

**Workington Towns Deal Board Meeting
Friday 11th February 2022
Draft Minutes**

The meeting was held via MS Teams

Attendance

Board Members

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Cllr. Mike Johnson (Chair) | Allerdale Borough Council |
| • Mark Jenkinson | MP for Workington |
| • Cllr. Paul Scott | Allerdale Borough Council |
| • Jonny Lowe | Iggesund |
| • Chris Nattress | Lakes College |
| • Bridget Johns | Cumbria CVS |
| • David Taylor | Allerdale Investment Partnership |
| • Jo Lappin | Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership |
| • Catherine Gourlay | Workington Town Council |
| • Anthony Wareing | Workington Heritage Group |
| • Cllr. Alan Barry | Cumbria County Council |
| • Cllr. Mike Heaslip | Allerdale Borough Council |

Officers

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| • Kevin Kerrigan | Allerdale Borough Council |
| • Catherine Nicholson | Allerdale Borough Council |
| • Brittany Mason | BEIS |
| • Michael Barry | Cumbria County Council |
| • Lizzy Shaw | Cumbria County Council |
| • Francesca Robinson | Allerdale Borough Council |
| • Eloise Abbott | BEIS |

1. Apologies

John Coughlan and Jack Gordon. Mike Johnson acted as Chair in John's absence

2. Minutes from previous meeting (14th January 2022)

Minutes agreed

3. Project Update – Innovation Centre

Kevin Kerrigan provided the update for this project.

The Aims and Objectives, Value for Money and Capital Costs have all been refined. It is estimated that construction costs have risen from £8.5 million to

£8.77 million. Subject to approval, the contribution from Allerdale Borough Council will increase from the initial £1 million to £1.3 million.

The predicted Revenue Costs have also been refined – it is expected that there will be a cumulative loss of £630,000 before the Centre breaks even. It is expected that the £700,000 support from the Towns Fund will cover this; the profiling and timing of the draw down of this funding needs to be confirmed.

It is proposed that a Board will be created to ensure that the Innovation Centre is delivered and operating successfully, and to ensure that the Centre complements existing facilities in West Cumbria rather than providing competition.

The preferred option will be to procure a specialist operator to run the Centre on Allerdale Borough Council's behalf to ensure the required occupancy levels and income generation. Some market testing will be carried out to see if there is a demand for this type of work. The café within the Centre will be sub-contracted to a local supplier.

Chris Nattress asked how the outputs have been tested in terms of risk and how will the predicted loss be underwritten if it lasts longer than forecasted. Kevin Kerrigan responded saying that SQW have tested the outputs and believe them to be achievable. Allerdale Borough Council has rigorously tested the finances as it will be the Council who is required to support any financial losses.

Jo Lappin asked about the financial delivery timescales. Kevin Kerrigan explained that it had been modelled over a 10 year period with the breakeven/surplus point expected in Year 7.

David Taylor explained that there had been discussions with a number of companies from different industry sectors who would be interested in using the facility. Jo Lappin stated that there needs to be interest from independent, private businesses rather than simply re-deploying existing public estates and that demand for future office space cannot be based on historic demand. David confirmed that the interested companies represent a broad business base.

4. Project Update – Sports Village

Chris Nattress declared an interest in this item.

Kevin Kerrigan provided the update for this project

There remains a challenge to secure the necessary match funding to deliver the whole project. £12.5 million is required, with around £6.5 million currently pledged. If the match funding cannot be secured, the project would be delivered in phases, with the first phase using the £6.5 million to provide a

new main stand at Borough Park with a new synthetic pitch to support the planned shared use.

Currently working with both clubs to have a co-ordinated approach to communication to ensure the effective dissemination of information across all parties.

Chris Nattress asked if the delivery of the full scheme is reliant on the match funding and if such funding is not secured, is all the Towns Deal funding lost? Jo Lappin asked if the Government has an opportunity to re-look at the project if the finances are not achieved. KK explained that the Heads of Terms for the funding requires that all match funding is required, but it is the intention to approach Government to seek approval to take the project forward as a phased development and demonstrate that it remains value for money. Brittany Mason from BEIS explained that if the Business Case has significantly changed then detailed information and justification will be required for a review by the Central Towns Fund.

Alan Barry asked when the stakeholder engagement would occur; Kevin stated that it will be aligned with the publication of the Executive Report.

5. AOB

Kevin Kerrigan shared a digital image of the Innovation Centre and architectural details of the Digital Accelerator project.

Chris Nattress explained that the Digital Accelerator project is a repurposing exercise, in line with the broader development of the Collage in terms of improving links with local businesses. The design reflects feedback received from industry.

Alan Barry questioned the progress of the cleaning programme around the Bridge. KK explained that the netting had been removed at the request of Cumbria County Council due to animal welfare but that a daily cleaning regime of the footpaths is ongoing. Open to working with the County Council and the third party landowners to find a solution, although it should be noted that it could be difficult as access is still required for bridge inspection and maintenance.

Paul Scott sought reassurance that the lease for Workington Reds would be extended, despite the move to a Unitary Authority. Cllr. Mike Johnson confirmed that discussions were ongoing regarding the lease and that it was unlikely that the local government reorganisation would affect this.

Meeting ended 15:06