

**Town Deal Board – Inception Meeting
Old Town Hall, 11 am Monday 27th January 2020**

Notes:

ATTENDEES	ORGANISATION
Emma Porter (EP) - CHAIR	Story Contracting
John Stephenson (JS)	MP
Cllr Gareth Ellis (GE)	Carlisle City Council
Cllr Cyril Webber (CW)	Cumbria County Council
Cllr Paul Nedved (PN)	Carlisle City Council
Jane Meek (JM)	Carlisle City Council
Alison Hatcher (AH)	Cumbria County Council
Jo Lappin (JL)	Cumbria LEP
David Jackson (DJ)	The Lanes
Andrew Mckay (AM)	Tullie House
Dr Julie Mennell (JuM)	University of Cumbria
Rev Mark Boyling (MB)	Carlisle Cathedral
Jane Robinson (JR)	Job Centre Plus/DWP
David Allen (DA)	CVS
Paul Musgrave (PM)	Cumbria County Council
Steve Robinson (SR)	Carlisle City Council
Zoe Sutton (ZS)	Carlisle City Council
Suzanne Jones (SJ)	MHCLG
APPOLOGIES	ORGANISATION
Craig Corrin	Marks and Spencers
Jason Anderson	Edinburgh Woollen Mill
Rob Britten	Castles and Coasts Housing Association

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jane Meek (JM) welcomed the Board Members and introductions were made.

2. Election of chair

JM outlined that Town Deal Guidance required the need for a mixed representation on the Board including a private sector Chair. JM introduced Emma Porter (EP) who has been nominated by Carlisle City Council (Lead Council) as Chair of the Board. JM asked for volunteers to stand for Vice Chair.

Action: All to consider interest in the Vice Chair role.

EP thanked JM and after a brief introduction outlined the ground rules for the meeting in respecting each other's views.

3. Overview of Towns Fund and

4. Presentation - City Centre Strategy

Steven Robinsons (SR) ran through a presentation outlining the Town Deal and its alignment with other on-going development opportunities through the Future High Street Fund (FHSF) and the Borderland Growth Deal (see attached presentation below).

Timeline for production of the Town Deal Investment Plan is as follows:

All Town Deal Boards convened (including publication of town boundary)	End of January 2020
Further guidance published	Early 2020
All Town Investment Plans produced	Summer 2020
Town Deals agreed	2020-21
A competition for further Town Deals	2020

Timeline for production of the Future High Streets Fund is as follows:

Early draft business case submission	15 March 2020
Full business case submission	30 June 2020
Announcement of successful places	Summer/Autumn 2020

General comments made regarding the process for developing these bids through the Green Book business case development:

- It was highlighted that making the economic case for intervention in northern towns is challenging. Suzanne Jones (SJ) assured the Board that MHCLG was aware of this with regard to the uplift of land values in rural and coastal towns. SJ emphasised the need to be clear on the challenges and how these will be met; the need for the Towns Fund to be used to lever in private sector investment as this will be used to analyse the strength of the Investment Plan; and that the Town Deal is over a longer period than the FHSF.
- Julie Mennell (JuM) requested more information on metrics on where we sit and what we want to achieve for our aspirations, subject for future meeting.

- Jo Lappin (JL) through the Places Forum has identified deliverability as a high-level issue and is working towards determining way in which the LEP can assist Cumbrian applicants to the Towns Fund.
- The Towns Fund area is based on the Office of National Statistics designation of Carlisle's urban area. If there is a strategic need to change the area, then a case can be made prior to the development of the Town Investment Plan. More advice will be received from MHCLG shortly including guidance on the capital/revenue split that will be allowable (SJ).
- Both the Towns Deal and the Future High Street are competitive in terms of bidding for funding.

5. Discussion

Summary of discussion and key issues raised by the board:

- Recognition of the important role of Carlisle station as a gateway to Carlisle and the wider Borderlands was raised. Scottish partners in the Borderlands Growth Deal recognise Carlisle as regional centre and the importance of connectivity is a key priority (JM). The Carlisle Station Project is an opportunity to unlock the potential of this gateway (EP).
- Need to consider skills and culture and what make Carlisle distinctive (JuM).
- Consideration of balance between night-time economy and health needs to be given with a mixed use that reflects this balance for a healthy city (DA).
- There is a lack of energy in the city centre from 5-6 pm due to a retail emphasis (GE). Not enough footfall after 5pm, need to encourage businesses to stay open longer. Part of the challenge is about encouraging people who already live in Carlisle and the surrounding area to use the city centre more (AH).
- Carlisle is the economic capital of the Borderlands and to develop it's role as a sub-regional strategic centre highlights the need for vibrant office space, to look outward and attract people to live and work here (JS).
- Need to decide on the area of focus for the Town Investment Plan: concentration on a focussed area such as the city centre or encompassing the whole area and including suburban location (AH). PN highlighted the need to capture the enthusiasm of the public in taking the Town Deal forward and not to spread the funds too thinly. JS agreed that funding of up to £25m is not much for what it needs to achieve and therefore need for clear cut projects that Government will buy into. The need to concentrate on a small number of key projects was considered. JS emphasised the need to be expedient and be front of the queue and to keep in mind what Government is wanting to achieve through this funding.

- Need for digital infrastructure and raising capacity for digital inclusion, perhaps matching with other funding sources to fund revenue inputs (DA). There was appreciation that revenue funding is difficult to access.
- Need for a clear vision and what we are aiming to achieve. How will we lever in investment? Keep in mind what Government will accept and the practicalities of what can be achieved in the time frame and proposed budget. DA reminded the Board of the need for private sector investment and suggested that community and environmental sustainability be focused on in delivering the largest economic benefit.
- JL highlighted the need for a strategic narrative to address the issues and how the LEP can assist. Narrative to include why Carlisle matters and what Borderlands means on a national basis. Important to consider how we tell the story.
- SR had outlined the five themes of the investment strategy, AH pointed out that of these themes two were not currently covered by on-going development projects, including Resilient City and Connected City and perhaps these could be covered by the Town Deal.
- EP emphasised the need to consider Carlisle as a healthy city, green open spaces, access to the outdoors, low unemployment as ways to attract people to live in the area. Although employment rate is good, lower than average pay needs to be addressed. Alongside low skills levels for the jobs available eg construction industry.
- PN highlighted the opportunity to make maximise on the potential of our heritage capital assets through exploring the scope to increase visitor numbers and improve Carlisle status as a tourist destination.
- JM need to identify small number of key projects. Rev B encourage the Board to rigorously test against criteria used to judge our ideas.
- JS proposed three key areas of focus:
 - Tullie House development;
 - Skills and education – University offer; and
 - Modern and vibrant office accommodation to encourage business to stay or move to the city centre.
- AH highlighted the importance of connectivity and the role of walking and cycling in getting people to use the city centre and conversely, enabling residents in built-up areas to access green open space on the edge of the city and the wider countryside.

- JM highlighted as an example the investment that Edinburgh Woollen Mill provided to create a head office in the City Centre; and JS mentioned NuGen's recent mover moved to Manchester and how we should have been done to encourage them to make a base in Carlisle.
- JuM identified complimentary themes and the need for improved Digital Connectivity which needs to be addressed to build on the capacity of business and the community. Opportunity to connect cultural assets eg Tullie House. Towns Deal could be a catalyst to progress other dimensions.
- DJ highlighted that Carlisle has a lot to offer as a gateway to the Lake District and our World Heritage sites. Although the vacancy rates on the high street are relatively good there is a high degree of vulnerability and we need to stem the decline. Repurposing empty properties for a diverse range of uses is needed, however, often the problem is ownership of these buildings. Can we do something about this? Residents need to see change and there needs to be a tight focus to our proposal.
- AM emphasised the need for futureproofing and encouraged diversity through the involvement of young people. Importance of getting young peoples view and representation. Young Ambassadors, FE and HE students and other networks could be involved in discussions. Cycling, pedestrianisation and modern city are key.
- JL informed the Board that the CLEP Future Forum is interested in being involved with the Town Boards across Cumbria. How to stem the loss of young people and addressing the aging population are vital issues to be addressed.

Action: SR to create a log of the schemes and issues identified by the Board to be circulated prior to the next meeting.

6. Terms of Reference

JM asked if the membership of the Board was comprehensive (see attached list). If Member felt that there were omissions then feed this through, bearing in mind the need to keep numbers to a reasonable level.

Action: All to consider gaps in Board Membership

Terms of Reference (TOR) have been circulated and follows guidance from MHCLG. Additions to the TOR:

- Register of interest is required, this could follow the procedures followed by the Lead Council (SJ).
- Chair added to statement on decision on Board membership
- Quorum will be 25% and cover public and private sector.
- Equality and diversity reviewed

Action: SR to update the ToR and circulate prior to the next meeting for discussion and approval

Board will meet once a month until the Investment Plan is signed off by the Board and submitted to MHCLG this summer of 2020. Dates for meetings will be identified and Thursday/Friday preferred. Request made that teleconferencing facilities be made available.

A forward plan of meetings will be drawn up.

Action: SR to develop Forward Plan for the Board and circulate a programme of meetings to be agreed at the next meeting

7. Next Steps

JuM suggested establishing the principles and options available through a task and finish groups that would come back to the Board with the options.

JM has identified the need for subgroups during the discussion, potentially covering themes such as:

- a. Business Development
- b. Digital Hub
- c. Plan sub group – to forward the writing of the Investment Plan, story boarding and collective ownership.

Action: SR to progress the establishment of work/sub-groups and report progress at next Board meeting.

JL suggested that consideration could be given to sharing innovation across Boards through meeting of Chairs across the Cumbrian Town Deal Boards in order to pull together learning and disseminate advice.

Action: All to consider what the LEP can provide

Action: JL to lead on coordination of Chairs meeting

Community engagement needs to be considered. DA advised that the CVS has been engaged to undertake this in Barrow .

Action: SR to follow up with DA on activity / services provided

The Board agreed to defer decisions of consultancy support to next meeting.

Initial focus on:

- Putting together the strategic narrative
- Setting priorities and how they fit in with the Governments priorities.
- Identifying projects

Action: SR to map out current projects / activity how they fit with 5 strategic themes for the next meeting.

8. AOB

None

9. Date of Next Meeting

Schedule of dates to be circulated

Attachments

Presentation	
Terms of Reference	
List of Board Members in Attendance	