

## **DUMFRIES TOWN BOARD**

Meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024

4pm @ SPEN Offices Dumfries

### **PRESENT**

Richie Nicoll – Town Board Chair (via Teams)  
Tom McAuchtrie- Town Board Vice Chair  
Kenny Bowie – Chamber of Commerce  
Rachael Milligan – Covetrus (via Teams)  
John Dowson  
Julie Dykes – The Bust Stop  
Anne-Marie Coulter MBE– Summerhill Community Centre  
John Caskie MBE - Guid Nychburiss  
Supt Nicola Robison- Police Scotland  
Campbell Young- SOSE(via Teams)

### **Council Officers**

Stuart McMillan – Strategic Economic Investment Manager

### **Observers/Guests**

None

#### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed members to the ninth meeting of the Dumfries Town Board.  
Introduction of Isabelle Johnstone took place.

**Action: RN**

#### **2. Apologies**

Councillor Maureen Johnstone  
Councillor David Slater  
Colin Smyth MSP  
John Strange – Solway Sharks  
Jamie Milligan – The Swan/Steamboat

#### **3. Minute of meeting 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024/ Matters arising**

The minute of the previous meeting was agreed. No matters arising and all actions from the previous meeting will be updated during this meeting

#### 4. Where are we at now?

The Town Board received confirmation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government that the £20 million funding allocated under the Levelling Up Fund is still in place for the seventy-five towns involved, however the initiative will be revised. With this revision to be advised, the Ministry has indicated that some additional development work will be likely, and the Board will possibly be granted a further £200,000 to support further engagement activities for financial year 2025/26. Actual project spend will now not happen until 2026/27.

The UK Government has received substantial feedback from the town boards involved in the programme. This is informing the development of the revised programme, with new time scales and objectives being introduced to better align the overall goals of the initiative with the core missions of the new government.

The Town Board is awaiting clarity on the updated time scales and objectives before making any public statements. There is ongoing discussion regarding the involvement of key figures, including the Secretary of State for Scotland, Ian Murray, and local MP John Cooper, to gather further insights and ensure alignment with the revised programme. The Board is also seeking a better understanding of the Ministry's long-term plans for the Levelling Up Fund and the wider programme.

The Board and Council are currently awaiting further guidance from Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government to clarify the next steps regarding the £20 million funding allocation. Once the necessary clarity is received, the Town Board will be able to move forward with the project and finalise the next stages of planning and engagement.

**Action: SMcM/RN**

## 5. Code of Conduct

As a follow-up to the previous meeting, the Code of Conduct document, which had been evaluated across Scotland, was discussed. After thorough consideration, all Town Board members unanimously agreed to adopt the Code of Conduct in its current form.

The Board also reviewed the complaints process, which had been shared with several board members for feedback. Following this review, a selection process was conducted, and four members were chosen to form the Complaints Committee.

The members selected to serve on the Complaints Committee are:

- **Rachael Milligan (lead)**
- **Kenny Bowie**
- **Billy Currie**
- **John Dowson (Reserve)**

The formation of the Complaints Committee was approved by the Board.

**Action: RM/KB/BC**

## 6. 'The Hub' Discussion

Further discussion took place regarding the opportunity for the Town Board to gain access to the Hub premises for potential use by the Board. A lawyer has reviewed the plan and provided the following advice:

- **Independent Operation of the Hub:** There is no direct correlation between the Town Board and the Chamber of Commerce, which is designed to ensure the longevity and independent operation of the Hub. As a result, the Town Board will not be responsible for paying rent towards the Hub's office space. The Town Board will not have any operational input into the running of the Hub, and the Hub will have no operational input into the running of the Hub. Physically there will be Trustees of the Hub who are TB members.
- **Revenue for the Community:** Any additional income generated by the Hub will be allocated towards community initiatives, ensuring the Hub remains focused on supporting local development.
- **The Town Board will retain an office within the Hub building, but the Hub will continue to operate as a charity, with its primary focus being community benefit.**

**Action: RN**

## **7. Website update**

There has been no further update since the last meeting on the outstanding matters. The Board is still awaiting answers to key questions.

It was agreed that these answers will be presented at the next Town Board meeting.

## **8. College and Town Works/Heat Feasibility Study Update**

There has been no further update from the last meeting. So, we are still awaiting updates. This update will be presented at the next Town Board Meeting.

## **9. AOB**

### **Better Streets Negotiation/ Discussion**

The Board discussed the Transport Levelling Up Fund, which is a regional investment initiative and the Better Street consultation by Dumfries and Galloway Council, in partnership with Systra, which has proposed a total of ten schemes within Dumfries.

This initiative aligns with the Town Board's objectives, particularly regarding transport and travel, which is a key focus area for the Board moving forward. However it was noted on the back of the budget that they have now been allocated substantial funding so TB believed that this would be sufficient.

**Action: RN**

## **10. Next Steps**

It was agreed that further information on the breakdown of finances will be provided to all members of the Town Board. This will ensure that members have a clear and thorough understanding of the financial situation and can make informed decisions moving forward.

The Town Board is still awaiting further details regarding The Hub. Once this information is received, it will be shared with the Board for review and discussion.

The Board is still awaiting confirmation on how to proceed with contacting Dumfries and Galloway Council and Systra regarding their involvement in the ongoing initiatives. Once contact has been made, further updates will be provided.

The Town Board confirmed the establishment of three committees to help prepare for the changes in conditions that are anticipated with the UK Government's long-term plans for

towns. These committees will focus on key areas, including transport and travel, as well as other relevant topics.

Further details on the structure and responsibilities of these committees will be clarified in before the next meeting. RN confirmed that he would request all members electronically submit their choices of which sub committee each member would like to represent.

**Action: RN**

**11. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will take place at 4pm on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2025 at the SPEN Offices, Leafield and online via Teams.