Brilliant Barrow Board Meeting

Friday, 23 February 2024
Furness College, Channelside Campus

Ref	Agenda Item	Start Time	P/R/V*	By
	• Welcome and Arrival • Channelside Campus Tour • Furness College Barrow Learning Quarter Update	9.00am 9.15am 10.00am		
	Break	10.15am		
	Presentation – Marina Village Update	10.30am		
1	To consider and note Opening Comments from the Chair	10.45am 5 mins	V	SC
2	To consider and note: 2.1 Apologies for Absence 2.2 Attendance of Substitute Members 2.3 Declaration of Interests 2.4 To consider and note a Secretariat and Senior Responsible Officer Update 2.5 To consider and note a Cumbria LEP Update	10.50am 10 mins	V V V V V	AW AW SC HH JL/SC
3	To consider and approve minutes of meeting held on 30 November 2023 3.1 To consider and note Actions	11.00am 5 mins	R R	SC
4	To consider and note Matters Arising, not covered in the Agenda	11.05am 5 mins	V	SC
5	To consider and note a Housing Market Renewal Project Update – **to follow** **Not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as this report contains exempt information relating to financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)**	11.10am 30 mins	R/P	DH
6	<u>Board Sub-Group & Focus Group Updates</u> 6.1 To consider and note a Board Sub-Group Update 6.2 To consider and note a Stadium Feasibility Focus Group Update 6.3 To consider and note a Futures Board Focus Group Update	11.40am 15 mins	R	HH KH
7	To consider and note a Biodiversity Net Gain Report	11.55am 10 mins	R	KH
8	8.1 To consider and note Accountable Body Programme Update 8.2 To consider and note progress in contracting with individual projects and the Programme Change Log at Appendix 1 8.3 Consider and agree the 'Notable' Change Control relating to the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure project at Appendix 2 8.4 Consider and note the Project Dashboards at Appendix 3 **Agenda items 8.3 and 8.4 not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as this report contains exempt information relating to financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)**	12.05pm 20 mins	R	LW
9	To consider and note the Updated Risk Register & Opportunities Update	12.25pm 10 mins	R	KH
10	To consider and note Brilliant Barrow Comms & Engagement Update	12.35pm 10 mins	R	HH
11	Any Other Business 11.1 Board Site Visits	12.45pm 5 mins	V	HH
12	To agree Date and Time of Next Meeting	12.50pm 5 mins	V	SC

* Presentation / Report / Verbal

Brilliant Barrow Board Meeting
Private Minutes

Thursday, 30 November 2023 at 1.00pm
Barrow Town Hall

Board Members present:	Steve Cole (SC), BAE Systems - Chair	Lauren Dixon (LD), NHS
	Cllr Jonathan Brook (JB), W&F Council - Vice Chair	Paul Hodgson (PH), Barrow BID
	Cllr Fred Chatfield (FC), Barrow Town Council	Julie Mennell (JM), University of Cumbria
	Cllr Andrew Jarvis (AJ), W&F Council	Nicola Cove (NC), Furness College
	Cllr Derek Brook (DB), W&F Council Furness Locality Board	Gabriela Lipska (GL), Cumbria CVS
		Natalie Goodman (NG), Spirit Energy
	Gareth Candlin (GC), W&F Council & Town Deal SRO	Helen Bayley (HB), BAE Systems
	Suzanne Caldwell (SCa), Cumbria Chamber of Commerce	Sarah Jones (SJ), Cumbria LEP
	Chris Clouter (CC), Associated British Ports	
Present:	Helen Houston (HH), W&F Council	Fraser Robertson (FR), W&F Council
	Liz Watson (LW), W&F Council	Holly Singleton (HS), W&F Council
	Karen Houghton (KH), W&F Council	David Haughian (DH), W&F Council
	Caroline Barber (CB), W&F Council	(DH Agenda Item 10 only)
Minutes:	Alison Webb (AW), W&F Council	

Presentation & Site Visit – BAE Systems Careers Inspiration Hub, Portland Walk Campus

Prior to the Board meeting, the Board visited the Careers Inspiration Hub, part of BAE Systems' (BAE) Portland Walk Campus. The presentation by members of the Project Delivery Team, provided an overview of the exciting plans for the 4 adjacent buildings on Portland Walk (Former Debenhams, The Body Shop, The Sweet Emporium and WH Smith) that were purchased at the end of 2022.

The Careers Inspiration Hub was due to open to the public on 4 December 2023 and will enable job seekers to access information and receive face to face support, relating to local business partner job vacancies. The Board met with members of the Careers Development Team who provided a demonstration of the customer journey, technology and facilities available. A key element of this will be partnership working, to enable the full realisation of the potential of wider opportunities in the area.

The Bridge (The Sweet Emporium and WH Smith) will provide educational and training facilities for the community.

The aim of the training facility in the Portland Walk Campus (former Debenhams) is to enable BAE's growing workforce to be able to obtain competence, by providing a 'learning through experience' centre.

The Portland Walk Campus will make an important contribution to the ongoing regeneration of the town centre.

Presentation – Business Support, Paul Foster (PF), Cumbria LEP & Lesley Robinson (LR), Cumbria Chamber of Commerce

The Business Support project offers a range of initiatives and support services, with the aim of nurturing economic growth, encouraging entrepreneurial spirit and championing collaboration, with delivery of the project subcontracted by Cumbria LEP to the Cumbria Chamber of Commerce. PF covered information on working age population, recruitment activity and claimant count in the local area. He explained that meeting the 2023 targets had proved challenging, however, the project delivery plan was gaining momentum and it was encouraging that there was a strong pipeline of activity into the new year.

LR provided a summary of activity to date and the Board were disappointed to learn that there was a lack of Strand 1 take up of the support being offered, following numerous organisations being contacted by the Cumbria Chamber of Commerce Business Advisers, and that some local training sessions were not well attended or had been cancelled due to insufficient take-up. However, LR went on to advise the BAE Meet the Buyer event had been very well attended and feedback in respect of other events and the service as a whole, was positive.

LR concluded the presentation by explaining future plans into the New Year, providing evidence that there was plenty of activity planned. LR asked for Board Members support in promoting the project.

SC noted the importance of supporting self- employed business growth in the local area and asked Board members to consider resources, opportunities and data that could be provided to the Project Team.

Action 1	To consider resource, opportunities, data and networks to support the Business Support Project Team.	All	31 December 2023

JM suggested LR should contact the University of Cumbria team, who could offer support in this area.

1 To consider and note Opening Comments from the Chair

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and highlighting the Town Deal programme was at a pivotal stage and 2024 would see some projects commence the capital delivery phase. It was an exciting time, where the people of Barrow would see physical activity at most sites and it was vital the Board fully supported and understood each of the projects.

SC highlighted the recent visit of HRH Princess Royal to officially open the new University of Cumbria Learning Quarter at Barrow Island and passed on his thanks to Julie Mennell and the BAES team for hosting an excellent event.

SC noted the W&F Council Support Team were undertaking a review of the operational requirements of the Board Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct & Conflict of Interest Policy and further information would be provided in the New Year.

2.1 To consider and note Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Simon Fell, MP Barrow & Furness
- Janet Garner, BAE Systems
- Jo Lappin, Cumbria LEP
- Peter Hepburn, Spirit Energy
- Alysha Moore, Futures Board
- Bryan Davies, Associated British Ports
- Daniel Tyler-McTighe, BarrowFull

2.2 To consider and note Attendance of Substitute Members

The following attended the meeting as substitute members:

- Sarah Jones, Cumbria LEP attending for Jo Lappin
- Natalie Goodman, Spirit Energy attending for Peter Hepburn
- Helen Bayley, BAE Systems attending for Janet Garner.

2.3 Welcome New Members

HH introduced the following new members who had joined the Board since the September meeting:

- Cllr Fred Chatfield, Barrow Town Council, as replacement for Cllr John Murphy
- Cllr Andrew Jarvis, Westmorland & Furness Council Finance Portfolio Holder
- Dr Lauren Dixon, NHS, as replacement for Jane Scattergood
- Gabriella Lipska, Cumbria CVS, as replacement for Alison Greenhalgh.

2.4 Declaration of Interests

HH explained that at each meeting, Board members had the opportunity to declare any additional interests. There were no other declarations of interest, in addition to those previously declared prior to the meeting.

HH confirmed the new Board members had completed a declaration of interest and the information would be added to the Register and made available on the Brilliant Barrow website.

3. To consider and approve minutes of meeting held on 20 September 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2023 were considered and approved.

3.1 To consider and note Actions

1 *At an appropriate time, arrange a site visit to Earnse Bay* – to be included in the 2024 meeting schedule. Action closed.

3 *To consider how to engage younger people in the comms and engagement process* – a verbal update will be provided by HH – agenda item 13.1. Action closed.

4 *To monitor and report on access rights to the University of Cumbria Learning Quarter site, as required* – a verbal update will be provided by JM during the meeting. Action closed.

4. To consider and note Matters Arising, not covered in the Agenda

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

JB suggested the Board should include consideration of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) during its meetings, either as a standing agenda item or within an existing report/paper. BNG is a way to create and improve natural habitats, and makes sure development has a measurably positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development. This was considered appropriate, due to the focus on climate change and should also be considered in the scope of future health checks.

Action 2	To consider how to include Biodiversity Net Gain within the Board meeting agendas and future health checks.	KH/HH	February 2024 Board Meeting

<u>Additional Agenda Item – Team Barrow</u>

To provide background information, GC explained that during the summer, the Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service, Simon Case, led a high-level delegation who met with senior representatives from partners including BAE Systems, Westmorland & Furness Council, Cumbria LEP and Barrow and Furness MP Simon Fell, to hear about the ambitious vision for the town and potential areas for Government support.

Following a very recent Government announcement, Barrow was successful in securing £5 million to create and run the Barrow Delivery Board (known as Team Barrow) and for initial feasibility studies to be completed. An update will be provided to the Board when full details are known.

The Board noted the verbal report and welcomed future updates.

5. To consider and note 2024 Board Meeting Schedule, including proposed Presentations & Site Visits

HH explained the purpose of the paper was to assist with diary management in 2024 and formalise site visits and meeting venues. SC added the schedule had been planned to assist with connecting the Board with the various projects at key stages of delivery.

HH noted that due to information received following the Board pack being issued, the February and September dates could not proceed as planned, and alternative dates would be circulated for consideration.

NC confirmed that Furness College would host the February 2024 meeting, however, the venue would be the Channelside Campus, due to the current lack of available space at the Rating Lane site.

Action 3	To reissue the 2024 Board Meeting dates and schedule.	HH	31 December 2023

6. To consider and note a Debrief on the Hartlepool Exchange Visit

On 6 October, a delegation (Steve Cole, Liz Watson, Karen Houghton and Helen Houston) visited Hartlepool and met with Council representatives to collaborate and share Town Deal learnings.

HH explained that Hartlepool was very similar to Barrow in many ways – a coastal and industrial town, with strong maritime heritage, and that both towns were in receipt of Town Deal and Levelling Up funding.

SC noted the importance of building on the learnings from the visit, and to consider and adopt new approaches, where appropriate. HH advised there were opportunities to develop further and best practice examples would be considered and communicated to the Board and Project Teams.

KH noted the importance of the confidence provided to the private sector from some of the Hartlepool Town Deal projects, that had resulted in private investment.

The Hartlepool Town Team have been invited to visit Barrow in early 2024.

The Board noted the update.

7. Accountable Body Programme Update

7.1 To consider and note the updated Local Assurance Framework

LW explained the Local Assurance Framework (LAF) was a requirement for the receipt of Town Deal funding by Accountable Bodies, and was based on the Government's National Local Growth Assurance Framework guidance.

The document had been updated to reflect recent Government updates on the Project Adjustment Request and Change Control processes, name changes following the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) (formation of Westmorland & Furness Council), Board membership and an updated Plan Delivery Group Terms of Reference.

The W&F Council Cabinet had approved the LAF at its meeting on 14 November 2023.

LW noted the list of Board members in the Board Terms of Reference would require updating.

7.2 To note the progress in contracting with individual projects and the Programme Change Control Log

LW provided a positive update that all projects have a form of contract in place and that the University of Cumbria Grant Funding Agreement was being considered for approval and should be issued shortly.

The Programme Change Control Log provides an audit trail of all the amendments to the Programme since inception, including the latest Project Adjustment Request in July, and had been included in the pack in line with the Local Assurance Framework.

7.3 – 7.5 Not for publication or onward sharing by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as this report contains exempt information relating to financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

7.3 To note the Statement of Grant Usage submitted to Government by the Accountable Body

LW explained the Statement of Grant Usage is completed by the Chief Finance Officer and is submitted to Government on an annual basis. The Statement forms the First Line of Defence in the Accountable Body's assurance to Government and was submitted in October 2023. The Statement was supported by the operational requirements of the Local Assurance Framework (LAF).

A copy of the Statement was included in the pack for transparency.

In response to a question from the Chair, LW confirmed that by following the requirements of the LAF, reporting requirements and annual declarations by the Chair and Chief Finance Officer, the Accountable Body had an effective and robust First Line of Defence in place and was in a positive position to manage an audit visit from DLUHC (Second Line of Defence). This was relevant, as given the level of financial slippage in the programme, this may be a 'trigger' for a Second Line of Defence 'Deep Dive' taking place.

KH advised that if the Government announced an audit visit, there would be only 15 working days to prepare.

To ensure oversight of the position, the Chair requested a readiness review was completed.

Action 4	To complete a readiness review for a potential Second Line of Defence 'Deep Dive'	LW	February 2024 Board Meeting

7.4 To review and endorse the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Performance Return

The M&E Performance Return was due for submission to Government by 4 December 2023, and was included in the pack for review and endorsement. The information used to complete the report was submitted by the Project Teams using the quarterly reporting cycle, and covered the period up to 30 September 2023. The information remained subject to review by the Section 151 Officer, and there may be further changes, of which the Board would be informed.

LW noted that currently, reporting continues to show that 'slippage' remains a key risk to the programme and that in most cases, this has been due to an extended design and/or consultation phase for reasons such as inflationary cost pressures and design concerns. At present, the mitigations currently appear to demonstrate the slippage will be resolved within the life of the Town Deal programme, but in some cases ongoing risk responses are being explored. As the programme is now at a critical stage in delivery, careful ongoing monitoring is crucial.

7.5 To consider and note the Project Dashboards

SC thanked LW for providing the project dashboards that had been included in the pack to provide a granular level of detail, as requested at the September Board meeting.

SC highlighted the importance of Board pack being adequate to enable Board members to provide enhanced oversight of the development and progress of the programme business cases. SC asked if the Board were comfortable that the current format of the Board pack and frequency of Board meetings was sufficient to meet this need.

AJ noted the financial information provided evidence of significant underspend, and asked if it was reasonable to believe the funding would be spent within the remaining timescale (March 2026). LW explained the financial position is monitored on a quarterly basis and reported as an annual profile, with the most recent revised financial profile being submitted to Government in March 2023, following a wholesale review of costs increases, as a result of Covid. Recent changes now permit Town Deal Boards to absorb and agree some slippage (30% year on year) and careful reforecasting could be considered on a quarterly basis.

It was agreed that additional assurance and oversight could be provided by the creation of a Board focus group. The sub-group would work more closely with the Plan Delivery Group and Project Teams, to enable the Board to gain a broader understanding of project progress, with timely information enabling early warning of any worsening risks, at an earlier opportunity.

The sub-group could also provide the mechanism for deep dives to investigate delivery challenges. This would supplement the Health Check reviews and support the Project Teams.

The supplementary meetings could be held on a quarterly basis, at regular intervals between the Brilliant Barrow Board meetings, with a quarterly report being provided to the Board.

Action 5	To present a Board Sub-Group proposal paper, to summarise the governance and purpose of the Group.	KH	February 2024 Board Meeting

The Board:

1. Considered and noted the updated Local Assurance Framework Version 3.0
2. Noted the progress in contracting with individual projects and the Programme Change Control Log
3. Noted the grant usage statement form submitted to government by the Accountable Body
4. Reviewed and endorsed the M&E Performance Return for submission to Government
5. Considered and noted the Project Dashboards.

8. To consider and note the Risk Register & Opportunities Update

KH explained the current format of the Risk Register was under review, to develop a more agile approach to risk monitoring and mitigation. The new version would be presented at the February meeting.

Action 6	To present the revised Risk Register proposal.	KH	February 2024 Board Meeting

KH referred to the Team Barrow update provided by GC at the start of the meeting, and the importance of working closely with this emerging project team, to ensure duplication is avoided and that opportunities available to enhance the Town Deal programme are seized.

SC focussed the Board's attention on the red risk position linked to the Housing Market Renewal (HMR) project, and noted the need to fully understand the position and then reset the project plan, to secure the best outcomes for Barrow residents.

GC explained an option could see the project relocated to an alternative location in Barrow, however overall, the challenge of the March 2026 project delivery date would remain challenging and ambitious.

The Board agreed that as discussed under agenda item 7.5, a sub-group would complete a dedicated deep-dive, linking the review to the HMR Health Check, and report back the findings and any actions taken.

Action 7	The Board sub-group to perform a deep dive on the HMR project and report back on findings and actions.	KH	February 2024 Board Meeting

In response to a request from the Chair, JM summarised the position in respect of the red risk post mitigating actions for the University of Cumbria project:

The overall Learning Quarter project (consisting of two elements delivered by the University of Cumbria and Furness College) aims to create more opportunities for people in Barrow and the surrounding areas to access further and higher education. It will see more than 1,400 places created for students at a new University of Cumbria (UoC) campus on the Barrow Island site, along with a further 300 at an expanded and upgraded facility at Furness College's Rating Lane site.

JM's update focussed on the UoC Barrow Island campus:

- the Grant Funding Agreement (granted by W&F Council) had been agreed in principle. It was currently being discussed by the Legal teams at W&F Council and UoC, and it was hoped that agreement would be reached by the end of the week
- a Deed of Easement is being progressed
- Resolving access issues had been complicated by the fact that the UoC was a tenant and not a landowner, and the lease with BAES had been strengthened to provide more reassurance around this issue.
- a Letter of Intent was due to be issued this week to the contractors
- it was anticipated that contractors will be on site before the end of 2023
- Significant communications and engagement activity will be required – UoC, W&F Council and Brilliant Barrow Board
- There is a potential issue in respect of historic planning and weight limits for the access road, which if it is not resolved, could cause an 8-10 week delay.

GC left the meeting.

The Board:

1. noted the latest version of the programme risk register and the ongoing management of programme and project level risks
2. noted the significant opportunity presented by Team Barrow
3. noted the red risk post mitigating actions for the University of Cumbria project
4. noted the two red risk post mitigating actions for the Housing Market Renewal Project

9. To consider and note a Town Deal Programme Health Checks Report

KH provided the Board with a summary of the approach taken and background to health Check process. The first cycle of meetings had taken place in during the Summer and the process was in addition to the work undertaken by the Accountable Body (W&F Council) Assurance Team.

The feedback from the SROs and Project Leads had been that the exercise was positive, and had provided a very welcome, supportive and open platform for discuss progress, challenges and solutions.

GC returned to the meeting.

The checks had identified common themes and support provided as required, to ensure risks were mitigated and understanding of eg governance arrangements, were fostered.

One common theme highlighted the Project Teams desire for closer engagement with the Brilliant Barrow Board, and would value an 'ambassador' approach. It was felt that this could promote openness and transparency, for both the Project Teams and the Board.

Action 8	To consider ways to improve engagement between the Project Teams and Board.	HH/KH	February 2024 Board Meeting

The Board noted the positive outcomes and that a second cycle of health checks was planned for 2024.

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10. To consider and note a Community Hubs Update

David Haughian (DH), Assistant Director for Thriving Communities for W&F Council, explained the Community Hubs project was made up of enhancements to an existing network of three centres at key locations in Barrow Island, Ormsgill and Barrow Town Centre and the presentation was an update on the fourth Hub, the creation of a new multi-million pound outdoor learning centre at Earnse Bay, Walney.

DH highlighted the objective of the Earnse Bay Outdoor Centre was to create an outdoor activity and educational space, for the community to spend time in the natural environment. Over the course of the project, extensive engagement activities had taken place with the community. In response to the feasibility studies, the plan proposes to deliver improvements to outdoor space and public realm, create temporary and permanent jobs, increase biodiversity, provide a facility for a volunteering scheme and to improve digital exclusion.

DH explained that the original proposal, prior to the Local Government Reform in April 2023, had been fully reviewed and revised in line with new W&F Council objectives, the Council Plan, Climate Action Plan and emerging Sustainable Buildings Policy.

DH presented the first version of the revised outline design and concept of the proposed site and described the inspiration taken from other similar sites in the northwest. The site will offer free or low cost activities, along with commercial opportunities.

S Caldwell left the meeting.

DH summarised the next steps as follows:

Brilliant Barrow Board briefing	November 2023
Formal Brilliant Barrow Change Control submitted for consideration	December 2023
Procurement of design & Build contract	February – May 2024
Outline design & further community engagement	June – September 2024
Planning Permission amended	November 2024
Complete detailed design	December 2024
Cabinet approval to aware Stage 2 D&B contract	February 2025
Complete W&F Council construction activities	February 2026
Revenue support ends/project evaluation completed	March 2026.

Action 9	To submit a formal Brilliant Barrow Change Control for the Earnse Bay Outdoor Centre for consideration.	DH	31 December 2023

SC advised he had made a recent visit to the Earnse Bay Community Hub site with DH and received an update on the project plan. The opportunity to create a wellbeing and activity centre will be an asset to the local area and economy, attracting both members of the community and visitors.

AJ commented that a pump track in Windermere had proved very popular with a teenage demographic and had created a destination to visit within the town, and hoped the same outcome would be seen at this site.

There were no questions from the Board, and the update was noted.

11. Brilliant Barrow Comms & Engagement

11.1 To consider and note Brilliant Barrow Comms & Engagement Update

CB presented the Communications Activity Report for September and October. The report noted:

- a comprehensive review of the Communications Strategy had been completed (see agenda item 11.2)
- an activity tracker had been developed to record and forecast day to day opportunities and a new distribution protocol is in place
- work was underway on a product delivery plan, that aims to increase visibility of the Brilliant Barrow brand, and to improve understanding of its actions and objectives
- a summary of media release content and social media and website statistics.

The Board considered and noted the Brilliant Barrow Comms & Engagement update.

11.2 To consider and note Brilliant Barrow Communications Strategy

CB presented the draft Communications Strategy and explained the key objectives were to provide oversight of outward communications across the Brilliant Barrow programme and projects, to enable progress tracking and to plan future activity. This should create better linkages between key stakeholders and the Board.

CB explained the 8 projects were delivered by Westmorland & Furness Council (5) and external delivery organisations (3). Each project had a Senior Responsible Officer and Project Lead, and that positioning and due to the number of parties involved in the programme, delivery of communications across the programme could be complex. It was important that the Brilliant Barrow brand was used consistently, that funding acknowledgements were in place and that external comms comply with the requirements of DLUCH.

The Board agreed there was potential for uncertainty in the public domain with messaging in respect of the schemes and projects being progressed by the Brilliant Barrow Town Deal and Team Barrow, and that clear messaging was essential.

The Board observed the importance of supporting the Comms & Engagement team.

The Chair thanked CB for the draft Strategy that was noted by the Board.

At the end of the agenda item, HH referred everyone to the Brilliant Barrow bags which had been provided, that contained a Barrow BID activity update, a copy of the Barrow Treasure Map and a Christmas activities leaflet – both were produced as part of the Place Development project activity.

12. To consider and note a Stadium Feasibility Update – Place Development

Due to other agenda items running past 3.00pm, the Board agreed there was not adequate time to discuss the update. To make progress, a focus group was agreed and will convene before the next Brilliant Barrow Board meeting in February 2024. Steve Cole, Cllr Derek Brook and Cllr Fred Chatfield agreed to join the focus group and SC asked for any other volunteers to contact Alison Webb.

Action 10	To carry forward the Stadium Feasibility Focus Update.	AW	February 2024 Board Meeting

Action 11	To invite Board members to join the Stadium Feasibility Focus Group.	AW	31 December 2023

13. To consider Any Other Business

JM remarked the Board was a very positive partnership of representatives from local enterprises and organisations who have the future of Barrow at their heart, and thanked the W&F team and Chair for their work to support the Board.

SC added that the Board had an extremely important role in supporting the Barrow Town Deal projects, to bring real benefits to the communities of Barrow, and that robust oversight and governance were key attributes for the Board to deliver. The willingness of Board members to be involved in focus groups outside the Brilliant Barrow Board meeting schedule, demonstrated commitment to the programme.

13.1 To consider and note a Futures Board Update

The Board agreed there wasn't adequate time to discuss the update. To make progress, a focus group was agreed and will convene before the next Brilliant Barrow Board meeting in February 2024. Cllr Derek Brook and Julie Mennell agreed to join the focus group, and Alysha Moore, Futures Board will be contacted and invited to join. SC asked for any other volunteers to contact Alison Webb.

Action 12	To carry forward the Futures Board Update agenda item.	AW	February 2024 Board Meeting

Action 13	To invite Board members to join the Futures Focus Group.	AW	31 December 2023

14. To agree Date and Time of Next Meeting

The date of the February 2024 meeting will be communicated to the Board in due course.

Brilliant Barrow Board

Actions

Ref	Meeting	Ag Item	Action	Person(s) Responsible	Target Date	Complete?
1	November 2023		To consider resource, opportunities, data and networks to support the Business Support Project Team.	All	31 December 2023	Complete
2	November 2023	3.1	To consider how to include Biodiversity Net Gain within the Board meeting agendas and future health checks.	KH/HH	February 2024 Board Meeting	Agenda item 7 Complete
3	November 2023	5	To reissue the 2024 Board Meeting dates and schedule.	HH	31 December 2023	Complete
4	November 2023	7.3	To complete a readiness review for a potential Second Line of Defence 'Deep Dive'	LW	February 2024 Board Meeting	Agenda item 8 Complete
5	November 2023	7.5	To present a Board Sub-Group proposal paper, to summarise the governance and purpose of the Group.	KH	May 2024 Board Meeting	Agenda item 6.1 Ongoing
6	November 2023	8	To present the revised Risk Register proposal.	KH	February 2024 Board Meeting	Agenda item 9 Complete
7	November 2023	8	The Board sub-group to perform a deep dive on the HMR project and report back on findings and actions.	KH	Ongoing	Housing Market Renewal presentation at February 2024 Board meeting Ongoing
8	November 2023	9	To consider ways to improve engagement between the Project Teams and Board.	HH/KH	Ongoing	Ongoing
9	November 2023	10	To submit a formal Brilliant Barrow Change Control for the Earnse Bay Outdoor Centre for consideration.	DH/LW	31 December 2023	Complete
10	November 2023	12	To carry forward the Stadium Feasibility Focus Group Update.	AW	February 2024 Board Meeting	Agenda item 6.2 Complete
11	November 2023	12	To invite Board members to join the Stadium Feasibility Focus Group.	AW	31 December 2023	Complete
12	November 2023	13.1	To carry forward the Futures Focus Group Update agenda item.	AW	February 2024 Board Meeting	Agenda item 6.3 Complete
13	November 2023	13.1	To invite Board members to join the Futures Focus Group.	AW	31 December 2023	Complete

Brilliant Barrow Board Meeting

Agenda Item:	6
Date of Meeting:	23 February 2024
Title:	Board Sub-Group and Focus Groups Update
Reporting Officer:	Helen Houston and Karen Houghton, Westmorland & Furness Council

Executive Summary & Introduction

At the November 2023 meeting, the Board discussed the formation of 3 separate groups:

- **Board Sub Group (Focus Group)**

It was agreed that additional assurance and oversight could be provided by the creation of a Board sub-group. The group would enable the Board to work more closely with the Plan Delivery Group and Project Teams, to gain a broader understanding of project progress and provide an earlier opportunity to review information enabling early warning of any worsening risks in a more timely manner. Firstly a Focus Group will be convened to investigate the establishment of a formal sub group.

- **Stadium Focus Group**

As part of the Place Development project a Mixed Use Stadium Feasibility Study was commissioned and completed and reported to the Board in March 2023.

With the feasibility study completed Board members discussed exploring any opportunities to support the development of a Stadium and how the Board might further support these discussions.

- **Futures Board Focus Group**

At inception the Brilliant Barrow Board was supported by a 'shadow' Futures Board who represent the younger generation of Furness, bringing fresh ideas and a different perspective. Its mandate is to connect the Board with young people, working collaboratively to ensure that challenges and opportunities are identified, and that joint working takes place to support successful delivery of the Town Investment Plan.

Over time the Futures Board meetings have been sporadic and the Board agreed that a review of the group is required to reignite this collaboration, to ensure young people continue to play an active role in influencing key developments within their local area. This Focus Group will review the Futures Board and report back to the Board.

Recommendation(s)

To consider and note the Board Sub-Group (Focus Group) update.

To consider and note updates on the formation of the Stadium Focus Group and Futures Focus Group.

Report

Board members were contacted to ask if they would like to be involved in the Groups. The following update provides the current position:

6.1 Board Focus Group

Limited responses were received following the request for members to join this group, further discussions have been held with the Chair on inviting none board members to join the group.

Officers have also considered terms of reference from other Town Deals, for examples of best practice.

The following have volunteered to be part of this Group:

- Steve Cole, Brilliant Barrow Board Chair and BAE Systems
- Julie Mennell, University of Cumbria
- Paul Foster, Cumbria LEP
- Karen Houghton, Westmorland & Furness Council – Facilitator.

The focus group would be convened to discuss the merits of establishing a formalised sub group of the board which would:

- Enable the Board to gain a broader understanding of project progress, with timely information, enabling early warning of any worsening risks, at an earlier opportunity.

- Provide the mechanism to investigate delivery challenges, supplementing the Health Check process and to complement/support initiatives by the project teams and sponsoring organisations, not to disempower them.

- Ensure alignment with and complementarity to Team Barrow.

- Improving engagement between the Project Teams and Board (this was noted as an action at the November Board meeting).

Other considerations include that the Board is not a decision making body but is strategic and directive in nature, it currently has no sub-groups that report into it and no framework to create one, therefore the formation of the sub-group will change the governance structure and this would need to be formally considered.

Consideration would need to be given to the frequency of meetings, which could be held on a quarterly basis, at regular intervals between the Brilliant Barrow Board meetings to provide a touch-point in between Board meetings.

The Board Focus Group will meet to discuss the above and provide feedback in consultation with the Accountable Body & Assurance Team.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the volunteers for this group meet, with the support of the Accountable Body & Assurance Team, to explore options available to them. Representatives from Team Barrow should be invited to ensure complementarity and alignment with that endeavour.

This group can then make detailed recommendations to the Brilliant Barrow Board as appropriate.

6.2 Stadium Focus Group

This Group is a standalone focus group and will not form part of the Brilliant Barrow Board governance structure.

The following have volunteered to be part of this Group:

- Steve Cole, Brilliant Barrow Board Chair and BAE Systems
- Cllr Derek Brook
- Cllr Fred Chatfield
- Simon Fell MP
- David Hughes, CLEP
- Phil Drane, W & F Council (Team Barrow)
- David Haughian, W & F Council (Community Infrastructure)
- Michelle Doherty, Place Project

Initially facilitated by Westmorland & Furness Council.

An initial meeting has been arranged and the Focus Group will provide a written update to subsequent Board Meetings.

6.3 Futures Focus Group

This Group is a standalone focus group and will not form part of the Brilliant Barrow Board governance structure. Once a way forward is establish it will be brought back to the Board for agreement.

The following have volunteered to be part of this Group:

- Alysha Moore, Futures Board
- Julie Mennell, University of Cumbria
- Cllr Derek Brook
- Daniel Tyler-McTighe, Barrow Full
- Cath Dutton, CLEP

Initially facilitated by Westmorland & Furness Council.

A pre meeting was held on 14 February with Alysha Moore, Julie Mennell and Helen Houston. A meeting of this group will be convened in March 2024, and the Focus Group will provide a written update to subsequent Board Meetings.

Helen Houston and Karen Houghton, Westmorland & Furness Council
13 February 2024

Brilliant Barrow Board Meeting

Agenda Item:	7
Date of Meeting:	23 February 2024
Title:	Biodiversity Net Gain and the Brilliant Barrow Town Deal Programme
Reporting Officer:	Karen Houghton, Westmorland & Furness Council

Executive Summary & Introduction

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a way to create and improve natural habitats, and makes sure development has a measurably positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity, compared to what was there before a development.

At the November 2023 Board meeting it was agreed that it was important to monitor the delivery of BNG outcomes of the Brilliant Barrow projects either as a standing agenda item or within an existing report/paper.

Climate change and greenhouse gas emissions are referenced in the Towns Fund Guidance Clean Growth section - 3.16 *"Towns will need to demonstrate that their proposed interventions have taken account of the following clean growth principle: Investment from this fund should support clean growth where possible and, as a minimum, must not conflict with the achievement of the UK's legal commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050"*.

Climate commitments are also referenced in the Barrow Town Investment Plan 2021 (pages 57, 66, 67, 71) and Healthy Places and Clean Growth information is included in the Strategic Alignment sections for each Project description (pages 76-89).

The newly enacted Biodiversity Net Gain requirement entered UK legislation on the 12 February 2024.

Whilst the request was initially made to consider BNG, it is proposed that this is expanded to Climate & Nature to include commitment to net zero in line with the Towns Fund Guidance.

Recommendation(s)

- To consider and note the initial report providing a summary of how climate and BNG is currently being considered by each of the Town Deal projects.
- To agree that the next round of health checks to focus on climate and biodiversity net gain.
- To arrange Carbon Literacy Training for Project Managers and Programme Team.

Report

This report provides the findings of an initial review on the progress being made by each of the 8 Town Deal projects, towards their BNG outcomes, their response to the climate crisis and their delivery of any sustainability measures. Appendix 1 provides a situation report as at January 2024 which the board is asked to note.

Brilliant Barrow's Town Investment Plan seeks to secure positive outcomes for Barrow through a triple bottom line approach, achieving positive social, economic and environmental outcomes. In terms of environmental outcomes these were:

- Attractive and sustainable places and spaces
- Better connected and sustainable transport
- Reductions in CO2 emissions and improved air quality.

The impact of the TIP by 2040 will be measured through various outcomes, including Carbon savings (measured by CO2) 810 tonnes.

Each project has defined outcomes in their business case and monitoring and evaluation plans.
It is important to monitor progress to ensure they are achieved. The Board should be kept informed of progress and any issues.

The opportunity presented by annual health checks to interview project teams and understand granular details should be expanded to include consideration of climate initiatives and contributions to biodiversity net gain where appropriate.

Westmorland & Furness Council colleagues from the Climate & Nature Environment team, including the Service Lead for Climate & Nature and Principal Ecologist, have agreed to review the information gathered and provide guidance which will be reported to a subsequent meeting. Project Managers and Programme staff have also been invited to attend Carbon Literacy Training, and for a presentation to be given by the Climate & Nature Team to a future Board meeting.

Karen Houghton, Westmorland & Furness Council
13 February 2024

Appendix 1 – Summary Report January 2024

<table>
<tr><th>Project</th><th>Town Investment Plan
Strategic Alignment</th><th>Project plans to deliver ‘green’ sustainability solutions</th></tr>
<tr><td>Learning Quarter –
BAE University
University of Cumbria</td><td>Clean Growth: the Learning Quarter will strengthen progression pathways into priority sectors including clean growth

Healthy Places: the Learning Quarter will be comprised of energy efficient buildings with green spaces. The provision of healthcare and nursing courses will be increased and strengthened through research collaboration and knowledge exchange. Significantly higher numbers of local residents will achieve healthcare qualifications.</td><td>Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG): Urban green produced a report that accompanied the planning application. Their analysis showed that the proposed development would provide:

<table>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="4">Habitat Unit Change</th><th></th><th colspan="2">Net change in Biodiversity</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>On-site baseline</th><th>Retained</th><th>Lost</th><th>Enhanced</th><th>Created</th><th>On-site post development</th><th>Habitat units</th><th>%</th></tr>
<tr><td>Area Units</td><td>0.4</td><td>0.00</td><td>0.4</td><td>0.00</td><td>+1.43</td><td>1.43</td><td>+1.03</td><td>+258.48%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Linear Units</td><td>0.00</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>0.33</td><td>0.33</td><td>+0.33</td><td>+100%</td></tr>
</table>

As illustrated in the table, the total BNG for the site, based on the current landscape design, is +258% of area habitats and +100% of linear habitats. A long-term management plan is to be developed to ensure this is met and the full gain in value to the environment is achieved. This management plan will be submitted to and approved by the council as a requirement of planning condition 27.

Other sustainability measures on the project, that are designed to minimise direct energy consumption and CO2 emissions (from Futureserv draft energy statement with planning application):

Passive Design elements:

• Air source heat pumps.
• Solar PV panels – roof mounted.

Active design measures:

• Improved boiler efficiencies.
• Reduced standing losses from pipes and thermal cylinders.
• Increase hot water generating efficiencies.
• Energy efficient LED lighting.
• Improved lighting controls.
• Low Energy EC Motors in pumps and fans.
• Efficient heat recovery in relevant systems.
• Enhanced heating controls.

The building is designed to comply with Building Regulations Part L, new version 2022, which requires the building to perform to a higher specification. An as-built energy statement will be submitted to and approved by the council as a requirement of planning condition 24.</td></tr>
</table>

Learning Quarter – Barrow 6th Form Rating Lane Campus **Furness College**	Works to improve the landscape setting within the campus	The Sixth Form College has recently undertaken to improve the landscape setting within the campus as part of the wider refurbishment project. Improvement works initially focus on three areas: the main entrance, off Rating Lane; the courtyard area at the front of the building entrance; and the landscape to the rear of the Library. The enhancement of biodiversity has been a priority for these areas: **Trees:** all existing trees will be retained and protected (1 small ornamental Acer will be transplanted within the site) and an additional 39 trees will be planted. Of these 39 proposed trees, 27 are native (these include Betula pendula and Sorbus aucuparia). Both the native and non-native tree planting will soften the vast areas of hardstanding, provide seasonally diverse vertical elements in the landscape, help to regulate temperatures within the Library (through solar shading), and provide important habitats and food for birds and insects. **Native hedges:** Yew hedges (native), are proposed at the main site entrance and adjacent to the courtyard area. These hedges, once established, will provide thick shelter and berries for birds and insects. **Shrubs, herbaceous planting, grasses and ferns:** the proposed planting will provide many more diverse plant species, including Hebe, Nepeta, Bergenias, and Geraniums. These all help to support and attract local wildlife. Existing Heathers will be retained and transplanted within the site. **Grassland Management:** to the rear of the Library, it is proposed that an area of grassland is left to grow long in Spring/ Summer. Areas of soil exposed and Yellow rattle and wild flora seeds sown to help reduce the predominance of coarse grasses/weeds, and allow wild flower species (e.g. Red campions, Dog daisies, Knapweed and Meadow cranesbill) to establish. Perennials and bulbs will be planted into the grass to add to the visual display and extend the flowering time, increasing habitat provision for wildlife, birds and insects. **Bulbs:** a mixture of native and non-native bulbs will be planted. These include Snowdrops, Daffodils and Crocus. The proposals will create an environment that not only enhances the visual setting but improves local air quality, water retention, opportunities for wildlife, and the mental health of site users.
Business Support **Cumbria LEP**	**Clean Growth**: the programme is focused on supporting Barrow's key growth sectors, including clean energy, and facilitating the decarbonisation agenda. **Healthy Places**: the programme will provide a business recovery programme for businesses affected by Covid-19, which will have important mental health outcomes.	Via the involvement of CSEP on the social enterprise section of the project, any business or entrepreneur interested in setting up or getting involved in social enterprise for the local community and or environment, will help to increase the ability of the Furness region to become more resilient against the impacts of the climate challenge. Via potential networking, volunteering and partnership working, businesses and communities will be able to meet the needs of the climate challenge on a stronger footing. If any entrepreneur, new or existing business are interested in recruiting new staff or upskilling existing staff to make their business more sustainable and resilient, they are given information and contacts for the local Skills Bootcamp provision provided by Cumbria LEP. For example, any existing heating engineering company or self-employed heating engineers are eligible to access the Skills Bootcamp upskill for air source heat pumps survey, installation and servicing. Under the new Wave 5 Skills Bootcamp provision, further upskilling and 'potential new staff' courses will be made available shortly. If any business shows a particular interest in implementing measures for Net Zero/Clean Energy/Energy reduction, they are referred to CAFS/North West Net Zero Hub for specific advice and support to meet the needs of their business. Via the supply chain support part of the project, increasing opportunities to engage and full fill contracts locally will support the climate challenge by reducing the carbon footprint of these businesses, reducing their need to travel out of the area, as well as reducing the need to 'import' from outside the Furness region.

Community Hubs – Earnse Bay **Westmorland & Furness Council**	**Clean Growth**: The outdoor centre and community well-being hubs will be highly environmentally sustainable and maximise Barrow's natural capital. **Healthy Places**: the outdoor centre will provide a space for physical exercise and both the outdoor centre and hubs will promote mental wellbeing in the community	An increase of a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain is an outcome of this project and will be achieved via the proposed landscaping scheme. Other contributions to the climate challenge will be assessed at the updated outline design stage. The list below outlines the sort of measures that will be considered. Implementation will be subject to feasibility and budget. 1. Cycle facilities and infrastructure - provide weatherproof cycle storage and cyclist facilities, to support bike hire, maintenance station and storage to encourage cycle/running/walking opportunities. 2. Undertake operational energy monitoring and whole life carbon assessment as part of design process. 3. Prioritise passive measures and on-site energy generation and storage. 4. Consider PV cells and a ground source heat pump as power source. 5. Fully electric - no fossil fuels. 6. Awareness of embodied carbon and procurement of low carbon solutions whilst encouraging re-use and recycled content of existing building materials. 7. Consideration of 10% target for the total value of construction and fit out materials derived from recycled and reused content 8. Design teams to explore modern methods of construction such as CLT or modular construction techniques. 9. Sustainable and low embodied carbon construction specifications 10. Greywater and rainwater harvesting
Community Hubs – Barrow Island, Ormsgill and The Forum **Westmorland & Furness Council**		The response we have had from the Project Team focusses on Earnse Bay only - the other hubs will be reported at a later date
Cycling and Walking **Westmorland & Furness Council**	**Clean Growth**: the programme would facilitate employers in the town to be better connected through sustainable and environmentally friendly means. **Healthy Places**: the programme would encourage local people to make healthier active transport decisions.	The two schemes we are looking to deliver are improvements to cycling, walking and wheeling which will reduce the reliance on vehicles. The two schemes are being constructed on North Walney from Jubilee bridge to Earnse Bay, then on Abbey Road from Ramsden Square to Park Drive. Construction is starting later on this year on both schemes. A biodiversity survey has been carried out on North Walney, with additional planting being installed in Vickers Town Park after the cycle scheme has been installed. However both schemes are due to go through detailed design, when details on construction materials or how we can save carbon by utilising carbon saving materials will be updated.
Place Development **Westmorland & Furness Council**	**Clean Growth**: the project will maximise sustainable use of Barrow's natural capital assets. **Healthy Places**: the project will promote active lifestyle choices through the generation of community events around Barrow.	The Place project will deliver events to residents/visitors of Barrow in Furness. A successful schedule of summer and Christmas events was delivered in 2023, working with key partners in the town. All the events are free to participate and promote physical and mental health and activity. The capital work to deliver the upgrade to the amphitheatre at The Dock Museum commenced in January 2024. When complete the amphitheatre will incorporate new planting, including plants chosen which are appropriate to coastal location and high trafficked area, and will provide enhanced habitat. The planting will take place this spring.

Marina Village **Westmorland & Furness Council**	**Clean Growth**: the programme will remediate a major site into one that is environmentally sustainable, provides a significant nature conservation area alongside low carbon development. **Healthy Places**: the Marina Village site will provide green space for local people to access for health and wellbeing.	The original intention of this project was that Town Deal funding was used to acquire and then remediate sites, but as time has progressed and negotiations been undertaken, it is clear that all of the funding will be needed for acquisition. Consequently there will not be any carbon reduction or contribution to BNG to be achieved by the scheme.
Housing Market Renewal **Westmorland & Furness Council**	**Clean Growth**: the programme will deliver carbon emissions savings and provision of green space. **Healthy Places**: investment in housing conditions and public realm centred around the most deprived parts of Barrow.	This project is under review and will be the subject of a separate paper/presentation by the Project Team at the Board meeting. Further information on climate and nature to follow.

Brilliant Barrow Board Meeting

Agenda Item:	8
Date of Meeting:	23 February 2024
Title:	Accountable Body Programme Update
Reporting Officer:	Liz Watson, Accountable Body and Assurance

Executive Summary & Introduction

Westmorland and Furness Council, as Accountable Body for the Brilliant Barrow Town Deal, continues to monitor programme performance in line with the Local Assurance Framework (LAF).

Contracting with individual projects continues to progress, with ongoing work to establish full Grant Funding Agreements, Memorandums of Understanding or Amendments where relevant. A significant milestone was achieved with the execution of the Grant Funding Agreement with the University of Cumbria in relation to the Barrow Learning Quarter in December 2023. A copy of the Programme Change Log is included at **Appendix 1**. A 'Notable' Change Control relating to the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure project is included for consideration at **Appendix 2**. At the time of writing, there are two further Change Controls currently being reviewed by the Accountable Body & Assurance team and a verbal update will be provided at the Board.

Projects continue in the established regular reporting cycle with the latest reports relating to Quarter 3 activity received during January. The information received in these reports has been used to complete the updated Project Dashboards that form **Appendix 3** to this paper.

Currently, reporting continues to show that slippage is a key risk to the programme that will need to be carefully monitored going forward. Whilst this has been generally due to development issues that have been identified either around cost or stakeholder engagement, resulting in an extended design process, the programme is now entering a critical delivery stage and it is important that these are now resolved to allow full delivery to commence. Previously, all projects were reporting that they would meet the financial and outputs performance requirements for the Programme. This was recognised as an increasing risk to the programme and individual projects are exploring risk responses to this where necessary. Significant risks are outlined in Appendix 3.

Given the level of financial slippage in the programme, the Accountable Body identified that this would meet a 'trigger' point for a potential Second Line of Defence 'Deep Dive'. As a result of this the Board asked for a 'readiness review' to be undertaken. This has been undertaken by the AB&A team in relation to the Barrow Town Deal and the Board are invited to note and consider the requirements in relation to this.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Town Deal Board:

1. Note the progress in contracting with individual projects and the Programme Change Log at **Appendix 1**.
2. Consider and agree the 'Notable' Change Control relating to the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure project at **Appendix 2**.
3. Consider and note the Project Dashboards at **Appendix 3**.
4. Consider and note the requirements for a Second Line of Defence 'Deep Dive' review.

Report

Project Grant Funding Agreements / Memorandums of Understanding

Grant Funding Agreements (GFAs), or internal Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for those projects being delivered by Westmorland and Furness Council, are key to ensure funding allocations can be passed to project delivery bodies in line with the responsibilities set out in the Local Assurance Framework and government requirements. Earlier in the programme, Initial Facility Agreement (IFAs) were also used to provide initial funding to projects, to support development and early delivery.

Work continues to establish or update these where relevant. The status of this for each project is summarised below in Table 1:

Table 1 – Project Contracting Status

Project	Current Status	Next Steps
BLQ – Barrow Island Campus	GFA in place	N/A
BLQ – Rating Lane Campus	GFA in place	N/A
Place Development	MoU in place	N/A
Business & Enterprise Support	GFA in place	N/A
Housing Market Renewal	MoU in place	Amendment required
Community Hubs & Earnse Bay	IFA in place	MoU required
Marina Village	MoU in place	N/A
Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure	IFA in place	MoU required

As part of the contracting process, the quarterly cycle of project reporting is designed to identify where further changes are required. Not all changes will result in a Change Control requirement but will be flagged in terms of project performance. Where project changes are required and have been agreed by the Accountable Body below the level requiring Town Deal Board endorsement, details of the approved changes are contained in the Programme Change Log which is presented to the next Board meeting. There have been no changes agreed since the last Board meeting. The latest Programme Change Log is included for noting at **Appendix 1**.

A Change Control has been received in relation to the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure project and this is included for consideration at **Appendix 2.** The requested changes address slippage in project delivery and include changes to project scope and project outputs, as a result of continued project development during the preliminary design stage. In accordance with the Change Control process set out in the Local Assurance Framework, this Change Control has been reviewed by the Accountable Body & Assurance (AB&A) team. The requested changes are considered to be 'Notable' and are therefore being presented to the Board for consideration, following a review by the Assistant Director of Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer). The recommendation following this review is that the proposed changes to the project should be approved. This will allow a project MOU to be put in place, as noted in Table 1 above.

At the time of writing, there are two further Change Controls currently being reviewed by the AB&A team and a verbal update will be provided at the Board. These relate to the Business and Enterprise Support and Community Hubs and Earnse Bay projects.

The latest quarterly cycle of reporting does suggest that further changes will be required going forward for both the Barrow Island Campus and Housing Market Renewal projects, and these will be considered in line with the agreed Change Control process. It is anticipated that the Housing Market Renewal project will be significant due to the level of financial re-profiling required and therefore will necessitate a Project Adjustment Request (PAR). The towns fund team have been informed of the anticipated timescales in relation to this, which will be submission for May 2024, in alignment with the next Board meeting.

Programme Monitoring & Evaluation Reporting

Projects are now in an established reporting cycle with the latest reports relating to Quarter 3 activity received during January. As this is an interim period (with the next government return not due until June), an overview of the key information regarding project and programme financial progress received in these reports is therefore shown below in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2 – Programme Financial Progress (Period Q3 23/24)

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	TOTAL
Agreed Profile	£799,000	£3,028,875	£9,015,626	£10,408,072	£1,748,427	£25,000,000
Actual Spend	£474,518	£916,713	£1,113,684	-	-	£2,504,915
Current Forecast	£474,518	£916,713	£3,409,642	£14,023,453	£6,175,674	£25,000,000

Table 3 – Project Status Overview (Period Q3 23/24)

Project Name	Delivery (RAG)	Spend (RAG)	Risk (RAG)	Commentary – Delivery Status and RAG Ratings
Barrow Learning Quarter – Barrow Island Campus	↓	↔	↔	**Current Project Delivery Stage & Status:** Initiation, Ongoing – Delayed **Delivery:** There are issues causing delays, but no overall impact upon outputs anticipated at this stage. **Spend:** There is variance due to delayed delivery, but spend is still anticipated to complete in Town Deal timescales. **Risk:** The project has identified some significant risks but has responses planned and implemented.
Community Wellbeing Hubs and Earnse Bay Outdoor Centre	↔	↓	↔	**Current Project Delivery Stage & Status:** Planning & Design, Ongoing - Delayed **Delivery:** There are issues causing delays with some changes anticipated, but no overall impact upon outputs anticipated. **Spend:** There is a variance of over 50% due to delayed delivery, but a revised forecast has been submitted. **Risk:** The project does have some medium risks, with risk responses planned.
Business and Enterprise Support	↑	↔	↑	**Current Project Delivery Stage & Status:** Project Delivery, Ongoing – On-track **Delivery:** Lack of take up is currently impacting upon delivery. Options have been requested with outputs now anticipated to be not delivered in full. **Spend:** There is a small variance but spend is largely on track. **Risk:** The project has some significant risks, mainly in relation to the achievement of outputs and outcomes, with no clear risk response planned.
Housing Renewal Programme	↔	↔	↔	**Current Project Delivery Stage & Status:** Planning and Design, Ongoing - Delayed **Delivery:** Issues causing significant delays may result in changes to the project. **Spend:** There is a variance of over 50% due to delayed delivery. **Risk:** There are significant risks to the project with a potential high impact. Risk responses being explored.
Brilliant Barrow Place Development	↓	↓	↔	**Current Project Delivery Stage & Status**: Project Delivery, Ongoing - Delayed **Delivery**: The revenue element of the project is progressing well and delivering outputs. There are delays to the capital element of the project, but no significant changes identified at this point. **Spend:** There is a variance due to delayed delivery. **Risk:** There are some medium risks associated with the capital element with risk responses planned.
Marina Village	↓	↔	↔	**Current Project Delivery Stage & Status:** Project Delivery, Ongoing - Delayed **Delivery:** Whilst key milestones are delayed by more than 6 months, significant changes to the overall project are not anticipated at this point. There has been key progress on the wider Marina Village project. **Spend:** Whilst the variance is currently over 50% due to delayed delivery, and some budget changes may be required, due to the nature of the project it is anticipated that spend will be achieved quickly. **Risk:** The project does have some medium risks, with risk responses planned.
Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure	↔	↓	↔	**Current Project Delivery Stage & Status:** Planning and Design, Ongoing - Delayed **Delivery:** Whilst there are some delays to the timetable outputs remain deliverable and on track. **Spend:** There is some variance due to ongoing design and delivery delays, with a revised funding package being refined. **Risk:** There are some medium risks with risk responses planned, including extended stakeholder engagement.
Barrow Learning Quarter – Rating Lane Campus	↔	↔	↔	**Current Project Delivery Stage & Status:** Project Delivery, Ongoing – On-track **Delivery:** Project is on track to deliver outputs and is keeping to schedule. **Spend:** Whilst there is some variance to the profiled financial forecast, delivery remains on track and no key budget changes are required. **Risk:** Project risks are low likelihood, with responses planned and implemented.

More detailed Project Dashboards have also been produced and these form **Appendix 3** to this paper.

Currently, overall reporting continues to show that slippage is a key risk to the programme that will need to be carefully monitored going forward. The narrative within the individual project returns demonstrates that in most cases, this has been due to development issues that have been identified either around cost or stakeholder engagement, resulting in an extended design process. However, the programme is now entering a critical delivery stage and it is important that these are now resolved to allow full delivery to commence.

Previous reporting has noted that the mitigations put in place would allow for this slippage to be resolved within the life of the Town Deal programme, with all projects reporting that they would meet the financial and outputs performance requirements for the Programme. This was recognised as an increasing risk to the programme and individual projects are exploring risk responses to this where necessary. Given the stage of the programme, it is now considered that there are some significant risks, and these are outlined in further detail in Appendix 2 and captured on the programme risk register where relevant.

In January 2024, the assurance team received queries from the Towns Fund Team regarding the risks that had been included in the last monitoring return. A progress update was provided, and it was noted that a PAR was anticipated in May 2024. The Towns Fund team advised that due to the latest financial forecasts, payments in relation to the Housing Market Renewal project would be suspended until receipt of a PAR.

Second Line of Defence Readiness Review

Given the level of financial slippage in the programme, the Accountable Body identified that this would meet a 'trigger' point for a potential Second Line of Defence 'Deep Dive'. As a result of this the Board asked for a 'readiness review' to be undertaken. This has been undertaken by the assurance team.

Background

There are requirements associated with the receipt of levelling up funds (which incorporate Levelling Up Fund (LUF), Town Deals Fund, Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) and future local growth funds where relevant, to assure the funds in scope and the accountability in line with each fund's delivery model.

These requirements are established in the Levelling Up Local Authority Assurance Framework (September 2022) and more detail was provided by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in a 'Deep Dive' Webinar (June 2023).

The assurance cycle is designed to provide confidence to the DLUHC Accounting Officer and the Senior Responsible Officer for each fund.

Assurance for each programme provides three separate and defined levels of assurance, referred to as the **three lines of defence**. Whilst there are minor differences between the programmes, there is significant overlap.

The three lines of defence can be summarised as follows:

	First Line of Defence (FLOD)	**Second Line of Defence (SLOD)**	**Third Line of Defence**
Responsibility	Local Authority	Assurance and Compliance Team - DLUHC	Government Internal Audit Agency
Method	Assurance Letter	Deep Dive Review	A review of the activity completed by DLUHC for

	Statement of Grant Usage		the second line of defence
Frequency	Annual Assurance Letter Annual Statement of Grant Usage (Six Monthly for LUF)	Risk based approach / Random sampling	

The risk factors taken into consideration for a SLOD Review are summarised below:

	LUF	**Town Deal**
Chief Finance Officer	Issues flagged in FLOD returns	
Financial Performance	40% off quarterly profile for two consecutive quarters (subject to further considerations)	40% off profile for any six-monthly return (subject to further considerations)
Delivery Performance	Deliverability is RAG rated red (6 monthly performance review undertaken by LUF delivery team)	Delivery performance for project is 40% off profile for any six-monthly return
Area Lead Intelligence	Judgement based on intelligence concerns	
External Auditor's Annual Report	Judgement based on published certified accounts	
Assurance Intelligence	Intelligence collated, feeding in from other funding programmes as relevant	
5% Random Sample	N/A	

Process

The SLOD review process consists of a letter sent to the Local Authority informing them of the Deep Dive and requesting various documents, as well as scheduling a meeting. The requested documents would have to be provided within **15 working days**.

Desk based checks would be carried out by DLUHC with further discussion and meetings as required. A report would then be issued with target dates for any agreed actions. Remedial action may include a PAR, payments being paused or staged, procurements being removed, specialist support deployed or recovery plans.

Following this, a sample of up to 2 procurements would then be reviewed as part of the deep dive which would be selected from the updated procurement register.

Review and Actions

The documents that would be requested and the status of these relevant to Barrow Town Deal are summarised below. Actions have been identified and are being progressed by the assurance team.

Document	Status
Terms of Reference for the relevant funding board	Town Deal ToR within LAF
Copies of the previous two board meeting's papers/minutes	Board meeting papers / minutes are held on file and published on the Brilliant Barrow website
Updated Conflict of Interest Policy which covers the relevant fund	Included in LAF and published on Brilliant Barrow website
Updated copy of Declaration of Interest Register	Register maintained by Inclusive and Green Growth Team and is published on Brilliant Barrow website
Local Authority Risk Policy for the relevant fund	**ACTION: Link to relevant document TBC**

Updated Risk Register for the relevant fund	Brilliant Barrow Risk Register is held and maintained by the Inclusive and Green Growth Team and is a standing agenda item at Board meetings.
Separation of Duties/Organogram for the relevant fund/project	Contained within the LAF.
Organisational Chart for the relevant project/funding	Contained within the LAF.
Counter Fraud Policy (including Counter Fraud referrals and whistle blowing process) for relevant project/fund	**ACTION: Link to relevant document TBC** W&F Fraud Policy (draft April 2023)
Updated Gifts and Hospitality register (for Town Deals to include Town Deal Board members)	Code of Conduct notes no gifts or hospitality should be received, so no register kept.
Updated Fraud Risk Assessment covering relevant project/fund	W&F Fraud Policy would apply, and additional checks undertaken through claims process. **ACTION: Link to relevant policy**
Updated copy of fund/project Procurement Register	Each project should hold a procurement register and relevant procurements are checked through quarterly reporting. **ACTION: AB&A team to amalgamate whole Fund procurement register using DLUHC template.**
Subsidy Control/State Aid documentation/Assessment	Each project had subsidy control assessment at assurance stage, and this is managed through individual GFAs where relevant.

Liz Watson, Programme Lead – Accountable Body & Assurance
15 February 2024

Brilliant Barrow Programme Change Log

									MINOR		NOTABLE						SIGNIFICANT							
Project Ref	Project Name	Change Control Ref	PMO Lead	Status of Change Control	Description of Changes Requested	Variation Type	Date Change Control Received	Date PMO Review Completed	Date Outcome E-mail Issued	Date Acceptance Email Received	Date sent to Accountable Body	Date Accountable Body Decision Received	Date BB Board Decision Received **(Required from LAF v3.0 onwards)**	Date Outcome Issued in Writing	Date Variation Issued	Date Variation Executed	Date sent to Accountable Body	Date Accountable Body Decision Received	Date BB Board Decision Received	Date Government Decision Received	Date Outcome Issued in Writing	Date Variation Issued	Date Variation Executed	Comments
BB002	Business & Enterprise Support	1.0	Liz Watson	CC Approved	Revised milestones, financial profile & outputs profile due to slippage.	Notable	30/06/2022	06/07/2022			06/07/2022	22/07/2022	N/A	See Comments	See Comments	See Comments								The Change Control reflects changes from the Project Business Case to the agreed Project M&E Plan. The M&E Plan will form part of the Project Grant Funding Agreement.
BB006	Marina Village	1.0	Julie Hodgson	CC Approved	1. Revised milestones, financial profile & outputs profile due to slippage. 2. Movement of funding between expenditure headings.	Minor	06/07/2022	05/08/2022	See Comments	See Comments														Although classed as Minor, the Change Control was shared with the Accountable Body as it reflects changes from the Project Business Case to the agreed Project M&E Plan. The M&E Plan will form part of the Project Grant Funding MOU. The Change Control was approved by the Accountable Body on 24/08/22.
BB004	Housing Renewal	1.0	Megan Kelsey	CC Approved	1. Revised milestones, financial profile & outputs profile due to slippage. 2. Movement of funding between expenditure headings. 3. Reductions to outputs.	Notable	26/07/2022	05/08/2022			05/08/2022	24/08/2022	N/A	See Comments	See Comments	See Comments								The Change Control reflects changes from the Project Business Case to the agreed Project M&E Plan. The M&E Plan will form part of the Project Grant Funding MOU.
BB001	Place Development	1.0	Kevin Little	CC Approved	1. Revised milestones, financial profile & outputs profile due to slippage. 2. Movement of funding between expenditure headings. 3. Minor reduction to outputs.	Notable	15/02/2023	15/02/2023			16/02/2023	20/02/2023	N/A	See Comments	See Comments	See Comments								The Change Control reflects changes from the Project Business Case to the agreed Project M&E Plan. The M&E Plan will form part of the Project Grant Funding MOU.
BB005	Community Hubs & Earnse Bay	1.0	Kevin Little	CC Approved	1. Revised milestones, financial profile & outputs/outcomes profile due to slippage. 2. Movement of funding between expenditure headings and creation of new expenditure heading. 3. Removal of project output to be replaced by alternative (classed as an outcome).	Significant	13/03/2023	15/03/2023									15/03/2023	15/03/2023	22/03/2023	05/07/2023	See comments	See comments	See comments	The Change Control reflects changes from the Project Business Case identified in the Project M&E Plan agreed with the applicant. The M&E Plan will form part of the Project Grant Funding MOU.
BB003b	Barrow Learning Quarter - Rating Lane Campus	1.0	Liz Watson	CC Approved	1. Reduction in match funding, and subsequent increase to TD intervention rate 2. Reduction in scope of project in line with reduced funding 3. Changes to outputs 4. Revised milestones, financial profile & outputs/outcomes profile due to slippage.	Significant	01/03/2023	31/03/2023									31/03/2023	31/03/2023	22/03/2023	05/07/2023	See comments	See comments	See comments	The Change Control reflects changes from the Project Business Case to the agreed Project M&E Plan. The M&E Plan will form part of the Project Grant Funding Agreement. This Change Control includes the disaggregation of the College element of the BLQ from the University element.
BB002	Business & Enterprise Support	2.0	Liz Watson	CC Approved	1. Revised financial and output profile due to slippage 2. Change to non-procured cost methodology due to delivery review and change of personnel 3. Movement of funding between budget headings	Notable	14/04/2023	18/05/2023			18/05/2023	24/05/2023	N/A	26/05/2023	15/06/2023	06/09/2023								
BB003a	Barrow Learning Quarter - Barrow Island Campus	1.0	Liz Watson	CC Approved	1. Increase in grant value. 2. Increase in total project cost and changes to match funding. 3. Minor change to outputs. 4. Revised financial profile due to changes to project budget and slippage. 5. Changes to milestones.	Significant	N/A	31/03/2023									31/03/2023	31/03/2023	22/03/2023	05/07/2023	06/07/2023	See comments	See comments	The Change Control reflects changes from the original business case to the revised business case which formed a PAR submission to Government, prior to the issue of a GFA.
BB007	Local Cycling & Walking	1.0	Liz Watson	CC Approved		Significant	N/A	31/03/2023									31/03/2023	31/03/2023	22/03/2023	05/07/2023	06/07/2023	See comments	See comments	The Change Control reflects changes from the original business case to the revised business case which formed a PAR submission to Government, prior to the issue of a MoU.
BB004	Housing Renewal	2.0	Liz Watson	CC Approved	1. Change to scope of project activity (level of intervention per property). 2. Reduction in outputs due to impact of inflation. 3. Extension of end date from 30/09/2025 to 01/02/2026 to allow for updated programme refined as part of scheme design. 4. Revised financial profile due to slippage.	Significant	N/A	31/03/2023									31/03/2023	31/03/2023	22/03/2023	05/07/2023	06/07/2023	TBC	TBC	The Change Control reflects changes from the MoU to the revised business case which formed a PAR submission to Government.
BB003a	Barrow Learning Quarter - Barrow Island Campus	2.0	Liz Watson	CC Approved	1. Extension of project end date from 19 August 2025 to 11 November 2025 2. Changes to milestones	Minor	16/11/2023	17/11/2023	See Comments	See Comments														The change control reflects changes from those agreed within the PAR to the agreed Project M&E Plan, prior to the issue of the GFA. The M&E Plan will form part of the GFA. This was classed as minor, as although milestone dates have been moved, this is within year and at this stage the financial profile has not been udpated.

Change Controls submitted following updated Change Control Process (Local Assurance Framework v3.0)																								
BB007	Local Cycling & Walking	2.0	Kevin Little	CC Being Reviewed	1. Changes to scope of project activity. 2. Changes to details & dates of milestones. 3. Changes to profile of expenditure & funding. 4. Changes to expenditure headings. 5. Reduction to overall length of cycle ways & footpaths to be created/improved. 6. Changes to profile of achievement for outputs & outcomes.	Notable	12/02/2024	14/02/2024			14/02/2024	14/02/2024												
BB005	Community Hubs & Earnse Bay	2.0	Liz Watson	CC Being Reviewed	Details to be added following completion of AB&A review		31/01/2024																	
BB002	Business & Enterprise Support	3.0	Liz Watson	CC Being Reviewed	Details to be added following completion of AB&A review		04/02/2024																	

Brilliant Barrow Board Meeting

Agenda Item:	9
Date of Meeting:	23 February 2024
Title:	Risk Register & Opportunities Update
Reporting Officer:	Karen Houghton, Westmorland & Furness Council

Executive Summary & Introduction

This risk paper introduces a simplified risk register to support effective management and transparency for the board of risk at both project and programme level.

As previously reported, now that the programme is in delivery phase, the focus of programme risk management is on working with delivery partners and project managers to ensure the successful delivery of projects and the achievement of project outputs and outcomes.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Brilliant Barrow Board:

1. Note the new simplified programme risk register and provide feedback for future development

2. Note the ongoing management of programme and project level risks.

3. Note that there is one red risk post mitigating action for the University.

4. Note that there are one red risk post mitigating actions for the Housing Market Renewal Project remains.

Report

The effective management of risk at both project and programme level is key to ensuring the successful delivery of the Brilliant Barrow Town Investment Plan and the associated outcomes. In addition, the relationship between project and programme risk management must be clearly defined with appropriate reporting and escalation systems in place, to ensure that the potential impacts of significant project level risks on the programme overall are captured and monitored.

Programme Risk and Opportunities Register

The programme level risk register has been redesigned to provide more clarity to the board and the latest version is provided at **Appendix 1**.

There remains a significant opportunity from the current focus on Barrow from central government, and the “Team Barrow” approach. A verbal update on this will be provided to the board meeting.

Barrow Learning Quarter – University Campus has one red risk (post mitigating actions) around recruitment of students.

Business and Enterprise Support has one red risk (post mitigating actions) on lack of take up in the programme.

Housing Market Renewal has one red risk (post mitigating actions) on deliverability and the project team are attending the board meeting to outline proposals for future delivery.

Risk management will be increasingly critical as projects progress towards milestones, particularly in relation to ensuring successful statutory consents, acquisition and in relation to managing cost escalation.

Escalating Project Risks & Issues

Each project delivery body is responsible for maintaining an appropriate risk register for their respective projects.

The Accountable Body and PMO continue to work with project delivery bodies to monitor project progress and this ensures any significant changes in project risks can be reviewed. The submission of formal quarterly project progress reports to the Accountable Body includes updates on the status of key project risks and associated mitigation actions, using a RAG rating format.

Government Risk Monitoring

Government monitors the risks associated with delivery of the programme through regular catch-up meetings with the Accountable Body or PMO, and through receipt of the 6-monthly Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) performance returns submitted by the Accountable Body in June and December.

In relation to the Housing Market Renewal project, government has withheld further payments until receipt of a Project Adjustment Form.

Karen Houghton, Westmorland & Furness Council
15 February 2024

Appendix 1 - Programme Risk Register

Brilliant Barrow
Programme Risk Register

Risk No.	Risk Name	Desciption	Consequence	Pre-Mitigated Impact	Pre-Mitigated Likelihood	Pre-mitigated Raw Total Score	Mitigations	Post-mitigated Impact	Post-Mitigated Likelihood	Post-mitigated Raw Total Score	Proximity	Risk Owner
1	Insufficient project management capacity	Required project management capacity and other resources absent	Project delivery delayed, key milestones missed	5 - Major impact	3 - High	15	Regular M&E returns to accountable body, project delivery group, site visits for board	5 - Major impact	2 - Medium	10	4 - Close: next 3 months	Project delivery teams
2	Failure to comply with DLUHC requirements	Failure to comply with DLUHC guidance or submission deadlines	DLUHC withholding grant. Project delays, reputational damage	5 - Major impact	2 - Medium	10	Accountable body in communication with DLUHC. Communication of serious impact to projects. Escalation if necessary	5 - Major impact	1 - Low	5	4 - Close: next 3 months	Assurance and programme teams
3	Insufficient match funding	Risk of full funding packages not being secured	Delays to projects or changes to scope	4 - Significant impact	2 - Medium	8	Ensure funding packages identified. Ensure monitoring of budgets and costs robust	4 - Significant impact	1 - Low	4	4 - Close: next 3 months	Project delivery teams
4	Deliverability concerns	Delays or failures to make progress, particularly in relation to site access/planning and other consents	Delays to projects or changes to scope	4 - Significant impact	2 - Medium	8	Clear strategies to be put in place, identification of issues through M&E and escalation where possible	4 - Significant impact	1 - Low	4	4 - Close: next 3 months	Project delivery teams
5	Stakeholder engagement	Risk that projects don't maintain high level of public support	Delays to projects due to issues in planning, insufficent support from community resulting in TIP's positive perception changes not being achieved	4 - Significant impact	2 - Medium	8	Develop and agree clear stakeholder engagement and communications strategies at project and programme level	4 - Significant impact	1 - Low	4	4 - Close: next 3 months	Project delivery teams and programme team
6	Ongoing impact of LGR?	Potential lack of ownership at senior level and capacity issues faced by projects	Delays to projects or negative impact on quality	3 - Medium impact	2 - Medium	6	Plan Delivery Group facilitates oversight by Programme SRO who can intervene/escalate as necessary	2 - Low impact	1 - Low	2	4 - Close: next 3 months	Programme team
	Project risks escalated to programme											
PR1	Barrow Learning Quarter - University Campus	Potential issues recruiting students		4 - Significant impact	3 - High	12	UoC to work with Furness College, schools, BAE and Spirit, supported by W&F	4 - Significant impact	3 - High	12	2 - Distant: next 12 mnths	Project delivery teams
PR2	Business and Enterprise	Lack of take-up of scheme		4 - Significant impact	3 - High	12	Project team have submitted PAR, under review by Accountable Body	4 - Significant impact	3 - High	12	5 - Imminent: next month	Project delivery teams
PR3	Housing Market Renewal	Lack of progress and need for review		5 - Major impact	3 - High	15	Project team reviewing options for decision by board and PAR to DLUHC	5 - Major impact	3 - High	15	5 - Imminent: next month	Project delivery teams

Brilliant Barrow Board Meeting

Agenda Item:	10
Date of Meeting:	23 February 2024
Title:	Brilliant Barrow Communications Activity Report November 2023 - January 2024
Reporting Officer:	Helen Houston, Westmorland & Furness Council

Executive Summary & Introduction

Clear, consistent and regular communication with residents and stakeholders is an essential part of the Brilliant Barrow programme and contributes directly to the delivery of the key messages below, as set out in the approved Communications Strategy.

- The eight Brilliant Barrow projects will create a range of new opportunities for the area and its communities through:

i) improved access to further education and a new higher education offer

ii) training and skills for individuals and SMEs, maximising the area's considerable economic strengths and potential

iii) local hubs for people of all ages to access the support they need at any stage in their lives

iv) spaces and events to contribute to a thriving town centre and local economy - safe, active travel routes

v) an improved perception of Barrow as a great place to live, work and visit

- The programme has also attracted additional funding and will continue to draw inward investment to Barrow in the years ahead.

We continue to identify opportunities within the projects and the programme to generate content that aligns with these key strands.

Recommendation(s)

To consider and note the Communications & Engagement update.

Report

Summary of activity undertaken:

Work has continued in order to strengthen communications activity linked to the Brilliant Barrow Town Deal in this key delivery stage.

We have implemented a dual-branding policy for the programme as well as projects delivered directly by Westmorland and Furness Council and have produced a brief for a new corporate brand ID manual.

A campaign plan has also been created to increase visibility of the brand and promote the provenance of the large-scale capital projects the programme is delivering.

Production and distribution of external, project-specific content continues to be tracked, forecast and delivered using the Communications Activity Tracker with output generating positive media coverage.

We are now set to launch a regular Brilliant Barrow digital newsletter with the first edition to be distributed in the coming weeks. This will give us the opportunity to communicate directly with an engaged audience on updates and progress on the programme and projects. We will be working to build an audience for this newsletter and would encourage board members to sign up and promote via their own channels wherever possible.

Brilliant Barrow digital newsletter header



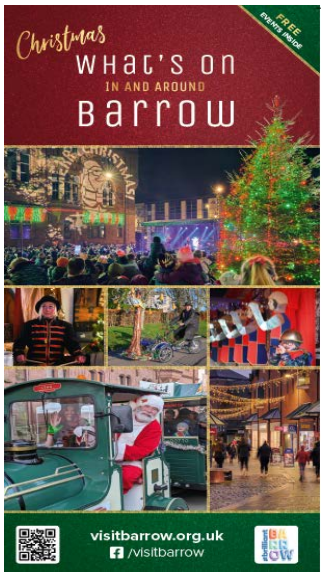
We are also working closely with project teams to plan and deliver key messaging and communications for projects that are subject to change.

Branded Activity:

The use of Brilliant Barrow branding on promotional activity in particular through the Place Development Project has continued with the production of the Christmas What's On guide and sponsorship of the Santa Express organised by Barrow BID in partnership with Barrow Town Council. Other activities in Barrow town centre over the festive period displayed Brilliant Barrow flags and banners.







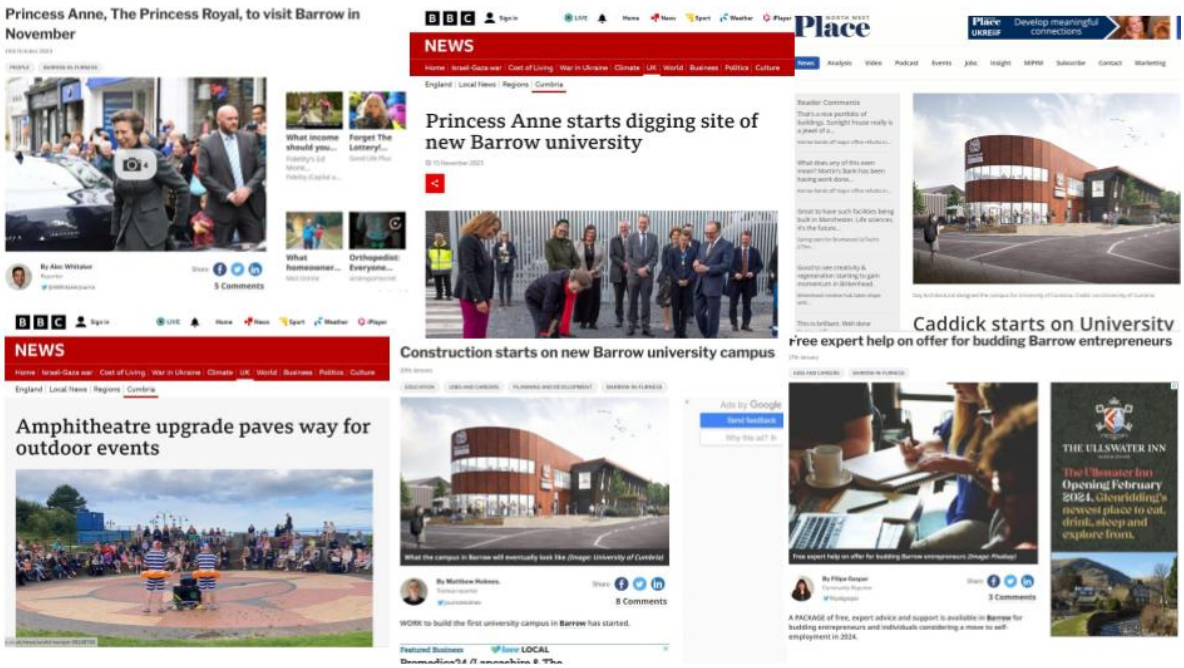
Content:

A number of media releases have been distributed linked to the Brilliant Barrow programme since the last board meeting:

- Work gets underway on Brilliant Barrow event space
- Want to start a business in 2024? Join one of our free Brilliant Barrow courses
- Contractor arrives on site at Brilliant Barrow university campus
- Did you enjoy Brilliant Barrow's summer of fun? Take part in our new survey

In total, distributed content resulted in 15 pieces of coverage on platforms which secure a total number of monthly unique website visitors of 171.8m.

These platforms include The Mail, Cumbria Crack, The BBC, Place North West, Beyond Radio and Cando FM.



Examples of news coverage secured since the last Brilliant Barrow Board Meeting

Content underway:

- Media release on audience-specific business start up / self-employment courses available through Business and Enterprise project
- Earnse Bay taster activities engagement

Social media:

A good level of engagement has continued across both Facebook and X with content now concentrated on project and programme updates.

An organic campaign has taken place in support of the Business Development project to generate awareness of - and to drive sign ups towards - a series of free entrepreneurship courses available in Barrow.

The latest analytics for the Brilliant Barrow channels on Facebook and X are below:

Facebook -Page Followers: 2.3k Page New Likes: 39

Page Reach: 14.3k

Page Profile Visits: 1k

Total engagements (reactions, comments and shares): 322

X - Page Followers: 898

Impressions: 6k

Engagements: 698

Brilliant Barrow website:

The Brilliant Barrow website is continually updated with news releases and confirmed updates/progress within individual projects. Changes to the membership of the board have been actioned to ensure the webpage is up to date.

The website has received 10k views with the number of users sitting at 1.3k.

Further page changes are planned for a number of projects in the coming weeks as project revisions come forward. Most notable of these will be the Earnse Bay Community Hub as the site will be used to host information on this site from Westmorland and Furness Council and Natural England.

Communications forecast:

A range of activity will take place in the coming months to highlight milestones and progress within the projects. This will include:

Project	Forecast Activity
Programme-wide	Digital newsletter launch. Activity to take place to promote new product and generate sign ups.
Business Development	Continued support to highlight free entrepreneurship courses available through the Business Development project.
Community Hubs	Communications support for engagement to help determine taster activities taking place at Earnse Bay this summer.
Community Hubs	Working with Natural England to develop a shared communications strategy for the Earnse Bay site with information to be hosted on the Brilliant Barrow website.
Housing Renewal	Developing a communications plan and then delivering activity to support changes within the Housing Renewal project.
Place Development	Communications around the official opening of the new events space at The Dock Museum to be held on May 29 for the Place Development project.
Programme-wide	Preparing a double page feature in the summer edition of Westmorland and Furness News, delivered to all households within the W&F Council area.

Caroline Barber, 32West
13 February 2024