

Kendal Futures Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 13th July 2022

3.00 – 4.30 pm

Georgian Room, Kendal Town Hall



Present:

Mark Cropper, Chair
Paula Scott, Kendal Futures
Susanne Long, Kendal Town Council
Cath Purdy, Housing
John Haley, Professional Services
Graham Booth, Board Observer for Cumbria LEP
Jim Bland, NFU
Nick Taylor, Kendal Futures
Geoff Cook, South Lakeland Local Committee
Gareth Candlin, South Lakeland District Council

Apologies:

Noel Farrer, Delivery Advice & Govt Liaison
Matt Williams, South Lakeland District Council
Miriam Randall, Creative Industries & Innovation
Jamie Allison, SL Professionals Group
Rhian Harris, Culture & Festivals
Tina Dulson, Kendal BID
Robin Ashcroft, South Lakeland District Council
Kelvin Nash, Kendal College

1. Apologies and membership

As above.

2. Declarations of interest

No declarations were made for the meeting agenda.

3. Minutes & matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th May were agreed as a true record.

Paula reported that the project development grant funding of £135,294 had been received into the CIC bank account.

4. Vision progress update event feedback

Around 150 people attended the Vision progress event in the Town Hall on 8th July. It was a useful event to share information, bring people together and encourage discussion. It was well received although there were some challenging questions following the presentation, particularly around the environment. The Vision has sustainability at its heart, but this may need to be communicated differently in future to better highlight how the town centre focus can help to address wider climate change issues.

The exhibition boards have been added to kendalfutures.co.uk and a newsletter will inform the mailing list.

The lead-in time for the event was short due to diaries, venue availability and the timing of council decisions for the Levelling Up Fund application. In future, a longer lead-in will ensure more effective co-ordination, planning (including informing partners about content) and promotion. Events should also include an evening and/or weekend. The intention is to hold more of these events in future which could be themed or subject specific, rather than discuss the whole Vision.

ACTION: Cath to share information about South Lakes Housing and housing plans at a future event.

The summer drinks event was also well attended at the end of June and a further event will be held before Christmas.

5. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Gareth Candlin from SLDC gave an update about LGR. The shadow cabinet is in place for the new Westmorland and Furness Council (WFC) and portfolios have been assigned to shadow cabinet members. Cllr Jonathan Brook has been

elected as leader and holds the economic development portfolio. The recruitment process is underway with CEO interviews being held imminently and other senior officer appointments expected by December. A full staff won't be in place until April 2023.

The KFB asked how to share information with the new council about the Vision and its aims and ensure the continuation of allocated funding. Gareth suggested having an initial conversation with Cllr Brook. Existing funding agreements will be continued into the new authority, which will include the Vision Manager funding and project development grant. The General Manager funding is via the Economic Development budget for which formal agreement through the shadow authority will be sought.

ACTION: Susanne and Paula to arrange a meeting with Cllr Jonathan Brook, and later relevant portfolio holders.

ACTION: Paula to request both SLDC and CCC get advance commitment of the KF funding.

The distribution of Cumbria wide services, such as highways, is still to be agreed. Some CCC services, such as the Fire Service or Children's Services may need to continue under a countywide footprint, hosted in different locations, but the overall principle is to have two separate authorities operating. District functions, such as planning, are being aggregated and how planning decisions will be determined is still to be agreed. It's likely that there will be 3 area teams and committees, however. The KFB discussed various issues with planning and legal delays due to a lack of capacity within the team. Gareth felt resources in the new authority will improve to enable more timely management of planning decisions and legal agreements. Additional resources will also support better conversations about applications and decisions.

The KFB agreed that there was a need to deliver a new Local Plan as soon as possible, but perhaps a version that can be more agile for the future, more flexible and easier to update.

Cath reminded the KFB that housing is central to the Vision and a local authority led approach is needed to develop a strategic and economic plan to realise its aims. Landowners must share the aspiration and recognise the opportunities offered by the Vision's approach. KF want to see the new council take a pro-active lead and drive interventions including land acquisition and identify and address barriers and costs. South Lakes Housing can offer support by bidding for infrastructure and engaging strategic partners. **ACTION: Cath to co-ordinate an introduction to the new housing portfolio holder via Cllr Helen Chaffey.**

The KFB also discussed the potential for the existing or new authorities to release assets, particularly land or buildings and it's important that KF is aware of the opportunity.

6. Highways Design Consultancy Services

Mark and Paula have held an online meeting with the consultants to discuss their proposals and a walkabout will be held in late July to scope and prioritise the junctions. The CCC highways team can't attend but have offered to hold a follow up meeting to share data and knowledge.

Susanne suggested including the Lowther Street/Highgate junction in the study to assess the impact of increased traffic volumes from Boundary Bank or Kendal Fell Quarry should new access from the A591 go ahead. The KFB briefly discussed ways to control or limit vehicle access to the town centre.

ACTION: Paula to ask interested parties at Boundary Bank and the Quarry for an update on their plans, and connect with Mike Turner, Chair of the LDNP's Business Task Force.

7. Project updates

Action Groups

Nick reported that the Transport and Placemaking Action Groups have continued to meet monthly, and attendees include several council officers. The Arts and Culture group will now focus on the creative industry sector, to avoid duplication with other groups. Nick aims to bring people together and identify what facilities or initiatives they would

like to see in the town, workspaces, work/live spaces or a centre for example. In the autumn he will engage young people via the schools and colleges.

Levelling Up Fund

SLDC's application is ready to submit when the Government opens the bidding portal.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Paula has submitted 4 expressions of interest to the consultants, Hatch, who are working on behalf of SLDC:

- Kendal town centre regeneration through public realm improvements (in partnership with SLDC)
- Feasibility study for improvements to Kendal's road network to support an increase in Active Travel
- Public art commission (to top up the EA public art fund)
- Funding for community engagement schemes and events

Gareth said SLDC will choose broad intervention areas in their Investment Plan which must be presented to Government in August. Once approved they will be developed into more detailed plans and proposals for year 1 activity (which must be delivered by March 2023), with years 2 and 3 to be planned in the winter months.

S106 scheme for Upper Stramongate

SLDC has reported that the s106 scheme is progressing. Survey results are awaited to inform the detailed designs and bill of quantities. Surveys to date found some damage to drainage pipes which must be repaired. An extension to the funding spend deadline until March 2023 has been requested from Morbaine, who have requested a draft deed of variation to consider. SLDC has instructed external solicitors to produce this within the month. The team is keen to try to meet the original deadlines of November if possible, however.

EA and flood scheme

Noel and Paula attended a follow up meeting with the EA team and discussed the revised planting scheme for Gooseholme and Aynam Road. The updated scheme was welcomed as the changes responded to Noel's earlier comments. The need to share information with the EA about the public realm scheme plans for Stramongate and Kent Street (via the LuF) was also discussed to achieve cohesive schemes across the town. The EA has also requested that KF and partners consider a public realm scheme for the junction of Wildman Street and Castle Street as their work will only include the area around the new pumping station and Gooseholme. There is potential for one of Nick's Action Groups to consider this and develop a project to improve the planting of the fernery garden at Stramongate Bridge.

The KFB discussed progress with the EA public art funding scheme and the need to achieve longer term benefits for Kendal. SLDC are managing a working group, chaired by Robin Ashcroft, and KF is represented, along with some Board members who are representing their own organisations. It was recognised that the funding was currently insufficient for a meaningful scheme, and that public art is very subjective and difficult to deliver well.

ACTION: KF to discuss again in more detail on a future agenda.

8. Partner and project updates

There were no further updates.

9. Any other business

The final Annual Report design will be shared with the KFB and partners by email.

10. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 14th September – 3pm – 4.30pm

Brewery Arts Centre