

KENDAL FUTURES BOARD

Minutes of the proceedings at a meeting of the Board held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Kendal, on Tuesday, 12th June 2008 at 4.30 p.m.

Present:	Peter Hensman (Chairman)	Lake District Estates Co. Ltd
	Alun Lewis	CBI
	Jim Bland	National Farmers Union
	George Inchmore	Kendal Retail Association
	Tom Powney	Federation of Small Businesses
	Graham Vincent	South Lakeland District Council
	Mandy Dixon	South Lakeland LSP
	Richard Pealing	Cumbria Vision
	Rob Johnson	Chamber of Commerce
	Geoff Cook	Kendal Town Council

Officers: Scott Burns (South Lakeland District Council), David Ingham (Cumbria County Council), Joanne Golton (Regeneration Programme Manager) and Margaret Graham (Clerk).

Also in attendance were Audrey Taylor, Policy and Major Project Manager, Cumbria Tourism; and Nick Raymond, Area Engineer, Cumbria County Council.

028/08 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chairman welcomed Audrey Taylor, who was giving a presentation on the Kendal Visitor Survey 2007.
- (2) He announced that the CCC Local Area Committee had rejected proposals for the Kendal Riverside Route through the New Road Car Park and the issue was being referred to the County Council's Scrutiny Committee. Consequently Nick Raymond's presentation would be restricted to the Kendal Transport Plan.
- (3) David Ingham informed the Board that Ted Walsh was no longer Chair of the Local Committee and that currently the Local Committee had not appointed a representative to the Board

029/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

030/08 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2008 be accepted as a true record.

031/08 MATTERS ARISING

Minute 020/08 (Brewery Project)

The Chairman had discussed the provision of undergraduate education in Kendal with the Vice Chancellor of the University of Cumbria. The University was still finalising its Business Plan. The Chairman was hopeful that Kendal's needs in the longer term would be recognised.

Rob Johnson said he had also raised the matter with a view to keeping focus on Kendal. The first tranche of money for the College extension had been given by the LSC on the basis of a University presence in Kendal. It was always part of the educational strategy, so the Board should not let the matter drop.

Richard Pealing said it was vital to keep a high profile, but also to be realistic. The University had initially to sort out problems with sites in Carlisle, Penrith and Ambleside, but it was important to ensure that Kendal was in "Phase 2". However, there was general agreement that we should continue to press for University involvement at an early stage.

In looking at the Brewery Project, the Chairman felt that it made sense, even without College involvement. He had asked Joanne Golton to speak to Sam Mason to see if there was a way that Board might be able to help with development of the plans.

Minute 021/08 (Local Development Framework)

The Chairman thanked David Ingham for his work in drafting the Board's formal response to the consultation.

Mr Ingham said that the Core Strategy had been significantly influenced by the Kendal Regeneration Action Plan. The amount of business development land required was difficult to forecast. 42 hectares had been quoted in the plan, but this might need to be reviewed as the plan progressed to take in different types and quality of sites and travel routes through the town centre. Mr Bland pointed out that there was currently no infrastructure for any of the proposed business sites.

Asked about the Kendal Northern Development Route, Mr Ingham confirmed that it was on Cumbria County Council's list as the next major scheme. However, there were serious environmental considerations to be overcome, as well as the difficulty of obtaining Regional Funding Allocation. The business case scoring for the KNDR was not strong. However, Members felt that it was vital that the Board make a strong case for the scheme, with support from South Lakeland District Council.

The Chairman asked whom to contact about the scheme, bearing in mind the limited development land available unless better access was provided. He was advised to write to the Chief Executive of Cumbria County Council, with a copy to the Regional Director, Government Office North West.

Minute 024/08 (Ref 018.08) (Car Parking Study)

Mr Ingham reported that the brief had been finalised but costs were more than the budget agreed (by £3,000). SLDC were looking for additional funds. The Board expressed their concern at the delay and agreed that the matter should be raised again at the next meeting.

Minute 025/08 (Logo) – Members were advised that this was not ready. Joanne Golton was asked to speed the design along.

Minute 026/08

Councillor Vincent reported that the Working Group felt that the development of business sites should be centred on Shenstone. This site was not straightforward, and there were other, better sites in the Local Development Framework; however, Shenstone had planning permission and could be progressed relatively quickly.

Other sites between the Kendal by-pass and the town would be a natural extension of Shenstone. The Group recommended that pressure be applied to obtain assistance. Joanne Golton was to meet the Group.

Scott Burns pointed out that the site required infrastructure and utilities; a significant level of public sector investment was needed. This site was part of the discussions with the North West Development Agency.

Mr Pealing suggested that SLDC might, as it had done at Ulverston, buy the site, put in the infrastructure and sell plots back to developers. Mr Burns pointed out that the NWDA could not give financial support to private sector problems.

032/08

KENDAL VISITOR SURVEY 2007 AND MARKET TOWN BENCHMARKING

Audrey Taylor, Policy and Major Project Manager, Cumbria Tourism, gave a presentation on the results of a survey of visitors to Kendal during 2007. She stressed that these were visitors' views and perceptions of the town, based on a sample of 506 interviews carried out during 20 June – 5 September 2007. The purpose of the survey was to identify strengths, weaknesses and problems, and inform future town centre management. For benchmarking purposes, the results had been compared (like for like) with similar market town locations within the County, and across the country (National Designation Benchmarking).

Ms Taylor highlighted significant findings from the satisfaction survey – both good and bad

- Kendal did well nationally in terms of first-time visitors to the town (42% against a 24% national average)
- 75% of visitors came by car (national average = 81%)
- shopping – the range of shops and quality of goods was highly rated, but visitors did not come to see specific attractions
- the quality of service at the Tourist Information Service was highly rated

However,

- The limited availability and cleanliness of public toilets was considered a weakness by visitors
- Visitors found it more difficult to find their way around Kendal using road signs than they expected
- The market was a disappointment
- Cost and difficulty in parking was a negative factor

Members discussed the results and felt that some very positive aspects had been identified. Also, it was comforting that the “bad things” about Kendal were not so bad as to put people off visiting. Many of the areas of low satisfaction were already well documented.

Mrs Dixon said that the Tourism Action Group which covered Kendal, Windermere and Bowness would be considering the Survey and agreeing the actions necessary. She was asked to report back to the Board on these.

The Chairman thanked Audrey Taylor for her interesting and informative presentation. She provided copies of the full Survey and advised Members that the results of the survey were also available on the Cumbria Tourism website.

033/08 KENDAL TRANSPORT PLAN

Nick Raymond, Area Engineer, Cumbria County Council, gave a presentation and responded to questions from Members:

Nick Raymond said that the main objectives of the Transport Plan were

- To remove/reduce congestion
- Improve air quality
- Improve access to retail outlets
- Get people out of cars
- Encourage walking, cycling and public transport (including improvements to the Bus Station)
- Promote work travel plans
- Encourage partnership working to develop a parking strategy
- Reduce long-term parking and increase short-term turnover
- Park and Ride
- A cycle network and walking/tourist trail
- Better traffic management

The written plan was on the County Council's website. Mr Raymond undertook to provide an executive summary for Members.

Mr Powney was concerned about the lack of consultation with residents. Mr Raymond explained that significant consultation had taken place, both with individuals and groups. It had been accepted that car parking is a major problem. Mr Powney was disappointed that, while solutions were already known, nothing was being done to deliver improvements.

Mrs Dixon felt that pedestrianisation had improved the town centre and this was generally endorsed by other Members. Now that there was evidence from the visitor survey which supported the need for improvements, these should be focussed on as a matter of urgency. However, the proposed car parking survey was short of funds. Mr Raymond agreed that providing measures to improve the situation was not simple.

Councillor Cook felt that the Futures Board needed to make a strong case for funding to the County Council. The Chairman offered to provide the Working Group recommendations to Nick Raymond, and Mr Ingham was asked to progress the issue of funding with the County Council.

AGREED – that

- (1) Mr Raymond be requested to provide a copy of the Transport Plan Executive Summary;
- (2) The Car Parking Working Group recommendations be provided to Mr Raymond; and
- (3) Mr Ingham be asked to progress the issue of additional funding for the Car Parking Study with the County Council.

034/08 PROGRESSING KENDAL FUTURES PRIORITIES

Joanne Golton was now in post and she discussed her planned approach. She said that initially she would -

- Start by talking to colleagues
- Contact Cumbria Vision, the North West Development Agency, the Kirkland Partnership, Sam Mason at the Brewery, Peter Crompton at BeA regarding Shenstone
- Discuss the Sports Village Project with Kendal College
- Sort out the logo and look at publicity arrangements
- Arrange appointments with individual Members / Groups
- Meet the Chairman on a fortnightly basis
- Look at ways of assisting The Kirkland Partnership to work up a scheme for the Kirkland Neighbourhood Square

Geoff Cook asked her to meet the Kendal Town Council.

Rob Johnson offered help through the Chamber of Commerce.

It was suggested that priorities and milestones needed to be agreed. These should be discussed with individuals/groups and put on a future agenda.

The Chairman felt that it was essential to convince the North West Development Agency and Cumbria Vision of the importance of Kendal's plans. Although, as a complete scheme, the Regeneration Action Plan was probably too large, there were many parts of it which fitted well with NWDA strategy and for which assistance could be sought. Kendal had missed out on the Market Town Initiative and needed to look for alternative streams of funding for pump-priming to generate activity.

035/08 BUSINESS TO BUSINESS

Scott Burns reported that SLDC had increased its Economic Development Fund for 2008/09. This had allowed the Council to renegotiate its service level agreement with CREA. SLDC's partnership with CREA and the Chamber of Commerce had secured the services of a **Business Advisor** for Kendal, who would be based at the 32 Market Place office, working one day per week for 30 weeks. Particular emphasis was to be placed on assisting local independent retailers. This could be the start of a "one stop shop" service for business.

The advisor would be promoting the **Business-to-Business Exhibition** among other events. This was proposed to be an annual event, organised by SLDC in conjunctions with others including CREA and the Chamber of Commerce. This year the event will be held at the Castle Green Hotel in Kendal on Thursday, 13th November (prior to the National Enterprise Week). Mr Burns circulated a draft flyer for the Exhibition.

036/08 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

AGREED – that the next meeting be held on Wednesday, 30th July at 4.30 p.m..