

Minutes

Blyth Town Deal Board

9am - 10am on Wednesday, 30 September 2020
(online)

Present:

Chair, Fergusons Transport	Alan Ferguson (AF)
Active Northumberland	Mark Warnes (MW)
Advance Northumberland	Michael Black (MB)
Bede Academy	Andrew Thelwell (AT)
Blyth Community Network	Thom Bradley (TB)
Blyth Town Council	Cllr Warren Taylor (WT)
Blyth Town Forum	Greg Gavin (GG)
NCC Cultural Development Manager	Wendy Scott (WS)
Northumberland Estates	Trevor Gyllenspetz (TG)
Newcastle University	Jane Richardson (JR)
Northumberland County Councillors	Cllr Richard Wearmouth, Economic Dev (RW)
North East Local Enterprise Partnership	Helen Golightly (HG)
North of Tyne Combined Authority	Rob Hamilton (RH)
ORE Catapult	Tony Quinn (TQ)
Port of Blyth	Martin Lawlor (ML)
Tharsus	Matthew Murray (MM)

In Attendance:

BEIS	Jonathan Gilroy
Economic Growth and Regeneration Team (NCC):	Rob Strettle (RS) Anne Lawson (AL) Helyn Douglas (HD)
New Skills Consulting	Peter Graham (PG)

Apologies:

Jobcentre Plus, DWP	Vicky Potter (VP)
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1 Governance Documents

Action

The following documents were presented for review:

- Declaration of Interests Form
- Pen Portrait
- Code of Conduct
- Terms of Reference

All of the above items were adopted.

Vice Chairs will be required - ideally one each from the public and private sectors. Members were asked to consider this and it will be on the next agenda.

2 Declaration of Interests

The Chair reminded all members to complete their declaration of interests form - even if it is blank. Without a signed declaration, members cannot take an active part in the business of the Board. The interests will not be published on the website

ALL

Pen portraits will be published on the website and it is a requirement of MHCLG that these are completed and displayed on the website. All board members were asked to submit these as soon as possible.

There were no interests declared.

3 Minutes of the last meeting - 29 July 2020

These were agreed to be accurate.

4 Town Deal 2020 update

The Chair thanked all those involved in getting the bid to this stage noting the hard work involved.

AL gave an update on progress and next steps. An additional amount of £750k has today been confirmed for Blyth from the Town Deal (a press release will go out shortly). This will be used to add value to the Blyth Town Council works already planned for Bowes Street.

Works will focus on improvements to parking, paths, cycleways and green areas, including a one-way system running west to east. Overall, this will provide better access and a more attractive environment, as well as building confidence in town centre traders.

Taken together these improvements will be labelled 'Northern Gateway' and will be integrated with the Market Place works. Work will start in January (avoiding any interference to the Christmas trade) and is due to be completed within 5 months.

5 Future High Street Fund (RS)

There is still no update yet on whether the bid has been successful; clarification is being sought by MHCLG on some aspects. A decision is expected in the 'Autumn'.

6 Town Deal Development

RS talked through the processes for developing projects for the Town Deal.

Development Process

- Work package 1 is the production of a Regeneration Framework with evidence base, utilising input from partners (Sep / Oct).
- Work package 2 focus on engagement with stakeholders around the priorities. The first round will take place during Oct (though any 'long list' of projects will not be used at this stage). Further work

will take place during Nov / Dec to identify a short list of agreed priorities.

- Work packages 3 and 4 overlap and concentrate on project development (identifying those in scope) and the Town Investment Plan.

Resources - a sum of £162k has been allocated for developing the Town Investment Plan, business cases, architectural and spatial plans and visuals.

Blyth Regeneration Framework

This document will set out the vision and objectives for Blyth, along with an evidence base. Ultimately a public brochure will be produced. This is the first step in developing the Town Investment Plan (TIP). Alongside this we are building a spatial map of the town and relevant assets. RS directed members to look at the 'Logic Model' for a handy reference to the projects, and noted that this will be updated over time.

AT would like more explicit reference to schools and the potential skills pipeline. JR endorsed that view and suggested going further to position Blyth as leading on innovation at a national level.

ML was keen to highlight the unique opportunities that Blyth can bring to the low carbon agenda nationally.

RS and PG agreed to make these elements more prominent and explain Blyth's unique offer. Whilst the majority of the funding is capital there will be an opportunity and a need to explain how the projects fit into the wider context.

AF, PG, AT

AT, PG and AF will discuss this further outside of the meeting.

Community Engagement

Phase 1 of the process will start in October with new web pages and a dedicated email address, as well as the ongoing 'MyTown' feedback. A survey is due to be launched next week (we will contact those who replied to earlier surveys and gave us their emails). Looking beyond that there will be focus groups (initially for young people, businesses., VCS and culture organisations).

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 restrictions all consultation work will have to be done online. Utilising social media we will tell the 'story so far' including Future High Street Fund, Northern Gateway, Northumbria Police's Aurora project and the Safer Blyth initiative. Phase 2 will commence when we are ready to shortlist the projects.

Project prioritisation

This will involve reviewing and selecting projects that best fit with the objectives and importantly have an evidence base. Selection criteria will include the level of investment, additionality to other funds, engagement with the local community, showing an innovative approach, deliverability and building in resilience for future changes (such as from Covid-19).

There is potentially £25m available from the Town Deal; to be spent on 5-6 high impact and innovative projects. TQ asked to set aside some element

for 'pump-priming' or 'last mile' funding of other projects. This will be considered but it will be necessary for the Town Deal to be clear on its goals and not spread the funding too thinly.

Next steps

- Oct - initially there will be a 'closed call' for projects sent out to Board members - with a return deadline of 09 October.
- Nov - priority projects will then be brought bac to the Board meeting in November
- Dec - a draft of the Town Investment Plan will be presented
- Jan - TIP is submitted

7 Any Other Business

There were no items raised.

8 Future meetings (online, unless otherwise stated):

10.30am on Wednesday, 04 November 2020

9am on Wednesday, 02 December 2020

2pm on Wednesday, 13 January 2021