

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Newark Town Board** held in the Air & Space Institute, Great North Road, Newark NG24 1BL on Wednesday, 11 September 2024 at 5.00 pm.

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 27 JUNE 2024

In Attendance:

Jane Buxton	Balderton Parish Council
James Carpenter	BB Mortgages
Rose Thompson	Historic England
Clare Janes	Inspire
Louise Casey-Simpson	Newark & Sherwood CVS
Neil Cuttell	Newark & Sherwood DC
Elaine Poon	Newark & Sherwood DC
Matt Lamb	Newark & Sherwood DC
Simon Gabbittas	Newark Business Club
Jane Harrison	Newark Civic Trust
Penny Taylor	Newark College
Tony Aspbury	Newark Showground
Matthew Gleadell	Newark Town Council
Cllr. Keith Girling	Nottinghamshire County Council
Charlotte Elam	Nottinghamshire Police
Andrew Fearn	St. Mary Magdalene with St. Leonard

In Attendance Online:

Julia Sandhu	Reach UK
Steff Wright	Gusto UK
Jenny Garbis	Gusto UK
Cllr. Paul Peacock	Newark & Sherwood DC
Steffen Benbow	YMCA
Linny Beaumont	Canal & River Trust

Submitted Apologies:

Sanjiv Kohli	Newark & Sherwood DC
Calum Osborne	Nottingham Forest
Claire Hinchley	Sherwood Forest Hospital Trust
Dawn Campbell	Newark Town Council
Ian Harrison	Newark Town Council
Jackie Insley	Sherwood & Newark Citizens' Advice
Kevin Kendall	Lincolnshire Co-Op
Nikki Burley	Newark Emmaus Trust
Paul Wilkinson	Notts. Wildlife Trust
Peter Gaw	Inspire
Sam Thompson	The Duck
Stephen Shatwell	Reach
Fiona Johnson	Nottingham Trent University

The Co-Chair, Penny Taylor MBE, opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

AGREED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2024 be accepted as a true record.

11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None submitted.

12 GOVERNMENT UPDATE

The Co-Chair, Penny Taylor MBE, advised that the Government announcement in relation to the funding for the 3 Year investment Plan for 2024/2025 – 2026/2027 submitted on 1 August 2024 remained outstanding. The Board continued to press for a response and also an indication of when the 3 years would commence. She added that as soon as the outcome was known, it would be communicated to the wider Board membership.

13 'WE ARE NEWARK' TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN RECAP

The Co-Chair, Louise Casey-Simpson, advised that the new name for the Long-Term Plan for Towns had been chosen and would now be “We are Newark”. She advised that the 14 Market Place Regeneration Scheme, discussed at the previous meeting, was to proceed. Matt Lamb added that himself, along with Neil Cuttall, were progressing the matter through the Council’s decision-making processes to enable a Head Lease to be provided to the College and the CVS. The project was currently out to tender to appoint a contractor to undertake the works. He advised that there would be a single apartment upstairs, space at ground level and also a basement. Further works were required on the specification for the ground floor usage. He further added that it was hoped that the project would progress irrespective of the funding announcement as the capital to undertake the works had already been committed.

Louise Casey-Simpson also advised that from discussion at the previous meeting the other two projects that would be progressed were the Riverside Regeneration and the new CCTV Control Room.

14 LONG TERM PLAN FOR TOWNS CAPACITY FUNDING UPDATE REPORT

The Town Board considered the report relating to the capacity funding for the Long-Term Plan for Towns Fund (LTPfT) which recommended the recruitment of a full-time salaried post to support ongoing activity regarding community consultation and events.

Matt Lamb set out the proposal which was that the Board approve a grant to Lincoln College Group (Newark College) of the remaining Capacity Fund in the sum of up to £123,000 to support the ongoing delivery of engagement activity for a fixed term period of 2 years. The role of the post holder would be to provide engagement in the form of project development and pre-business improvement district work that would be required in order to deliver for the Town Board. The proposal for Lincoln College

to be the host employer was to create additional autonomy for the Town Board and the progression of identified projects. It was noted that the job description for the post was currently being drafted.

In relation to recruiting to the post, Matt Lamb asked Board members to consider anyone they knew from their own networks who may be suitable for the role and that they make Penny Taylor aware. County Councillor Keith Girling asked that the job description be forwarded to Board members.

In closing the discussion, Penny Taylor advised that the recruitment process would be jointly run by herself and Louise Casey-Simpson.

It was **AGREED** that approval be given for a grant to Lincoln College Group (Newark College) of the remaining Capacity Fun for LTPfT of up to £123,000 to support the ongoing delivery of engagement activity for a fixed-term period of 2 years. The fund to include the appointment to the role (a c£36,000 plus on-costs per year post) to create dedicated full-time capacity, a role which could expand into events and pre-BID set-up.

15 NEWARK CULTURAL HEART UPDATE REPORT

The Board considered the update report relating to the Newark Towns Cultural Heart project which sought approval to submit a Project Adjustment Request to the Government to redistribute the grant funding from the Gateway Project to the Newark Cultural Heart Project.

The report, presented by Matt Lamb, set out the background to the funding received to date, the projects which had been delivered and those which were underway. It was reported that some of the grant originally earmarked for the Newark Gateway (SISCLog) project had already been reallocated to the Castle Gatehouse and Stodman Street schemes but that there remained an allocation of £2,203,737 to the Gateway Project.

It was reported that the existing Towns Fund grant to the Newark Cultural Heart project, specifically allocated to the Newark Market Place, of £1,500,000 capital was insufficient to create transformational change, with the Council's Cabinet having noted that the reallocation of Towns Fund grant could only go to other priority Towns Fund Projects and not new projects. The proposal before the Board was to increase the Newark Cultural Heart delivery budget by £2,203,737 (made up of £2,110,000 from the Towns Fund Capital grant and £93,737 from the Towns Fund Revenue grant from the Newark Gateway scheme). The proposal was to be reported to the Council's Cabinet on 24 September for consideration and approval. If approved, the whole of the £25m Town Fund grant would be allocated with no anticipated grant funding underspend being returned to Government.

In presenting the report, Matt Lamb advised the Board that the other Towns Fund Projects were currently able to deliver with the budget already allocated to them. The projects were noted as: Newark Castle Gatehouse; and the finalisation of Stodman Street. He advised that NSDC and Newark Town Council had met to consider the political processes required to enable both authorities to work jointly in partnership

and to commence the commission of a design and build project – a single process. It was noted that the project would need to involve the entire Board, the public and Historic England. Work had commenced on compiling a list of must haves and would like to have.

It was **AGREED** that the following be approved:

- a) an increase to the Newark Cultural Heart delivery budget by £2,203,737 (made up of £2,110,000 from the Towns Fund Capital grant and £93,737 from the Towns Fund Revenue grant from the Newark Gateway scheme);
- b) delegated authority be given to the Chairs of the Board and the s151 Officer to submit a Project Adjustment Request form to Government to re-allocate the remaining £2,203,737 from the Newark Gateway scheme to the Newark Cultural Heart project; and
- c) as Project Sponsor, NSDC to undertake the Full Business Case for the Newark Cultural Heart project and return to the Board for approval.

16 FUTURE PROPOSED NEWARK TOWN BOARD (EXECUTIVE BOARD)

The Co-Chair, Penny Taylor, advised that following discussion at a previous meeting, the Programme Manager had issued information in relation to the establishment of an Executive Board. This had asked for nominations for the Executive Board using agreed criteria in order to spend the LTPfT fund monies noting that this would be community led with NSDC being the accountable body.

Consideration was given to the nominations which had resulted in the Executive Board being set as detailed in the presentation (Slide No. 13 – verbally amended to include Andrew Fearn and Rose Thompson as representatives for the Heritage & Culture element). Penny Taylor added that the Executive Board would be the decision-making body but that the Stakeholder Group would continue to meet to provide opinion and commentary on the decisions to be made. Matt Lamb added that both himself and Neil Cuttall would continue to be available should any of the members of the Stakeholder Group wish to raise an issue. Any issues could also be raised with the Executive Board members as spokespersons for their sector and/or organisations.

Penny Taylor advised that it was proposed that there would be quarterly Stakeholder Group meetings.

In response to a question about advisors, Matt Lamb advised that there would be an Advisor Team to the Executive Board to offer guidance and to steer Board Members on what they might wish to consider. County Councillor Keith Girling suggested, and it was accepted, that the Advisor Team include a representative from the tourism industry.

It was **AGREED** that the proposed Executive Board be approved, as detailed in Slide No. 13, subject to the inclusion of Andrew Fearn and Rose Thompson.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Project Updates

Referring to the Recommended Capital Projects Next Steps table (Slides 6, 7 & 8 of the presentation) Matt Lamb stated that he would welcome the views of stakeholders. In noting that confirmation of whether the funding was to be awarded would be included in the October budget he sought views on the following:

Upper Floor Residential Conversation Grant

How to cover a percentage of costs of someone delivering a fit for purpose residential use in the town. Slide 7 of the presentation set out the possible principles in delivering the project. It was noted that the principles did not require immediate agreement but discussion on what these may be was encouraged.

He advised that discussions were being held with Historic England to ascertain their level of interest in this project as it was nationally replicable in towns similar in nature to Newark. Contact was also being made with the Mayor for the East Midlands Region to say that if the scheme works, could Newark act as a pilot. He added that it may not be necessary to receive this specific funding to commence the scheme, it could be funding from an alternative source.

In response to whether comments and views were sought only on known projects, Matt Lamb advised that it was a blank canvass and that comments on both existing and potential future projects would be considered.

The Deputy Chair, Tony Aspbury, raised the issue of general improvement area monies and whether anything similar might be available. In response, Matt Lamb advised that prior to the October budget the decision on the Levelling Up Fund would be announced. It was also known that the Government were to press ahead with the Fair Funding Review on how local government is funding. There was thinking to be a move away from competitive funding with a shift to the creation of a 'pot' for local areas which offered a guarantee of what the local authority would receive. This may result in a more devolved budget process for local government. He added that the information would begin to be shared with stakeholders whilst Officers considered how a revised budget process may work and be administered in reality. He noted that another consideration was in relation to what the legacy of this project might be. Every effort must be made to ensure that after an owner was awarded the funding and spent it on the development they also maintained the fabric of the building as failure to do so would result in the same situation in the future. What control measures could be put in place to avoid that situation.

County Councillor Keith Girling commented that it would be beneficial for the Executive Board to be made aware of what the criteria was for a building to be determined as a heritage building at risk and how many buildings surrounding the market square fell within that category.

Newark Information Point (NIP)

Matt Lamb stated that he was unsure as to whether 14 Market Place was the correct site for the NIP but that consideration could be given to whether it would be suitable for a 'We are Newark' information point.

Town Centre Events

Matt Lamb advised that funding for these would run out at the end of March 2025. The district council would review and consider funding in budget setting for this to be extended and it was hoped that the Town Council would also provide additional funding.

Feasibility Grants

Matt Lamb advised that there would be projects for the Executive Board to consider whether to offer a feasibility grant. A decision on how to progress this was required as to what the criteria for an application for a grant may be.

County Councillor Keith Girling suggested that the budget of £200,000 be increased if possible. He also advised that other Boards were looking at inward investment opportunities and queried whether any consideration had been given to this. Matt Lamb acknowledged the suggestion of increasing the budget and also advised that match funding could be further explored. In relation to inward investment Matt Lamb advised that there had been £1.7m unallocated from the rolling up of the capital projects from the first 3 years and that expenditure of that could be either opportunity or feasibility led. He noted that should the monies be awarded it was not known whether the endowment style provision would be retained.

Community Grants

Matt Lamb advised that there were several ways to progress this. The Executive Board could issue guidance on what they considered to be good ideas to meet their aspirations for the town. Alternatively, the guidance could be specific, setting out the projects the Board would only be interested in.

Tony Aspbury commented that a decision needed to be taken on whether applications for both a feasibility grant and a community grant could be submitted or whether applications would be limited to one only.

In closing the debate, Matt Lamb advised that irrespective of the outcome of the bid, the Executive Board were still able to submit an investment plan, noting that Chesterfield had done that rather than waiting for the outcome of the bid. The investment plan would set out what the Executive Board's priorities were for the town and could provide a clear indication to either the Government; the local MPs; the East Midlands Regional Mayor; the County Council, or to all of those named.

Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.

Meeting closed at 5.52 pm.