

ACTION LOG

Kidsgrove Town Deal Board

DRAFT

30th January 2025, 16.05 – 17.40

Present: Board members: James Dennison (JD) - CRT; Dan Gray (DG) - Aspire; Josephine Locke (JL) - KTCCIC; Simon Martin (SM) - CRT; Cllr Simon Tagg (ST) – NuLBC; Rob Timmis (RT) - King's Academy; Emily Verow (EV) - King's Academy; Cllr Paul Waring (PW) - Kidsgrove TC; Cllr Philip White (PWh) – SCC; David Williams (DW) - MP.

Support Officers: SCC - Gail Edwards (GE); NuLBC - Trudi Barnard (TB), Elaine Burgess (EB), Hal Higgins (HH), Simon McEneny (SMc), Brian Meredith (BM), Sarah Wilkes (SW).

Others: EMR - Bali Sethi (BS) – part; **King's Academy** – Mandy Prince; **MP's Office** – Finlay Gordon McClusker

Apologies: Jon Gray (BEIS/DLUHC); Lisa Healings (LH) - VAST; Paul Hodgkinson (PH) – Keele University; Rob Leese (DWP); Zoe Papiernik-Bloor (Audience Agency); Cllr Philip White (SCC Member).

	Issue	Action	By	Due Date	Compl
1.	Welcome & introductions Board members and other attendees in person and online were welcomed and King's Academy thanked for hosting. The Chair noted the meeting was not quorate so any decisions taken today would be pending, subject to comments from absentee members.	Contact absent board members re decisions	TB	07 Feb 2025	
2.	Action Log of previous meeting was accepted as a true record.				
3.	Declarations of interest None received.				
4.	Review of board membership/election of chair and vice chair DW enquired whether a skills audit had been carried out for the board, which SM confirmed had been carried out when the board was formed. DW requested that Rachel Laver from Chamber of Commerce would be invited to join the board, which was agreed.	Formal invitation to join board to be sent to Rachel Laver. Private sector appeal	DG/ST/ TB	14 Feb 2025	

	<p>DG requested that more private sector input was sought via Council comms channels to strengthen the Board.</p> <p>Nomination for Chair:</p> <p>Dan Gray – nominated by ST, seconded by PWh, approved by board.</p> <p>Nomination for Vice Chair:</p> <p>Simon Tagg – nominated by PW, Seconded by SM, approved by board.</p> <p>Dan Gray and Simon Tagg duly appointed as Chair and Vice chair respectively for the next 12 months.</p>		SMc/TB	Ongoing	
5.	<p>Project and spend status update</p> <p>The current spend profile for the projects was circulated to board.</p> <p>JD pointed out that although spend on the canal project was scheduled to be completed this financial year, due to a number of issues, the bulk of it would be spent in the first half of the 25/26 financial year.</p> <p>A more detailed breakdown was requested for the next board meeting.</p>	Prepare more detailed breakdown for next board meeting.	TB	Mar 2025	
6.	<p>Shared Service Hub (SSH) overview</p> <p>Following the October board meeting, two project sub-group meetings have taken place, with a unanimous decision on direction of travel, with the caveat that there will be changes as the projects are fully developed. Business cases will be circulated to board members for comment before any decisions are taken.</p> <p>An overview, including a breakdown of budget proposals was circulated to board members. Of the £6,183,000 Town Deal allocation, £175,000 has been spent to date, on technical, statutory and legal fees exploring options on locating the shared service hub at Meadows Road.</p>	Business cases to be circulated once prepared.	RT/EV SMc/EB	Mar 2025	
6a.	<p>Shared Service Hub – Community facility at King's Academy</p> <p>EV presented the proposal for the community facility at the academy. Operating models have been considered and the build completed in around 37 weeks. The precise location has to be determined (subject to location of underground facilities) however, both sites have good connectivity. EV noted that the cost did include an optional element of a changing room and green space.</p> <p>Q&A/comments:</p> <p>DW asked what level of confidence there was in delivering services from the facility. EV replied that the academy was concentrating on existing partnerships,</p>		EV/RT/ MP	Mar 2025	

	<p>including Alice Charity and Harper Adams University. The delivery model for adult education is being planned. Nursery provision may also be an option for the future.</p> <p>JD queried if this constituted a new project, as these were not allowed under TD regulations. SMC confirmed that it did not, although a PAR would be required by MHCLG.</p> <p>DECISION: Board members were asked to approve the development of a business case by the school (supported by NuLBC officers).</p> <p>Unanimously approved by all Board members present by show of hands.</p>	<p>Continue to develop proposal to report back at next meeting.</p> <p>As meeting was not quorate, opinions of absent board members to be sought.</p>	DG/TB	14 Feb 2025	
6b.	<p>Shared Service Hub – Access from canal to SSH</p> <p>EB went through paper previously circulated to board members, noting that the early-stage cost of c. £200k, provided by CRT based on similar schemes, does include contingency/optimism bias.</p> <p>Q&A/comments:</p> <p>PW commented that if there was an issue over costs then paths A and B should take priority.</p> <p>JD pointed out that CRT has ‘permitted development rights’ for work on CRT managed land, however, ownership of all paths needs to be established.</p> <p>EV queried if there would be an issue as this was not included in the original business case. SMC confirmed that this would not be the case as MHCLG were aware of this need to improve accessibility to and from canal.</p> <p>DECISION: Board members were asked to approve working up this element of the SSH business case.</p> <p>Unanimously approved by all Board members present by a show of hands.</p>	<p>Continue to develop proposal to report back at next meeting.</p> <p>As meeting was not quorate, opinions of absent board members to be sought.</p>	<p>BM/JD</p> <p>DG/TB</p>	<p>Mar 2025</p> <p>14 Feb 2025</p>	
6c.	<p>Shared Service Hub – Enterprise units</p> <p>SMC presented paper previously circulated to board members, emphasising that land acquisition was no longer required. The units will be sited on the council owned car park which can be reconfigured so only 2-3 spaces are lost.</p> <p>Q&A/comments:</p> <p>DW needed more confidence in the evidence for demand for the units and asked if the Chamber and local businesses have been consulted. SMC confirmed conversations with the Growth Hub show that there is a demand for the size of units. The business case would include this evidence.</p>	<p>Continue to develop proposal to report back at next meeting.</p>	SMC/EB /TB	Mar 2025	

	<p>EV asked if there was a cost associated with withdrawing from the garage site. SMc replied that some compensation would be required but that a figure had not been agreed.</p> <p>PWh supported the proposal as part of a longer-term strategy. Whilst there was good provision in the borough, this did not include Kidsgrove.</p> <p>DECISION: Board members were asked to approve the development of a business case by NuLBC officers.</p> <p>Approved by seven of the eight board members present by a show of hands, with one abstention.</p>	As meeting was not quorate, opinions of absent board members to be sought.	DG/TB	14 Feb 2025	
6di.	<p>Shared Service Hub – Public realm options (highways update)</p> <p>EB presented a paper previously circulated to board members. The forecast cost for the whole scheme is £1 million, including contingency – this includes Meadows Rd/Station Rd and Market St/Vine Bank and improvements to the cycle and pedestrian route from Mount Road, through to Tesco. The forecast delivery schedule shows that construction works can be complete by the end of March 2026 with snagging and handover happening between April and May 2026.</p> <p>Q&A/comments:</p> <p>SM asked that consideration is given to moving the crossing outside the Post Office and PW enquired if the bus stop could be moved.</p> <p>DECISION – see item 6dii.</p>	These points to be raised with Highways team.	EB	21 Feb 2025	
6dii.	<p>Shared Service Hub – Public realm options (King Street)</p> <p>EB presented paper previously circulated to board members, noting that public realm improvements were always part of the SSH project. Draft designs were included in the public consultations in Nov 2023 and July 2024, however, these will need updating.</p> <p>Q&A/comments:</p> <p>Several board members queried how well used the car parks and taxi rank were used. Whilst no formal data exists, other board members confirmed that the car park and pull in were very well used.</p> <p>DW asked if local shops had been consulted. EB confirmed more formal consultation would take place in due course.</p> <p>PWh pointed out that a key outcome for Town Deal funding is economic regeneration, adding that public realm improvements do improve residents’</p>				

	<p>attitudes towards their localities. He also confirmed that SCC cannot fund anything other than structural work.</p> <p>DECISION: Board members were asked to approve NuLBC officers moving forward with both elements of the public realm.</p> <p>Approved by seven of the eight board members present by a show of hands, with one abstention.</p>				
7.	<p>Kidsgrove Station</p> <p>BS from EMR went through some key elements of the paper previously circulated to board members. Kidsgrove station is the only one in the borough and is strategic to the future growth of Kidsgrove. DG emphasised that board cannot move forward with this project until ground investigation (GI) has been completed. ST, PW, and PWh expressed a desire to complete the GI work. DW confirmed that he will do all he can to ensure no Town Deal funding is returned to MHCLG, but queried why, if the station is so important, it was not included in NuLBC's or SCC's capital projects. SMc replied that it was not a council asset.</p> <p>Board members noted the cost for the GI work in the paper now appeared to be £1.14m. BS pointed out that this included work already carried out and the OCIP insurance. The actual GI cost was £698k as previously reported, however, costs other than the phase 1 GI were estimates.</p> <p>The cost to deliver the project in full (car park/station/interchange) is estimated at £5.5m, including remediation. Once the GI is complete, it will allow a better understanding of the remediation costs for each element of the project and the optioneering phase will begin.</p> <p>Board members debated at length whether the station project continued to meet the needs and interests of the people of Kidsgrove and whether investment in other projects would be better use of the funding. There was robust consultation on the station as part of the Town Investment Plan and also subsequently at the station by EMR/NR. Whilst it supports long-term growth of Kidsgrove, DW noted that residents did not expect that there was potential for substantial funding being used for mining mitigation rather than station improvements.</p> <p>Given the issues around spending the money on other projects, the lack of clarity on additional transport funding, and the risk that Town Deal funding might have to be returned to MHCLG, no formal decision was taken at this meeting. DG indicated that he would meet with DW as a priority to seek clarity on the</p>	Arrange meeting	DG/DW	Feb 2025	

	outstanding issues raised through the discussion at Board and noting that time is pressing to reach a final Board decision on whether to proceed with the GI work.				
8.	Date of next meeting Date/venue to be arranged for end March 2025. NB: Should it be necessary, in between meetings, briefing papers will be sent to board members, which need to be read and commented on.	Confirm date/venue	TB	TBC	

Abbreviations:

CRT – Canal & River Trust

DfT- Dept. for Transport

EMR – East Midlands Rail

GI – Ground investigation

KTCCIC – Kidsgrove Town Centre CIC

KTD – Kidsgrove Town Deal

MHCLG – Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Govt

NuLBC – Newcastle Borough Council

NR – Network Rail

OCIP – Owner Controlled Insurance Programme

PAR – Project Adjustment Request

SCC – Staffordshire County Council

SSH – Shared Service Hub