

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **All Together for Spennymoor** held in Livin', Farrell House, A2 Arlington Way, Spennymoor, DL16 6NL - Meeting Room on **Thursday 3 October 2024 at 3.00 pm**

Present:

A Boddy (Chair)

Board Members:

Councillor E Scott and L Maddison	Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships, DCC
E Scott and L Maddison	Local Member, DCC
G Hall (substitute for J Allen)	County Durham and Darlington Police and Crime Commissioner
Councillor D Ranyard	Spennymoor Town Council
I Geldard	Spennymoor Town FC
B Graham	Community Representative
D Stone	Whitworth Park Academy
Revd Cannon M Tarling	St Paul's Church, Spennymoor
L Fellows (substitute for A Strickland)	Head of office, Office for Alan Strickland MP for Newton Aycliffe

Officers:

G Wood	Economic Development Manager, DCC
J Anson	Community Economic Development Manager, DCC
K Monaghan	Project Manager, DCC
C Harwood	Participation and Engagement Officer, DCC

1 Chair's Welcome / Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the fifth Board meeting and introductions were made.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Allen, A Harhoff, A Kerr and A Strickland.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 August 2024 were agreed as a correct record subject to apologies being added for Councillor E Scott (apologies were sent but not recorded), the title to Mr A Boddy be corrected and a reference on page 7 to be amended to read 'A Strickland'.

Matters Arising

- Discussions had taken place with Mr Strickland regarding the Zen City research that was promised from Government. He apologised and agreed to raise the issue again with his colleagues.
- No further information had been released regarding the new submission date or next steps from Government. It was assumed this information would follow the Autumn statement that would be announced by the Government on 30 October 2024.

5 First Year Investment

The Community Economic Development Manager provided an update on what projects were proposed within the first year's investment. Figures had been costed within the spreadsheet through estimates from previous similar projects and some from salaries and work costs. The overall projects came in at just under £12 million but these were still being developed and had the flexibility to evolve with continuous engagement with the community. There was a presumption that year one of the programme would commence in 2025 as it was anticipated that a submission date would be confirmed by the government at the end of October 2024, and there would likely to be a four weeks deadline for submission. She surmised that if the submission date was set for the end November 2024, factoring in the Christmas and New Year period, it was considered that any assessment would not take place until January 2025 which would be in time for the new financial year for 2025/26. No submission template had been forthcoming from the government, therefore, a template had been created from previous funding submissions to assist with the collation of information. This could then be transferred to any revised documentation issued by the Government.

The Economic Development Manager noted that discussions had taken place with the Cities and Local Growth Unit and subject to any announcement relating to a revised submission, which could coincide with the Autumn statement, he anticipated a short window to a revised submission date and the process thereafter to follow previous advice with determination of the investment plan in approximately six weeks. With these timings the current estimate was that any Heads of Terms funding agreement would be issued in February 2025 and the programme to commence 1 April 2025.

The Community Economic Development Manager allayed Councillor L Maddison's fears that the repair work to the Leisure Centre car park had been factored into the financial figures as these had been identified as part of the accessibility walkabout to enhance and improve access to the entrance to maximise attendance.

The Community Economic Development Manager reassured Mr D Stones that investment in the town centre was a top priority to encourage and attract investment from both large and independent businesses to the town. Work was ongoing to look at industrial estates to attract companies to set up in Spennymoor. This work not only focused on large businesses but also smaller ones. She also confirmed that other funding opportunities would be investigated throughout the project. The aim was to achieve the best improvements possible with the £20 million allocated to help grow the town and future proof the investment.

The Economic Development Manager added that the council had received money from the government for the Kerbo scheme which would see the installation of electric charging points in streets of terraced houses and car parks.

The Community Economic Development Manager clarified for Mr G Hall that as part of the engagement works people had commented that they did not feel safe in certain areas of Spennymoor. Proposals had been made to reach out to children and young people to start conversations around diversionary activities. This had commenced through the establishment of a children and young person's working group to include their voices within the programme. The Community Economic Development Manager stated that the government work to create youth hubs mentioned by Mr G Hall should link in with the children and young people's working group to maximise funding.

The Community Economic Development Manager explained that the engagement work would build on talking to businesses, community development, engagement with the community and stakeholders and the establishment of community hubs. This would help to sustain growth of the programme and make people aware of what was available to them. It would also build on activities already available, such as boxing, basketball and gyms, so children and young people could contribute further suggestions of what they would like to do.

The Community Economic Development Manager also referenced that there had been positive feedback on the activities and markets events held and it was hoped that further enhancements could be made for the future. The programme would include the history and heritage of Spennymoor and how this could be taken forward.

Some concerns had been voiced around the use of off road bikes and a feeling of intimidation. Proposals to counter this included the installation of CCTV and the management and subsequent deployment of resources on the streets. It was seen as vital to change people's behaviours to improve cycling and walking in the town with a focus on establishing more links.

In response to Mr Boddy's positive comments around the significant plans for the first year, the Community Economic Development Manager confirmed that once a submission date had been confirmed, the subsequent branding would be formalised and awareness raising and messaging would be circulated to the community.

6 Update from "You Said ,We Heard" Feedback Sessions

The Project Manager provided an update on the consultation exercises held throughout April and May 2024. These gave an indication as to what people wanted the money to be spent on. There had been positive feedback to the work by Urban Foresight which showed people that their views had been listened to. The Project Manager had attended all three working groups which continued to meet and build upon current projects and develop new projects, some of which had already been costed. He provided an example of a collaborative project which provided assistance to people who had experienced mobility issues due to accidents or strokes at the leisure centre.

Mr A Boddy commented that despite the delays caused by the general election and the change of government there had been a significant amount of work already carried out to deliver against contract.

The Economic Development Manager stated that work would be carried out with the comms and design teams to discuss the logo and branding for 'All together for Spennymoor' Town Board.

Councillor L Maddison relayed that the public could start to see fruition in the programme by the upgrade works at Festival Walk. Although it was not finished people could see the area had started to be cleaned up.

Mr D Stone explained that the first year was significantly important as a town board to communicate and engage with people, as generally people had no idea what £20 million looked like let alone what it could be used for. The quick wins and branding would help people get a feel for the sense and scale of the investment and how it could revitalise Spennymoor.

7 Programme Update

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which provided a progress update of the draft initial project submission following the consultation period for the Long-Term Plan for Towns Programme (for copy of report, see file of Minutes).

The Economic Development Manager gave an update to the Board that the position of the submission date had not changed from the information that was sent by government in July 2024. Some activities had paused due to the elections that had created a revised timeline. There was still no formal documentation from government for the submission but the team continued to collect data so it could be readily available when the date was released.

The Economic Development Manager stressed that it was a long-term programme for people who worked and lived in the town to shape its future. Work was ongoing to gain a business representative to be part of the Board which would be the final element for the right people to be at the table. With regards to the financial spreadsheet work would be taken to the next level with the three working groups which continued to work on the three themes. An additional fourth working group

had been established for children and young people which would be cross cutting and help build on the success of the youth festival to go from strength to strength. At the previous meeting discussions had taken place relating to the loss of youth worker provision which was a gap which supported young people. He confirmed that this would continue to be pushed as an opportunity to meet the needs of all residents.

Resolved:

- i) That the continued progress with consultation and consultation feedback events to underpin the LTPT programme submission be noted.
- ii) That a special Board meeting be arranged once the programme timescales were confirmed.

8 Spennymoor Youth Working Group

The Project Manager confirmed that the first meeting of the children and young people working group had taken place via teams and had been very positive. Work was underway to hold future meetings in the town centre.

The Community Economic Development Manager responded to Mr G Hall's reference to the trail blazer at the Gray's Academy in Darlington which was a positive programme focussing on youth activities to map activities in Spennymoor and confirmed that this exercise had already been carried out.

Mrs B Graham mentioned that there was a youth representative on their community management committee.

Discussions took place on the protocols for public relations and what messages should be communicated to the public and when. It was agreed that a coordinated approach would ensure that work already undertaken was not undermined and align to the vision. It was agreed that further work would be carried out on the comms protocol that was already in place relating to press releases and liaising with the local press offices.

Councillor L Maddison mentioned that she had contributed some funding towards a project entitled 'Choices' which was a story developed by a local PCSO which aimed to make young people to consider their attitudes and make better choices in life.

Mr G Hall stated that the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office was fully supportive of this type of work and referred to the Police education scheme in West Yorkshire. He suggested that a review should take place of how the police and education could work together to deliver these programmes effectively.

9 Any Other Business

The Economic Development Manager provided the Board with images of the work achieved to date which included the;

- relocation of the library into Spennymoor Leisure Centre;
- ongoing demolition of units at Cheapside;
- new £13m Springmoor Grange School development;
- demolition of a supermarket and construction of a car park for Aldi;
- new police custody suite (a £20million public investment in the area);
- increased offer within the leisure centre for rehabilitation purposes for people recovering from strokes and accidents; and
- improvements carried out at Festival Walk

All of the projects had created jobs and would encourage people to use the town.

C Harwood mentioned that she had taken a group of 'hard to reach' children from Stanley to Spennymoor to see an art festival. They had been very impressed with the improvements made to the Front Street.

Mr A Boddy thanked the team for their continued hard work on the programme.

10 Date of the next and future meetings

Resolved:

- i) Future meetings to be held on a quarterly basis.
- ii) To hold a board meeting in December 2024 (potentially 5 or 6 December) following the Autumn Statement.