



Kendal Futures Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 12th July 2023

3.00 – 4.30 pm

South Lakes Housing, Bridge Mills

Present:

Mark Cropper, Chair
Cllr Jonathan Brook, Westmorland & Furness Council
Paula Scott, Kendal Futures
John Haley, Professional Services
Cath Purdy, Housing
Nick Taylor, Kendal Futures
Miriam Randall, Creative Industries & Innovation
Noel Farrer, Delivery Advice & Govt Liaison
Chris Davies, NFU

Matt Williams, Westmorland & Furness Council
Graham Booth, Large Employer
Angela Jones, Westmorland & Furness Council
Cllr Susanne Long, Kendal Town Council
Jamie Allison, SL Professionals Group

Apologies:

Rhian Harris, Culture & Festivals
Laura Miller, LAWSA
Cllr Doug Rathbone, Westmorland & Furness Council
Tina Dulson, Kendal BID

1. Apologies and membership

- Angela Jones was welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made. Angela stressed the importance of partnership working and the relevance of KF and the Vision to WFC and her role as Director of Thriving Places.
- Cllr Doug Rathbone has been appointed to the KFB as a WFC representative, joining Cllr Brook. Cllr Peter Thornton has asked to remain on the circulation list.
- John Haley, Cath Purdy, Miriam Randall, Jamie Allison and Rhian Harris (in her absence) were re-elected to the KFB for a further 3 year term.
- Mark reminded the group about the shared responsibility to discuss the work of KF and the Vision with their representative groups, and to encourage involvement at our events and action group meetings.

2. Declarations of interest

No declarations were made for the meeting agenda.

3. Minutes & matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th May were accepted as a true record, with the exception of noting that it was a hybrid meeting with some members attending online. **ACTION: PAULA to update the May meeting minutes and share with the KFB again.**

4. Better Balanced Streets Feasibility Study

Mark and Paula gave a progress update and shared some of the slides shown in the recent stakeholder workshop.

The overall strategic direction of the study was explained. KF has asked the consultants to present two different options for local town centre traffic - a one-way and two-way option for traffic on Highgate and Kirkland, based on

significantly reduced volumes of traffic due to the rerouting of strategic traffic. Additional visuals will be created and the study publication date has been delayed until late September.

The KFB were shown visuals of some of the proposals, including a new bridge and improved walking and cycling routes on New Road. Some early conversations have been held with landowners and business owners who understand the rationale. The KFB discussed the potential benefits of the proposals around the wider town, including reducing the prevalence of 'rat runs' to avoid the one-way system and the need to build resilience into the existing road network.

Improving the town centre for walking and cycling was a key objective of the study and KF has discussed this robustly with the consultants who tend to favour separate cycling lanes in line with Action Travel England. KF has commissioned Andrew Cameron to work with them on the client side. He has helped to challenge and clarify some of the proposals and suggest innovative solutions to issues.

The report will focus on a 20 mph speed limit across the town centre with high quality public realm and improved spaces. Preston was highlighted as a positive example of this approach. The KFB agreed the direction of the study was practical, and that further constricting the town with segregated cycle routes would be unhelpful. Angela said that in Barrow WFC are working closely with Active Travel England to manage a similar shared space scheme.

Visuals for Longpool were also shared but the option of developing a standalone scheme to be developed in the area may not be easily achieved.

Angela reminded everyone that a business case which identifies the benefits from the investment, would need to be developed to achieve the significant funding required. What will be affordable and deliverable in the future isn't yet known but the area does need a pipeline of projects to take advantage of future funding opportunities. Mark recommended that WFC make a future ask for private sector investment match against such schemes which KF can help to deliver.

The report will be finalised at the end of September before being shared with partners, and at a public engagement event which will now be held in October.

The 20 mph scheme for Kendal is progressing and is being considered by WFC's Locality Board with the policy developed and some funding available later this year.

5. Old Grammar School

Craig Russell (acting in a personal capacity and not as a member of KTC) has shared a proposal to convert the Old Grammar School into a new Lakeland Museum, combining the collections of the Museum of Lakeland Life and Industry (MoLLi) and Kendal Museum. The KFB recognised that Rhian wasn't present at the meeting but had discussed the sale of the Old Grammar School by Lakeland Arts at the last meeting, Paula asked the KFB to decide an agreed position which she and Nick could represent at meetings and in communications.

The KFB discussed the ideas in the proposal. Concerns included the cost of buying the building (£375k estimated for both properties), renovation to museum standard costs (estimated at £1m), significant ongoing maintenance costs, the loss of a heritage asset and lack of control over its future, the number of unknowns about the project, including whether there was a desire to combine and manage the museum collections as one. It was also noted that the collections would also need significant 'visioning' to assess and streamline.

Lakeland Arts have already said they need to sell the building due to the liability and that they feel it deserves to be refurbished and brought back into use, which they are unable to do. Agreed that the focus should be on supporting Lakeland Arts to successfully reestablish Abbot Hall and reopen MoLLi in the future.

The KFB agreed that their priority is to help ensure a successful and sustainable future for the recently reopened Abbot Hall Art Gallery, and to be engaged in plans for the future reopening of MoLLi. They felt unable to intervene in the sale of the Old Grammar School at this time, given the challenges relating to timescales and the significant levels of risk and funding required. They commended Craig Russell's vision and enthusiasm for a potential museum project and agreed it could have some merit in the longer term, but there were many longer term issues to resolve including the most suitable site, collections, funding and a larger business plan.

Miriam recommended that KF wait until Westmorland & Furness Council has developed its Cultural Strategy before agreeing to support any new projects. The KFB agreed and stressed the need to influence the development of that strategy as it emerges. **ACTION: PAULA to write to Craig Russell with the views of the KFB.**

6. Stramongate Improvement Scheme

Following concerns about further delays to the Stramongate Scheme, WFC has invited KF to attend regular project meetings with the first one scheduled on Friday 14th July. The contractors have been appointed, with a local Curtin's team leading on some aspects of the design. Reassurance was given by WFC representatives that they are committed to the integrity of the design and use of high quality materials. They are applying to the UKSPF to meet the increased cost of the scheme. Noel reminded everyone that it was critical to keep the quality of the project high, with strong client input. The scheme will reset the standard for future public realm projects in Kendal.

7. Partner updates

- Susanne said that KTC is asking Kendal BID to withdraw a poll they have issued to their membership about the 20mph proposals for the town as it is too late to consider the feedback at this stage.
- Nick said the mural yard project with the Placemaking Action Group has been delayed due to the structural condition of the yard. Costs for repairs are being investigated.

8. Any other business

Paula has sent the Annual Report to the designers, and the KF is also being updated. Both will be shared asap.

9. Date of next meeting

NB: The next meeting date has changed and will now be held on Thursday 28th September - 3pm – 4.30pm (previously Wednesday 20th September).

South Lakes Housing, Bridge Mill, Stramongate.