

Contact Officer: Nicola Sylvester

Dewsbury Town Board

Thursday 16th May 2024

Present: Keith Ramsay (Chair)
Councillor Graham Turner
Mark Eastwood, MP
Chief Supt Jim Griffiths
Anis Dadu
Natalie Liddle
Sophie Johnson
Anum Rehman
Nancy Barrett
Peter Mason
Helen Rose
Palvinder Singh
Christine Fox
Charles Dunn (Virtual)
Helen Rose (Virtual)
Paul Burnett (Virtual)

In attendance: Joanne Bartholomew, Kirklees Council
Simon Taylor, Kirklees Council
Michelle Illingworth, Kirklees Council
David Wildman, Kirklees Council
James Blamires, Kirklees Council
Andy Raleigh, Kirklees Council
Jenny Tully, Counter Context
John Prendergast, Counter Context

Apologies: Councillor Cathy Scott
Fara Butt
Martin Walsh
Sue Baker
Jane Jackson

- 1 Membership of Dewsbury Town Board**
Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Cathy Scott, Fara Butt, Martin Walsh, Sue Baker and Jane Jackson.

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2 Declaration of Interests

No Interest were received.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2023, 25th January 2024 and 28th March 2024 be approved as a correct record.

4 Admission of the Public

All items were considered in public session.

5 Public Question Time

Question from Gill Young.

“ I note the current Board membership has been established with the intention, I assume, of being able to ‘deliver the Long-Term Plan for their town and put it to local people for consultation’ as the Government requires. However, despite at least 10 mentions of the Long-Term Plan in the terms of reference for the Board – but no link to see it - there is scant reference to the Plan being ‘community led and embedded within the local area’ or ‘direct engagement with the community’ on elements of the Plan and who is responsible for these facets. Perhaps this will be covered in Item 9 of your Agenda, but, for long-term residents of Dewsbury like myself we lack information on the ‘evidence baseline’ that presumably informs the Plan, as well as the ‘community engagement’ that would seem to be a Government condition. How will this all to be achieved?”

The Chair of the Board responded to the question and advised that it was very clear that the Governments view was that the Long-Term Plans was community led. The Long-Term Plan for Dewsbury would be driven by the community, and there was a number of pieces of work that would take place involving the community and would be highlighted at item number 9.

6 Deputations/Petitions

There were no deputations or petitions received.

7 Chairs Update

The Chair advised the Board that he had been invited to Downing Street on 15th May 2024 along with MP Mark Eastwood, other Town Board Chairs and national organisations that were all committed to Town Boards. Adam Hoxby, Chair of the town’s unit for the Department for Levelling Up Communities and Housing made it clear that towns now had the resources to make positive changes for their community. Dewsbury Town Board now had to use the money to help rebuild the social foundations and fabric of the towns on the programme, key was to increase footfall and economy in the town centre. The Log-Term Plan was a 10-year programme that required a vision statement and three-year plan by 1st August 2024.

RESOLVED: That the Chairs update be noted.

8 Terms of Reference for Dewsbury Town Board

The Board considered the Terms of Reference for Dewsbury Town Board. The Chair explained that the Terms of Reference were what the Board would operate under which mirrored what the local authority did and were built on from the Terms of Reference of Dewsbury Town Deal Board January 2020.

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference for Dewsbury Town Board be approved.

9 Long-Term Plan update

The Board received a presentation on the Long-Term Plan. David Wildman, Strategic Partnership Lead explained the work that had already taken place and work that was due to be undertaken for the Long-Term Plan.

Mr Wildman explained that a detailed programme had been compiled which set out a large number of tasks to be undertaken in the next 10 weeks around (i) Governance, (ii) Community Engagement, (iii) Baseline, (iv) Working Groups, (v) Economic Viability, (vi) Options (develop & refine), (vii) Long term plan, (viii) Approval & Submission, (ix) Interfaces.

Community Engagement was critical to ensure that the long-term plan reflected local priorities and involved current and future generations. The Board noted that Counter Context had been appointed following a procurement and evaluation process involving a panel of cross service council colleagues and the Deputy Chair of the Board. Opportunities had been explored to raise the profile of the Long-Term Plan with Hoardings and Scaffolding at Field House and to align the plan with the college campaign.

Jenny Tully, Senior Account Manager, Counter Context explained that they had been commissioned to support the engagement which concentrated on putting the community's voices at heart of the project. Counter Context were a specialist communication and engagement agency with 30 years' experience delivering community engagement, and consultations and had supported the Kirklees Cultural Heart project in Huddersfield. The Board noted that Counter Context priorities were to be inclusive and accessible, flexible, adaptable, creative and participant driven.

Ms Tully explained the core offer from Counter Context which included a planning and preparation phase followed by a consultation period. The Board noted the additional option on offer, which included creating a website, promoting the consultation via social media and local engagement, however, this would incur additional costs.

Mr Wildman updated the Board on work that was taking place around economic value, which was around delivering new homes and supporting the growth and regeneration of the town through a mix of housing, commercial and community assets. A tendering exercise was underway to help understand potential land uses and financial viability within the town centre to identify priorities for investment.

Mr Wildman advised that four working groups were to be created, with Board members leading the groups to help shape ideas, feed back to the Board and support the development of the Long-Term Plan. The workshops set up were:

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- Safety and Security
- High Street, Heritage and Regeneration
- Transport & Connectivity
- Comms, Engagement & Events

A long list of 84 potential interventions was shared with the Board to consider what areas they considered to be a priority for the Long-Term Plan.

During discussion of this item, the Board raised concerns around the short timeframe of the consultation taking place and the necessary recruitment, training and briefings that were required for local engagement, along with requesting that Hoardings be put up around the town centre. It was noted that digital presence was important, with a suggestion that a website landing page could be set up quickly. Suggestions of where local engagement could take place in addition to recommendations were:

- Supermarkets
- Schools/Colleges
- Parks
- Events taking place.

The Chair suggested that he and the Deputy Chair discuss the additional options available and meet with Counter Context to discuss the additional costs involved. Details would then be circulated to Board Members.

Following a conversation around deadline dates, the Chair advised that an additional Board meeting would be required prior to the next formal meeting, and that governance would contact Board members for availability.

RESOLVED: That Long-Term Plan Update be noted.

10 **Kirklees College Campaign update**

The Board received a presentation on Kirklees College Campaign.

Palvinder Singh, advised the Board that evidence had shown post covid, education would struggle after covid. Data received had confirmed that most outputs had either declined or stalled since Covid. Kirklees College was one of the few colleges in the country that had accelerated and was placed 6th out of 30 colleges in the country that came positive. However, Young people in Dewsbury were choosing not to stay in Dewsbury and the coloration of quality and coloration of choosing to stay in Dewsbury was not aligned. A strategic priority for Kirklees college was 'Dewsbury' for the next academic year, where time, effort and finances would be invested.

Helen Rose, explained that evidence had shown that currently students were travelling from Dewsbury to Huddersfield to learn due to the variety of curriculum offered in Huddersfield. To be able to offer curriculum subjects at Dewsbury, numbers were required with a campaign from the college taking place that talked to students, employers and the town, and asked 'what can you do to make a difference'. The campaign would run for 18 months to 2 years.

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During discussion of this item, Jim Griffiths advised the Board that the new police headquarters was to be built close to Springfield college and asked if a course such as public services could be offered where the police could be involved and could attract young people of Dewsbury. Anis Dadu also offered courses to the college that may attract apprentices in Dewsbury.

Kirklees Council's project team agreed to include some of the Kirklees College 'Our Town' branding on the Arcade Hording.

RESOLVED: That the Kirklees College Campaign Update be noted.

11 **Project Update**

The Board received and update on ongoing projects.

Michelle Illingworth, Economic Resilience Project Officer provided a positive update on the building grant revival update, 6-10 Westgate completed last week, which saw works to convert the upper floor to residential and ground floor to commercial with the creation of a new café and office space which will be utilised by the existing solicitors. Homeworld had received a grant to support a shop front replacement scheme and roof renovation which was due to complete this week.

Andy Raleigh, Economic Resilience Project Manager advised that 52 market applications had been received, interviews would take place to understand the market trader's requirements in the temporary and new market. The new market was in Phase 3 of detailed design with pre- planning application being submitted with the application submitting June/July 2024. Traffic surveys had been requested to understand how local road networks would interact with the market.

RESOLVED: That the Project Update be noted.

12 **AOB**

There were no other items of business.

13 **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 25th July 2024

Location: Dewsbury Town Hall

Time: 16:00 – 19:00