



Kendal Futures Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday 28th September 2023

3.00 – 4.30 pm

South Lakes Housing, Bridge Mills

Present:

Mark Cropper, Chair
Paula Scott, Kendal Futures
John Haley, Professional Services
Cath Purdy, Housing
Vicky Williamson, Kendal College
Rhian Harris, Culture & Festivals
Miriam Randall, Creative Industries & Innovation
Chris Davies, NFU
Matt Williams, Westmorland & Furness Council
Graham Booth, Large Employer

Cllr Susanne Long, Kendal Town Council

Jamie Allison, SL Professionals Group

Apologies:

Laura Miller, LAWSA
Cllr Doug Rathbone, Westmorland & Furness Council
Cllr Jonathan Brook, Westmorland & Furness Council
Angela Jones, Westmorland & Furness Council
Kelvin Nash, Kendal College
Tina Dulson, Kendal BID
Noel Farrer, Delivery Advice & Govt Liaison
Nick Taylor, Kendal Futures

1. Apologies and membership

2. Declarations of interest

No declarations were made for the meeting agenda.

3. Minutes & matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th July were accepted as a true record, with the exception of the reporting of agenda item 5. **ACTION: PAULA to update the July meeting minutes and share with the KFB again.**

Rhian reported that the Old Grammar School has been advertised for sale by auction. Rhian and Paula attended a meeting, organised by Kendal Town Council, about museum provision in Kendal. The idea of establishing a 'super museum' type organisation wasn't thought to be feasible at the current time, but it was agreed that Kendal has a rich source of provision through its existing organisations and collections and efforts should focus on ensuring their future sustainability and development through additional resources, investment and improved connections. The KFB agreed to pursue this through the development process for WFC's new Cultural Strategy. **ACTION: PAULA to invite David Haughian from WFC to a future meeting to discuss the Cultural Strategy.**

4. Better Balanced Streets feasibility study

The draft report has been shared by the consultants with the KF project team. It highlights some great work and concepts, backed by strong technical detail but some of the messages have been lost in the overall presentation which lacks the necessary impact. They have been asked to redraft it and Paula will share a further version with the KFB as soon as it is available and ahead of the planned public progress event.

5. Public progress event

A public progress event is planned for 17th October in Kendal Town Hall to share the recommendations from the Better Balanced Streets study. This project will be the focus on the event, along with the progress of the Stramongate scheme. Representatives from WFC have been invited to speak and discuss their funding support for the study (via the UKSPF) and how it aligns with the Vision and both organisations wider principles. Kendal Town Council will also be invited to speak, when they have seen the study, as it aligns with their proposals for a 20mph town.

The event will be held 1.30 pm until 8.00 pm and will include exhibition boards for the public to view. A presentation, speeches and Q&A session will be held at 2 pm and 6 pm. It will be publicised via flyers and posters and details will be sent for the KFB to share.

6. Project development fund

The project development funding of £135k was allocated in May 22, and Paula reported around £90k remains. The CIC/Working Group has discussed what projects and activities to spend it on which initially included gaining some high level planning advice to develop a KF Planning Strategy to help embed the principles of the Vision into the next Local Plan, particularly in relation to favouring town centre over greenfield development. Several discussions have been held with the Local Plans team prior to Local Government Reorganisation, including a session with a planning consultant. The consultant has since priced and detailed a series of support studies, at the request of KF - to support the Local Plan process. The details were circulated prior to the meeting, and include the scoping and production of a draft Kendal Town Plan, Spatial Design Guide and Indicative Capacity Study at a total cost of £73-£88k.

The Local Plan process will now change, however, in light of LGR and proposed legislation under the Government's Levelling Up paper. The support studies may not add value, or contribute to the process as intended in the longer term. The KFB agreed that it was risky to commission these studies at this time, and their preference would be to see WFC fund them directly, if required, in future. There is strong WFC representation on the KFB, the Local Plans team has a good understanding of the Vision and the timeframe to influence is now extended. The proposed studies will not be funded at this time. Instead, the KFB agreed to focus on projects that will make a material difference to the town more quickly.

On behalf of the CIC/Working Group, Mark proposed using some project development funding to design and visualise a Market Place, Finkle Street and Bird Cage improvement scheme, including the adjoining part of Stricklandgate. The Levelling Up Fund application has already outlined a scheme. The aim would be to take the project to a stage where it could attract additional funding leading to delivery in the medium term.

Mark suggested investigating the potential for a small, covered structure in the Market Place to support markets, events and festivals, and said that historically Market Place did have a covered area. He has received a request to erect a QEII memorial in the town and the projects could be linked. Any planning must also consider access for necessary vehicles.

Matt said WFC is being asked to confirm a UKSPF investment of £750k - £1m to improve the indoor Market Hall. The KFB asked for involvement in the design and planning of the Market Hall to ensure the projects are complimentary.

The KFB agreed to progress design and project ideas for Market Place and the surrounding area.

The group then discussed the need to spend some resource on masterplanning and visualising the opportunity areas identified in the Vision, including Canal Head (with links to the Better Balanced Streets recommendations), Station Gateway/Longpool and County Hall/Busher Walk. It will be necessary to engage with private and public sector

landowners as plans progress, develop a preferred land use for each of the areas and include the economic appeal of the process.

The KFB broadly supported the request to spend the project development funding on a town centre public realm improvement scheme design and masterplanning for Canal Head, plus additional areas if funding allows. There was a request for more detail to be shared in writing for consideration. **ACTION: PAULA to further develop the outline proposals for discussion at the next meeting.**

On the 25th September, Paula, Noel and Nick presented to an informal group of Kendal Town Councillors to update them about Kendal Futures and Vision progress. They challenged KF to be more ambitious and asked for a 3 year funding request aligned to project development and their own priorities to be considered in their budget setting process in November. Much of the project development will rest with WFC, and will rely on large amounts of funding to be raised, but KF must better demonstrate how they are progressing future tangible project development. **ACTION: PAULA to draft the project proposals and funding ask for KTC over 3 years.**

In addition, the Action Groups can identify smaller projects which KTC can be asked to support with project delivery, such as footpaths, planting schemes, signage etc. The Yards project is an example of this, where KTC has provided funding and officer resources to progress the activity. **ACTION: NICK to discuss the Yards activity and how Action Group projects are developed further with Miriam.**

7. Large employer meeting

A large employer meeting is planned for 23rd November, hosted by Mark at James Cropper. WFC will be invited as an employer and to hear the views of the other employers, and several other KFB members will attend. The aim is to connect the larger employers and define the problems they face about workforce recruitment and retention, housing and workforce supply, now and in the next 5-10 years. It will also provide an opportunity to remind them about the Vision, and the importance of their views being fed into the Local Plan review process.

Cath reminded the group that the area needs a housing strategy with drive and ambition, led by an enabling Council. KF is particularly concerned with the workforce housing strategy and supply linked to economic development and large employers need to influence the Council. The balance of visitors and appropriate accommodation is another factor to consider.

8. Partner updates

- Paula reported that a planting scheme has been designed for the new beds on Stramongate which link to similar schemes in the area. WFC will request that KTC maintain the bed in future.
- The Professionals Group is planning a survey aimed at the ABC123 demographic. **ACTION: ALL to send potential questions for inclusion to Jamie.**
- Susanne said that KTC is leading improvements to the footpath linking Ford Terrace and Scroggs Wood. The potential for widening the path is also being explored.

9. Any other business

Paula said the Vision Manager year 2 funding report is required by WFC in early November. If satisfactory, this will release the year 3 funding for Nick's role and Action Group related activity.

10. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 15th November - 3.00 pm - 4.30 pm - South Lakes Housing, Bridge Mills.