

**REPORT FROM: DIRECTOR OF PLACE**

**TO: TOWN DEAL BOARD**

**DATE: 13 JUNE 2025**

**Report Author: Richard Savory**

**Tel. No:**

**E-mail: richardsavory@raisepartnership.co.uk**

## **REVITALISE NELSON – PROGRAMME UPDATE**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

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

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

(1) To note the report.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

(1) 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) has run the centre in conjunction with management operator BPL (formerly known as Beddows Limited).
4. The centre continues to operate relatively smoothly on a day-to-day basis, albeit with a reduced number of shops. A number of retailers have now vacated the centre and/or closed their businesses as a result of compensation being agreed prior to CPO powers being formalised.
5. At the last Board Meetings in December 2024 and February 2025, the timeline for the CPO process was laid out in 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

6. This timeline remains broadly on target, although there are some positive changes as a result of the outcome of the CPO process.
7. In February 2025 the Town Deal Board was advised that the CPO order has been made with two holding objections received. One from Specsavers and one from Lancashire County Council (LCC) (with respect to concerns regarding the denotation of the land as Highway). It was also reported that the project team was optimistic of getting both objections withdrawn by the end of February, and before the Secretary of State's office decided on the route by which the CPO was determined i.e. Public Inquiry, Written Representations, or Self-Determination.
8. As reported in February LCC accepted a Letter of Undertaking from Pendle Borough Council. An agreement with Specsavers allowed them a long-stop date to vacate the centre at the end of October 2025. Therefore, following negotiations both objections were indeed withdrawn and the Planning Inspectorate's office confirmed that self-determination could be implemented thus avoiding the need for a CPO inquiry or written representations.
9. Confirmation of the CPO was duly made by self-determination of the PBC Executive on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025. Notices of confirmation were then posted and issued on the 20<sup>th</sup> April marking the start of a 6 week challenge period which expires on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2025.
10. Following completion of the challenge period PBC intends to issue the General Vesting Declaration to all parties at or around the end of June 2025 giving a 4 month notice period to the end of October 2025 to coincide with the long stop date for Specsavers. This 4 month period exceeds the minimum legal requirement of 3 months.
11. At the end of the 4 month notice period, all interests in PRSC will be vested in PBC ensuring vacant possession at this time. Therefore, in respect of the CPO process timeline, while some of the precise interim actions have varied, in terms of nature and timing, the outcome of demolition by March 2026 remains on target.
12. Meetings with each tenant and Axis and/or the PBC Estate Team have continued to take place with respect to compensation in line with CPO requirements. Settlement figures have been negotiated and agreed with the majority of tenants. Only 5 retailers remain without confirmed deals and these are all in progress. These negotiations are commercial in confidence and are covered in a separate report.

13. As previously reported, the soft strip out of shop units vacant at the time was completed before the end of the calendar year. Further soft strip is now being organised as more units have become vacant as a result of compensation agreements.
14. A utility consultant has been engaged to ensure all utilities are identified, transferred to PBC and then deenergised, decommissioned and stripped out ready for demolition. Depending on the nature of the supply some of this work will form part of the demolition contractor's scope of works, other supplies will be shut down in advance.
15. The current demolition schedule is as follows:

ACTIVITY	PLAN START	PLAN DURATION													
			Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
PRSC CPO	1	3													
SOFT STRIP OUT	2	2													
RETAILERS VACATE	1	7													
TELECOMS RELOCATE	1	7													
ASBESTOS CONTRACTOR PROCUREMENT	2	3													
ASBESTOS REMOVAL	5	3													
DEMOLITION CONTRACTOR PROCUREMENT	1	5													
HARD STRIP OUT	8	3													
FULL DEMOLITION	10	3													
LEVEL READY SITE	12	1													

16. (Green squares in the table denote lines where the commencement of activity is post April)
17. The PBC engineering department is liaising with LCC with a view to synchronising the timing of the PRSC demolition with the Accessible Nelson works along Broadway up to Manchester Road. Agreement has already been reached 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 PRSC proposals.
18. Highways consultants, Mode, represented these proposals in a S73 variation to the planning permission which was approved by PBC as Local Planning Authority on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April. Mode are now progressing with the corresponding technical proposals which will form the basis of the S78 agreement and these should be completed and submitted by the 13<sup>th</sup> June.
19. The current budget profile for the PRSC Town Deal funding remains 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>	

20. As there is now no requirement to go to public inquiry there is likely to be a saving on CPO and professional fees of around £150,000. Once confirmed this can be added to the contingency budget. There may be further adjustments upwards and downwards on these budgets as details continue to be defined on compensation agreements, and demolition costs, but any requisite adjustments are expected to balance out within the £10.3 million available.

## **21. Relocation Properties**

22. Good progress continues to be made with the Telecommunication installations. As previously reported all three Telecommunication companies have found alternative sites. EE have advised that their relocation should be complete by July 2025. Airwaves are aware of the end of October deadline and have indicated that while their new site should be ready, they can, if necessary, by arrangement, establish a temporary mast in a car park to maintain blue-light communications. Cornerstone are relocating to the roof of the ACE Centre, their current programme for this move is awaited, but they are aware of the need to vacate by the end of October 2025.

23. The former Althams property at 1-3 Scotland Road is under consideration by the Banking Hub. Penbrook and PBC are currently reviewing these proposals. In the meantime, the property continues to be used by In-Situ for the This is Nelson project.

24. The former proprietors of Armico News in PRSC, have taken a lease on 5-7 Scotland Road.

25. The deal with Specsavers included their relocation to the former bank at 23 Manchester Road and all terms have been agreed. Work is underway to the property to prepare it for their relocation prior to the long-stop PRSC vacation date of the end of October 2025. A site progress report of 22<sup>nd</sup> May from the Quantity Surveyor (QS) responsible for the works confirmed that all was proceeding to schedule.

26. At this time no further properties will be acquired pending the outcome of tenant compensation negotiations, telecom relocation costs and confirmation of any demand for relocation properties as part of the last 5 tenant negotiations.

## **27. Trafalgar House**

28. Pendle Borough Council has decided to retain the historic front element of Trafalgar House and demolish the rear of the building. The front will be refurbished for commercial use and the rear will be presented as a cleared and levelled site, for use for car parking and/or street market expansion, with an additional medium/long term option of it providing a further town centre development site.

29. The QS and Structural Engineer have now accessed the building so that budget estimates and a scope of works can be more accurately assessed and defined. While the internal condition of the building is in a state of dilapidation, the basic structure appears to be sound and the front section which is to be retained will stand on its own once the rear is demolished.

30. The 3 months marketing of the building has now completed with the confirmation of one interested end-user. Meetings have been held with this party to open negotiations regarding their potential occupation of the building. These negotiations are commercial in confidence and are covered in a separate report