

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NELSON TOWN DEAL BOARD
HELD VIA TEAMS
ON 16TH DECEMBER 2025**

PRESENT

Councillor A. Mahmood (AM) – (In the Chair)

Members of the Board

<i>Councillor F. Ahmad (FA)</i>	<i>Pendle Borough Council (PBC)</i>
<i>Councillor N. Ahmed (NA)</i>	<i>PBC</i>
<i>County Councillor A. Ali (AA)</i>	<i>Lancashire County Council</i>
<i>C. Bennett (CB)</i>	<i>Positive Action in the Community</i>
<i>R. Grey (RG)</i>	<i>Lancashire Constabulary</i>
<i>J. Hinder (JH)</i>	<i>Member of Parliament</i>
<i>Councillor M. Iqbal (MI)</i>	<i>PBC</i>
<i>N. Rockett (NR)</i>	<i>Owner of Phoenix Health</i>
<i>Councillor D. Whipp (DW)</i>	<i>PBC</i>

Officers in attendance

<i>I. Bokhari (IB)</i>	<i>Head of Economic Growth, PBC</i>
<i>D. Dixon (DD)</i>	<i>Group Operations Manager, RAISE Partnership</i>
<i>R. Ferguson (RF)</i>	<i>Committee Administrator, PBC</i>
<i>D. Gamble (DG)</i>	<i>Projects and Programmes Officer, PBC</i>
<i>Z. Iqbal (ZI)</i>	<i>Project Support Assistant, RAISE Partnership</i>
<i>P. Preston (PP)</i>	<i>Democratic Services Manager, PBC</i>
<i>R. Savory (RS)</i>	<i>Project Manager, RAISE Partnership</i>
<i>P. Spurr (PS)</i>	<i>Director of Place, PBC</i>
<i>N. Watson (NW)</i>	<i>Assistant Director (Planning, Building Control & Regulatory Services) PBC</i>

Also in attendance

M. Nuttall (MN) Property Director, Brookhouse Group

(Apologies for absence were received from D. Langton, K. Spencer, K. Arciniega, S. Barnes, H. Warren, P. Hartley and A. Patel)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor D. Whipp declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 4 (Trafalgar House), on account of his role at PBC and as Director of Penbrook Developments Ltd.

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Councillor A. Mahmood declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 4 (Trafalgar House), on account of his role at PBC and as Director of Penbrook Developments Ltd.

As the Vice Chair had declared an interest, nominations were invited for the appointment of Chair, for this meeting only.

RESOLVED

That Councillor M. Iqbal be appointed Chair.

Councillor M. Iqbal (Chair)

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2025 were submitted for approval.

AGREED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2025 be approved as a correct record by the Chair.

4. TRAFALGAR HOUSE

PS submitted a report updating the Board on progress with submitting the planning application for Trafalgar House, construction cost estimates received from contractors, and the assessment of façade retention as an option by which the heritage of the property could be preserved with the likelihood of planning permission being obtained. The report asked members to reaffirm the virement of £673,000 from Pendle Rise and Relocation budgets to Trafalgar House.

At the November meeting the Howell Goodfellow's cost plan for the proposed works to Trafalgar House showed an estimated cost of £1,702,066. This was set out at Appendix 2 of the report. The Board had approved a virement of £673,000 from Pendle Rise and Relocation Properties budgets to Trafalgar House to meet the estimated costs, subject to a number of conditions. These were set out in paragraph 6 of the report and included any savings realised as a result of actual tenders being received, being retained within NTD funds; a planning application being submitted as soon as possible to limit delay; and a review of the option to retain the façade of the building only as a way of preserving heritage value at a reduced cost.

It was advised that a report was taken to the December meeting of the PBC Executive following the Town Deal Board's decisions. It was advised that once planning permission had been approved a full tender exercise would be undertaken by Penbrook. The results of the tender exercise would be reported to the PBC Executive for formal approval to proceed with the project through Penbrook.

RS presented the report and reiterated to members the urgency of coming to a decision due to the advanced dereliction of the building. Many different options had been looked at over the years, and the report recommended to proceed with demolition and partial retention of the heritage frontage. The Board was advised that a planning application to proceed with the said recommendations would be submitted by the end of January and would be most likely heard at the meeting of the Nelson, Brierfield & Reedley Committee in March 2026.

The report stated that three similar demolition tenders had now been received which supported the cost plan for the demolition of £460,000. The proposed renovation of the remaining building to deliver the proposed scheme in its entirety, had been independently costed by Barnfield Construction Limited at £1.70m. It was therefore not possible to deliver any savings from the budgeted figure of £1,702,066. As time went on costs were likely to increase due to inflation and the increasing deterioration of the building and so the contingency of 3% in the budgeted figure had been increased to £256,231 (15% of the construction costs).

Lanpro, Heritage Consultants retained by Penbrook, who had been advising on the planning application, had provided a report on the feasibility of a façade retention only option for Trafalgar House. Their findings were set out at Appendix 1 and summarised in the report. Their report concluded that “retention and sensitive/selective demolition or adaptation of the whole building provides a more heritage-led, policy compliant and contextually appropriate solution”.

It was said the appendix to the report provided unambiguous advice to not proceed with façade-only retention, as this option was more costly and was not supported from a conservation perspective. The assessment was that ‘façade retention only’ was considered more costly than the current proposals and would likely diminish the likelihood of planning permission being granted as it would not adequately preserve the heritage of the property.

The proposal to proceed with partial demolition and retention of the frontage provided a pragmatic, viable way forward, preserving the heritage of the property, whilst also finding an economical use for the repurposed floor space and was more likely to get planning permission.

It was asked by a member if the heritage advice received in the report had merit. The response provided by MN outlined a standard approach which the advisors had followed. A point was raised whereby under the proposals set out in the report, the building will have a purpose. It was said that if the Board were to proceed with façade-only retention the building would serve no purpose and gradually deteriorate in condition.

A member asked that the Board be reminded of the proposal going forward for the purpose of clarity. It was ratified that under the current proposal set out in the report partial demolition would take place to allow for car parking, with the front portion of the building to be retained and refurbished for commercial/community use. It was advised that there had been interest expressed in the lease of the to-be-refurbished space, which highlighted the low risk of an empty and unused building.

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Members of the Board raised concerns regarding several unused office spaces in Nelson and the difficulty in finding tenants to occupy these spaces. These included Nelson Town Hall, No 1 Market Street and offices next to the Ace Centre. There was also a concern raised on the cost of the maintenance for the remaining heritage section once the demolition had taken place. One member called attention to the lack of an indoor market in Nelson and mentioned the difficulty the marketeers for Nelson's outdoor market face in cold winter months.

DW alluded to the wish of constituents of Nelson, reminding the Board that an empty building which serves no purpose would be detrimental to the prospects of Nelson Town Centre. He also advised that if Local Government Reorganisation occurred, it would be beneficial and a negotiating power to PBC to have as much office space as possible. It was said Nelson could be an administrative base for the unitary authority.

AA expressed concern about the cost of the project. It was said that the money could be used elsewhere in Nelson. It was said by NA that the cost to the taxpayer must be considered and the benefits which the project could bring to Nelson and Pendle in the long term.

PS commented on the regeneration work in Nelson town centre which will be set to see renovations to the Lord Nelson, demolition and re-development of Pendle Rise and the refurbishment of Wavelengths. Pendle Rise and Wavelengths, along with Trafalgar House, had been core capital projects as part of the Town Deal Programme which aims to revitalise Nelson Town Centre.

RS highlighted that to demolish the entire building would be near impossible as planning permission would be required to do so which would require the Board to show that there was no viable use for the building. The proposals put forward allow for a partial historic retention and an economical use of the building.

The Chair summarised the debates and conversations that had taken place and advised that the Board move the recommendations that had been set out in the report.

The outcome of this meeting would be reported to the meeting of the PBC Executive on 17th December for their endorsement.

AGREED

- (1) That a façade-only retention option for Trafalgar House not be progressed as it did not provide a means to preserve heritage value at a reduced cost.
- (2) That the virement of £673,000 from Pendle Rise and relocation budgets to Trafalgar House, approved at the 14th November meeting, be reaffirmed.

(Immediately following the vote Councillors F. Ahmad and D. Whipp and County Councillor A. Ali requested that it be recorded in the minutes that they abstained from voting on the motion.)

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5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday 6th February 2026 at 10.00 a.m.

Chair _____