

## KENDAL FUTURES BOARD

Minutes of the proceedings at a meeting of the Board held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Kendal on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2008 at 4.30 p.m.

<b>Present:</b>	Peter Hensman (Chairman)	Lake District Estates Co. Ltd
	Simon Sjenitzer	Cumbria Vision
	Alun Lewis	CBI
	Jim Bland	National Farmers Union
	Geoff Cook	Kendal Town Council
	George Inchmore	Kendal Retail Association
	Tom Powney	Federation of Small Businesses
	Graham Vincent	South Lakeland District Council
	Mandy Dixon	South Lakeland LSP
	Derek Armstrong	Chamber of Commerce

Also in attendance were Scott Burns (South Lakeland District Council), David Ingham (Cumbria County Council), Margaret Graham (Clerk) and David Sykes (South Lakeland District Council)

Apologies for absence were received from Rob Johnson (Cumbria Chamber of Commerce) and Ted Walsh (Cumbria County Council).

### 001/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At the meeting on 17 December 2007, it had been agreed that all Members should complete, and return to Scott Burns, Appendix 1 Declaration of Interest forms. It was reported that there were four forms still outstanding.

The following interests were declared:-

- (1) Mr Peter Hensman declared a personal interest in the Canal Head item (Minute 8 ) because he was a minor shareholder with Gilbert Gilkes and Gordon Ltd.
- (2) Mr Tom Powney declared a personal interest in the proceedings as he was a retail trader in Elephant Yard.
- (3) Councillor Graham Vincent and Mr Peter Hensman both declared a personal interest in Minute 5 (one stop shop) because they were Board Members of CREA
- (4) Mrs Mandy Dixon declared a personal interest in minute 5 as a Board Member of CREA.

### 002/08 MINUTES

**AGREED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2007 be accepted as a true record.

### 003/08 MATTERS ARISING

- (1) Members discussed the proposed business support programme. The Chamber of Commerce had not yet progressed this. Concerns were expressed about

gaps in the mechanisms and duplication of work/support (throughout the County), e.g. Business Link, CREA, forums.

- (2) A reasonable response had been received to the advertisement for a Regeneration Programme Manager and successful interviews had been held. The post had been offered to one of the short-listed applicants but unfortunately she is now unable to take up the post. A second candidate has been approached and it was anticipated that her decision would be known within a week of the meeting.
- (3) A fair report on the Group had appeared in the Westmorland Gazette. They were ready to revisit the subject when the Programme Manager appointment was announced.
- (4) Mrs Dixon mentioned the need to establish a Board logo for publicity purposes.

**004/08**

### **CAR PARKING STRATEGY**

The chairman stressed that it was critical to have a strategy in place. Mr Ingham believed that there was a case for commissioning a study, not just about parking spaces but better use of existing facilities and the positioning of car parks, reducing congestion, and making Kendal more visitor/shopper friendly. "Park and ride" seemed not to be viable and more coach parking was needed.

It was pointed out that two studies had been undertaken already (by Cumbria Tourism and by SLDC). It was felt that any further study should not go over old ground, rather it should bring together the results and identify gaps and propose solutions. The requirement of three different markets (tourism, local public, and business) needed to be reflected in the study. Mr Ingham indicated that the CCC Transport Study budget had suffered a significant reduction; available funding was limited and had to be committed by the end of March 2008. Councillor Vincent said that he would be prepared to put a case to SLDC for addition funding if this would be of significant benefit to the project. Mr Powney suggested setting up a working group to establish what had already been surveyed, evaluate and analyse the results and narrow down missing objectives in order to agree a brief for the study.

**AGREED** to set up a Working Group of Members comprising Messrs T. Powney, J. Bland and G. Inchmore and Councillor G. Vincent.

**005/08**

### **ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES**

The Chairman noted the proposed themes from the Action plan

- Adding value – moving business up the value chain
- Investing in the Town Centre
- Boosting Enterprise and Business Birth Rate
- Promoting Economic Infrastructure

and the key projects within those themes. He suggested that the first two of these themes should be the main priority and within each theme the Board should focus on the following:

<b>Infrastructure theme</b>	Provision of employment sites and premises Car and coach parking solutions
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**Town Centre Investment** a thriving town centre initiative  
Promotion of Kirkland as a distinct arts and cultural quarter  
Better public realm and connections

**Boosting Enterprise** Better business support through a one stop shop and dedicated advisor  
Managed business centre

**Adding value business** Help for existing businesses to move up the value chain together with plans currently under development for

- Promoting a strong university presence in the town
- Regeneration of Highgate for mixed retail, business arts and cultural uses including a “creative industries campus” at the Brewery Arts Centre
- Canal Head development (including Canal Restoration)

After some discussion Board members agreed that key elements of all four themes needed to be addressed simultaneously. The following received particular support:

a. Improving business birth rate and related infrastructure.

The “birth rate” was being stifled through lack of space/premises and incubators. As a result, new businesses were going where there were registered sites (e.g. Lancaster, Penrith, Ulverston). Kendal needed to get to a position where it could encourage new businesses, new jobs (especially higher income jobs), and get energy back into the town. Nothing could be done if the infrastructure was not in place to persuade businesses that there were opportunities in the Town. Also, it was fundamental to have appropriate employment sites, premises etc ready before the “one stop shop” (see below) was in operation.

Members recognised that the local planning authority was vulnerable to appeal if it allocated Greenfield land for employment use and the importance of retaining Brownfield sites for employment use. It was agreed that it was important to get sites established, break down barriers to business development, and move the process.

b. Encouraging University/ higher education facilities and promotion by Kendal College of business/culture/sport

This sat well within the Action Plan and tied in with the “sports village” proposals currently being promoted by the College (see below) and their “skills academy” aspirations. It was understood that there was to be an imminent press release on business courses available through Kendal College, and that the College’s proposed intention was to tailor courses to the needs of business – ideally at management level. Referring to the Young Chamber of Commerce set up at Kirkbie Kendal School, it was suggested that partnerships between Colleges and Schools could promote business education.

c. Business one stop shop

It was felt that the merger of CREA and the Chamber of Commerce would help with the creation of a “one stop shop” which would be highly visible to the public and make business expertise generally available to a wider audience. There was an awareness that some projects were “ready to roll” now, with sites available and investors on board. However, there was a need to establish where assistance was

still needed. It was suggested that Business Link could be asked to give a presentation to a future meeting and explain what assistance they could provide.

#### d. Town centre improvements

Discussion covered the lack of co-ordinated day-to-day management, problems identified by retailers e.g. youth disorder, pedestrianisation, empty stores, dug-up roads, traffic and litter. It was felt that there were currently no opportunities in the town centre; independent retailers were struggling and faced the threat of even more competition from out-of-town stores. It was suggested that the Utilities could be contacted about the dug-up roads, and the cost of bringing these back up to County Council standard where the reinstatement undertaken was considered to be unsatisfactory.

The Board was also interested to learn more about the Brewery's proposals to expand its site to develop creative industries. It was agreed to ask the Brewery to send a representative to a future meeting.

**006/08**

### **KIRKLAND PUBLIC REALM – NEIGHBOURHOOD SQUARE**

The Kirkland Partnership had met on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2008 and introduced a scheme to create a neighbourhood square around the Ring of Bells Public House/Nether Hall. A diagram of the proposed square was provided for information. Members were asked to consider the submission from the Kirkland partnership and give an opinion as to whether the proposal would achieve a “quick win” on the promotion of Kirkland as a distinct arts and cultural quarter. It was felt that the square would provide an attractive and identifiable start to Kendal town which would slow traffic down and encourage travellers to stop. Members agreed that such a scheme, within the Conservation area, was worthy of support and looked forward to seeing it worked up.

**AGREED** – that the proposed scheme be supported, and the Partnership be requested to provide further details of the scheme, including cost estimates.

**007/08**

### **SPORTS VILLAGE**

The Board discussed a report from Richard Foster, SLDC, on the concept of a Kendal Sport Village. A steering group of influential organisations (SLDC, CCC, Sport England and the University of Cumbria) was taking forward the project, the need for which stemmed from the lack of quality sports facilities in the town and meant that individual clubs and centres were effectively competing with each other for grant funding to develop their own facilities. The steering group had agreed that two separate areas in Kendal could be developed – an outdoor facility at the Jubilee Playing Fields and an indoor facility, possibly by relocating Kendal Leisure Centre. The outdoor site was at design stage, and funding had been identified from a private source. Members were generally supportive of the proposals.

**AGREED** that the aspirations for a Sports Village should be encouraged, and the Board be kept up to date on progress.

**008/08**

### **CANAL HEAD**

Members received an interesting and informative presentation from David Sykes, Head of Regeneration at SLDC, on two inter-related projects at Canal Head – the canal restoration from Tewitfield, and a built development for mixed use comprising housing, B1 and B2 employment use, ancillary retail use, a hotel and restaurant/café. Mr Sykes explained that it was a very complex planning problem to deliver such an ambitious scheme, and to establish that there was sufficient value in

the scheme to pay for itself. There were many issues still to be addressed - threats to the retail/business balance; traffic issues in respect of the effect of the development on the town, bus services, bio-diversity issues because the River Kent is an SSI and water would need to be extracted from it. British Waterways were working on the environmental issues.

Asked if the development would add to the Board's Action Plan, Mr Sykes said that it was proposed to be complementary to – but different from – the cultural quarter, adding to the interest, heritage and attractiveness of the town. It did not preclude development of the New Road area, and would hopefully improve the east/west flow.

Following the submission to SLDC's cabinet for approval of the development document and strategy, there would be a six-week public consultation period. If the town did not support the development, it was not going to happen. The principal local authorities were pulling together to support the scheme, and the Kendal Futures Board would receive regular updates on progress.

**AGREED** to support in principle the proposed development, and request that the Board be regularly updated.

**009/08**

#### **ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN**

**AGREED** that the following be actioned:

- (1) Working Group to be set up to progress car parking study
- (2) Support for Kirkland Neighbourhood Square plan
- (3) Employment sites to be identified
- (4) Brewery Arts Centre be requested to attend a future meeting
- (5) Production of logo

**010/08**

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr Powney said that he felt the proposed cycle route was fundamentally flawed around New Road and asked how close the scheme was to implementation. He was also concerned about the loss of car parking spaces at this location. County Council representatives suggested implementation was still a little way off.

**AGREED** that Mr Powney contact Nick Raymond about these issues, or Mr Raymond be asked to a future meeting to discuss these issues with the Board.

**011/08**

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**AGREED** that the next meeting of the Board be held on Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> March at 4.30 p.m.

The meeting ended at 6.55 p.m.