

**Coatbridge Town Board Meeting Notes
Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life/by Teams
7 October 2024**

Attendees: Cllr. Allan Stubbs (virtual), Cllr. Geraldine Woods, David Wood, Fulton MacGregor MSP (virtual), Gavin Whitefield, Jacqueline Smith, Liz McCutcheon, Willie McBride (virtual), Yvonne Lindsay

Apologies: Christopher Moore, Frank McNally MP, Chief Inspector Graeme McLaughlin, Liz McCutcheon

Observers: Chris Bateman, Pamela Humphries, Stephen Penman (virtual) (all North Lanarkshire Council), Eilidh Henderson, Eva Voulgaridou (both Page Park)

Item	Summary	Actions
1	<p>Introduction and Welcome</p> <p>GW welcomed attendees to the meeting and welcomed DW and RC to the Board. GW noted that both DW and RC have vast experience and expertise in their respective sectors and will be excellent additions to the Board.</p>	
2	<p>Minutes from previous meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed as an accurate reflection of the meeting by GW and seconded by JS.</p> <p>GW noted that there were several matters arising from the previous minutes and considered these in turn. CB advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ due to continued pressure on Board time at this meeting, the governance item will be carried forward to a future meeting ▪ an options paper on engagement on a draft Plan will also be brought forward to a future meeting, due to expected delays in timescales for Plan development and submission ▪ he has confirmed that schools and other facilities can open outwith school hours for activity programming however any additional facilities management costs would be borne by any service or agency using these spaces ▪ a full and comprehensive draft of the Long-Term Plan for Coatbridge and a more accessible version which would be used for public engagement has been drafted however this has not been distributed for Board consideration due to expectations that requirements are likely to change, which is to be discussed more fully at a later item. <p>SP provided a further update on the community asset transfer process currently being undertaken in relation to Coatbridge Outdoor Sports Centre. He noted that following fire damage to the Janet Hamilton Centre, all three of the interested parties have been invited to reconfirm their intention to proceed with potential asset transfer and have been given a deadline in mid-October to do so. Should one or more party proceed with their application then the full statutory process would have to run its course and it is therefore not</p>	

	<p>something that the Board should consider as being within scope of any future Investment Plan at this stage.</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>UK Government and progress update</p> <p>CB noted the work undertaken to develop draft documents which integrated feedback from the previous Board meeting on 13 August. He advised that the Board has agreed, via email correspondence, with the amended vision and priority outcomes set out in a short paper which was distributed after the meeting. The Board had further agreed with the approach to develop a shorter list of potential projects which would fall within the scope of an initial Investment Plan and which is the subject of Item 5 of the meeting.</p> <p>CB further updated the Board on recent engagement with UK Government. Since the election of the current government, the only formal correspondence received by the council has been a letter issued in late July advising that the deadline for submission of the Long-Term Plan for Coatbridge was to be delayed to an unconfirmed future date. In formal correspondence with other local authorities and Town Boards, UK Government has noted that the Long-Term Plan for Towns programme is under review and the future of the programme and funding stream will be confirmed by the Autumn Spending Review on 30 October.</p> <p>More recently, CB has had informal discussions with civil servants which suggests that if the programme is to continue then it is likely that it would be revised to align with the current government's priorities, with updated guidance (including on requirements for engagement and the structure of any submission document) to be issued later in the year. Any revised submission date would likely be in Spring 2025. Given this information, CB advised that the current drafts of the Long-Term Plan and Investment Plan have not been distributed to the Board as any further work on these documents would likely be abortive. However, it is likely that most, if not all, of the projects currently under development would be a strong fit for any future funding stream and it is therefore recommended that the Board continues to provide input on these, to enable their future development and for an updated vision document and investment plan to be quickly developed for public consultation following a positive announcement at the spending review.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Establishment of Town Centre Working Group</p> <p>CB presented a short paper seeking Board approval for the establishment of a town centre working group, which would act as a reference for the Board and which would be used to generate ideas for town centre activities and improvements. These would then be brought forward to the Board for its consideration and inclusion in any future investment plans. CB noted that improving the town centre is a key priority for the Board and the people of Coatbridge (as evidenced by the findings from earlier engagement) but that delivering on this could only happen with the support of town centre businesses.</p>	

	<p>AS expressed his support for the proposal however noted that there are other groups which are based in or active within the town centre, including faith-based groups, who do not fall within the scope of the proposal which is more narrowly focused on town centre businesses. Following discussion, it was agreed to approve the establishment of a town centre working group subject to a wider range of businesses and groups being invited to express interest in joining the group. In advance of contacting these parties CB will distribute a list of non-business groups that will be contacted to the Board, to enable members to identify any omissions. It was further agreed that the working group will be chaired by RC who will be asked to report back to the Board, with a standing item to be added to the agenda to allow for this.</p>	<p>CB RC</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Investment Plan proposals discussion</p> <p>EV introduced the item by providing a background to the work and the development of the projects, which emerged from Page Park's desktop analysis and its engagement with the Board, council officers and participants in engagement carried out during the early summer. This has informed the development of the vision and priority outcomes and a long list of potential projects, which has been refined following Board feedback in August.</p> <p>EV outlined three key project proposals which have been developed for each of the three draft outcomes, before GW opened up the discussion for initial comments. There was broad agreement that the current proposals are a strong fit for the Board's vision for Coatbridge. YL stated that this refined shortlist was a much better fit for the town and with people's priorities and that she was pleased to see it would deliver some quick wins which will be critical for building public confidence. There was then a discussion around phasing projects, with CB and EV suggesting that many could be taken forward in the first year of any plan.</p> <p>AS broadly agreed with YL however he identified two particular projects which had been on the initial longlist (establishing a new civic square in front of St Patrick's Church on the Main Street and capital works at the Time Capsule) but were not presented on today, that he would like to see considered for inclusion in the first investment plan, subject to costs. CB advised that officers are of the view that these would be unlikely to be delivered in the (current) first investment plan period; the civic square proposal would require land assembly which is tied with wider negotiations between commercial tenants and North Lanarkshire Properties (the landowner) and any redevelopment of the Time Capsule is likely to require capital funds in excess of what would realistically be available during the first plan period. CB further advised that these projects are still under development and can be considered by the Board when further information is available on any revised criteria, funding profiles or timescales.</p> <p>YL asked if the Board could make use of some of the capacity funding provided to deliver any of the proposed interventions. CB advised that the funds could only be used to develop the Plan, which</p>	

	<p>may include engagement activities and feasibility studies. There was then a discussion around a potential further winter engagement event, with GW and YL proposing that some funds are used to support this. The Board agreed to support this proposal in principle, with GW and YL to liaise with CB with a view to developing a detailed proposal for approval at a future Board meeting in November.</p> <p>The Board then considered each project theme in more detail, with EH facilitating a discussion for the in-person group and EH facilitating discussion with Board members attending virtually. Members provided generally very positive and constructive feedback during these discussions, which will be considered as projects are further developed.</p>	GW, YL
6	<p>Dates of next meeting</p> <p>It was agreed to schedule a meeting in mid-November. CB to arrange venue and diaries and issue an invite when a suitable date is identified.</p>	CB
7	<p>Any other competent business (AOCB)</p> <p>No other competent business was raised. GW closed the meeting and thanked members for attendance.</p>	