

**NOTE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
NELSON TOWN DEAL BOARD
HELD AT NELSON TOWN HALL,
AND VIA TEAMS
ON 28TH FEBRUARY 2025**

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 D. Whipp</i>	<i>PBC</i>
<i>C. Bennett</i>	<i>Positive Action in the Community</i>
<i>D. Gordon</i>	<i>Lancashire County Council</i>
<i>J. Hinder</i>	<i>Member of Parliament</i>
<i>J. Rosenblatt</i>	<i>Buoyant Upholstery</i>

Consultants/Advisors

<i>H. Warren</i>	<i>Department for Work and Pensions</i>
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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>D. Dixon</i>	<i>Group Operations Manager, RAISE Partnership</i>
<i>S. Rae</i>	<i>Project and Programmes Officer, 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 A. Mahmood, Town Councillor Z. Ali, R. Grey, P. Hartley, D. Mendoros, A. Patel, D. Rothwell, L. O'Loughlin, N. Rockett, R. Rouse and N. Watson.)

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

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.

C. Bennett declared a potential conflict of interest on Item 5 owing to a member of her organisation, Positive Action in the Community, being employed by the Yes Hub.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th December, 2024 were submitted for approval.

AGREED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th December, 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. ROSE ROUSE

The Chair led the thanks to R. Rouse who would soon be leaving Pendle Borough Council to take up the role of Chief Executive at Darlington Borough Council. The Chair, together with all Members of the Board, thanked her for the help and support she had provided to the Board and wished her well in her new role.

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)

The timeline for the CPO remained broadly on target with the timeline presented to Board Members at the last meeting. The CPO order had been made with two holding objections received. One from Specsavers and one from Lancashire County Council (LCC). In a verbal update Board Members were advised that the LCC objection had been withdrawn yesterday. Board Members were further advised that there had been a meeting with Specsavers immediately prior to this meeting to discuss the withdrawal of their objection. The next step was for the Secretary of State's office to decide on the route by which the CPO would be determined i.e. Public Inquiry, Written Representations, or Self-Determination. Self-Determination was the Project Team's preferred route, but the Written Representations route might be more likely. It was expected that the position would be clearer within the next seven days.

Discussions around relocation and compensation, in line with CPO requirements, had been accelerated following the important Christmas trading period and two PRSC retailers were closing permanently today, five settlement deals had been confirmed with a further one hoped to be confirmed today, and all other negotiations were well advanced. It was hoped that vacant possession, currently timetabled for the end of September 2025, could be brought forward to the end of June 2025 and all negotiations with tenants had been held with this aim in mind. Further detail would be provided in Part II of the meeting upon the exclusion of Public and Press due to its

commercially sensitive nature.

The soft strip out of vacant shop units was completed before the end of the last calendar year. Further soft strip out would continue as agreements on compensation were being reached and units were becoming vacant.

The current budget profile was provided in the report. There might be some adjustments upwards and downwards on these budgets as details continued to be defined on the CPO route, compensation agreements, and demolition costs, but any requisite adjustments were expected to be relatively minor and to balance out within the £10.3 million available for the overall project.

It was asked if there was any possibility of unspent Town Deal capital funding for this project to be used to lessen the significant revenue burden on Pendle Borough Council (PBC) for the running of PRSC until it transferred to PenBrook Developments Ltd. Currently using capital funding to meet revenue costs was strictly prohibited by Central Government but it could be asked to consider making an exception given PBC's financial situation. It was felt this should not be dealt with at Officer level and that it was more an action for J. Hinder MP. The level of flexibility required could be confirmed following this meeting and J. Hinder MP could be fully briefed prior to him making any approach to the Government. Some Board Members felt this might be a bit previous as the budgets at this stage were estimates and any current flexibility within the scheme might be needed later to ensure its delivery but they also felt that there would be no harm in making an enquiry.

○ **Relocation Properties**

Good progress continued to be made with the Telecommunication installations following confirmation by all three Telecommunication companies that alternative sites had been found. This was welcomed by Board Members given the risk this issue posed to the project. The Project Team were actively engaging with all three companies and were now concentrating on finalising both cost and timescales for the moves. It was hoped all the moves could take place either by the end of July 2025 or shortly afterwards.

Relocation properties at both 1-3 and 5-7 Scotland Road had been offered as relocation opportunities to tenants being displaced from PRSC. The former Althams building would continue to be occupied by In-Situ until the end of March 2025 at least pending confirmation of any interest from tenants seeking relocation. Other than 23 Manchester Road, which was intended for Specsavers, no further properties would be acquired pending the outcome of tenant compensation negotiations and confirmation of demand for relocation properties. More PRSC tenants than expected were seeking to negotiate extinguishment but there was still some level of interest in relocation which had yet to be quantified.

It was pointed out that there had been some slip in the overall project, and it was emphasised that further slippage could not be afforded. The timeline was deliberately ambitious but had some contingency incorporated. The Project Team remained optimistic that the March 2026 deadline could be achieved as a lot of things could run in parallel and align with each other.

○ **Trafalgar House**

The retained front portion of Trafalgar House (TH) would be refurbished for commercial use and the rear would be presented as a cleared and levelled site for temporary use for car parking and/or street market expansion initially, with the medium/long-term aim of it providing a further town centre development site.

TH was currently being marketed for a period of three months. A copy of the marketing brochure was attached to the report at Appendix 1. As reported at the last Board meeting there was already at least one interested party and in a verbal update it was reported that a further party had registered an interest.

The Project Team was currently working to organise access into the building for the appointed Quantity Surveyor so that budget estimates and a scope of works could be more accurately assessed and defined.

The Project Team had also opened dialogue with Group First Global Limited, of the ACE Centre, regarding the car park expansion between the rear of Number One Market Street and the ACE Centre, which would form part of this project.

Potential governance issues were raised given that the current proposal did not resemble the original proposal of full demolition which had received Board approval. Whilst the Board would be relaxed in supporting the new proposal it would need assurance that it would meet governance requirements particularly in relation to outcomes and costs. Furthermore, a new business plan would need to be presented to the Board for its formal approval. This would all be done at a future Board meeting once all the details were known and this would likely be once access into the building had been achieved and the marketing period had expired.

AGREED

- (1) That the progress detailed in the report be noted.
- (2) That an approach to Central Government be made by J. Hinder MP, on behalf of the Nelson Town Deal Board, to request flexibility for Town Deal capital funding to be used by Pendle Borough Council to meet the significant revenue costs for running Pendle Rise Shopping Centre until such a time as it transfers to PenBrook Developments Ltd.
- (3) That J. Hinder MP be fully briefed prior to making the approach to Central Government referred to in (2).
- (4) That a new business plan for Trafalgar House (TH) be presented to the Board at a future meeting for approval.
- (5) That assurances that project outcomes for TH would still be met within available budgets be provided at a future meeting.

6. NELSON TOWN DEAL PROGRESS UPDATE

The Director of Place submitted a report to provide an update on progress with six of

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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**

Lancashire County Council Highways (LCCH) had advised that works on Sagar Street/Holme Street, Nelson (Area 5), which were expected to commence on 6th January, 2025, had been delayed slightly due to a requirement to carry out unforeseen utility works. LCCH had not yet provided Pendle Borough Council (PBC) with a firm start date for works but indications were that work should commence in March 2025.

PBC's Project Team were working closely with LCCH colleagues to finalise the Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) between PBC and LCC and get up to date timelines and starting dates for Areas 4 and 6 (Leeds Road/New Scotland Road and Railway Street/Broadway), which are adjacent to Area 5. Discussions were centring around the payment schedule to LCCH as part of the GFA.

Agreement had been reached with LCCH in respect of the scope of works where Accessible Nelson (AN) was co-terminus with Pendle Rise Shopping Centre (PRSC). This would ensure minimal abortive work and further ensure that the AN works integrated with the public realm and highway infrastructure of the redeveloped site, rather than any works requiring re-modelling post installation as part of the PRSC redevelopment. Any works that abutted the boundary line that needed completing post PRSC's redevelopment would be carried out by PenBrook Developments Ltd and a Section 78 Agreement was being formulated on that basis.

Assurance that the project would be delivered on time was sought from LCC's representative on the Board. AN, which had high visibility at County Hall, was a major priority for LCC. There were regular meeting and briefings and mitigations were being looked at. LCC was moving the project forward as quickly as possible and wasn't overly concerned about the delay as it only represented a short one. It was suggested that a PBC and LCC Steering Group be established but this wasn't deemed necessary. There were already PBC and LCC Officer Liaison meetings taking place and their frequency could be increased instead.

○ **Advanced Digital Skills**

Students/trainees continued to benefit from the new facilities at the main Advanced Digital Skills (ADS) Hub at the Nelson and Colne College (N&CC) main campus.

The budget to meet the unexpected costs for a new Air Conditioning facility at the ACE Centre which was holding up finalising the lease for the second phase of the ADS project, the Town Centre Spoke, was agreed at PBC's Full Council meeting held on 19th December, 2024. Works had now commenced, with completion expected within the next two weeks, and this has enabled the lease terms to be agreed between N&CC and PBC.

- **Business Resilience and Growth**

The Business Resilience and Growth project continued to gain interest and to support local businesses by providing investment in new plant or machinery, investment focused on lowering CO2 emissions and/or energy consumption and premises improvements or expansion.

Since the last meeting applicants had been contacted to ensure that they were proceeding with the process and, as a result, some of the larger grant recipients had withdrawn as they were unable to provide the correct assurances to meet the funding requirements. Some new applicants were in the process of providing the relevant information to satisfy the requirements of the grants.

Approximately £600k of grant funding was now paid or committed with a further £200k earmarked against solid potential grant award applications currently being processed. This left a project total of c£280k to allocate.

The Project Team and PBC's Communications Team were working hard and proactively to continue to market the grant funding available and there was confidence that the rest of the grant funding would be committed very shortly.

- **Healthy Towns - Parks**

The Parks element of the Healthy Towns project was still progressing well and within budget.

Works in Walverden Park were nearing completion. Any future works would be undertaken once budgets had been finalised.

Victoria Park had recently had a Learn to Ride Track installed for young people. This has been a great addition to the park and had received a compliment from a member of the public.

The tender pack for the works at Victoria Park's Playground was currently being collated.

Contractors were currently on site completing the tennis court refurbishment at Marsden Park.

A revised location for the Pump Track at Marsden Park (the Lower Triangle) had been agreed by the Nelson, Brierfield and Reedley Committee on 3rd February, 2025. PBC Officers were now in the process of drawing up detailed plans with specialists in the field.

- **Healthy Towns - Wavelengths**

The planning application for the new Wavelengths extension had now been formally submitted. Works were expected to commence at the start of Autumn 2025 for completion by March 2026 subject to planning permission being granted. The procurement for these works was currently being finalised

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The project continued to work and align with PBC's Car Parking Strategy to mitigate the loss of around 15 spaces at Wavelengths on the footprint of the extension.

There were works currently being undertaken at Wavelengths to install new windows and solar panels. These works were due for completion around the end of March 2025. While not directly Town Deal works, the value of these works could be used as match for the Town Deal investment in the leisure centre.

○ **This is Nelson**

The This is Nelson (TiN) project continued to progress well. A successful Peoples' Assembly was held on 1st February, 2025 with over 100 in attendance at PRSC.

In-Situ were continually working to expand their funding and were currently working on putting together an Arts Council bid for a light-based commission and mural-based works across Nelson.

The Time is Everything Exhibition (January 2025) was a recent TiN activity. Upcoming plans included Herbalist Sessions & Food Strategy meetings (Ongoing 2025); New Art Installations (February 2025); and Come and Grow! (March 2025).

○ **YES Hub**

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

This quarter had been particularly successful for the YH with significant progress in their engagement and support initiatives. One key highlight was the significant increase in referrals of young people into various support pathways. For the last reporting quarter this was up to 149 against a target of 68, reflecting the effectiveness of their outreach efforts and partnerships, of particular note was the joint work with the Department of Work and Pensions locally.

A number of activities were currently being held at the YH and were detailed in the report.

Two YH case studies were attached to the report at Appendix 1 and 2 and had been shared on the YH's social media.

○ **Nelson Long-Term Towns Plan**

Guidance on the programme was still awaited from Central Government and was expected in either April or May 2025. It was thought there might be expansion of the key themes, but the detail was not yet known.

PBC was in the process of recruiting two members of staff to assist with the delivery of the programme.

AGREED

- (1) That the progress with each of the six Nelson Town Deal projects be noted.
- (2) That the frequency of the Officer Liaison meetings between Pendle Borough Council and Lancashire County Council Officers for the Accessible Nelson project be increased.
- (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, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's (MHCLG) funding, match funding and funding gaps, total grant spend to date, total match spend as at September 2024, remaining and forecasted future grant and also match spend and forecasted over/underspends were presented in a table.

Match funding evidenced to date had now been included in the report, as had been agreed at the last Board meeting, and would be included in all future reports. Checks with MHCLG had been undertaken and there was confidence that the entire Town Deal programme was where it should be with regards match funding.

Board Members were advised not to be concerned by the big figures within the remaining grant to spend column. The financial situation was constantly moving, and plans were already in place to ensure the current balances could be spent in the next twelve months.

To ensure good governance and provide further assurance to the Board it was suggested that a table containing the project outcomes expected originally and the revised outcomes now expected be included in all future finance reports.

A Project Adjustment Request (PAR) would be submitted to MHCLG to vire £325k of funds from the Revitalised Nelson (RN) project to the Accessible Nelson (AN) project.

Pendle Borough Council's (PBC's) Finance Team were currently negotiating with Lancashire County Council (LCC) regarding the exact approach to introducing £130k of This is Nelson (TiN) project funding to its seven phase overall plan to improve travel across Nelson.

While PBC have requested that the £130k be used to fund an area outside of the Accessible Nelson Areas 4 and 6 (such as Area 7), LCC would prefer for this funding to be used against Areas 4 and 6 (the Accessible Nelson project) in addition to the £325k already vired out of the RN project.

A further PAR submission to MHCLG would be required to cover such an additional virement if the transfer proceeded on the basis of the LCC preference. Also, the achievement of TiN's public realm improvement target would be impacted by the LCC suggested route and the impact of this was in the

process of being reviewed.

Regular monthly meetings continued between PBC's Finance Team and the Programme Management Team (PMT). These meetings had enabled the PMT to provide Project Leads with support and guidance in relation to financial and contract management processes to ensure close monitoring of progress towards spend targets before March 2026.

AGREED

- (1) That the budget update for all seven Nelson Town Deal projects be noted.
- (2) That a table containing the project outcomes expected originally and the revised outcomes now expected be included in all future Nelson Town Deal finance reports.

8. COMPLIANCE AND TRANSPARENCY UPDATE

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

It was reported that since the last meeting a new page had been set up and developed on the NTD website to be able to house Board Members' profiles and that, as of today, all profiles were available to view. The Board was now fully compliant with the MHCLG's requirements.

AGREED

That the update be noted.

9. 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 (PBC's) Communications Team, Pendle Leisure Trust (PLT) and In-situ 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 on marketing the Business Resilience and Growth (BR&G) grants. In January 2025 and February 2025 press releases for BR&G project beneficiaries, Clarkson Coatings Ltd and Farmhouse Biscuits Ltd, respectively, were sent out.

PBC's Communications Team were working closely with Lancashire County Council's Communications Team in a collaborative process to make sure that the communications regarding the Accessible Nelson (AN) project were ready and that both parties were sharing the same messages. A draft press release had been prepared to be sent out at the appropriate time. The Chair envisaged the AN project being the biggest challenge in terms of communication and said it would

need to be at the front and centre going forward.

In December 2024 PLT held a 12-day challenge across Pendle with Paralympic Gold Medallist Gregg Stevenson. Each day Gregg attended one of the four Pendle leisure sites, including Seedhill and Wavelengths. This initiative helped to bring new customers into Wavelengths to experience the new Town Deal funded equipment in the gymnasium.

A press release for the Revitalised Nelson project had been drafted and would be sent out imminently now businesses in Pendle Rise Shopping Centre had started to close.

AGREED

- (1) That the updates on the ongoing communications and engagement work be noted.
- (2) That the Accessible Nelson project be at the front and centre of Nelson Town Deal communications work going forward.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was asked whether a site within Nelson town centre had been identified for the new banking hub and, if it hadn't, whether the properties acquired for the potential relocation of Pendle Rise Shopping Centre tenants could be considered. J. Hinder MP was not aware that a site had been identified and said he would be happy to have a discussion about potentially siting the hub in premises originally intended for relocation.

It was reported that there had been conversations about the NHS establishing a footprint in the town centre with a health hub and that it was currently looking at assets against clinical requirements. Pendle Leisure Trust had also been approached about the possibility of Wavelengths complementing a health hub. It was further reported that Marsden Heights Community College was interested in having a town centre presence from a health and well-being angle.

AGREED

That potentially siting the new banking hub in properties in Nelson town centre originally acquired for the relocation of Pendle Rise Shopping Centre tenants be discussed.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, 14th May 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

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.

Firmer estimates for the hard strip out and asbestos removal packages had been established. Feeding these into the overall budget estimate, leaving current estimates for the final demolition and site clearance phase the same, the expected cost was expected to be at, or just over the available budget.

Although compensation settlements had yet to be agreed with some tenants, indications, so far, were that the budget available for compensation would be sufficient.

Since the last Board meeting the demolition programme had been revised and, reassuringly, it still showed that a development ready site could be achieved by end of March 2026 incorporating a three-month contingency period. Strong progress had been made since the last meeting and there was now a clear path towards achieving full vacant possession, which was key to the demolition timetable, by the end of June 2025.

It was reported that the support provided by Axis Property Consultants, Brookhouse Group Ltd and Eversheds Sutherland LLP had been excellent throughout the whole process and deserved recognition from the Board.

The current position with the preferred 'anchor' end user was enquired about given the level of risk involved to this element of the Revitalised Nelson programme. The end user had started to engage and dialogue with them would continue.

AGREED

- (1) That the update be noted.
- (2) That recognition be given to Axis Property Consultants, Brookhouse Group Ltd and Eversheds Sutherland LLP for the excellent support they had provided with the Pendle Rise Shopping Centre element of the Revitalised Nelson programme.

Chair _____