

# Kendal Futures Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020

3.00 pm - 5.00 pm

Video Meeting via Zoom



## Present:

Mark Cropper, Chair

Paula Scott, Kendal Futures

Susanne Long, Kendal Town Council

Robin Ashcroft, South Lakeland District Council

Matt Williams, SLDC

Mandy Dixon, K Village and Tourism

Cath Purdy, Housing

John Haley, Professional Services

Miriam Randall, Creative Industries & Innovation

Brian Harrison, Kendal BID

Graham Booth, Board Observer for Cumbria LEP

Jamie Allison, Young Professionals Group

Nick Taylor, Kendal Futures

Geoff Cook, South Lakeland Local Committee

Jim Bland, NFU

Dan Hudson, South Lakeland District Council (item 4)

Noel Farrer, Delivery Advice & Govt Liaison

## Apologies:

Derek Armstrong, Cumbria Chamber of Commerce

Kelvin Nash, Kendal College

Rhian Harris, Culture & Festivals

## 1. Apologies and membership

Noel Farrer was elected to the Kendal Futures Board (proposed by J Allison and seconded by S Long) to offer specialist advice about the Vision delivery, Government liaison and masterplans. He will also be appointed to the Kendal Futures CIC at the next Directors' meeting. N Farrer thanked the KFB and stressed his enthusiasm for helping to manage positive change for Kendal.

## 2. Declarations of interest

No declarations were made for the meeting agenda.

## 3. Minutes & matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September were agreed as a true record. A general update to the minutes was circulated ahead of the meeting (see attached).

### Matters arising

R Ashcroft reported that due to current economic circumstances the successful bidder has withdrawn from the SLDC markets tender process. SLDC will now manage the markets themselves with a more entrepreneurial approach. The KFB emphasised the need to work in partnership to develop the markets to their full potential and offered to assist SLDC to improve the offer and bring in successful examples and experts from other areas. Understanding and managing the constraints imposed by the Market Charter and highways consent issues is vital. **ACTION: P SCOTT to co-ordinate a KF/SLDC markets meeting to discuss next steps.**

## 4. Local Plan and planning policy reforms

Dan Hudson, Strategy Lead Specialist for SLDC, attended the meeting to update about progress with the next Local Plan. Prior to the first national lockdown in March, SLDC had a consensus of direction for the Local Plan following a visioning event and had agreed an outline timetable. Since then, however, Government has issued new population projections which doubles household growth figures and the Government has also consulted on a new method for

calculating housing need which will affect the numbers of new homes needed in the Local Plan. This number isn't yet known so the team are planning with a great deal of uncertainty.

The early stage consultation has been done and a call for sites to identify what development options are available is underway. A draft plan is likely in 2022 with adoption in 2023, but it may then have to be adapted as planning rules change.

Issues to consider in the Local Plan will include the impact of COVID on town centres and the wider destination, as well as on changing work patterns with broadband connectivity and local environmental quality becoming increasingly important. There's likely to be a reduction in demand for office and retail space, which could result in increased demand for residential homes, along with a need to create safe spaces for pedestrians and cyclists and towns less dominated by traffic.

The Government has also produced a White Paper which proposes to overhaul the planning system to include zoning, a rules based system, mandatory design codes, binding national policies and no clear direction about sustainable homes. It focuses on the numbers of new houses that can be built with a rules based approach that removes the local discretion and judgement from the planning system. This may mean that planners will need to clearly identify what can and can't be developed in a town. Development management policies would be set nationally which may prevent local policies about affordable housing or development which responds to specific local issues. Affordable housing and CIL would be rolled into a single levy and councils will have to decide how much to spend on infrastructure and affordable housing. While not likely to be implemented quickly, the proposals are a concern if approved.

The next Local Plan will plan for more growth than previously. The sustainable and climate change agenda will be fundamental for green space, transport, energy efficiency and active travel. The Kendal flood scheme will see a huge physical change and the Local Plan will need to consider huge issues such as how to improve walking, cycling, car parking, scope for more housing, public realm and retail.

CCC are seeking funding for the Kendal Northern Access Road and for this case to be successful the Local Plan has to show how it relates to development, growth and housing delivery. There are other good reasons for the road including better access to industrial areas for employment growth. The case must be made for increasing capacity in the transport network more generally which in turn supports increased housing growth opportunities elsewhere in the town and creating a transport network which works better to enable a more intelligent use of road space in the town centre and contributes to placemaking. This must be reflected in the Local Plan. The KFB agreed that the Northern Access Road should allow the town centre to become more attractive and healthier which in turn could unlock new town centre homes which will benefit the economy and vibrancy.

Renewal is also an interesting issue and wider area based change needs to be considered in a larger contest than being single estate based. Flexibility in approach is needed and the current proposals in the White Paper would be restrictive in this area.

The complexity of brown field sites must be investigated, and the Local Plan must take this into account. SLDC will have to make a call about what can be delivered from brown field sites based on robust assumptions about what is likely to be achieved. Owning a site doesn't necessarily confer deliverability. The Government wants a major increase in housing numbers and is strongly supportive of green field development which doesn't have automatic

protection. Housing should be locally led in a way which supports town centres and benefits the local community. An area can be allocated if it can be demonstrated it is likely to be deliverable.

The meeting discussed what KF can do with assisting SLDC to prove deliverability and identify suitable brown field sites, including options for land purchase and forming an Arms Length Management or developer organisation, working with existing partners to levy funds for private development.

## 5. Vision priorities, activities and next steps

N Taylor outlined the activities he will undertake if the funding application to SLDC is successful. Communication will be a priority, with local authority partners, strategic site owners and developing the Action Groups to build community capacity and interest.

M Randall reported that young participants in Brewery Art Centre projects are very keen to be involved in the development of the Kendal Vision and offered to continue those conversations and report back. The KFB agreed having previously emphasised that young people's views will be vital in each Action Group. **ACTION: N TAYLOR to discuss how to give young people a meaning voice further with M Randall.**

P Scott reminded the KFB that the agreed Action Groups are Housing and Workspace, Arts, Culture, Leisure and Tourism, Placemaking (landscape and environment) and Transport. **ACTION: P SCOTT to resend the structure and group headings to the KFB again.**

Existing groups will be included in the Action Group process with KF working to bring people together and reduce barriers. **ACTION: ALL to share contacts (and make introductions) to individuals and groups who should be involved in the Action Groups to N Taylor and P Scott.**

N Taylor will also investigate options for delivery structures, such as an Arms Length Management Organisation or charitable trading body, and provide examples from other areas. N Farrer reminded the group that the Vision is a working document which must change as we learn from the local community and external influences also change. KF must continue to adjust its thinking and stay up to date.

## 6. Kendal Vision funding update

R Ashcroft said that the funding request for £150k over 3 years to support the Vision Manager role and associated project costs over 3 years would be considered by Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> December. SLDC were also considering including additional sums to support project development linked to the Town Centre Strategy and Vision delivery, as well as allocating the £240k s106 Sainsbury's funding to KF to improve the Longpool to town centre pedestrian route.

SLDC requested that KF share their learning in developing their strong partnership approach and the Vision with other towns in the district. They are keen to enable other towns to develop placemaking strategies. The KFB agreed and emphasised that they see the continued partnership approach with SLDC and others as vital. M Cropper thanked R Ashcroft and M Williams for assistance with the funding application and KF understands the responsibility it will be given if the funding is successful.

P Scott reported that KTC has allocated £5k of funding this financial year to activities to support the Vision. She has proposed a small series of facilitated workshops, including one with landowners and strategic employers to broker conversations that will lead to change, and another with council officers to discuss the policies and barriers they face

and how everyone can work better together to progress the Vision. An initial workshop will be run with the KFB to agree structure, roles and terms of reference and examine how a new delivery vehicle could be developed. **ACTION: P SCOTT to share the funding proposal to KTC and workshop details with the KFB.**

S Long confirmed that she has requested a further £5k be made available from KTC next financial year to support the Vision work but it is dependent on budgetary decisions first. This commitment will also support the funding request to SLDC who want to know that KTC support the Vision. P Scott reminded the KFB that the SLDC and KTC funding discussed is in addition to the existing funding requests to support her role and smaller projects such as the Visit Kendal website.

## 7. Partner and project updates

Dealt with by exception. An update paper from the BID was circulated ahead of the meeting.

M Randall reported that the **Brewery Arts Centre** is moving closer towards becoming a centre for innovation and talent development and has received a top up grant to their existing Capital Development project from Cumbria LEP's Growing Our Potential fund. Digital hubs are being created throughout all the spaces to improve the live streaming and digital infrastructure for online activities including professional development programmes for young people in creative and online industry developments.

**SLDC** - M Williams said Kendal will host a visit from a High Streets Task Force expert on 16<sup>th</sup> December. SLDC and P Scott will conduct a town tour, presentation and then hold a virtual stakeholder group meeting to discuss the town's aspirations to deliver the Town Centre Strategy and Vision.

**KTC** - S Long requested a one page update about the Vision and next steps to share with KTC. **ACTION: P SCOTT to produce an update and send to S Long and KTC.**

M Dixon said **Travelodge** will be opening to the public in February/March and 40 of the 88 new apartments at **K Village** will be available by April, attracting more people to live in the town centre. The Virtual Wool Gathering attracted around 2000 people and there were lots of positive comments about returning to Kendal next year.

M Cropper asked whether anyone knew of any progress with the sale of the old Beales store. M Williams said SLDC is working with LSH, their property services team, to conduct a condition survey and are discussing possible uses with Kendal College.

## 8. Any other business

There was no other business.

## 9. Date of next meeting

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – 1.30 – 3.30 pm**

Via Zoom