

Notes

Kirkham Futures Steering Group

Date:	Thursday, 12 May 2022	
Venue:	Remote Meeting Via Zoom	
Present:	Councillor Liz Oades (Chairman) Councillor Karen Buckley - Leader Tracy Manning - Deputy Chief Executive. Mark Evans - Head of Planning. Melissa Thorpe - Town Centres Manager & Acting Project Manager. Derek Appleton - Corporate Finance Manager. Carly Smith - Legal Officer. Mike Harris – Press Officer.	
Note Taker:	Lyndsey Lacey-Simone	Principal Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Paula Huber, Marie Percival, Gemma Broadley and Erin Coar.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Following introductions, the Chairman welcomed all those present to the meeting.

3. Notes and Actions from Previous Meeting

Tracy Manning (TM) introduced this item. In doing so, she referred to the notes of the last meeting which detailed a list of actions arising from the previous meeting of the KFSG. In summary, these were reported as follows:

Actions Brought Forward from 12 April 2022

- **ME to review the committee reporting arrangements/timetable and come back to Councillors Oades and Buckley at the earliest opportunity.** It was reported that **Melissa Thorpe (MT)** had drafted an information report to go the June meeting of the Planning Cttee which will include past minutes of the group meetings.

Cllr Buckley (KB) requested that a report come to the next meeting of the Steering Group setting out the timetable for the delivery of the projects running to 31st March 2024 **Action: MT**

- **25 car parking spaces had been lost in Market Square** – Actioned - This was covered on the agenda under item 4.
- **ME to further clarify the position about the “programme not being at risk” with the MP and report back to the Group** – It was reported that the MP for Fylde had met with Minister and further feedback was sought **Action: ME to chase up and update the group at the earliest opportunity.**

- ***It was reported a review/update of the content of website would be timely to strip out outdated information and refresh with updated information.*** This was dealt with in the Comms item.
- ***The opportunity for visuals to engage with the community by putting up posters/ banners up in Kirkham town centre to highlight the current/ongoing works/car parking etc.*** This was dealt with in the Comms item.
- ***KB asked that a comms plan be put in place highlighting the shop front scheme in particular.*** This was dealt with in the Comms item.

4. Project Updates

Shop Front Improvement Scheme - Melissa Thorpe (MT) introduced this item. In doing so, she referred to the document previously circulated to the Group on the matter.

Details regarding to recent challenges relating to the allocation of grant funding for three shopfront conversions were highlighted at the meeting. Members were invited to consider 3 options (detailed below) and the associated risks to the HAZ & FHSF shopfront scheme. It was also suggested that consideration be given to any changes that the group deem necessary to the amount of grants offered to the three applicants in the first instance, and to the scheme moving forward.

The options presented at the meeting were as follows:

Option 1- Provide a 90% intervention rate on all projects taking part in the scheme regardless of cost, size, or location within the town centre.

Option 2 - Provide an 80% intervention rate on all projects taking part in the scheme regardless of cost, size or location within the town centre.

Option 3 - A grant panel will assess Shopfront projects against the scoring criteria which will result in a varying degree of intervention rates based on pre-set criteria

Cllr Oades (EAO) stressed the importance attached to this scheme and suggested that the Council move forward with Option 2 to provide an 80% max intervention rate. This was supported by **KB. Action: MT**

Public Realm Improvements - ME reported that whilst the scheme had been designed and had the benefit of planning permission, the key issue that remained is that the tenders for the works had come in considerably over the budget allocation.

The Group was reminded that the other element of funding secured was the LCC grant (Lancs Economic Recovery Fund) which had been agreed in principle by LCC's Cabinet. **ME** informed the group that a business plan had now been submitted to LCC to allow the Council to draw down the funding. Once concluded, the intention was to bring a report to committee and add to the Capital programme at the earliest opportunity. The group was advised that LCC had asked for some additional information and anticipated start dates at this stage were nebulous until the funding was secured.

KB asked that a copy of business plan be shared with group. **Action: ME/PH**

Future Car parking Provision - A detailed discussion took place about matters associated with the displaced Market Square car parking and the impact on the high street generally including the proposal to move the car parking to Kirkgate if the scheme was progressed in Phase 2 of the design works.

Market Square Planting Works - Issues relating to the maintenance of Market Square planting works and the associated planning condition were raised at the meeting.

Reference to the Town Council's proposal to continue public realm themes outside project area including the design rationale were further highlighted.

Councillor Oades (EAO) sought clarification on a number of areas including: LCC decision making process regarding funding; loss car parking spaces/ use of Market Square when events are not taking place; feasibility of a parking permit scheme at Kirkgate; general management/maintenance of planting works and the town councils role; restrictions on planting in Market Square and issues of securing alternative locations whilst the public realm works were ongoing; relationship/communications between planning and parks; entrance to market square

being pulled up/ closed. **ME** addressed these points. **MT confirmed that the issues relating to the works at the entrance to the market square were due to the repair of a sink hole.**

KB asked financial aspects of the open spaces contract. **EAO** addressed this point.

Former Girls School, schedule of works and timetable - **ME** reported that he would update members on the indicative timetable at the next meeting. A local architect, who had been commissioned to undertake the works was currently putting together a schedule of adjustments to the scheme that had previously received planning permission. **Action: ME to circulate indicative programme and include on agenda for the next meeting.**

KB asked about ongoing revenue costs -**Derek Appleton (DA)** addressed this matter.

Kirkgate - **ME** stated that as previously advised, the Kirkgate centre acquisition is not going to go ahead as it was not viable for partner organisations. The initial project was to acquire the building and pass on to a registered provider.

It was reported that officers had spoken to our FHSF case officer at Dept for the Levelling Up Fund about the possibility of reallocating /redistributing the funds for other purposes such as works to the frontage of the building or the shop front scheme funds and to seek an 'in principle' agreement. 4 potential options had been put forward.

ME advised that any alternative proposal must:

- Meet the original objectives of the FHSF programme.
- Meet the minimum BCR of 2:1.
- A project change request must be submitted, and this would take at least 6-8 weeks to process.

Potential deliverable options put forward for consideration were:

1. Private scheme for Kirkgate working with current building owner to deliver market homes.
2. Public realm
Required to meet increased cost in materials.
Delivers more of the 'original' scheme.
3. Shopfronts
Potential to offer higher intervention rates and scheme throughout
4. Former TSB Bank refurb
Committed to scheme following purchase and costs increasing as with other projects.
About £100k additional cost estimate (at current prices)

It was acknowledged that the ongoing increase in the costs of materials/ labour was deemed to be a high risk.

EAO stated that her preference would be to reinvest in existing projects (Options 2, 3 and 4) with the priority being (Option 2) public realms works that would benefit everyone in the community. This was agreed by the Group. **Action: ME to progress.**

Health and Wellbeing Project - **MT** presented an updated report on Year 3 of the Health & Wellbeing programme. She advised that the Council was in receipt of job description, person specification and a Service Level Agreement for a Local Heritage Health and Wellbeing Coach which will be jointly funded by Fylde Council and Wyre Rural Extended Network (WREN) Primary Care Network. WREN will manage the work of the postholder over the next 2 years of the project, with referrals being made into a social prescribing programme of events specifically developed for the Kirkham Futures Project. Year 3 will continue with the current post holder to provide a consultancy service over the next 12 months. The postholder will provide the link between the Council and WREN.

In addition to the above, an evaluation of the scheme (led by consultants) would be undertaken. It is proposed to extend their work until end of June to drive Year 3 and Year 4 work.

Staffing - TM reported on this matter and in doing so, referred to the staffing document previously circulated. She highlighted the new/ key posts and other supporting officers that would be involved in the delivery of the project.

5. Project Communications Plan

Mike Harris (MH) was invited by the Chairman to present an update in this matter. **MH** stated that a draft project Communication Plan which had recently been prepared included key milestones of the project. He added that this currently runs to July 2022. In addition, Kirkham Futures website was currently under review to update and remove outdated information. Social media details from Rhodes Media had been received which would enable Facebook coverage re Kirkham Futures to be implemented.

KB highlighted the need to prioritise the update the website to enable the update on the shop front scheme to be communicated. **Action: MH/ EC**

6. Growth Lancashire Mid Term Review

TM reported that both she and **Paula Huber** had recently attended a meeting with the Acting Head of Growth Lancashire (GL). The Group was reminded that the Council had previously agreed to be a member of Growth Lancashire and the Leader would sit on the Board.

Some of the areas discussed at the meeting were highlighted including: the need to conduct a mid- term review, which looked at the original aspirations being delivered /funding streams; economics / sustainability of some of the projects/end use of buildings alongside opportunities created with partner organisations.

TM stated that GL would draw up the methodology which would be focused on programme sustainability and approach to be agreed by the group in due course. **Action: TM to bring a report to the next appropriate meeting.**

7. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The Chairman thanked all for their attendance and contributions. It was suggested that the next meeting be held w/c 20 June 2022 onwards. Date TBC.
