



Blyth Town Deal Board Meeting

Wednesday 14 December 2022 10.15

(Microsoft Teams video conference)

Present:

Thom Bradley (TB)	Blyth Community Network
Alan Ferguson (AF) - CHAIR	Fergusons Transport
Ian Flintoff (IF)	Blyth Churches Together
Steve Martin for Lesley Knighting	Jobcentre Plus
Martin Lawlor (ML)	Port of Blyth
Ian Levy (IL)	Member of Parliament for Blyth Valley Constituency
Matthew Murray (MM)	Tharsus
Cllr Kath Nisbet	Northumberland County Council
Wojciech Ploszaj (WP)	Northumberland County Council
Rob Strettle (RS)	Energising Blyth Programme Team
Andrew Thelwell (AT)	Bede Academy
Richard Wearmouth (RW)	Northumberland County Council

In Attendance:

Lara Baker (LB)	Programme Manager, NCC
Fiona Ford (FF)	Project Manager, NCC
Jonathan Gilroy (JG)	BEIS
Bev Harrison, (BH)	Regeneration Finance & Performance Manager, NCC
Elaine Maylin (EM)	Regeneration Investment Funding Manager, NCC
Lee Paris (LP)	Senior Programme Officer, NCC
Taylor Sharp (TS)	BEIS
Helen Swinburn (HS)	Projects Officer, NCC

EB Programme Board Attendees:

Anthony Dunn, NCC Finance

Audrey Kingham, NCC Director Business Development, Education and Skills Services

David Laux, NCC Head of Technical Services (Local Services)

Gill Robertson, NCC Strategic Estates

Notes of discussion:

1	<p>Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence EB Programme Board members were invited to attend this meeting. AF welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p><u>Apologies</u> Scott Bullock, Newcastle College Robin Earl, Advance Northumberland Helen Golightly, North East LEP Rob Hamilton, North of Tyne Combined Authority Carol Jameson, Regeneration Programmes Investment Manager, NCC Lesley Knighting, Jobcentre Plus Tony Quinn, ORE - Catapult Jane Robinson, Newcastle University Glen Sanderson, Northumberland County Council Phil Soderquest, Blyth Safety Network Warren Taylor, Blyth Town Council Mark Warnes, Active Northumberland Jan Willis, Executive Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), NCC</p> <p><u>EB Programme Board Apologies</u> Chris Baty, NCC Procurement Suzanne Dent, NCC Finance Pam Hindhaugh, NCC Procurement Carol Humphries, NCC Legal Liz Morgan, NCC Director of Public Health Rob Murfin, NCC Director of Planning (Regeneration, Commercial & Economy) Mike Robbins, NCC Strategic Estates Mike Turner, Head of Property Services and Capital Programming (Property Services) Nigel Walsh, Head of Cultural Services, Culture, Heritage and Libraries</p>	Action:
2	<p>Declarations of Interest RS - Project Sponsors for decisions to be made, particularly for ECC partners: The Port, NCC, Advance Northumberland and Catapult.</p>	
3	<p>Minutes of the last meeting These were accepted as a true record.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subsidy control advice from Advance Northumberland to be shared with The Port – LB to check it has been shared • visuals and plans within project reporting – covered in today's slide pack • updated Terms of Reference – covered in today's slide pack 	LB
4	<p>Delivering Energising Blyth – 2022 end of year update - RS RS provided a brief update summary to Board.</p>	

5	<p>Programme Performance Update - LB</p> <p>Town Deal projects met the Towns Fund OBC Summary Document deadlines and on FHSF we have made significant progress made on the Culture Hub and Market Place in terms of Designs and Operator Procurement.</p>	
6	<p>Towns Fund Summary Documents DLHUC Internal Reviews - LB</p> <p>We have confirmation that six of the Town Deal projects have passed the DLHUC review process so funding will be received as per the expenditure forecast in January 23 to NCC as the Accountable Body. We will then need completed and approved FBC's to enable Grant Funding Agreements (GFA) to be issued. The GFA will then form the basis of all future claims, monitoring and reporting including evidence of the outputs and outcomes.</p>	
7	<p>Project Adjustments and approvals (following completed OBCs) - LB</p> <p>The OBC's submitted have resulted in some changes since the original project confirmations in September 21. Some require formal DLHUC approval in the form of Project Adjustments which Board need to formally approve, and others are for notification only as NCC has delegated authority to make minor adjustments.</p> <p>IF - could you clarify the increase in costs for Energy Central Campus Phase 1? LB – pre-tender total project costs we were £11,175m. The Stage 2 tender has been received and is under QS review. Due for reporting in January 23. We will need to come back to Board to update on cost once we have the report.</p> <p>Board agreed to the formal approval of Energy Central Campus Phase 1 (Learning Hub), Northumberland Energy Park Infrastructure, Bebside to Town Centre Cycling & Walking Corridor and Energy Central Campus Phase 2 (Institute).</p>	
8	<p>Towns Fund and FHSF Monitoring Returns April 22 to September 22 – LB</p> <p>We are due to submit the FHSF Fund and Town Deal Fund Monitoring Return on 16 December. These are six monthly returns and require formal sanction form Board on the detail we are providing.</p> <p>FHSF we can identify spend so far which is mainly on the Culture Hub design fees. We are also reporting cost increases against the Culture Hub which has been previously reported to Board, but we are waiting on the RIBA Stage 3 report which will include the cost plan and expect an increase of £5m. NCC are now contributing from the Programme Delivery Support Budget which is in the overall budget so we are not asking for additional funds. FHSF ask for three key issues, which have previously been highlighted to Board, which we are managing and dealing with and have a strategy for mitigating the risks. These are: 1) construction cost inflation 2) site assembly 3) lack of contractor interest.</p>	

	<p>Town Deal is a different monitoring return as officially we have not started spending the Town Deal Fund yet as we've just had confirmation of the Summary Documents, so we're only reporting on the 5% Capital Development Fund we received to progress the projects, particularly the Energy Central Campus Phase 1 (Learning Hub) where funding has been spent on designs and consultancy support, etc. Town Deal Accelerated Funding for Bowes St, Church St and Wanley St Improvements (Northern Gateway Phase 1) has been spent.</p> <p>AF – the extra funding of £5m where will that come from? LB - before we submitted the business case it was clear that even if we secured the funding there would likely be insufficient funds to deliver what we stated, so we agreed with the Council that some of the Project Delivery Support Budget would be set aside in the MTFP for the Culture Hub and other project costs increases.</p> <p>Board agreed with the information provided to be submitted in the Monitoring Returns.</p>	
9	<p>Inclusive Town - Project Update - LP</p> <p><u>Energy Central Campus Phase 1 (Learning Hub)</u></p> <p>Timescales have changed largely due to the increase in costs. Value Engineering (VE) is taking place now with a deadline of 23 December and the tender report is due 16 January 23. We will need to seek Cabinet approval again because of the costs in April 23. The main package of work starts May 23 with delivery and operation from September 24. During VE we are looking to moderate the project costs without compromising the performance or functionality of the building.</p> <p>AT – Cabinet April 23, the demolition starts before then so is there any likely risk given we would be waiting for Cabinet approval? LB – we have had approval to start the enabling works at risk, but the risk is low as Town Deal and Cabinet have approved the outline business case, we just need the final costs following the VE exercise.</p> <p><u>Energy Central Campus Phase 2 (Institute)</u></p> <p>We have the Stage 2 designs. The accommodation split needs further development as the project progresses. A 'light touch' OBC Summary Document was submitted early December and a detailed OBC is due April 23. The building completion date is Summer 26 with an operational date of September 26.</p> <p>RS – the email circulated in November when the project was asking for OBC approval, the site location identified in the Town Centre raised queries and questions. Just to clarify that we needed a site location to be identified to secure funding but there is more work to do before that is confirmed. We are working with the Strategic Sites Workstream looking at how existing users would be affected and any transition support for residents and businesses, etc, which we will provide more information on in 2023.</p>	

10	<p>Vibrant Town - Project Update – RS Alongside the Culture Hub & Market Place, Culture & Placemaking Programme and Hotel and Restaurant there is also - Blyth Tall Ship and Maritime Heritage Centre; Project Space; Heart of Blyth which is going really well; Operation Aurora where Northumbria Police continue to work on ASB and have plans for further discussions in 23.</p> <p><u>Culture Hub & Market Place – FF</u> Landscaping designs have been received which we are still working through but hope to bring CGI's to Board early 23. We are expecting the RIBA Stage 3 report next week with costings for the Culture Hub and landscaping. The operator procurement process finished last week, we are currently in the standstill period, but we do have a preferred operator. There will be an announcement in the new year and we will work with them on the RIBA Stage 3 report and discuss designs, etc, and the OBC will be presented to Board in March 23. We have carried out public consultation events which were very well attended (the survey closes tomorrow) which will feed into the statement of community involvement for the Planning Application submission in February. A young person's consultation will also be organised. The Creative Play process was excluded from this procurement process but will be starting to firm up plans and briefs in the new year.</p>	
11	<p>Growing Town - Project Update – RS As well as Energy Central, Northumberland Energy Park and ORE Catapult there is Bates Clean Energy Terminal; Low Carbon Minewater Heat Network and a growing industry cluster of companies in Blyth and the surrounding area.</p> <p><u>Northumberland Energy Park Infrastructure (Capping Beam) – LB</u> This has now been approved by DLHUC and we hope to issue the GFA before Christmas. Works are due to complete Q4 22/23</p> <p><u>OREC Technology & Subcomponent Innovation Demonstration Centre – LB</u> The FBC has been submitted although a copy of the legal subsidy control advice is needed, but ORE are aiming to start work in Quarter 4 22/23.</p>	
12	<p>Connected Town - Project Update – RS As well as the four key EB projects (see below) there are interventions to connect to the town centre better and also connect Blyth externally.</p> <p>There is a draft Transport and Connectivity Masterplan which shows how all the EB schemes and others connect into the town centre which was shared at a Town Forum workshop last week. Most of the projects need more consultation so there will be more workshops in the new year. LP - we are also working with Highways on the wider area of Blyth to understand the impact in terms of the projects being delivered and to ensure we have capacity to deliver them and keep Blyth flowing during delivery.</p> <p><u>Bowes St, Church St and Wanley St Improvements (Northern Gateway Phase 1) – RS</u></p>	

	<p>The scheme opened to vehicles early December, tree pits have been installed; street furniture is to be delivered between November – February; first stage deep clean is complete; festoon lighting is installed and the Management and Maintenance Plan is being finalised. Completion is expected Spring 23.</p> <p><u>Bridge St Improvements (The Link) – LP</u> Preliminary designs and costs are back; site surveys and investigations are underway; OBC is with the external appraisers and will come back to Board in January; there is an agreement in principle for NCC Highway's to deliver the scheme which will save some time around the procurement process; stakeholder engagement sessions are ongoing and construction is expected to start late 23 and will be planned alongside the Culture Hub & Market Place.</p> <p><u>Regent St Improvements (Northern Gateway Phase 2) – LP</u> Summary Document has been submitted and approved; early engagement is underway with Morrisons regarding the mini roundabout on Kings St to remove it; site investigations are taking place and delivery is expected 25/26 subject to Highway's phasing programme.</p> <p><u>Bebside to Town Centre Cycling and Walking Corridor - LP</u> The Summary Document is approved; we are into the early traffic modelling stages; site investigations to take place; final design is subject to consultation and delivery is expected 25/26 subject to Highway's phasing programme.</p> <p>ML – two questions, 1) in terms of connectivity, what allowance has been made for the ongoing HGV traffic around the edges of the centre and 2) the town centre physical market itself, what is the location and format of how it will operate? RS - 1) all analysis will cover HGV use around the edge of the town centre similarly with the buses, and 2) the intention remains to have the market as a key function in the Market Place and they will operate along Market St most likely in a row of stalls but there is also opportunities for pop-up markets outside the Culture Hub. The plan is to allow the market to operate during the construction phase so there is no adverse effect.</p>	
13	<p>DLUHC Levelling Up Deep Dive update (Town Investment Plan support asks) - RS As you know we have been talking to Ministerial teams about the opportunities in Blyth which hopefully has been a valuable experience for you. There will be no news on the support package for Blyth until the new year.</p>	
14	<p>Governance Review – Recap and Next Steps - RS This is underway with the first step being all members asked to confirm if they would like to remain on Board. There were three no responses so they will not continue, and we are working on the revised Terms of Reference based on the latest Towns Funds Assurance Framework and will come back to Board on this in the new year.</p>	

15	<p>Communications and Engagement – RS</p> <p>Successful consultation event held for the Culture Hub & Market Place in November for which all the information is online and in the Project Space.</p> <p>New construction hoardings are being planned and the first project they will be used on is the Energy Central Campus Phase 1 (Learning Hub).</p> <p>The Project Space - leased until October 23 using it alongside CVA. It has been successful to date and for that to continue CVA have put in an application to resource the Project Space so Dave Cowan, a local musician, is staffing the space which is capturing new footfall as well as returners. There are lots of things planned for the space, but it is available for other activities if partners wish to use it.</p>	
16	<p>Forward Plan and Calendar</p> <p>Forthcoming project target dates were outlined in the meeting some of which are to be confirmed. These dates will be shared as part of the slide pack after the meeting.</p>	LB
17	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>None reported.</p> <p>RS and AF expressed thanks to Board and the EB Team for the work to date and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.</p> <p>Slide pack to be shared after the meeting.</p>	HS
18	<p>Date and time of next meeting: Tuesday 24th January 2023 15.30 - 17.00am</p>	