

CATTLE MARKET MAKERS PROJECT BOARD – NOTES

WEDNESDAY 9 MARCH 2022 at 14.00, MEETING BY ZOOM

Present:

Deputy Mayor, Councillor Christina Whitty

Chair, Councillor Rachel Brooks

Vice-Chair, Councillor Annette Lee-Julian

Councillor Richard Dorling

Councillor Naomi Taylor

Councillor Nick Craker

Councillor Jane Pascoe

Town Clerk – Stephen Vinson

Arron Jones – Principal Development Officer, Cornwall Council

In attendance:

Project Manager – Alec Charles

Apologies:

Mayor, Councillor Simon Cassidy

Councillor Lori Reid

Councillor Julian Smith

Deputy Town Clerk / RFO – Yvette Hayward

Ian Hutchinson – Head of Development, Plymouth College of Art

Project Administrator – Jack Rockliffe-King

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed board members and fellow councillors to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillor Simon Cassidy, Councillor Lori Reid, Councillor Julian Smith, Yvette Hayward, Ian Hutchinson and Jack Rockliffe-King.

2. Notes of previous meeting

The notes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record (proposed: Councillor Brooks; seconded: Councillor Dorling). It was noted that amendments to the website requested by the previous meeting had been completed by the Project Administrator. All other actions from the previous meeting were addressed in the agenda.

3. Capital build

It was noted that, following the completion of the tender process, a recommendation for the approval of the preferred supplier for the construction of the project's specialist studio facility as part of the redevelopment of Liskeard's historic Cattle Market site would be considered by a special meeting on Liskeard Town Council at 19.30 on 19 March 2022. It was observed that at that stage LTC would not be asked to approve appointment to contract, which will be subject to clarifications achieved at that pre-contract inception meeting, in order to ensure that project costs remain within the limits of funded budgets.

It was noted that the project consultants had reviewed the contingency requirements for the construction project, and had reached a figure of £44,000 in relation to construction cost contingency risk. In addition, after extensive discussion with WWA, areas had been identified whereby the full extent of these contingency costs might be reduced through a process of clarifications with the preferred contractor at the project inception meeting (prior to formal appointment to contract). In addition, the project had identified up to £20,000 of prospective savings that could be reallocated from within the extant ERDF budget to set aside to mitigate any outstanding contingency risks.

It was further noted that strict business confidentiality applied to the identity and status of the prospective suppliers tendering for this contract, and that the decision as to the approval of preferred supplier would be published following the approval by LTC of that status, and following the notification of this decision to all prospective contractors who took part in the tender process.

It was agreed that advice would be sought from the project consultants as to the costs of the eventual clearing of the site (expected no earlier than autumn 2032).

In response to questions as to the value-for-money aspect of the project, it was noted that the increase in costs was to be borne by CLLD/ERDF funding, and that the open tender process followed the advice of CLLD. It was observed that the first stage tendering process (originally conducted by CC) had projected significantly higher costs; by contrast, the tenders received by the current process had been sufficiently close to the consultants' cost projections to underpin confidence that these represented realistic and reasonable market costs.

4. Financial update

It was reported that the project had received approval for an increase in ERDF grant funding of £240,549.43 in order to meet increases in costs of construction experienced across the sector as a result of the Covid-19 crisis.

The Board also received a general financial update presented in advance of the meeting by the LTC RFO: The project Match funding from Cornwall Council is payable at 90% at the start of the project and the remaining 10% paid on completion. On 6 January 2022 LTC received 90% of the ESF match funding totalling £10,504.63. Once the tender process for delivery of the workspace is complete, and LTC has received a revised offer letter for the new increased ERDF funding, LTC will be able to draw down 90% of the related match funding totalling £279,367.34. The ERDF and ESF funding is payable against quarterly claims providing evidence of defrayal. In January, the Town Council submitted its first grant claim for both the ERDF and ESF elements of the project, from commencement to 31 December 2021. The claim is being processed by CLLD and additional information requested has been submitted and accepted. The total expenditure for the period was £17,609.63 (this includes a 15% overheads allowance on salary costs totalling £1,322.74). The claim submitted for eligible ERDF and ESF funding totals £12,968.35 and is due to be received shortly. LTC will continue to make quarterly claims for the ERDF and ESF funding against evidence of defrayal, with the next one due to be submitted in April and paid in May for the period covering 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2022. While all monies are reclaimable through the project, there will be some timing differences which will need to be managed within cashflow. Once the stage payment schedule for the capital build has been agreed, LTC will be able to profile this against our cashflow and confirm whether LTC have sufficient reserves to cover this or whether the Town Council will need to seek an interest free loan from CLLD to cover any short-term gaps between expenditure and grant recovery/VAT reclaim.

5. Promotional activities

An article about the project's course delivery launch featured in the Liskeard Voice newspaper on 23 February. The third issue of the project newsletter was published on 17 February. The Project Manager met with clients of the local Active Plus course on 16 February, and it is anticipated that this will lead to some recruitment to the ESF programme. Social media engagement continues to increase, with 52 followers on Twitter, 111 on Instagram, and 287 on Facebook.

6. After-school clubs and courses

6.1 After-school clubs

Following confirmation from both St Martin's and Hillfort primary schools that they are now willing to resume these activities, it is anticipated that after-school club activities will commence during March, with a planned date of 15 March for delivery at St Martin's (following a visit by the PM to St Martin's on 2 March to confirm these arrangements). The PM visited Hillfort School on 9 March to confirm arrangements for these sessions, which are due to start on 22 March. These do not represent target engagement activities for the project, but are intended as tools for the recruitment of suitable participants to the ESF-funded skills programme. It is intended to run an initial pilot schedule of four sessions (up to the schools' Easter break) in print-making, woodcrafting, watercolour painting and fabric work.

6.2 Courses

The first classes for participants in the project's ESF-funded skills programme began on 17 February. Six participants attended the first class. It is expected that numbers of participants will grow as the delivery continues. The classes meet for three hours on Thursday afternoons. The initial five weeks of delivery are focused on watercolour painting; future sessions will focus on print-making, woodcrafting and fabric

work. In addition to these arts & crafts skills classes, the Project Manager has started running regular one-to-one professional development tutorials for participants to underpin the trajectory and momentum of their progress towards employment, self-employment or education. The participants have offered very positive feedback about their initial engagement with the programme.

It was noted that the PM would be visiting Liskeard Secondary School on 10 March to discuss potential for collaboration and referrals; it was also suggested that the PM contact Liskeard's Wave School for similar conversations.

7. Enterprise engagement

The Project Manager has initiated individual mentoring meetings with creative businesses registered with the project. Meetings were held with three such businesses during February; further meetings are scheduled for March. In addition to this, the project's broader-based Creative Enterprise Network Forum held its second and third meetings on 15 February and 8 March. These meetings featured workshops on data protection, equality & diversity, online sales platforms, business websites and gallery exhibition.

The Board asked about the extent of Plymouth College of Art's involvement in the project. It was noted that their primary role would be in advising upon and supporting the process for the equipping of the capital build's workshop spaces; the College had also offered to host visits from members of the ESF programme who might consider applying to study at PCA, and from professional makers interested in PCA courses and facilities. The Town Clerk read a recent communication from the Deputy Chair of the Board of Governors at PCA which hoped that LTC would 'note the continued support of the European programme team and their offer of additional funding, which confirms that they believe the project remains good value for money even at the higher cost'.

8. Schedule & frequency of future meetings

It was noted that it had originally been intended to reduce the frequency of CMM Board meetings; however, it was agreed to maintain the schedule of meetings on a monthly basis until the completion of the capital build.

9. Any other business

No other business was raised.

10. Date of next meetings

14.00, 7 April 2022

14.00, 11 May 2022

14.00, 8 June 2022

14.00, 6 July 2022

14.00, 10 August 2022

14.00, 7 September 2022