



Northumberland County Council

Blyth Town Deal Board Meeting

Wednesday 26 January 2021 10.00

(Microsoft Teams video conference)

Present:

Alan Ferguson (AF) (CHAIR)	Fergusons Transport
Thom Bradley (TB)	Blyth Community Network
Kay Charlton (KC)	Jobcentre Plus
Robin Earl (RE)	Advance Northumberland
Ian Flintoft (IF)	Blyth Churches Together
Helen Golightly (HG)	North East LEP
Jonathan Gilroy (JG)	BEIS
Rob Hamilton (RH)	North of Tyne Combined Authority
John Hildreth (JH)	Energy Central Steering Group
Martin Lawlor (ML)	Port of Blyth
Leah Tooke (LT) for Rt Hon Ian Levy	Member of Parliament for Blyth Valley Constituency
MP (IL)	Tharsus
Matthew Murray (MM)	Northumberland County Council
Cllr Kath Nisbet (KN)	Northumberland County Council
Cllr Wojciech Ploszaj (WP)	ORE - Catapult
Tony Quinn (TQ)	Newcastle University
Jane Robinson (JR)	Cultural Network
Wendy Scott (WS)	Energising Blyth Programme Team
Rob Strettle (RS)	Bede Academy
Andrew Thelwell (AT)	

In Attendance:

Cristina Armstrong (CA)	Creative Producer, PlaceCreate
Lara Baker (LB)	Programme Manager, NCC
Karen Donaldson (KD)	Principal Programme Delivery Officer, NCC
Helyn Douglas (HD)	Project Officer, NCC
Carol Jameson (CJ)	Regeneration Programmes Investment Manager, NCC
Andrew Mowbray (AM)	Senior Project Manager, Advance Northumberland
Neil Quinn (NQ)	Senior Programme Officer, NCC
Steve Rutland (SR)	Director, Public Value Ltd
Helen Swinburn (HS)	Administration Assistant, NCC

Notes of discussion:

<p>1</p>	<p>Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence AF welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies Rick O’Farrell, Northumberland County Council Warren Taylor, Blyth Town Council</p>	<p>Action:</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Declarations of Interest TQ - ECC Learning Hub as he is a Director of the Energy Central Campus company created to oversee the project regarding Item 4 and 5.</p> <p>ML – the Port of Blyth owns the land for the Battleship Wharf project and is a Director of the Energy Central Campus Company regarding Item 4 and 5.</p> <p>RE - Advance Northumberland have interest in various projects including Item 4 and 5.</p> <p>RS – on behalf of NCC as they have an interest in the ECC Company regarding Item 4 and 5 as NCC is a partner and RO is one of the Directors of the Energy Central Campus Company.</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>Minutes of the last meeting These were accepted as true record.</p> <p>Actions – The number of jobs were to be clarified for the Battleship Wharf Project. RS confirmed there will be 100 jobs created from the Town Deal element of the project and 500 created overall.</p> <p>All other actions have been addressed.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Energy Central Campus Phase 1 Project Presentation Steve Rutland presented an update on the project: what is Energy Central; what the ECLH will do; ECLH Facilities; ECC Phase 2 – Energy Institute; why do we need ECLH in Blyth and the North East; Policy Context; Project Objectives; Target beneficiary groups; ECLH outcomes and benefits; Cost and Funding; Risks, Constraints and Interdependencies; Governance and Partnership.</p> <p>JR – the capital costs, is that for Phase 1 or for both phases? From a University perspective there is a real interest in the Phase 1 Learning Hub, how can we engage with green and renewable energy? SR – the project cost is for Phase 1. We work with the University on energy and with the outreach teams so are aware of the further work that is going on. This is a great opportunity to continue the successful partnership to date. LB – there is a further budget within the programme earmarked for the Phase 2 project. Re Phase 1 there is also some Town Deal budget support for the initial establishment of the project in its early years of delivery in terms of revenue support.</p>	

RE – you refer to ‘state of the art conferencing facilities’, what, through working capital and ongoing revenue budgets, will you do to ensure it fulfills its promise to stay ‘state of the art’? SR – a lot of work has been done. ML at the Port has setup a 10 year plan for revenue and there are a range of income streams including facility hire, ie: long term partners in the building, and we are having conversations with strategic partners now, as well as considering SLAs with schools and colleges and we aim to be a lean organisation with a lean staffing structure.

RH – NTCA Cabinet have formally approved the expression of interest for funding and have invited the project to submit an FBC.

AT – the number of learners per annum, what scale of provision are we anticipating? SR - depending on the metric used the numbers will vary, but the numbers should be viewed as indicative not definite. The first year will be significant in STEM then smaller in the apprentice, T- Levels, etc. In the first phase there will be approximately 800, 300 of which will be in the full time 16-19 years category.

Andrew Mowbray presented a design update on the project around Progress/Timeline; Site Plan and Floor Plans.

RE – what about the build price inflation and the risk for delivery? AM – it is clearly a key risk for this, and all other projects. We have built in an element of construction price inflation into the budget. The budget was revisited in October and the team made some conservative estimates but in a very uncertain market it is difficult for cost managers to predict. Towards the end of next month we will get a new design report and updated cost plan which will see a move from area based cost per square metre to a very detailed estimate so we can see where the costs are and give the wider team an opportunity to look for savings.

LB – as part of the wider programme we are looking to improve the linkage from this facility to the town centre with the wider projects over the next 5 years, particularly travel and transport, and also the Culture and Placemaking link with art features included. WS – there are lots of artists and student who are interested in combining their interest in visual arts, science and green energy. We are working closely with Steve and colleagues as there is an opportunity for residency once the building is open, and the exhibit space is also a really good opportunity to embed a programme that links STEM with arts. SR – Advanced Industrial Solutions training suites in North Tyneside have murals that reflect offshore imagery and clean energy, we could arrange an introduction for WS to view it. WS – thanks, we are keen to ensure the Community are a big part of the programme.

AT – the costs have already jumped. If there is another jump, have the team identified other possible funding streams to cover the rising costs or would we scale back provision to finish within the current budget allocation? AM – from a design perspective we have already, as part of early design, found cost savings and engineered down to the current budget and we would

	<p>struggle to reduce it further without impacting on the function of the building. SR – we are trying to manage within the envelope of the budget and looking for alternatives is always on the horizon, but we are doing what we can to ensure it balances. LB – it will depend on market conditions at the tender stage but yes, we will continue to monitor this across the programme as discussed earlier.</p> <p>Comments made by the Board on the project were that it is an excellent project, there are exciting opportunities, it will be great for local jobs, the building looks spectacular and it will be a great landmark building. Board thanked all those who have been involved in the project to date.</p> <p>The slides presented by Steve and Andrew will be circulated.</p>	<p>HS</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Energy Central Campus Phase 1 Project Appraisal Report CJ provided feedback of the appraisal report.</p> <p>As identified in the assurance process, the projects go through a detailed assurance report to assure Board that assurances are being carried out. The summary of the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) fits well with the Town Deal submission and there is a strong strategic fit. The accountable body conditions need to be addressed between now and the Outline Business Case (OBC) on getting assurances from the new group and the asset transfer evidence, these also need to be recorded in the milestones and risk register. Evidence is required of the procurement process, tenders, etc, cost, cashflow, match funding, job creation, stakeholder plans, competitor analysis and the strategic framework approach around how we engage with employers, etc. UK subsidy control advice is required and we will need legal advice. It is a good report and was recommended to go to the next stage at the EB NCC Programme Board. Today we ask that Board consider the presentations and recommendation to proceed to OBC subject to the conditions presented today, and in the paper circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>AT – the competitor analysis list, to what extent does it include Post 16 organisations? CJ – we can add that in as one of the conditions. SR – this is a collaborative model as we are not a provider so there will be a framework for providers to operate from it. We need to see that in the competitor analysis.</p> <p>TQ – the feedback and the conditions, have they gone back to the project team? CJ – they have been informally feedback and will be formally feedback following the decision today.</p> <p>Board approved the recommendation to progress to OBC subject to the conditions outlined.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Programme and Project update LB provided an update.</p> <p>Programme Performance</p>	

Strategic sites – the Aspinall Verdi and Broadoak recommendations are being taken forward with further engagement planned including with Northumberland Estates and Arriva. Independent surveying will be commissioned soon to support the Strategic Estates Team. More progress is expected in the coming months.

£1m of the Town Deal 'CDEL' Payment was received on 22 December 21 to enable the Council to keep the projects moving forward by paying for fees before the official start of expenditure in April this year. This has helped as we have been able to draw from this budget, for instance by supporting the design team costs for the ECC Phase 1 ECLH.

Independent appraisers have been appointed for the business case process.

Monitoring & Evaluation plans have been agreed for FHSF and Town Deal with the first return for FHSF due 04 February 22.

EB Recruitment – the new Project Manager is starting on 22 February, interviews will be held for the Senior Programme Officer role and the Projects Officer is being advertised internally this week. The programme team continues to be supported by RS, KD, and other NCC officers.

Project Performance

Culture Centre / Market Place and The Link – Faulkner Browns have been appointed as lead architects. DCA Consulting have been commissioned for the next steps in the feasibility plan around culture work for the centre and will produce a business plan with Operator Engagement in accordance with Procurement rules.

Culture and Placemaking Programme – the business case is being developed, in advance of this 3 of 5 themed pilots are taking place from February. This will be covered in more detail under item 7 on the agenda.

Hotel and Restaurant – soft market testing will take place during February and March around demand from potential operators to locate in the Town. ML – have a number of hotel beds been identified? LB – we are asking agents for the scale of demand which will dictate the bed numbers. ML – the visitor centre and conference facilities we already use at the Commissioners Quay but it would be good to have alternatives.

NEP1/Battleship Wharf – significant infrastructure works are taking place creating a link from the Northumberland Energy Park (NEP1) to Battleship Wharf. Berth 4 for the Jack-up vessel, priority over the berth is currently with the contract supplying the Seagreen 1 offshore windfarm in Scotland so there projects delivery programme may be revised. AF – what about subsidy control? ML – regarding the roads, we don't see any significant issues. LB – Subsidy control advice is being finalised.

ECC (institute) Phase 2 – meetings are taking place with the business case consultants. A robust SOBC needs to be ready for the Summary Document being issued to Town Deal on 04 August to secure funding. Steve Rutland's

	<p>contract has been extended to enable continued feasibility and demand work and engagement across the ECC phases.</p> <p>OREC Bearing Technology – LB has met with the OREC project team. The programme is on track and a revised programme is awaited to include the business case timeline. Confirmation is required that the SOBC will be on time for the Summary document deadline.</p> <p>Northern Gateway Phase 1 – Phase 1 started in the town centre in January as it was awarded accelerated early funding. There is information online about the scheme, the Town Forum were briefed in December and there has been a walkabout with the construction team following visits to traders in the area prior to scheme start. Feedback on Phase 3 which is the Wilko end of Bowes St around parking has been received and there is concern around losing spaces so it is being reviewed and revised. KN – thank you for looking into parking as there are lots of complaints at the thought of losing it.</p> <p>Northern Gateway Phase 2 – consultants are engaged regarding business plans and transport consultancy support for a more holistic approach for all the Highways interventions is being considered.</p> <p><u>EB Partnership event 08 December 21</u> LB extended thanks to everyone who attended and gave a summary of the positives and challenges raised:</p> <p>Positives – STEM hub created; recognise Blyth as a national leader in Green industry; Culture Centre and Market Place will be a great facility for children, young people and families; lots of support for the Clean Energy Visitor Centre and the ECLH.</p> <p>Challenges – wider connectivity to Blyth must be considered; where do cars fit in with promoting Green Energy; concern of the potential impact on existing cultural organisations; strengthen liaison with the Blyth Culture Network; concerns about congestion on Cowpen Road.</p> <p>The slides presented by LB will be circulated.</p>	<p>HS</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Culture and Placemaking Programme – Pilot Project Update RS provided background on this programme and the role of PlaceCreate who are supporting it. He explained that the pilots being presented today will help to inform the business case for the main town deal funded programme which will be coming to Board in the Spring at SOBC stage for consideration linked closely to the development of the Culture Centre too</p> <p>Cristina Armstrong from PlaceCreate shared a presentation on: what PlaceCreate have done to date; the projects in the context of the programme; work done to date; stakeholder engagement; approach to creative projects; integrated structure; Projects – 1) Mapping the Future/Community Collective, 2) Blyth Icons & Text, 3) Animating Space, 4) Blyth: A Living History, 5) Environment and Ecology; summary points. Proposed flyers for the workshops were shared and Cristina welcomed Board members to attend.</p>	

	<p>AT – the animating spaces sounds fantastic, if there is anything we can do to support this let me know. Faith community engagement and culture, what is the engagement and how is that cultural heritage being portrayed, and given the inclusivity theme, what about communities moving into the area, ie: refugees? CA – we are working with Buffalo Community Centre for example who have a newly formed woman’s group for different backgrounds, cultures and heritage and Reverend McPherson sits on the advisory group. There are lots of established groups which we are keen to tap into, and also keen to tap into those that are underrepresented. We are working with Paul at Bede Academy around the icons and identities of Blyth.</p> <p>RE – imagery icons, etc, how do you avoid the danger of looking backwards when we want to look at the future? CA - that’s why we are bringing in a Creative Artist to expand that vision and co-create work with the local community. It is important to acknowledge the roots and foundation of the town and its sense of pride, whilst looking forward and being aspirational.</p> <p>KN – there is an over 50s forum, it would be good to contact them as they have been in the town for a long time.</p> <p>RS – there will be collective comms around activity in February, if partners could push this out via their own comms channels to promote activities it would be appreciated.</p> <p>CA committed to picking up the suggestions and contacts provided. The slides presented by Cristina will be circulated.</p>	HS
8	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p><u>Regular Programme reporting:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comms / Engagement • Risks / Issues • Performance/ Finance / Metrics Report • Health & Safety <p><u>February - Spotlight on Growing Town</u> NEP1 / Battleship OREC Bearing Technology Energy Central Campus Phase 2</p> <p><u>March - Spotlight on Culture Placemaking</u> Culture Centre/Market Place and The Link Culture and Placemaking Programme and Culture Centre SOBC workshop feedback Culture and Placemaking Programme Hotel and Restaurant Culture Centre/Market Place Stakeholder Engagement Plan</p> <p><u>April - Spotlight on transport</u></p>	

	Transport projects This slide presented by LB will be circulated.	HS
9	Any Other Business None reported.	
10	Date and time of next meeting: 1pm Thursday 31 st March 2022	