

REPORT FROM: DIRECTOR OF PLACE

TO: TOWN DEAL BOARD

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NELSON TOWN DEAL PROGRESS UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Town Deal Board on progress with Nelson Town Deal projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) To note the progress update.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) For information.

1. PROJECT UPDATES

2. REVITALISED NELSON

- See separate report.

3. ACCESSIBLE NELSON

4. The Accessible Nelson Project comprises Areas 4 and 6 of a wider programme of works aimed at enhancing Nelson's public realm, travel routes, infrastructure, and overall accessibility in an integrated and cohesive manner.
5. Works continue to progress on schedule, with new pavements constructed along Scotland Road, laid out in line with the requirements of the new Pendle Rise development. Final surfacing for elements of these works will take place following completion of the Pendle Rise development to minimise abortive work.
6. Much of the road surfacing and cycleway surfacing, which features a distinctive green asphalt finish, is scheduled for delivery and installation as a final consolidated operation across adjoining completed phases towards the end of the overall programme of works.

7. LCC currently anticipates that the Accessible Nelson works will continue until December 2026.
8. The project remains on target to deliver all outputs and outcomes.

9. ADVANCED DIGITAL SKILLS

10. Opening of the new Digital Skills Spoke in the Ace Centre remains on course for the end of February, with delivery of courses starting w/c 02 March 2026.
11. The dedicated BT Open Reach Internet lease line – providing connectivity between the digital skills hub at the main East Lancashire Learning Group (ELLG) campus and the spoke - has been installed, decorating and fit out in the reception and first floor classrooms are nearing completion. Laptops have been ordered and are due for delivery soon.
12. The confidence in this progress from ELLG has been supported by the publication of an ACE Centre Curriculum Plan for February 2026 and the planning of a February engagement event. This will take the following form:

- Ground Floor: Welcome Area
- Ground floor: Employer, stakeholder and learner survey stations to influence future usage and curriculum choices
- Ground floor: Career, Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) booths
- First Floor Learner Experience Rooms: 'have a go' activities in different digital sector pathways
- First Floor: Wider Employer Offer Fair: Workforce development, co-creation, co-delivery and learner placement opportunities.

13. The project remains on target to deliver all outputs and outcomes.

14. BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND GROWTH

15. The Business Resilience and Growth Project continues to make strong progress. It was reported to the November meeting that approximately £7,000 of funding remained. Two applications have now been received that will spend this remaining allocation, therefore all funds are now fully committed.
16. In November it was reported that over £350,000 had been allocated for approved grants that at that time had not been spent or claimed by applicants, as their respective projects were still in progress. Since then, grant payments of c£230,000 have been approved and made to:
 - Innovative Outdoor Projects – specialist production equipment
 - Giddy Kippers – Solar Panels
 - Sugden Limited – CNC Machinery
 - Richard's Sheet Metal – CNC Machinery
17. Therefore, the amount of committed, but not yet spent, grant now sits at just over £100,000 and this is forecast to be spent by the end of March 2026.
18. The project remains on target to deliver all outputs and outcomes.

19. HEALTHY TOWNS – PARKS

20. The Healthy Towns Parks project continues to progress well with virtually all works complete. The remaining bridge improvement scheme in Victoria Park is on target to be finished by the end of March 2026.

21. The project remains on target to deliver all outputs and outcomes.

22. HEALTHY TOWNS – WAVELENGTHS

23. The Wavelengths Project is progressing rapidly. It was reported to the November meeting of the Board that excavation and base preparation works for the extension foundations were in progress and on programme. Since then, the foundations have been completed and the walls and roof of the extension have been finished to provide for a water-tight super-structure.

24. Internal fit-out works will now proceed and are on track for completion for the end of March 2026.

25. Works on the new water feature within the pool play area scheduled for December progressed in similar vein and are complete and open to the public.

26. The project remains on target to deliver all outputs and outcomes.

27. THIS IS NELSON

28. The This is Nelson (TIN) project continues to successfully engage with the local community, supporting a range of initiatives that enhance community spaces across Nelson. The project is currently meeting all output targets, reflecting strong delivery performance.

29. As reported to the November Board meeting, a collaboration between In-Situ, PBC and Penbrook will see the This Is Nelson project involving local schoolchildren in the design of artwork for the PRSC development hoardings and to explore creative gateway features for the town. Design sessions have already begun with the primary schools and installation of the resulting vinyls is planned for February/March, weather permitting.

30. Other current projects include six/seven engagement sessions with the TIN Collective planned between January and June, delivered with artists Rob St John and Tommy Perman, across different venues. Sessions will focus on intergenerational audio collecting, with participants bringing objects and sharing stories.

31. Dana Olărescu will be delivering three taster sessions as part of the Transformation Food Project:

- Youth-led cooking project with Marsden Heights, culminating in a shared meal.
- Planning, meeting and sharing session reflecting on a previous London visit.
- Palestinian kitchen session at Unity Hall, including conversation and food.

32. Nelson Library is to be used as the regular engagement space for Heritage Sessions and sessions for the Agony Massive Collective for a core group of 15-20 young people are due to restart at 3B Systems.

33. The 'Folkloristan' Exhibition will be open from 31 January to 7 March, with a launch event on 4 February, including a storytelling performance and opportunity to engage

with Komal Salman from the Folkloristan Project via Zoom. The ‘talking booth’ installation was undertaken on 27–29 January, and went live from 31 January, with a celebration event held on 4 February.

34. Finally, as outlined in the Finance Report, it is proposed to do a project closure event to coincide with the Festival of Culture in June, thereby extending the This Is Nelson project to the end of June 2026 – a 3-month extension.

35. The project remains on target to deliver all outputs and outcomes.

36. YES HUB

37. The Pendle YES Hub project continues to progress strongly, meeting all reporting outcomes and performance targets. The YES Hub team remains committed to providing young people with opportunities to build confidence, develop skills, and prepare for future employment. Some of the activities that have taken place since the last Board Meeting, or are planned over the coming period, include:

- A community placement for a Medical Student at the Yes Hub, providing positive support for young people.
- A visit to the Inspire Youth Zone (Chorley) to compare delivery models with Pendle.
- A further visit from the High Sheriff, Jim Carter, which helped to further raise the profile of the YES Hub.
- East Lancashire Learning Group delivering health and wellbeing sessions.
- Educational trip to the National Railway Museum, York.
- Winter funding secured from LCC for safe space provision, including breakfast refreshments.
- Bike maintenance club ongoing.
- New bouldering programme introduced.

38. Local business engagement is progressing well, with significant support from PBC’s Principal Economic Development Officer, including regular coffee mornings held with local businesses, and plans for a more focused session to promote Yes Hub activity and encourage employer engagement. Some examples of successes with local employers are:

- ASDA internships
- Protec (Business Resilience Grants recipient) exploring apprenticeship opportunities
- The King’s Trust providing interview preparation support and techniques.
- NatWest delivering “Financial Foundations” sessions, including financial health checks for young people.

39. Progress has been made with legacy funding post the end of the Town Deal funded programme at the end of March 2026. A verbal update on this will be provided to the Board at the meeting.

40. The project remains on target to deliver all outputs and outcomes.

41. GENERAL UPDATES

42. COMMUNICATIONS

43. The Programme Management Team continues to meet fortnightly with PBC's Communications Team, Pendle Leisure Trust, In-Situ and the Nelson Pride in Place Officer to ensure that the website, news releases, and social media channels remain up to date with notable stories and achievements arising from the Town Deal Programme. Actions identified at the previous Town Deal Board meeting have been incorporated into the communications update included later in the agenda, and key updates are being pushed out where required.

44. A visit from officers of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is due to take place on the 17 of February, showcasing the progress made on the project since the last visit on in September 2025.

45. The PBC Communications Team continues to work collaboratively with the Lancashire County Council Communications Team to ensure consistent and coordinated messaging around the Accessible Nelson project. Both teams are actively engaged in ensuring that communications are timely, accurate, and aligned across all platforms.

46. Now that many projects are coming to completion, the PBC Communications Team is working with project leads to get good news stories ready for the end of much of the programme in March. There will be press releases celebrating the projects and reflecting on the positives of the programme.

47. RESOURCES

48. Regular monthly meetings continue to take place between the PBC Finance Team and the Programme Management Team. These sessions provide ongoing support and guidance to project leads on financial management, contract administration, and compliance processes, ensuring robust monitoring of progress towards spend targets up to March 2026 and beyond for those projects delivering past this date.

49. Monthly cash flow forecasting exercises continue to be undertaken and have proven to be highly beneficial in maintaining financial oversight. These will remain an ongoing feature of programme management through to the end of the delivery period.

50. The Programme Management Team also continues to hold monthly progress meetings with project leads to review delivery status, discuss any challenges or risks, and provide targeted guidance and support as required.

51. Guidance from MHCLG on year-end monitoring / reporting is awaited.

52. RAISE Partnership Limited will complete their tenure as Town Deal Programme Managers and Revitalised Nelson Programme Managers at the end of June 2026 after which these functions will pass to PBC Officers. A full and comprehensive handover will be implemented.

