

Llandudno Business Forum Meeting
5th September 2024 - Providero

Attendees

Jon Merrick (JM)	jon@mostynestates.co.uk	Mostyn Estates Ltd
Heather Thomas (HT)	Heather.thomas@conwy.gov.uk	CCBC (Conwy County Borough Council)
Amanda Ballance (AB)	amanda.ballance@conwy.gov.uk	CCBC (Conwy County Borough Council)
Sarah Ecob (SE)	sarah.ecob@conwy.gov.uk	CCBC (Conwy County Borough Council)
Elen Edwards (EE)	Elen.Edwards@conwy.gov.uk	CCBC (Conwy County Borough Council)
Amy Jones–Enaruna (AJE)	Amy.Jones@conwy.gov.uk	CCBC (Conwy County Borough Council)
Sharon Morgan (SM)	sharon.morgan@conwy.gov.uk	CCBC (Conwy County Borough Council)
Adrian La Trobe (ALT)	adrian.latrobe@conwy.gov.uk	CCBC (Conwy County Borough Council)
Cllr Nigel Smith (NS)	cllr.nigel.smith@conwy.gov.uk	CCBC (Conwy County Borough Council)
Edward Hiller (EH)	Edward@mostynestates.co.uk	Mostyn Estates
Karen Aerts (KA)	Baycounselling@gmail.com	Bay Counselling
Lyn McKean (LM)	Lynne.mckean@specsavers.com	SpecSavers
Tim Winstanley (TW)	Info@pendragondrinks.co.uk	Pendragon Drinks
Tris Owen (TO)	Tristan@tomowenandson.com	Tom Owen & Son
Kelly Owen (KO)	Kelly@tomowenandson.com	Tom Owen & Son
Rich Edwards (RE)	Richard@penderyn.wales	Penderyn
Jodi Cook (JC)	Jodi@inscribeprint.co.uk	Inscribe Print
Dan Worsley (DW)	Danworsley@hotmail.com	X Factory Ltd
Paul Levy (PL)	Paul@livetech.co.uk	LiveTech
Callum Roberts (CR)	Callum@techbaserepairs.com	TechBase
Sam Amis (SA)	Samantha.amis@stdavidshospice.org.uk	St Davids Hospice
William Peedell (WP)	Billy@trancio.uk	Trancio
Jason Pinnick (JP)	Info@dudleyandgeorges.co.uk	Dudley & Georges
Sally Paveley (SP)	Sally@themotorsportlounge.co.uk	The Motorsport Lounge
Claire McElroy (CM)	Claire.mcelroy@ulsterstores.com	Clares of Llandudno
Alix Donaldson (AD)	Mail@givealittle.co.uk	Give a Little
Elyse Waddy (EW)	sales@empirehotel.co.uk	Empire Hotel

Jon Merrick opened meeting and welcomed all.

The main topic on the Agenda today was the Venue Cymru Levelling Up Project Consultation and Officers from Economy & Culture attended who were introduced to the Forum

[Venue Cymru Levelling Up Consultation - Conwy County Borough Council](#)

Jon handed over to Sarah Ecob - Head of service - Economy & Culture

SE provided an overview of how CCBC had come to make the proposal to move both the Library and Tourism Information Centre (TIC) to Venue Cymru (VC) as part of the creation of the Creative Community Hub.

This derived following the UK Budget in March where a £10Million investment was offered by the then Government in respect of Venue Cymru. A business case was put forward – it should be noted that following the change in Government the £10M based on the Business Case submitted has not been confirmed.

A report was submitted to Cabinet 23rd July – as part of the Business Case the opportunity was taken to look how to better use VC and protect services against the Economic Crisis that all Local Authorities find themselves in

Library – issues identified with current site

- Accessibility as located on the first floor
- Huge driver is the cost for using the library building
- County has 5 Area libraries – only 3 are required
- Budget to Economy & Culture cut – currently looking at a reduction to opening hours to libraries
- Limited Blue badge parking spaces

Whilst it recognised that the current building is a Carnegie building and brings footfall into town the new proposal is ideally placed between Llandudno and Craig Y Don. It will be well serviced by a large car park with 16 accessible bays. Its position next to the Swimming pool will provide easy access to families and the library will be accessible whenever VC is open.

They are looking to create a co-location work with local groups

Potential for a space for Hot desking/cafe/community space – Plans for this not done yet as awaiting on outcome of Consultation

Tourist Information Centre

Looking to safeguard this service as not a statutory service – Many LA's are closing these at present due to financial difficulties.

300,000 footfall to VC every year many from outside area

Will look at some form of TIC (Digital site) in town when monies allow

The Consultation is live until 23/9/2024

The Levelling Up Funding had a previous deadline to complete works by March 2026 but would be looking to negotiate an extension

Cllr Nigel Smith wanted to reiterate to the Business Forum the financial difficulties CCBC are encountering. As a county we have had the lowest settlement from WG

Up to 80% of the budget is allocated to Social Services with the remainder 20% being used to cover the remaining services

CCBC want to keep the library's and must explore all options to safeguard the level of service currently provided

Questions were raised by Forum members as follows and answered accordingly in red

- Would VC get the monies anyway even if the Library/TIC stay if Welsh Government see VC as a good model
SE – TIC in particular cost £200K to run per year – need to look at how to look to do this more affordably
- Does the £200K cost relate to both Conwy & Llandudno – TIC – **Yes**
- Is there a feasibility study that provided better understanding of the impact the potential move of both services would have in the High Street
The consultation includes request from feedback that would help understand this.
EE commented that CCBC has continues to support projects in Llandudno through projects and funding e.g Support through Funding to Mostyn Estates to supporting the M&S development
Property funding through SPF – Key Fund
Works to shelters on the Promenade

Will the Car parking at VC be free

Currently 4 bays that provide 20 minutes free parking – will be looking to extend this number

Jon M commented that he personally felt the Consultation had not been written well and that a Feasibility Study should be considered which gives thought around the businesses in the area

It appears that a lot of work has been put into the grant available – could this not be used to make the existing property in town work for the library. It is a Jewel in the crown at the centre of town and the loss of it would affect community cohesion. Budgets queried if not Commercial sensitive

SE – The monies on offer were made available to VC as a nationally significant cultural hub.

A charity has been established to look at cultural projects

The potential funding cannot just be shifted to a library project

Looking at VC to become a co-location with more partnership work with organisations such as Betsi Cadwaladr/Coleg Llandrillo/Arts Council for Wales

Will see if budgets can be produced

If the loss of the Library/TIC were deemed to be detrimental to the High Street – would it still move?

SE – It would be a weaker case, but CCBC still must make savings

EE – 15-20% cuts each year are a reality

Is the VC project alone not sustainable without the library move incorporated – is it not attractive as a standalone project.

SE – VC brings £33M to the local economy

ALT – Highest earning conferences per year

On this basis does this not provide enough of a case for a standalone project in relation to VC alone

Reality is that the library service is under pressure – now have reduced hours and staffing has reduced from 10 FTE to 2FTE

Are all libraries in the same position

Llanrwst is now based in Glasdir which is a CCBC owned existing building

Conwy – CCBC new building and co linked with Archives

Colwyn Bay – Own building but secured a grant with Coleg Llandrillo

Abergele – Older building and conversations with other partners as to How it will fit in with other services available to town

Having to look at the opening hours across County – for info – Denbighshire have reduced their opening hours by 40%

EH – A lot of discussion has been made about Finance & Cost. 99% of businesses have had an increase in costs

Not talking to people who are naive – need to take care of businesses so they can reinvest

Council must make cuts so do other businesses – need to send a confident signal and this sends a negative signal to town centre

Library & TIC move out of town is an easy solution

Think there is an alternate solution

Cllr NS – Reiterate that if CCBC were to go down a Section 114 – they would not care about Llandudno as a town. The project provides the best solution and the alternative of not doing this is scary. The theatre is vital to Town

Query around monies

SE – Figures in Cabinet meeting – Link provided below

Appreciate economic climate and the creation of a creative hub. Mindful of M&S having already left Town Centre – Any data on the effect on footfall?

Car parking at VC is key as limited Street parking

Will be looking at the possibility of more car parking spaces as part of Business Case

Surely the TIC with gift sales and footfall should be profitable

AB – With regards to the TIC – this may be seen as a retail shop, but it is an Information Centre with a retail element. Footfall in shop cannot be viewed on conversion to sales as many come in solely for Information

ALT – The TIC in VC will be serviced accommodation

AB – CCBC are exploring the option of a Tourist Information Point in town

JM thanked representatives from Economy & Culture for providing information to Business Forum

Summarised some of concerns raised by businesses regarding proposal

Main concern around the reduction in footfall – With a loss of 200K out of Town Centre this can make the Town look quiet and the potential to lose confidence

Meeting Closed 9.30a.m

Next Meeting

7th November 2024

Venue to be confirmed