ruled out

by Pendle Borough Council (PBC) Officers as being unsuitable for various reasons. However, after listening to the concerns raised, a third location within Marsden Park had been identified on the corner of Hallam Road and Marsden Hall Road. Contractors had since attended the site and had confirmed suitability, after initial concerns relating to the gradient of the land. The views of the lead Petitioner and another member of the public who had raised complaints on this alternative location had been sought via e-mail on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2024 but no response had been received to date. A further site on Southfield Street had also been identified. A confirmed programme of works was not yet available.

Posters would be displayed on the Park's noticeboards until the end of 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2024 to consult residents of the new proposed location and to invite them to contact PBC's Parks Department with any feedback. Following on from this consultation, unless there were significant objections raised, planning permission would be sought in early 2025.

How the maintenance of the pump track would be funded in the future was again enquired about. PBC did not have a budget or the resources for such a forthcoming liability and the Board needed to be satisfied that the facility would be sustainable but could not assist as it had no ongoing resources. Marsden Park was fully funded by Nelson Town Council (NTC) and it was likely that they would accept the ongoing liability but only if the track were to be located in the park and not on Southfield Street. There would need to be a formal contract with NTC for long-term future maintenance. This was outside the Board's remit and would be a matter to be dealt with by PBC.

It was asked what the plans for engaging with young people were to address possible anti-social behaviour within the Park. There had already been conversations with various youth services and there could be opportunity for support from the This is Nelson project.

The report also advised Board Members that a formal complaint from a member of public had been received on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2024 which had indicated that the minutes of the Board's last meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2024, did not accurately reflect the position of the project concerning the pump track within Marsden Park, Nelson. A copy of this complaint was attached to the report at Appendix 3.

Following investigations the Assistant Director Operational Services agreed that that particular minute was inaccurate and a response to the complainant, a copy of which was attached to the report at Appendix 4, was issued on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2024.

The minutes of the last meeting had summarised paragraph 24 in the Key Projects Progress Updates report submitted to that meeting. That report had been written by an Officer who had since left the Council, and, as such, it could not be ascertained how the inaccuracy had occurred. The Council's Greenspaces Team were not privy to this report prior to publication to carry out any editorial checks. Going forward, it had been agreed that the Project Lead for the Parks element of the Healthy Towns Project would review all reports / updates prior to publication to ensure their accuracy.

## **AGREED**

- (1) That the report be noted.

- (2) That revenue funding for the future maintenance of the proposed pump track be agreed between Pendle Borough Council and Nelson Town Council.
- (3) That all future reports / updates relating to the Parks element of the Healthy Towns Project be reviewed by the Lead for that part of the Project prior to publication to ensure their accuracy.

## **5. REVITALISED NELSON**

The Director of Place submitted a report to update Board Members on progress with some elements of the Revitalised Nelson programme.

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

Ongoing meetings had been taking place between the existing tenants of PRSC and Pendle Borough Council's (PBC's) Property Services Team regarding the options going forward in terms of rights under the CPO process. Further detail would be provided in Part II of the meeting upon the exclusion of Public and Press due to its commercially sensitive nature.

On 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2024 PBC's Executive approved making the CPO to acquire any remaining interests in the PRSC site and land. The CPO Order had since been made in line with the target timeline set out in the table in the report.

One objection had been received to the CPO. Eversheds-Sutherlands were currently in correspondence with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government Secretary of State's Office regarding the potential for the CPO to be determined via written representations (WR) rather than a full public inquiry. If successful, this had the potential to speed up the target timeline as the WR process was quicker than the full public inquiry route. It was also less expensive.

The soft strip-out of vacant shop units was still on target to be completed before the end of the calendar year and a full demolition schedule had now been drafted. The intrusive asbestos survey had shown that most asbestos was limited to service areas. This meant that safe asbestos removal, 'hard strip-out' of empty retail units and Phoenix Chambers could continue while the centre remained open and arrangements for vacant possession were made with retailers. Once this 'hard strip-out' was completed and vacant possession achieved, it was anticipated that the remaining full demolition could be achieved in 16 weeks.

On this basis, the current aim was still to have vacant possession of the centre by agreement not later than September 2025 and hopefully at an earlier date, and to have a cleared site ready for development by the end of March 2026.

An updated Budget profile was provided in the report.

Assurances around the telecommunications masts and utilities were sought. All three telecommunication companies had confirmed that they had their alternative sites for their masts. One had obtained planning consent. Dates for the relocations were not currently known but there was good active engagement with the companies

and they could be asked for dates as part of that process. There had been initial engagement with utility providers and the utilities would be replaced as part of the PRSC development.

The revenue consequences of the project on PBC were highlighted. PBC had recently had to use £0.5million from its reserves to meet unbudgeted costs such as the operation of PRSC and this was not sustainable. PBC would be making a flexibility request to Central Government and the Board's support was sought.

Work on securing the crucial anchor tenant for the development was ongoing but there was confidence about the delivery of the overall project as expectations were being exceeded in terms of timescales.

It was reported that there were some feelings of community mistrust towards the development. There were concerns that there would be too much for one community and not enough for another. It was felt that replicating 'Clone Town Britain' should be avoided and that a unique selling point was needed. Nelson had a very strong Asian heritage which should be acknowledged and celebrated. SMEs were also a strength. The development had the ability to use and play to those strengths through the future uses it could accommodate. It was also felt that there needed to be a variety of retail and food options and space within which things could be tested and tried out like a Maker's Market.

#### ○ **Relocation Properties**

PBC had agreed and finalised terms for the long-term rental agreement with Brookhouse Developments Limited (Brookhouse) for 5-7 Scotland Road, Nelson. The former Althams building would continue to be used by In-Situ until mid-January 2025.

Surveys were 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 continued to be under review against the requirements determined from the interviews with existing PRSC tenants. One property was of particular interest and a survey was currently being arranged.

PBC's Property Services Team had completed a Schedule of Availability for retail premises for relocation that were available within 500m of PRSC. This would soon be issued to retailers. Accompanying this would be a letter giving details of how to express an interest in properties under PBC control and setting out criteria by which interested parties would be qualified.

The Project Team had sought to minimise disruption through the important Christmas trading period, but it was the intention to accelerate discussions around relocation and compensation in January 2025 to provide greater certainty for retailers and all other stakeholders. To support this Axis Property Consultants had been retained to provide a dedicated resource to accelerate the process.

#### ○ **Trafalgar House**

On 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2024 PBC's Executive decided on a partial demolition of Trafalgar House (TH). The historic front portion was 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 was to be included in the works package.

Firm interest had already been forthcoming in the retained portion of TH for commercial usage (offices) at ground and first floor level. Discussions with the interested party were active and Penbrook Developments Limited were currently developing proposals. There was also speculative interest in the development site at the rear. Further details would be provided at the next Board meeting.

It was asked where such a facility sat in PBC's current plan for the town centre. It would align well with PBC's aspiration to bring more commercial use and professional services into the town to enhance its vibrancy.

There would be a new plan that would require Board approval. The Board would also need assurances that project outcomes would still be met.

## **AGREED**

- (1) That the progress detailed in the report be noted.
- (2) That Pendle Borough Council's flexibility request to Central Government be supported by the Board.
- (3) That the concerns raised and suggestions made at this meeting in relation to Pendle Rise Shopping Centre's future use be considered fully by PenBrook (PenBrook) Development Limited.
- (4) That a further update on PenBrook's proposals for the commercial usage of the retained portion of Trafalgar House (TH), at ground and first floor level, be provided at the next Board meeting.
- (5) That the new plan for TH be presented to the Board at the next meeting for approval.
- (6) That assurances that project outcomes would still be met be provided at the next meeting.

## **6. NELSON TOWN DEAL PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Director of Place submitted a report to advise Board Members that the latest monitoring return had been submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and to further provide an update 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.

### **o Accessible Nelson**

Board Members had given their approval on 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2024 for £455,000 Town Deal funding to be vired to support the funding of the Accessible Nelson (AN) programme as follows:

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

Following this approval being given it was subsequently identified that there was £300,000 within the original Revitalised Nelson PRSC budgets earmarked to support AN works in line with the original business case. This allowed for the reduction in the This is Nelson contribution to £130,000 and covered the costs of £44,000 for the original design work for the AN scheme. So, by utilising the £300,000 already allowed for within PRSC budgets the final virements were as follows:

• Revitalised Nelson Trafalgar House	£25,000
• Revitalised Nelson Relocation Properties	£65,000
• This is Nelson Public Realm Improvements	£130,000

Lancashire County Council (LCC) had provided Pendle Borough Council (PBC) with a start date of 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2025 for the start of works on Area 5 of the overall transportation and public realm improvements at Sagar Street / Holme Street, Nelson. Confirmation of the wider programme was still awaited.

Discussions were currently taking place to agree the exact scope of LCC and AN works where they would abut the development boundary of PRSC to ensure their consistency with Revitalised Nelson proposals.

A comprehensive communications plan for the project had been developed and was awaiting LCC's sign-off. This would need to be followed up as a matter of urgency as early communication was crucial, particularly given the start date of 6<sup>th</sup> January, to minimise disruption as far as possible. Contractors were already on site undertaking some 'soft' preparatory works.

#### ○ **Advanced Digital Skills**

With regards to the main Digital Skills Hub at the Nelson and Colne College main campus, 295 students/trainees had been in new education and training courses due to the facilities there.

The second phase, the Town Centre Spoke, had been delayed due to challenges in finalising the lease for the ACE Centre. The lease was being held up by an unexpected cost of approximately £140k for a new air conditioning facility. Nelson and Colne College had offered to fund approximately £40k of the costs and a report on the balance was considered by PBC's Executive on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2024. The Executive made a recommendation to PBC's Full Council that the addition of the ACE Centre air conditioning system scheme to PBC's Capital Programme be approved. PBC's Full Council would consider this on 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2024. It was then hoped that the lease could be executed early in Quarter 1 but it would be subject to there being a commitment to works taking place.

○ **Business Resilience and Growth**

The Business Resilience and Growth project had had lots of interest over the past couple of months, with businesses looking for bigger grant allocations.

Currently, once grant payments or grant offers made had been taken into account there was approximately £233k remaining of which there were pending applications of c£191k which were considered likely to proceed. There was c£41k left to allocate. Any outstanding current applicants were now being contacted to ensure that any that were unlikely to proceed were identified so that their funding could be made available to other applicants.

○ **Healthy Towns - Parks**

The Parks element of the Healthy Towns project was progressing well and within budget. Updates on all the works, either completed, in progress or due to commence imminently, in Walverden, Victoria and Marsden Parks were provided in the report.

The proposed pump track at Marsden Park had been discussed earlier as part of a separate update.

○ **Healthy Towns - Wavelengths**

A draft planning application for the new extension at Wavelengths had been prepared by PBC's Property Services Department and would be submitted in the next few weeks. Works were expected to commence in Summer 2025 for completion by March 2026 subject to planning permission being granted.

This element of the Healthy Towns project was being aligned with PBC's Car Parking Strategy to mitigate the loss of around 15 spaces at Wavelengths on the footprint of the extension. The role of the Palace Car Park, next to the Billiard Hall, was under consideration for mitigation.

New Gym equipment had been installed at Wavelengths and had received positive feedback. The website for the leisure centre had also been redesigned and was launching soon.

The project was still being delivered within the budget and governance agreed by the Board since its restructuring.

○ **This is Nelson**

The This is Nelson (TIN) project continued to progress well. A summary of the key findings of its 2023/24 end of year independent evaluation was provided in the report.

The project was in the process of commissioning the third of four print commissions, which would be placed on Nelson Library.



(Nelson Town Deal Board 06.12.2024)

The TIN Team had put forward £130k of its budget for public realm works to support the Nelson-wide improvements to public realm and transport infrastructure of which Accessible Nelson formed a part.

Recent activities included Food Nelson Manifesto as part of World Food Day (October 2024) and Peoples Assembly (October 2024). Upcoming plans included Herbalist Sessions & Food Strategy meetings (December 2024); New Art Installations (December 2024); and Peoples Assembly (February 2025).

○ **YES Hub**

The YES Hub project continued to make great progress, consistently meeting its expenditure and output targets.

The project was currently serving an average of 131 young people each week. A breakdown of the types and amount of support the project had provided to date was detailed in the report.

○ **Nelson Long-Term Towns Plan**

Central Government had since confirmed that the programme would proceed but would be delayed. Further consultation would take place in 2025/26 and main programme funding would be released in 2026/27. The programme would also be reoriented in line with Government's priorities and further guidance on this was awaited.

**AGREED**

- (1) That the progress with each of the six Nelson Town Deal projects be noted.
- (2) That the sign-off of the comprehensive communications plan for the Accessible Nelson project be followed up with Lancashire County Council as a matter of urgency.
- (3) That further progress with all of the Nelson Town Deal projects be reported at the next Board meeting.

**7. NELSON TOWN DEAL FINANCE REPORT**

Board Members were provided with an update on the current financial status of all seven of the Nelson Town Deal projects. Details of total project value, MHCLG funding, match funding and funding gaps, total spend to date, remaining funds to spend/pull down both including and excluding match funding and forecasted over/underspends were presented in a table.

Programme Management spend had now been included as had been agreed at the last Board meeting. Match funding evidenced to date had not been included in this report but would be in future reports.

Pendle Borough Council's Finance Department were now proactively supporting Programme Management and had provided all Project Leads with financial and

contract management processes to ensure close monitoring of progress towards spend targets before March 2026. The Board could be assured that everything was currently on track.

Going forward PBC would need to give wider consideration to what it could do to help the organisations delivering all Town Deal projects, not just financially.

A sustainability strategy could be developed that identified what needed to be sustained and then a multi-faceted plan to achieve it, as single streams of funding for sustainability were proven not to work.

## **AGREED**

- (1) That the budget update for all seven Nelson Town Deal projects be noted.
- (2) That match funding evidenced to date be included in all future Nelson Town Deal finance reports.
- (3) That wider consideration by Pendle Borough Council be given to all Town Deal projects' sustainability.

## **8. COMPLIANCE AND TRANSPARENCY UPDATE**

Board Members received a verbal update on compliance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's requirements, specifically in relation to providing Board Member profiles on the Nelson Town Deal Board website.

It was reported that there was just one Board Member profile outstanding. It was further reported that a new page would need to be set up and developed on the Nelson Town Deal Board website to be able to house the profiles and that this work was currently in progress. It was hoped that this work could be completed very early into the New Year.

## **AGREED**

That the outstanding Board Member profile be obtained as a matter of priority.

## **9. COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**

The Project and Programmes Officer 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, Pendle Leisure Trust and In-Situ fortnightly to ensure that the Nelson Town Deal website, news releases and social media were up to date with notable stories resulting from the Town Deal programme.

In November 2024 a press release was sent out by PBC reporting that Buoyant Upholstery Ltd, on Hallam Road, Nelson had installed 700 solar panels onto its warehouse roof, had generated 17 new full-time jobs and had safeguarded 35 existing full-time jobs using Business Resilience and Growth project grant monies.

Most recently efforts had concentrated around Pendle Rise Shopping Centre (PRSC) with PBC's Leader visiting retailers and traders in the centre and communicating key messages to them in Urdu, where appropriate. A more comprehensive update on PRSC communications had been provided in the Revitalised Nelson report considered earlier as part of a separate update.

**AGREED**

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

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Progress (if any) on erecting a statue to celebrate Learie Constantine was enquired about. There currently wasn't any available This is Nelson funding for such a project. Also, there had been requests for suffragette Selina Cooper to be celebrated instead. All options were still being considered but would be dependent on funding becoming available either from underspend or sponsorship.

It was suggested that a series of pavement artworks be considered instead of a statue. Brass plaques could be inlayed in the new Accessible Nelson paving around Pendle Rise Shopping Centre and would be a unique feature. Lancashire County Council might be able to provide some funding for this.

**AGREED**

That all options for celebrating key characters in Nelson's heritage including Learie Constantine, Selina Cooper and Sydney Silverman continue to be considered by the Project Lead for the This Is Nelson project.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 10.00 a.m.

**12. 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.

**13. REVITALISED NELSON**

*(N. Rockett had declared a conflict of interest in this item which was such that he considered he should not take part in the debate and decision on the matter, therefore, he withdrew from the meeting and this concluded his participation in the meeting.)*

The Director of Place updated Board Members on gaining vacant possession and completing demolition of Pendle Rise Shopping Centre (PRSC) in order to present a level site ready for development by March 2026 in line with Town Deal Funding requirements.

The demolition / asbestos advisors had now provided a detailed draft works programme which provided timelines assuming a sequenced/phased start of work packages at the beginning of February 2025. Although only indicative at this stage the programme did reassuringly show that a development ready site by end of March 2026 was achievable.

Firm estimates for the various packages of works were not currently available but would be reported at the next Board Meeting. Board Members, however, could note that the current budget of £1.5million was in line with the estimates previously supplied by the same demolition / asbestos advisors as part of market testing earlier this year.

There had been a meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2024 at which Evershed-Sutherlands, Axis Property Consultants, Brookhouse Developments Ltd and Pendle Borough Council Officers had agreed to adopt a certain approach to achieving vacant possession. This approach was intended to; move quickly to a situation where there was a clear path to achieving vacant possession for the end of June 2025; accurately quantify the level of compensation payments required; address arrears and non-supply of information issues; and accelerate relocation for those tenants who wished to pursue that option. The Board's endorsement was now required and an update on the outcomes would be provided at the next Board meeting.

It was felt that some of the proposed timescales were too generous and it was suggested that shortening them could be considered by Officers. The end of June 2025 deadline had to be met to avoid the whole programme's slippage. The level of risk could not be underestimated.

The importance of maintaining open dialogue with PRSC's tenants and working with and supporting them was emphasised. A programme of tenant engagement was due to commence on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2024.

The Chair led the thanks to the Officer Team for their efforts and contributions to the programme followed by the Director of Place.

## **AGREED**

- (1) That the update be noted.
- (2) That firm estimates for the various packages of works for the strip-out and demolition of Pendle Rise Shopping Centre be reported at the next Board meeting.
- (3) That the approach to achieving vacant possession agreed on 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2024 be endorsed subject to the review of some of the proposed timescales being considered by Officers.
- (4) That an update on the outcomes from (3) be reported at the next Board meeting.

- (5) That thanks be given to the Officer Team for their efforts and contributions to the Revitalised Nelson programme.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_