

# Peterhead Development Partnership

Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021 at 1.00pm

virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

Present: Councillors Norman Smith (Chair), Dianne Beagrie, Alan Fakley and Anne Allan. Leslie Forsyth, Amanda Roe, Christine Webster, Suzanne Robertson, Terry Moran, Matt Lockley, Catriona Nicolson, Craig Finnie, Jamie Bell, Martin Brebner (in part), and Mhairi Reid (note taker).

Apologies: Councillor Stephen Smith, Damian Bates, Eleanor Morris

## 1. Welcome and apologies

Councillor N Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Councillor Stephen Smith, Damian Bates and Eleanor Morris.

Councillor N Smith advised that Phyllis Mundie has resigned from the Peterhead Development Partnership. He noted his thanks to Phyllis who has been a community representative on Peterhead Development Partnership since its inception in 2016 and has been a regular contributor to discussions and strategic planning. Those present joined Councillor N Smith in wishing Phyllis all the best.

A letter of thanks will be issued to Phyllis from the Partnership.

## 2. Note of Last Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021

The note of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021 was approved.

The only matter arising that would not be covered on the agenda was murals. Councillor N Smith advised that there is now a mural on the rear wall of symposium (in the Prince Street car park). Councillor Allan provided an update with regard to the ArtVenture murals, noting that they have been struggling to arrange for a mason to have a look at the wall (side of M&Co) however they have someone from Ellon who may be able to help. Whilst they wait for this to be carried out, they have asked the artist to think about some ideas for the Freshcatch wall.

## 3. Focus on Funding

### Levelling Up Fund

Martin advised that there has been a number of new funding programmes announced over the last few months from the UK and Scottish Government with the Levelling Up Fund being one of them. A total of £4.8 billion has been allocated to the programme, with the expectation that around £500 million of this will be awarded to projects in Scotland. The focus is very much on capital infrastructure within three themes:

- Town centre regeneration and repurposing
- Local and active travel and transport schemes
- Cultural and heritage assets, including green space

There is a slight challenge in terms of the way the fund operates in that it focuses on Parliamentary Constituencies with a maximum of one successful bid per constituency up to the value of £20million. The fund is competitive and there is no guarantee that ever constituency will receive funding. Aberdeenshire Council have set up an External Funding Member Officer Working Group to look at the options for this fund and prioritise bids. Officers have been asked to explore two potential bids for the Banff & Buchan Constituency, one around a Fishing Towns Deal and the second a project based on the concept of the Peterhead Cultural Quarter. Over the coming months, Council staff will be looking to engage with partnerships both inside and outside of the Council to develop the bids.

Following some questions, Martin advised that we would be looking to submit one bid per Parliamentary Constituency as any submissions requires endorsement of the local Member of Parliament. He also confirmed that in terms of the assessment criteria, the main focus is on value for money. We require to go through a Treasury Greenbook Assessment which is a quite rigorous business case which looks at the wider economic benefits. Other factors taken into account will be the identified level of need within the local authority area. He noted that Aberdeenshire is classes as tier 3, which is the lowest priority area.

Amanda asked if there was a role for the Peterhead Development Partnership as the bids develops, noting that there is a vast degree of knowledge and expertise round the table that could contribute. Martin agreed that input from the partnership would be key in developing and moving the bids forward. He noted that it is important that there is a strong local buy in for any bid put forward and that key groups will be contacted by officers in the very near future.

Nothing that that the Town House is mentioned in the bid a few times, Cllr Beagrie, in her role as a Feuars Manager, advised that the Town House is in the final process of an extensive refurbishment therefore it would be good to have an off-table conversation to update the team working on the id on this.

Leslie asked what the status was on the existing National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) bid regarding the Muckle Kirk / Broad Street / Arbuthnot House spine as he would not want to see the momentum being lost around this. Christine advised that there is some work ongoing around this behind the scenes as the fund was unavailable for some time however it is not back but looking slightly different. She noted that the two ids could complement each other as the NHLF fund could be used as match funding for the Levelling Up Fund.

Before moving on to the next item, Christine asked the group what they felt the priority for these bids should be. Jamie noted that he felt that that a strong economic emphasis in terms of jobs and wealth should be a priority. Leslie advised that he felt it would be to support the private sector to develop some of the large vacant premises in the town centre. He noted that by enable them to fill the gaps, jobs and wealth will be created in spaces that are currently void.

The group were asked to contact Christine with what they felt the priorities should be.

### **Community Renewal Fund**

Martin advised that the Community Renewal Fund (CRF) was another fund launched by the UK Government in 2021. It has a much shorter term and any funding awarded would be for this financial year only with all spend required to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The themes for the CRF are slightly wider and it looks more at supporting local businesses, communities and places. Bids had to be submitted mid-June, following the announcement of the fund in May and they were

looking for large-scale projects of around £500k. Similarly to the Levelling Up Fund, there is priority areas throughout the UK who have slightly more opportunity to secure the funding of which Aberdeenshire is not one however a bid has still been submitted to try and draw down some funding. The bid, titled Transition Ready North Aberdeenshire (TRNA), is outlined in the paper circulated with the agenda for the meeting. It aims to tackle a holistic, place-based approach to preparing for an inclusive Net Zero Carbon future. It was hoped that there would be an announcement on the funding at the end of July however that has been postponed and there is no known date for this. Christine added that part of the bid submitted is around the potential for an e-bike project to explore accessibility, access to jobs and access to services in some of our more challenge community areas, which will link into some of the work already being done with colleagues such as the CLD work with the Longate community. Another element of the bid she picked up on was again around transport and vehicle electrification, what that might look like for Peterhead in terms of infrastructure and skills for transition. Picking up on this, Councillor N Smith noted that the biggest issue is around the charging infrastructure, which at the moment is rather poor, and until it is addressed, promotion of electric vehicles is going to be very difficult. Craig also picked up on this, noting that the issues go further than just the infrastructure. He added that he has had conversations with various bodies that are under pressure to decarbonise their fleet however they cannot do this until the required infrastructure is in place. He mentioned a new system being introduced where work vehicles can be charged overnight at an employee's home and the cost of charging is billed directly to the employer. Councillor Beagrie also picked up on the difficulties with the infrastructure noting in particular the issues with the charges at the Lido Car Park. She added that having the appropriate chargers in the town centre is a must moving forward. Suzanne advised that many companies are now jumping on board to produce the chargers and asked if they were universal or if certain chargers were specifically for certain vehicles. Craig advised that the plugs for the chargers are mostly universal however there are some differences in terms the set up and type of charge etc and this is where problems can arise. Suzanne picked up on the training and support available for business in relation to this agenda and asked how this has been. Craig advised that he had to send his technician down to Warrington for training, he added that he was not aware of much other training available on this. Cllr Fakley picked up on the point Cllr Beagrie raised about the issues with the chargers we have in Peterhead. He added that his worry was that with Peterhead being quite a long distance from anywhere, if tourists are relying on the electric chargers, there could be issues if these are not working properly. Martin advised that he would take on board the discussion points in the electric vehicles. He noted that it may not be something that this fund could look to support but there may be other funds coming up that could support this.

### **National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF)**

Christine updated on this item earlier in the agenda under item 3a.

### **Other funding streams**

Matt advised that the Government recently announced that £15million is to be invested into economic recovery and skills in the north east through training and enterprise projects across a number of sectors, including entrepreneurship, tourism and energy transition. He had no further details to share at this time however he will share more when it is received.

Jamie informed those present that Scottish Enterprise launched a new series of funding, the Green Jobs Fund, to help businesses create jobs that contribute to improving the environment and

achieving net zero emissions. He noted that the first tranche is closed however they are expecting another one to open. Jamie will keep the group updated.

#### **4. Regeneration Update**

A detailed update on the Regeneration Plan was circulated with the agenda for the meeting. Christine highlighted that there has been big progress made in reducing vacancies in the town centre, particularly over the last year and credited Invest in Peterhead for their work on this. Updating on the work in Drummers Corner, she advised that progress is being made and the drum structure is now being manufactured. Christine has an onsite meeting later in the week and will get an update in terms of timescales which she will share.

#### **5. Town Centre First Principle**

Christine advised that the Council adopted the Scottish Government's Town Centre First Principle as a policy five years ago. This has resulted in the Town Centres across Aberdeenshire being at the heart of all decision-making processes, which is promoted by Town Centre First Ambassadors. The policy is currently being updated and is going round all Area Committee's in November. Leslie noted that he felt the challenge would be with linking with planning on this particularly around edge of town investments and how they can have a direct impact on Town Centres.

Christine noted that some of the funding they have access to at the moment is a Vacant and Derelict Land Fund. She will circulate information on this to allow the group to consider any suggestions, which should be sent back to her.

#### **6. Round the Table Updates**

Leslie advised that the Town Centre clean start tomorrow morning (22<sup>nd</sup> September). It is being done slightly differently this time, which means it should be done slightly quicker as there are two crews working at the same time. The timescale given for completion is approximately 7 weeks. It was noted that the ponds will be included in the cleaning programme. If any issues are picked up, please let Leslie know. The Rediscover Peterhead Board met recently and have worked out their next year's programme and budget, and some announcements will be made on that in the very near future. The third point Leslie mentioned was in connection with a conversation he had recently with a Local Councillor regarding Peterhead's history and the fact that there is a lot of interesting history, buildings and people in or associated with Peterhead and it would be good to have our own blue plaque to identify these and increase local awareness as well as bringing people into Peterhead. Councillor Beagrie suggested linking in with Peterhead Community Council on this as they have been discussing something similar to this involving QR codes. Councillor Allan advised that there are some plaques on buildings and suggested that these could be incorporated into a new piece of work.

#### **7. A.O.C.B**

No other business was noted.

#### **8. Date and time of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Peterhead Development Partnership will be held on Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 1.00pm