

**Workington Towns Deal Board Meeting
Friday 14 January 2022
Draft Minutes**

Attendance

Board Members

Cllr Alan Barry	Cumbria County Council
John Coughlan (Chair)	TSP Engineering Ltd
Jack Gordon	Sovereign Centros
Catherine Gourlay	Workington Town Council
Valerie Hallard	Churches Together in Workington
Cllr Mike Heaslip	Allerdale Borough Council
Mark Jenkinson MP	MP for Workington
Bridget Johns	Cumbria Council for Voluntary Service
Cllr Mike Johnson	Allerdale Borough Council
Jo Lappin	Cumbria LEP
Jonny Lowe	Iggesund
Chris Natrass	Lakes College
Cllr Paul Scott	Allerdale Borough Council
Anthony Wareing	Workington Heritage Group

Officers/Support

Gerard Acton	Cumbria County Council
Julie Alexander	Allerdale Borough Council
Michael Barry	Cumbria County Council
Kevin Kerrigan	Allerdale Borough Council
Brittany Mason	BEIS
Catherine Nicholson	Allerdale Borough Council
Lizzy Shaw	Cumbria County Council

1. Introductions

The Chair welcomed all Board Members and their supporting officers to the meeting.

Apologies

David Taylor

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Actions

The board agreed the minutes of the last meeting.

3. Update/Overview of Business Cases

Business case summaries for each of the Town deal projects were circulated to the group prior to the meeting.

Public Realm and Connectivity

The Programme Manager for the project, Gerard Acton, presented plans for Murray Road, Upton Street, and Central Way with connections to the station, outlining how the scheme had been identified to deliver Town Investment Plan priorities within the budget available. Next steps include further stakeholder engagement and work on preliminary designs. Ensuing discussions included provision for Argos deliveries and the need to ensure that there is sufficient disabled carparking within the town centre.

Port of Workington/Oldside

Michael Barry confirmed that the proposals involve the creation of improved laydown areas at the Port, and remediation of contaminated land both at the Port and adjoining land at Oldside. The works align with national, regional and local aspirations for growth and also with the recently adopted Port of Workington Masterplan.

Digital Accelerator

Kevin Kerrigan outlined the operation of the Workington Digital Accelerator (WDA) programme. The Towns Fund will cover the capital costs of the scheme which relate to the re-configuring of Lakes College, software licensing and IT upgrades. There will be ongoing revenue costs associated with the scheme for example staffing, but the project has been assessed as generating a moderate operating surplus based on funding contracts that Lakes College would be able to access to deliver training. No match funding is needed, and the scheme is sustainable.

Chris Nattrass confirmed that the Lillyhall campus would function as the locus of a hub and spoke type facility, linking with Gen2, Energus and other interested parties and extending into Workington and the town innovation centre to connect with residents and communities. In a response to a query as to whether the programme would be available to all including those on lower

incomes, the inclusivity of the scheme was confirmed, with some courses being tailored for particular audiences.

CN also clarified that there was no link to the I o T for Cumbria which had not been successful, and nor was the business case for the WDA dependent upon the I o T. The WDA project has been tested locally with industry and employers by telephone which confirmed that demand exists.

Innovation Centre

Kevin Kerrigan updated the board on work that has been undertaken on this scheme. Following demand assessment analysis it was concluded that a 15,000 ft² facility would be the optimal size for the project. A larger structure of 20,000 ft² would be potentially overambitious and unaffordable, and a smaller scheme of 10,000 ft² would be insufficient to deliver the range of facilities necessary to support the entrepreneurship package. Further design work is needed to refine the footprint, scale, mass and appearance details, with cross checking of the cost to ensure affordability and consistency with the capital contribution and match funding. Cash flow revenue work has been undertaken and assumes low occupancy initially, rising to 90% by year 10. Initial years will run at a loss and ongoing revenue support will be needed. The predicted deficit is however within the envelope of revenue support funding identified within the town deal.

Jo Lappin enquired about market demand, the potential for other development in close proximity and whether the occupancy was realistic. In view of the fact that the costs would need to be underwritten further details on market demand would be helpful. It was confirmed that the project team would be asked to look at sensitivity testing again, and the chair asked that feedback be provided to the next board meeting.

Sports Village

Kevin Kerrigan reported on the Workington Sports Village WSV. The projected costs of £12.5 million exceeds original estimates, and alternative design scenarios are being tested. There are risks associated with the availability of match funding, and there is a need to be realistic about what can be delivered. There have been positive discussions with the Football Foundation. A phased approach is being considered, examining what can be delivered with existing funds, and seeking to achieve maximum outcomes in the initial phase. Cllr Mike Heaslip queried timescales for being able to assemble further funding. KK confirmed that ABC needed to approve a business case and submit a project summary by the end of March

Cllr Alan Barry questioned what impact of Local Government Review (LGR) would have on the process, with spending allocated in years after the existing authorities would cease to exist. KK confirmed that planned contributions from ABC would be included within the capital budget. Cllr Mike Johnson confirmed that Govt had made it clear that LGR does not affect Towns Fund, and that schemes will continue under the new authority.

Jo Lappin asked about the match funding - it would be helpful to understand what risk is in the gap funding and the level of gap. If we don't get the money, how is the project rescope to ensure that value is added. KK confirmed that work was ongoing and an update would be provided to the Board at the next meeting and would have an opportunity to comment further.

5. *Future Meetings*

Next Board meeting – Friday 11 February 2022 – 2:30 pm, to be held remotely.

The meeting ended at 3:30 pm