

Millom Towns Fund

Minutes of Board Meeting held on Monday 30 November 2020 at 2pm

1. Meeting Protocol

All participants were reminded of the virtual meeting protocol, to remain on mute unless speaking and to use the 'hand up' function to indicate a wish to speak.

2. Attendances and Apologies

In attendance

Board Members

- Robert Morris-Eyton – Chair – Becksides Construction Ltd
- Cllr Felicity Wilson – Vice Chair – Copeland Borough Council
- Leanne Bolger – Deputy for Trudy Harrison – Parliament Assistant
- Jo Lappin – Cumbria LEP CEO
- David Savage – South Copeland Partnership
- Jenny Brumby – Around the Combe
- Marion Giles – Millom Recreation Centre
- Paul Stewart – Unit 3, Millom NC
- Elliot Burrow – Youth Representative
- Jo Martin - Head of Energy & Funding, BEC
- Gavin Towers – As If By Magic Ltd Director
- Elsa Brailey – Deputy for Brian Patterson – Home Group
- Jakki Moore – The Beggar's Theatre Owner and Director
- Cllr Bob Kelly – Millom Town Council
- Cllr Keith Hitchen – Cumbria County Council
- Pauline Preston – Business and Transformation Manager ICC – Health
- Matt Savidge – Head Teacher Millom School – Education Representative

Also Present

- Gillian Elliot – Cumbria County Council
- Maria Hewitt – Cumbria County Council
- Alison Hatcher – Cumbria County Council
- Louise Guyon – Hatch Associates
- Eleanor Farrell – Cumbria County Council
- Lauren Newby – Hatch Associates
- Elaine Herbert – DWP

- Naomi Hollows – BEIS
- Lorraine Smyth – ACT
- Marc Watterson – ARUP
- Sarah Mitchell– Copeland BC
- Diane Ward– Copeland BC
- Stephanie Shaw– Copeland BC
- Rose Blaney– Copeland BC

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Sarah Pemberton and Esme Holliday

3. Minutes of the Meetings held on 19th October 2020

Comments were made regarding updating the company information for two consultees and a spelling error within the minutes. It was agreed that amendments would be made to correct these errors.

AGREED: – That, subject to the amendments, the minutes of the meetings held on 19th October 2020 were unanimously agreed as a true record.

4. Declarations of Interests in Agenda Items

Due to the nature of the agenda, a number of declarations of interests were made by Members of the Board.

- Cllr Felicity Wilson – Member of the Nicholson Society, President of the Millom Discovery Centre, a Member of the Haverigg school Board of Governors.
- Marion Giles – Director Millom rec
- Jakki Moore – owner of Beggar’s Theatre
- Joe Martin – BEC employee
- Paul Stewart – Millom Network Centre
- Gavin Towers – As If By Magic Ltd Director
- Jenny Brumby – Around the Combe Community Group and Copeland Borough Council (CBC) Shop Local Co-Ordinator

5. Town Investment Plan Prioritisation Assessment

An overview and update was given by Lauren Newby, the Study Manager for Hatch, on the Town Investment Plan Prioritisation Assessment. The main highlight was the discussion surrounding deriving a shortlist, the shortlisted project proposals and the thematic areas surrounding them with the Star Chamber feedback.

Housing was a key discussion feature for the Board with members feeling as though there needed to be further investment into the housing in Millom; why people were leaving the town, Homes for Life, accessibility, inclusivity, Millom Town Council submitting responses to the consultation for the Copeland Local Plan and supply and stock of housing projects. It was noted that there shouldn't be a loss of focus on housing, as if the aim of the project is to bring more people to live and work in Millom, there needs to be a further discussion around housing. However, there may need to be a further investigation into other funding possibilities to enable further investment into housing within Millom as the Towns Fund isn't the only funding available for housing, such as the new funding for retro-fitting houses. But there must be consideration given into not duplicating possible funding or working with private landlords and market demand.

Agreed area of focus and enabling projects. Potential shortlist, suggested larger projects, Iron Line, Town Square reactivation, transport as enabling investment. Anchor projects that will drive a response to what Millom is facing such as depopulation and lack of jobs which brings in a problem of attracting and retaining investments.

Arts was suggested as one the thematic areas and projects to push as it will and does bring more people into the town, such as the Beggar's Theatre which brings in people from outside the town for not just the shows but for food and drink too. Though not currently at the stage in the process to look at subjects that would fall into that theme, but recognising that visitor economy is something to consider as driving those new uses and looking to create new uses would be beneficial.

A lot of what is trying to be achieved is around Health and Wellbeing through the economic side, from the arts to a potential leisure centre, but also through healthy town's initiative that is not currently in Cumbria. The healthy town's initiative could bring together arts, culture, heritage, health and wellbeing, skills and investment to Millom which would be the golden thread that the Board are trying to achieve.

Balance of Funds across the different themes is also something key to consider, as it may need to be re-balanced, to enhance the upskilling of the community and jobs that would perhaps enable a stronger business case.

Local transport is also a consideration to bring more people into the town, but a key focus should also be on activities within the community.

Digital connectivity is a key concern for students, especially after moving curriculum online, regarding the broadband connectivity and 4G. A way of attracting people to live and work in the area is around improved quality of live, where rapid connectivity to the outside worth through digital connectivity which may underpin everything else. It was noted that this is something that is already going to be provided through Connecting Cumbria. As this is something that will be funded from elsewhere, it will not be a key focus of the Towns Fund. So, digital connectivity will be included in the narrative and ambition for the town while being reflected in the strategy and vision to be deployed within Millom, there will not be an a funding ask from the Towns Board as it can be funded through other sources. Cumbria

County Council offered to supply some additional information outside of the meeting regarding this topic.

Regarding other funding opportunities, questions were raised regarding how the Board would know if other funding was available and how the Board would keep track of those projects being delivered. It was clarified that part of the proposal for the next steps will be discussing these areas with consultants and lead officers which will look at other funding areas, as there needs to be evidence that the funding requested through the towns fund cannot be found elsewhere. Aligned asks will also be made to the government for other funding should it be available.

Clarification was given as to the next steps of the process which to focus the asks, through key themes, by working in smaller working groups with key consultants and officers alongside the relevant officers on creating the strategic opportunities and business case on chosen projects. Some of which will need more work than others.

Opinions were given regarding the lack of skills and training opportunities within the town, which was echoed by multiple members, although it was highlighted that the plan was to include skills and training and inclusive growth benefits in each theme and how they can be delivered as part that, including employability in the future. The revenue impact that might need a bit more support in developing as well. Another opinion was the lack of having one major project to work on that would highlight all the key points MHCLG are looking for. Also discussed were the scores for Connected Millom which were very high, and the reason for those scores such as; the strong active travel approach it with health and wellbeing, investment in the public realm, pride of quality of place, way finding (enabling visitors to find their way around) and a number of other aspects which can be covered including improvements to the station.

Also highlighted was that some projects, such as the Iron Line Project which was classified as Arts, Culture and Heritage, could potentially be encompassed within other areas and become a transformational project depending on how it is developed which could really enhance the town if chosen as an anchor project. Local transport is also a key point that would enable to better quality of life for residents, which is the main point of the Towns Fund.

AGREED: – That, with a vote of 16 votes for, none against and two abstentions, the shortlisted project proposals to form the basis of the Town Investment Plan are agreed.

[Jo Lappin left the meeting at 3.15pm due to other commitments]

6. Updated Workplan

Lauren gave an update on the workplan which is moving at pace, liaising with CBC officers. The sessions will be consultant led. But it will be a co-designed approach to make sure that the content is correct and evidence is there. Once able to get into the detail, after working with stakeholders an update on progress in next meeting. The submission is split in

two parts, part one is a 10,000 word document and the second is an excel spreadsheet with all the relevant detail. In January there will be a Check and Challenge by ARUP who will provide us with good feedback. To enable to facilitate that feedback, CBC officers forewarned the Board regarding moving meeting in January back a few days. It is a tight timescale, with the TIP needing to be submitted end of January to MHCLG but really needs to be completed by end the of December to go through all governance processes to ensure the TIP is the best business case as possible. The Chair highlighted that there will be a push for the £25 million but not over to avoid the extra layer scrutiny.

AGREED: – That the Board will note the timescales within the updated work plan.

7. Stakeholder Insight Report

An overview was given by Lauren Newby, which included the collated feedback from Hatch and ACT.

[Elsa Brailey and Allison Hatcher left at 3.28pm due to other commitments]

It was commented that the CBC website is providing good communication and information. Further information is also provided every month in Around the Combe, which is hand delivered around 25 miles and is not just within Millom, and the papers provided to the Board are summarised within Around the Combe. There is also an active social media presence. The 'My Town' App, which has a high amount of comments and sometimes double the amount of comments than the other 101 towns on the App. The engagement for the project and the feedback has been really positive, other options for engagement are encouraged. Links to website are also included in Around the Combe.

Some of the feedback in the stakeholder report came from community sentiment, but there will be a separate conversation offline to ensure all points are correct. Proposal was made to request some analysis of the feedback provided and produced to make sure that they align with the projects which are being taken forward and the views of the community to ensure that there is no disconnect. Thanks were given to Jenny Brumby and the team involved for Around the Combe, which has managed to capture a lot of information successfully and in a clear manor.

AGREED: – That the Board will note the completion of Stakeholder Engagement Phase 1 Activity.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next Millom Towns Fund Board Meeting will take place on Monday 21st December 2020 at 2pm via virtual meeting.

Reminder for members that the January meeting will be moved to Friday 22nd January at 10.00am and invitations will be sent out shortly. Board members were also encouraged to keep in contact, and ask questions, should clarification on anything be needed. There was a proposal for a short film to be created for consultation, meeting with two young people and a young filmmaker following this meeting and a brief will be taken to the working group to agree before filming starts

Clarification was sought as to discussions between CCC and CBC. It was clarified that there is to be a meeting with both sets of officers from CCC and CBC as part of an officer working group to identify the correct people to be part of the working groups moving forward including officers from the correct department/area, board members and project leads. Board members will be allocated to projects following an initial conversation with the Chair and Deputy Chair and then expanded out to the rest of the Board. A concept owner would not sit on a working group to avoid potential conflicts of interest but would be able to inform the groups, decisions will be put back to the Board before the groups start working. Officers are hoping that the decisions will be made this week, they just wanted to make sure that Board members were comfortable with project areas before any decisions were made.

Meeting closed at 15:41pm