



# Northumberland County Council

## Blyth Town Deal Board Meeting

**Friday 22 October 2021 10.30**  
(Microsoft Teams video conference)

### Present:

Alan Ferguson (AF) (CHAIR)	Fergusons Transport
Robin Earl (RE)	Advance Northumberland
Greg Gavin (GG)	Blyth Town Forum
Jonathan Gilroy (JG)	BEIS
John Hildreth (JH)	Energy Central Steering Group
Martin Lawlor (ML)	Port of Blyth
Rt Hon Ian Levy MP (IL)	Member of Parliament for Blyth Valley Constituency
Rick O'Farrell (RO)	Northumberland County Council
Cllr Wojciech Ploszaj (WP)	Northumberland County Council
Jane Robinson (JR)	Newcastle University
Cllr Glen Sanderson (GS)	Northumberland County Council
Julia Smith (JS)	Jobcentre Plus
Rob Strettle (RS)	Energising Blyth Programme Team
Cllr Warren Taylor (WT)	Blyth Town Council
Cllr Richard Wearmouth (RW)	Northumberland County Council

### In Attendance:

Lara Baker (LB)	Programme Manager, NCC
Jodie Balmer (JB)	McBryde & Co
Karen Donaldson (KD)	Principal Programme Delivery Officer, NCC
Peter Graham (PG)	Managing Director, New Skills Consulting
Carol Johns-McLeod (CJM)	Regeneration Programmes Investment Manager, NCC
Janice Rose, (JRo)	Service Director, NCC
Helen Swinburn (HS)	Administration Assistant, NCC
Jan Willis (JWi)	Executive Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), NCC

**Notes of discussion:**

<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence</b> AF welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p><b>Apologies</b> Thom Bradley, Blyth Community Network Ian Flintoff, Blyth Churches Together Rob Hamilton, North of Tyne Combined Authority Matthew Murray, Tharsus Wendy Scott, Blyth Cultural Network</p>	<p><b>Action:</b></p>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b> ML – Port of Blyth for the Northumberland Energy Park Phase 1 and Battleship Wharf Link Project alongside Advance Northumberland.</p> <p>RE – As above, Advance Northumberland have an interest in the NEP 1 project as a beneficiary of the project.</p>	
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting</b> These were accepted as true record.</p> <p>Actions will be covered under today’s agenda.</p>	
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Town Deal Fast Track Process – Northumberland Energy Park Phase 1 and Battleship Wharf Link Project - Outline Business Case Report for approval</b></p> <p>LB gave an overview of the project and appraisal process. The appraisal panel have approved it, subject to minor conditions, which have been issued to the Port and need to be returned by Friday 29 October with the revised documents submitted that were attached to the business case.</p> <p>The overall proposal which already has funding approval from the other match funders is to build an internal heavy duty access link between three key strategic sites – Northumberland Energy Park (NEP) Phase 1, Phase 2 and Battleship Wharf. The £500,000 works, which are the subject of this Business Case, will create an offshore ‘jack up’ vessel berth on Battleship Wharf Berth 4. This will improve Port capability and maximise services to the offshore energy sector.</p> <p>AF – just to clarify that the Port are responsible for any overrun on the £500k and the Port need to ensure us of this. LB confirmed this will be confirmed in the grant offer and ML confirmed this was the case.</p> <p>ML – can you clarify the figures shown in the KPIs as direct jobs should be 100 rather than 10? The ‘jack up’ facility will create an additional 100 jobs across the NEP site and Battleship Wharf. RS – there is a difference between direct and indirect as 100 is referred to in other parts of the report so we will clarify. PG – for information, in terms of the Town Deal process we will be reporting indirect jobs for the entire investment back to Town Deal.</p>	<p><b>RS</b></p>

	<p>WT – the document states to confirm if planning permission is required, do we not know if it is required? LB - we do know but we need confirmation that planning permission has been secured.</p> <p>RE – in terms of delivery, there are a lot of moving parts. How do we make sure there is no conflict or loss of warranties from any of the contractors on this project? LB and ML gave assurances that warranties will be in place to cover each part of the Battleship Wharf NEP 1 Link Project which will be distinct from warranties covering the current site works on NEP1. Any recourse for defects/liability under different warranty when there is an overlap or interface of works between contractors will be adequately addressed in the follow-on contracts and will be managed between the Port of Blyth and Advance Northumberland as the contracting bodies. These warranties will be extended by collateral warranty to interested parties, including funders.</p> <p>Town Deal Board were asked to approve Towns Fund Grant of £500k towards a total project cost of £3m which is subject to final approval by NCC Cabinet, and the special conditions listed in the issued summary report.</p> <p>Town Deal Board were also requested to delegate to the Town Deal Board Chair and Section 151 Officer respectively to sign off the MHCLG Summary Document for this project subject to the above decision.</p> <p>The Board approved the above recommendations.</p>	
5	<p><b>Energising Blyth Business Case Timeline and Development Plan – GANNT chart / staged process to a decision</b></p> <p>PG gave an overview of the spreadsheet. This is a forward plan being used for the work to develop the programme and business cases. The projects have been divided into themes: Culture and Leisure, Energy Central and Connectivity. There is time pressure on this plan as seven Town Deal project business cases need to be submitted for approval in July 22 and FHSF spend by March 2024. There is the possibility of more meetings during the next 6 months because of this pressure around the business cases. The Strategic Outline Business Cases (SOBCs) are spread across the months in terms of coming to the Board but there are peaks in February, March and April to hit the July 22 deadline. Four external business case consultants are working with the project sponsors to support them with their business case development.</p> <p>JR – the vast majority of the funding is capital. There are lots of discussions with the University, College and OREC around how we can work together on the skills provision and understand how the business case is aligned to opportunities for skills pathways. PG - New Skills are the external consultant for the Energy Central Learning Hub project and we will have stakeholder workshops to start to shape the thinking around the strategic case for skills facilities. Steve Rutland is the Project Manager appointed on this and we will be working with him in tandem.</p> <p>RS will reshare the spreadsheet.</p>	RS

	<p>PG gave an overview of the business case template, that will be used for both Town Deal and FHSF, which aligns to the Treasury Green Book standards. PG will circulate.</p> <p>IL – is environmental impact included? PG - when the projects were first assessed they were done so against four impacts that focused on climate change, inclusive growth, covid recovery and health. Each project needs to demonstrate how it aligns with those four impacts alongside the strategic context. PG to pick this up in final business case template.</p> <p>RE – as a Board how do we get assurance when we see these documents that they have been appraised? PG – we bring SOBC, then there is internal appraisal within NCC to ensure it aligns and a brief report then comes to Board and will highlight any issues. OBC is written by the consultants and project sponsors, NCC have appointed independent business consultants to test the viability of the projects as well as independent appraisal, then another report back to Board. Depending on what Board wants to see they could also see the business cases as well as the appraisal. Board would like to see the business cases too.</p>	<p><b>PG</b></p> <p><b>PG</b></p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Communications and Engagement plan update</b></p> <p>RS recapped on the work to date during the bidding phase regarding stakeholder communications with the community and partners and how that provided an excellent basis for securing the funding awarded. We have been in a holding position waiting for the bids mainly focused on stakeholder communications and are now ready to plan in comms around development and delivery as projects come through. There is a need for a different level of detail so we decided to bring McBryde &amp; Co in for advice and support for comms and urgent tasks in the next few months. Input and feedback is needed on the approach, and a more detailed plan going forward will be provided. It is important to tease out both programme and project level comms and engagement.</p> <p>JB shared the short, medium and long term priorities. Short is October – December 21, medium is November 21 – January 22 and long is January 22 onwards. These priorities are the headline tasks and more detail and feedback are needed. JB will share the presentation.</p> <p>JB asked for contacts to be able to ‘spread the word’. IL would be happy to put details on his web page as good news.</p> <p>RS commented that town branding boosts marketing and events in a town which should be considered as part of, and link to, the Culture Centre and Placemaking Programme.</p> <p>RS – we are proposing to organise covid compliant partnership meetings by invitation pre/post Christmas as part of comms and engagement at this stage with further public facing events in 2022.</p>	<p><b>JB</b></p> <p><b>LB</b></p>

	IL – I am attending COP26 in Glasgow and am being interviewed on Sunday Politics so I can ‘plug’ Blyth. JR – Newcastle University have official observer status and will have a delegation in the blue and green zones in COP26 and would be happy to share core messages. LB to provide an Energising Blyth briefing to members ahead of COP26.	
<b>7</b>	<b>Forward Plan</b> There will be Programme and Project Delivery items identified in the Forward Plan for discussion at each meeting moving forward. The Forward Plan will be circulated for information for the meetings on 24 November, December (to be arranged) and 26 January.	<b>LB</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Culture and Placemaking Programme Pilots</b> WS unable to attend, item deferred.	
<b>9</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b> AF commented that MHCLG has changed its name to The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).	
<b>10</b>	<b>Date and time of next meeting:</b> Wednesday 24th November 2021, 10am  Post meeting note – The next meeting is now replaced with a Partnership and Stakeholder Event on Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2021, to which all Town Deal Board Members are invited to attend.	