

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

Attendees: Cllr. Allan Stubbs, Cllr. Geraldine Woods, David Wood, Frank McNally MP (virtual), Fulton MacGregor MSP (virtual), Gavin Whitefield, Sgt. Gerry Canning, Jacqueline Smith (virtual), Liz McCutcheon (virtual), Roddy Cameron, Willie McBride (virtual), Yvonne Lindsay (virtual)

Apologies: Christopher Moore, CI Graeme McLaughlin

Observers: Chris Bateman, Pamela Humphries, Stephen Penman (virtual) (all North Lanarkshire Council)

| Item | Summary  | Actions |
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| 1    | <p><b>Introduction and Welcome</b></p> <p>GW welcomed attendees to the meeting, including GC who was attending his first meeting as a substitute for GMcL to represent Police Scotland.</p>  |         |
| 2    | <p><b>Minutes from previous meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate reflection of the previous meeting by consensus, though RC asked for the note at Item 4 to be updated to make it clear that no similar group is currently in operation in Coatbridge town centre.</p> <p>GW noted that any matters arising would be covered elsewhere on the agenda.</p>   | CB      |
| 3    | <p><b>Progress update</b></p> <p>CB noted confirmation from UK Government that it will continue to support the Long-Term Plan for Towns programme and Coatbridge's inclusion within it, with formal correspondence confirming that the town will be provided with 'up to £20m in funding' and that further guidance, setting out revised priorities, funding profiles and timescales will be issued in due course. UK Government has also confirmed that it will allocate a further £200,000 capacity funding to towns during 2025/26 and that project delivery will commence from 2026/27. CB advised that the council and other local authorities are seeking clarity on whether the 2025/26 funding is additional or will come from the overall funding award.</p> <p>CB further noted that, since the last meeting on 7 October, the council has hosted representatives from Asda and Scottish Canals to discuss potential long-term redevelopment projects in the Main Street and along the Monklands Canal, respectively. Both parties have committed to continuing discussion with the council with a view to potentially developing proposals for future investment. CB further advised that AECOM, the sub-consultants to Page Park's commission to support the Board to develop the Plan, will prepare</p> |         |

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|          | an initial report outlining the opportunities, constraints, risks and likely funding requirements for any redevelopment of the Canal.  |    |
| <b>4</b> | <p><b>Proposal for Festive engagement event</b></p> <p>CB presented a paper seeking Board approval for the council to organise a Christmas engagement event on Coatbridge Main Street on its behalf, following the Board's request at its 7 October meeting (for the council to bring forward proposals for such an event if it was feasible).</p> <p>There was extensive discussion around the proposals, which were generally strongly supported. There was broad consensus that the event would be welcomed by people in Coatbridge and provide a real boost to the town and local businesses, while also enabling the Board to engage a large audience of locals and visitors around its current proposals. DW and YL advised that the event would have to be well promoted to maximise footfall and its potential as both an engagement event and as a boost to the local economy. SP agreed and reassured the Board that the council would provide the Board with significant support from its corporate communications team to ensure that the event was appropriately marketed. RC welcomed the proposal and felt that it would be a great boost to retailers and hospitality businesses on the Main Street. He did however ask if there was any potential for the event to be held at the square adjacent to St Patrick's Church, which may make for a better venue. CB confirmed that market traders have a licence to operate in this area and the council may be unable to grant a licence for two competing activities in the same area at the same time and that, even if voluntary agreement could be reached with the traders, there would be no legal impediment to stall-holders setting up in front of the stage, for example, which would pose a risk to the success of the event. RC acknowledged this and the proposed location was accepted by the Board. RC further asked if the council could also promote Small Business Saturday (which takes place on the preceding Saturday); SP agreed that it would do so.</p> <p>YL advised on work that she, GW and WMcB have been undertaking to support secondary events on the day, based at Summerlee Museum of Industrial Life. WMcB noted that he could support any additional activities with PVG-certified volunteers, which was welcomed.</p> <p>AS and GW asked if it would be possible to install a Christmas tree and for the lights to be switched on as part of the event, arguing that this would act as a further draw and boost footfall and engagement. There was broad agreement that this should be facilitated if it was possible to do so. PH and SP agreed that the council would support this if viable. CB will investigate and make necessary arrangements.</p> <p>The Board agreed to all of the recommendations set out for approval in the paper, with three substantive amendments:</p> | CB |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To allow for Christmas lights switch-on as part of the event programme</li> <li>▪ To increase the allowance for the event to £20,000 plus all costs associated with the acquisition, installation and maintenance of the Christmas tree (up to a maximum of a further £10,000)</li> <li>▪ To invite both the Provost <i>and</i> all the councillors from each of the three Coatbridge wards to attend the event.</li> </ul> <p>It was further agreed that the council would continue to make arrangements for programming and that the Board could make any suggestions for the event and associated activities to CB, for consideration and action.</p>   | ALL   |
| 5 | <p><b>Update on retailers working group</b></p> <p>CB advised that this group had not yet been established though he and RC have undertaken informal engagement with a number of businesses and had a positive response. Following approval of item 4, which will provide a strong 'hook' for engagement, he will arrange for officers to engage with businesses in and around the Main Street and the distribution of flyers promoting the working group and asking for nominations in the week commencing 18 November. RC advised he was happy with this approach and will support this work. CB asked for Board members to notify him of any additional groups who should be engaged with and invited to contribute to the working group (i.e. groups active on the Main Street but which do not have a physical presence).</p>  | CB/RC |
| 6 | <p><b>Initial discussion on next steps</b></p> <p>GW led an initial discussion on next steps, noting that while the work done so far means that Coatbridge is well placed in development of its Long-Term Plan, both he and the rest of the Board will be keen to ensure that it does not 'tread water' between now and April 2026 when project delivery can commence.</p> <p>PH noted that while the delay was frustrating it could allow for further engagement and activity, including potentially advancing feasibility studies for some of the projects which the Board is keen to support.</p> <p>AS suggested that the Board remained in a relative state of limbo until updated guidance was issued, but (noting the success of the family fun events held over the summer) suggested that further engagement events could be scheduled around the school holidays. There was broad agreement around this.</p> <p>AS asked to confirm the council's position on staffing to support the Town Board and the development and delivery of the Long-Term Plan. PH advised that this is under review and that while NLC has provided significant in-kind support to the Board so far, this is unlikely to be sustainable and that a proposal seeking costs associated with a staff post will be brought forward in future.</p> |       |

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|          | <p>There was some further discussion, after which GW summarised next steps are for NLC to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to work up projects for a future Investment Plan</li> <li>▪ Consider a programme of future event-based engagement opportunities</li> <li>▪ Develop an activity and communications plan for the Board.</li> </ul> |    |
| <b>7</b> | <p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>The Board agreed to meet on Monday, 20 January at 1-3pm at Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life. While a Teams option will be made available it was agreed that members should attend in person if possible.</p>  | CB |
| <b>8</b> | <p><b>Any other competent business (AOCB)</b></p> <p>PH noted that CB is leaving NLC in the New Year to move to a new post at another employer. Both PH and GW thanked CB for his contribution and wished him well for the future.</p>  |    |