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Blyth Town Board

Thursday 17 July 2024

15.00 – 16.30

Via Teams.



Northumberland
County Council

Note of the Meeting

Member Name	Organisation	25/06/2024
Alan Ferguson (AF) - CHAIR	Fergusons Transport	Attended
Thom Bradley (TB)	Community Voluntary Action Blyth Valley	Attended
Lesley Anne Cassie	Job Centre Plus	<i>Apologies</i>
Debbie Draper (DD) (on behalf of Lesley Anne Cassie)	Jobcentre Plus	Attended
Rev Canon Ian Flintoff (IF)	Blyth Churches Together	Attended
Steven Harrison (SH)	Advance Northumberland	<i>Apologies</i>
Steven Hume (SH)	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Northumbria	
Martin Lawlor (ML)	Port of Blyth	<i>Apologies</i>
Rt Hon Ian Lavery MP (IL)	Member of Parliament for Blyth and Ashington Constituency	<i>Apologies</i>
Paul B Robertson (PR) (on behalf of Ian Lavery MP)	Office of Member of Parliament for Blyth and Ashington Constituency	Attended
Sarah McMillan (SM)	Director of Economic Development & Growth, NCC	<i>Apologies</i>
David Warburton (DW) on behalf of Sarah McMillan	Head of Regeneration, NCC	Attended
Matthew Murray (MM)	Tharsus	
Cllr Kath Nisbet (KN)	Northumberland County Council	Attended
Heather Orton (HO)	North East Combined Authority	Attended
Cllr Wojciech Ploszaj (WP)	Northumberland County Council	Attended
Tony Quinn (TQ)	ORE - Catapult	Attended
Jon Ridley (JR)	Newcastle College	
Jane Robinson (JR)	Newcastle University	<i>Apologies</i>
Cllr Warren Taylor (WT)	Blyth Town Council	Attended
Andrew Thelwell (AT)	Bede Academy	Attended
Cllr Richard Wearmouth (RW)	Northumberland County Council	<i>Apologies</i>
Jan Willis (JW)	Executive Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), NCC	<i>Apologies</i>

In Attendance	Organisation	25/06/2024
Cristina Armstrong (CA)	Project Manager, NCC	<i>Apologies</i>
Reemer Bailey (RB)	Project Manager, NCC	Attended
Lara Baker (LB)	Programme Manager, NCC	Attended
Joanne Burn (JB)	Finance & Claims Manager, NCC	<i>Apologies</i>

Peter Graham (PG)	New Skills	Attended
Bev Harrison, (BH)	Regeneration Finance & Performance Manager, NCC	<i>Apologies</i>
Carol Jameson (CJ)	Regeneration Programmes Investment Manager, NCC	Attended
Elaine Maylin (EM)	Regeneration Investment Funding Manager, NCC	<i>Apologies</i>
Lee Paris (LP)	Project Manager, NCC	Attended
Taylor Sharp (TS)	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government	Attended
Beth Gorman	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government	Attended
Rob Strettle (RS)	Economic Growth & Regeneration Manager, NCC	Attended
Helen Swinburn (HS)	Projects Officer, NCC	<i>Apologies</i>
Peter Graham	New Skills consulting	Attended

1.	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of interest	Chair
	<p>Apologies noted as above.</p> <p>AF welcomed new members – Paul B Robertson attending on behalf of Rt Hon Ian Lavery MP and noted Dr Jon Oust has joined the Board, although has given apologies for this meeting but was able to attend the recent Partnership workshop.</p> <p>AF welcomed additional attendees – Beth Gorman attending with Taylor Sharp as MHCLH observer and Peter Graham from New Skills Consulting who have assisted the council in the development of the LTPFT submission given the short timescales and additional resource required.</p> <p>Declaration – as noted at the last Board meeting NCC is the intermediate project sponsor for all 5 projects within the new Long Term Plan for the Town (LTPFTs) and Advance Northumberland supported the development of the Business Network proposal.</p> <p>RS noted the projects or funds created then provide the ability for a much larger range of project sponsors to come forward through things like the Community Fund subject to approval by the board and confirmation of the programme by Government.</p>	
2.	Minutes of the last meeting	Chair
	Minutes were accepted as a true and correct record.	
3.	Governance	Rob Strettle
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RS - An updated version of the terms of reference and Code of Conduct will be shared in the Summer. It would not be too different to the documents that we had before just with some slight updates as a result of the guidance we received previously. RS - apologised for this not being shared sooner and this is attributed to capacity issues at the moment as the team have been 	

	<p>focusing on delivery of the existing programme, engagement and consultation work and the related LTPFT submissions development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RS – then went on to outline a governance update focused on proposals for new members. RS shared the current position in regard to expanding the board by way of new membership in line with the Long Term Plan For Towns submission requirements. • Rs noted that the Board had considered the size and composition of the Board in the Spring and noted that a sample review of c10 other boards around the Country showed there was no one size fits all model with some boards as small as 10 members and some nearer 25-30 like Blyth. His reflection was that its important to think about what works for the town as a key consideration - with a view to enhancing Community, Culture, Health and Business representation on the Board to provide greater balance building on the good work to date. And reflecting the shifting of the emphasis coming from the LTPfTs. • RS also updated that Ian Lavery MP will be no doubt getting involved with the board and shared that a meeting had taken place with Mr Lavery yesterday where an initial introduction to the work going on was given and the intention is to follow up in due course and thanked Ian's representative for finding time to join the meeting in Ian's absence due to parliamentary business. • From the nominations that came forward, it is clear to see that people from these sectors 'wear a number of hats'. Noting that people play a number of roles in the community in Blyth. • RS – reflected on the original objective which was to strengthen community and culture representatives on the Board originally seeking to add a further three representatives plus replacing Wendy Scott who had represented the Culture Advisory Group in recent years. He then took the Board through the list of the current board members and explained where there were gaps in representation. • In terms of the public sector and private sector at a strategic and large business level it was felt that there was generally good representation e.g. combined authority, Job Centre, and NCC representatives in terms of assurance when needed, and other representatives in including the Police and Crime Commissioner, OREC, etc. • For health the Board now has a representative from the PCN. Dr Jon Aust. • The board is still seeking a Leisure representation. This will be further pursued in the summer considering the new Leisure operator or one of the towns sporting clubs may be an option given a number attended the recent partnership workshop. • Lastly a small business representative i.e. property rep and a land rep were felt to be important to add a wider range of business perspectives to the group. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RS – then stated the current nominations positions: • In terms of the Culture and Community. Initially we sought 2 from the culture sector via the Cultural Advisory Group and for Community we would be looking to the Heart of Blyth for two nominations. • However, as a result of the some of the engagement work, other interest has come forward following the Partnership event. • RS considered this to be a positive thing showing appetite from partners to support the Board. • The following list was presented to the board – all of whom have completed a pen portrait similar to those of existing Board members to give an overview of what they could bring to the Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dale Carty – Buffalo Community Centre Deputy Manager and youth worker. ○ Dave Cowan – Project Space manager previously and a local musician and music promoter. ○ Claire Young – A well known volunteer across Blyth, Ridley Park, cleaner and greener. ○ Clive Gray – Blyth Tall Ship and heritage/ maritime. ○ Mathew Margetts – Edible Architecture, Kings Head Cafe and Republic Gallery, private and culture sector. ○ Fran Castle – Headway Theatre. Inclusive arts and culture. ○ Sharon Fawcett – Blyth Resource and Innovation Centre – enterprise and employability. • RS noted the areas above and in the report were not exhaustive examples all nominees bring a wider range of knowledge and expertise from varied careers and roles. • RS shared the below broad considerations with a view to assisting the board in reaching a consensus and approval as to which of the nominations to bring onto the board. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ to invite an increased number of Culture and Community representatives to mirror the need to show a better balance and proportionality to the type of work going on. ○ to do some further to work in terms of the business representation and will do more work during the summer. ○ Fran Castle and Clive Grey could join the board with a role as Chair and Co-chair of the CAG. ○ the community reps – Dale, Clive and Sharon would work well if the Board is minded to add another community rep to the Board from Heart of Blyth Partnership. ○ Although Mags was nominated by the CAG a valuable role could be fulfilled by him from a small business perspective and any further reps from this sector could be considered at a later date. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RS noted that in terms of community reps that came forward he had contacted Dave Cowan who has confirmed he would be happy to maintain his current role on the CAG and in terms of the recommendations as above would not therefore stand for appointment onto the board at this time. ○ RS recommended by accepting all the list of people onto the board as outlined in the paper this would achieve the balance we seek. ○ The board would then consist of around 29 representatives. A bigger board but a demonstrable shift in balance and representation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would like to continue to do some further exploratory work regarding the business network development. • RS – suggested our recommendation would be to invite the list of people above - to invite an increased number of nominees to join the board from culture and community sectors would be on the basis that it would significantly diversify the board and achieve the aim of demonstrating a greater culture and community sector involvement. • The two culture advisory group reps could be taken up by Fran Castle and Clive Grey on behalf of the Culture Advisory Group, and those people would then be asked to Co-chair, the Culture Advisory Group as well. • RS – In terms of community representation, instead of two spots, the recommendation is to create three and invite Dale Cartie, Claire Young and Sharon Fawcett to join the board. • Matthew Margetts would play a valuable role in terms of small business representation recognising there is still more work to be done. • The intention will be to continue dialogue with The Rotary Club, FSB and Chamber of Commerce over the summer. <p>Following the thoughts and recommendations this decision was then opened to the Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WT – this is great mix and I'd like to endorse the recommendations. • Chair – the team have done a good job in get things this this far. • TB – this does address the gender balance as well as a welcome representation from the sector. The rationale is fine in regard to Dave Cowan. • Chair – We also have the ability to invite people who are not part of the board but can bring a specific interest to specific topics. • Chair AF went on to say “it’s a real honour to be part of it”. • TQ- It makes a lot of sense to have the various reps on the board. • TQ added a practical consideration but recognised “it’s a good balance of community engagement”. And that “we can’t keep 	
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Action Point	<p>adding more and more and we need other ways of consulting groups.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair – “There will always be some who can’t attend but we – can’t go adding and adding.” • RS – you could argue in terms of the overall EB agenda we don’t have anyone from the Housing or Sport and we’ll have to see over the summer. • RS – also emphasised that there is a need for the property and landlord sector to be considered as to what might work for them, noting in regard to those who had come forward already that they would need to consider how that could affect their interests in accessing council or external funder support. • RS - We maybe need a slightly different sub-group as a way of working for business engagement. • There was general approval. • The Board’s next action was to formally endorse the nominations. • The Board Endorsed the proposals as set out. • Chair asked for a week for the Board to review the written information submitted by nominees. Subject to this the nominees can be contacted and invited to join the Board. • Pen Portraits to be shared for information and Board members to raise any further queries within a week and subject to this nominees to be contacted and invited to join the Board. 	RS/RJB/ALL
4.	Engagement work	Reemer J Bailey
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RJB – shared the partnership slides and discussed the engagement activity that has taken place to date with over 1500 additional people engaged in only 2 months and around 100 organisations inputting to the process. • RJB – the key importance of this fund is its relationship to being community-led and that all the work has provided legitimacy and authentic agency to the submission. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting from the partnership event and recognising the formal networks already in existence the presentation explored and explained the extent of the engagement and the qualitative and quantitative data that was collected, all of which is within the bid and will also form essential elements of its delivery and implementation. The importance on continuing to communicate with all the people involved so far was also emphasised. This work forms the basis of an ongoing way of working together. And as part of this we have created a Miro Board timeline as a collaboration space shared with the attendees to the Partnership workshops. This will be shared with the board. 	
5.	LTPFTs Submission Document	Peter Graham
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PG – Introduced the submission to the Board and explained its structure is two parts essentially. How the updated Town Investment Plan has been updated and includes the requirements of the LTPFTs. It will show how we're already on our regeneration journey, talking to local people and community groups and how this is a grass roots investment plan. The 6 priorities were then explained. The plan highlights where Blyth is in its regeneration journey. It discusses how it's been attracting lots of other investment and how the plethora of other work is contributing to Blyth's growth. It recognises how this opportunity brings the local people, organisations and businesses into 'the fold'. Part B of the document shows the indicative spend. PG – Explained the 5 projects and what specifically this will cover. PG- Covered the geographic area including Cambois and NEP down to South Beach. It then shows where all the Energising Blyth projects are. PG – explained that as part of this work there is slightly refreshed Vision for Blyth picking up on Board comments. PG - The driver for the growth of the town is that it is being connected into the new business and the people being able to be part of that. (See the vision). It also demonstrated the many positives available to be built upon. The Strategic Objectives have not changed but instead it shows a refresh of how it aligns to the LTPFTs objectives. We then have listed all of the current projects and they all contribute to the wider strategy. We have highlighted the central role that communities have taken in this work. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PG then went on to talk about the other opportunities for leverage. It could be seen by a kind of additionality. Looking at how we might be able to supplement some of the investments made, e.g. Arts Council. So although the strategy provides the basis for the forthcoming activities and town wide involvement, it demonstrates an opportunity for future attraction of additional investment. • PG – then ran through the broad timescales. • Lastly, the second part of the document is the three-year investment plan. This is in regard to the first £5m and the timescales. This submission will be shared with the Board members. • PG – then shared the indicative budget. • HO – Offered to create a form of words in regard to the latest thinking from the Government about growth plans. • HO – Would be interested in looking at how the large project ideas align with NECA priorities. • A further conversation was agreed between RS and HO • DW – Acknowledges the scale of the work but in particular the longer term commitment. MHCLG is about putting Local Government front and centre and that they will be re-setting the relationship. • TQ – Acknowledged the work that the team had done to create a robust plan. • TQ - asked how do we continue the ongoing development work? • RS – we’ve given a commitment to ensure the full involvement of for example the community in regards to the community work. This is to enable the best possible outcomes. • TS – We are still awaiting a number of steers in regard to getting clear signals and will continue to keep the line of communication open. • TB – Also thanked the team for the amount of work done to get us to this point. To be able to work with the sector and put capital projects in place in this timescale and this is to emphasise if we want to bring the community with us this will take a lot of time and support. Where the sector will be taking the lead • PG – In response to Thom’s comment – there is FTE in regards to the Community capacity building project development work needed. There are resources in the programme to bring this about and time to co-produce the right support and approach. • RS – In terms of demand from recipients. We need to think about the scale of the projects that will come through. This will dictate how we think through the delivery of them. • Chair – Given the scale of the local interest, we can see is clearly there. • WT – important to reflect on the good work that’s happened to date and this document helps us do this while also recognising the 	RS/HO
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	<p>challenges that Blyth faces that are entrenched and requires sustained work on this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WT – Where are we at with the hotel from a strategic sites point of view? • LB- the hotel always needed an operator and while there was some interest, it did tail off for a bit given the changing picture on Northumberland Energy Park. There will be a bit of a timelag, where we reach a degree of private sector investment. For the over 1,600 direct jobs, including 1,200 long-term construction jobs, and over 2,700 indirect and induced jobs over the course of the development, the hotel will have a good customer base. So we're still ongoing with our marketing. The majority of the funding is there from NCC. But it is a bit of a waiting game. Currently the thinking is developing on the masterplan for the site including a hotel, ECC phase 2, enhanced public realm and car parking and also thinking about a new bus station in longer term. • WT – re match funding – existing section 106 funds held with NCC – could match up with some of the community investment funding projects. Could we identify what there is and what it's ringfenced for. • RS – we could discuss with planning and see what might be aligned. • LP – endorsed WT's comments re Sec 106 and hopefully this is something the LTPfTs officer could pick up. • AF – Added his thanks to the team for all the work on the submission stating it is an excellent piece of work. • AF – The board endorsed the submission and approved its submission to the MHCLG. 	RS
7.	AOB	
	None	
8.	Date of next meeting	
	TBC	