

Kidsgrove Town Centre Community Interest Company Business Plan

Draft 2

January 2014

Our Vision

Kidsgrove, a great place to live and trade

Our Mission statement

To develop and sustain trade and prosperity within Kidsgrove and its surrounding areas through the promotion of services, activities and co-operation between disparate groups for the benefit of all

INTRODUCTION

Background

Following on from the setting up of the Newcastle Town Centre Partnership in January 2013, borough councillors and officers were keen to support businesses in Kidsgrove to develop a similar partnership.

At a well-attended meeting in April 2013, there was a clear mandate from businesses, town councillors and other stakeholders to begin the process of setting up a Town team. At a second meeting in May 2013, three main themes were identified, sub-groups set up and chairs appointed.

Theme groups

Each theme group has a distinct sphere of activity, although naturally there is cross over between groups. The objectives of each theme group are detailed in the appendices although these will change over time as the groups mature and projects are completed. In brief, the scope of each group is:

- Environment & Infrastructure
 - Waterfront project - dredging, improving moorings, tackling anti-social behaviour, improving signage, developing the heritage/tourism aspect and promoting the area.
 - CCTV
 - Signage
 - Brightening the place up
- Marketing and Events
 - Developing a town centre website
 - Promoting Kidsgrove's assets to existing and potential customers
 - Building a business database
 - Communications about events
 - Facilitating events other organisations wish to stage

Kidsgrove Town Centre Community Interest Company (KTCCIC)

The KTCCIC is a private sector led initiative. It has been set up as a Community Interest Company, which was incorporated in September 2013. The small Board of directors comprises representatives from local businesses, the town council and the Borough Council. The use of sub-groups allows the Board to give voice to a much wider audience, build on people's interests and to draw on expertise in specific areas.

The town team recognises that, only by engaging all stakeholders in the future prosperity of the town and working in partnership, can it hope to achieve real change. It also understands that this will be a gradual process as there is a need to build confidence that change can happen.

High streets across the country have been hit hard by declining footfall, the rise of internet shopping and the effects of the recession and Kidsgrove is no exception. However, the town has a number of strengths upon which to build, including its transport links, strong community spirit and the potential afforded by the canal.

This business plan sets out what the KTCCIC hopes to achieve over the next two years and beyond.

Kidsgrove Today

Kidsgrove town centre is a comparatively modern town, built on and around the site of an old North Staffordshire mining community. Although part of the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme, it is close to the City of Stoke on Trent, Crewe and Congleton.

The town benefits from its own railway station, served by the Manchester, Stoke on Trent/Euston line, and the Crewe, Stoke on Trent/Derby line. The M6 Birmingham/Preston Motorway passes within 3 miles of the town and there is a feeder road to it from Talke which provides easy access.

Kidsgrove is also a canal town, being sited on the Trent Mersey canal and can be proud of its heritage being home to the Harecastle and Brindley tunnels.

Despite its industrial heritage and the strong sense of community that exists in the area, the town is in decline like so many others round the country. A number of large anchor stores (Tesco, Aldi, Home Bargains) attract footfall, and the town benefits from free parking. However, the shopping choice is generally poor and, whilst the vacancy rate is low, a high concentration of takeaways which are open only in the evening, add to the slightly run-down air.

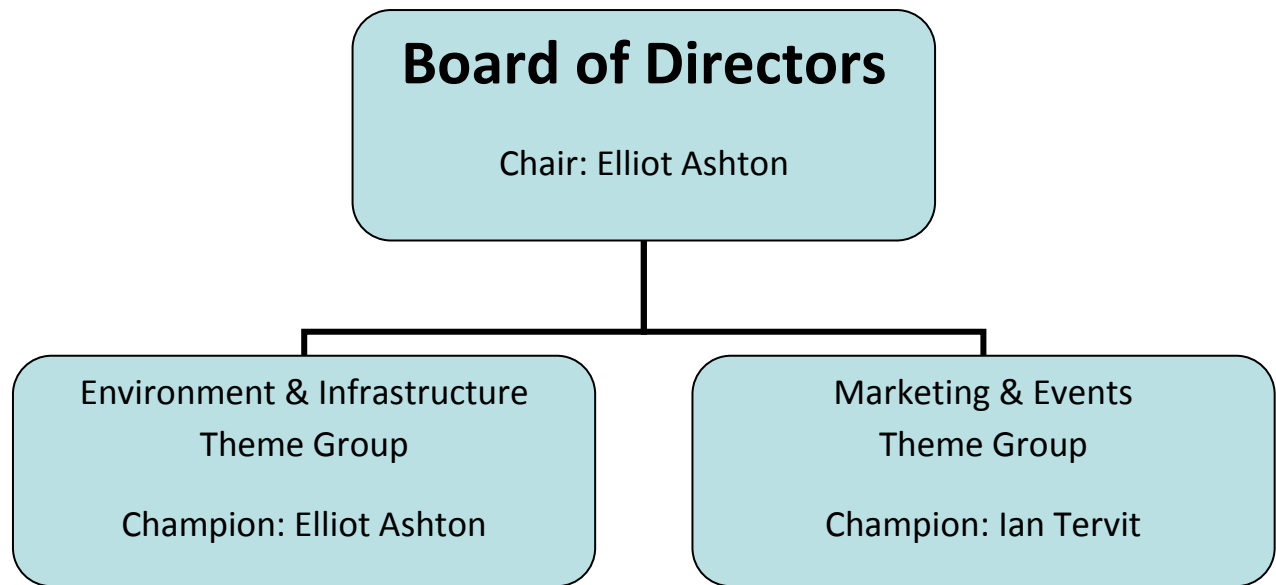
Because of the lack of mooring facilities and a poor reputation for safety the town is unable to capitalise on canal traffic in a way that might be expected, given the canal's proximity to the town.

Kidsgrove tomorrow – the vision

The KTCCIC wishes to work with all stakeholders in the town to re-imagine Kidsgrove town centre as a canal town, building on its industrial heritage and recreate a thriving community built on a strong sense of belonging and identity.

This vision is being developed in conjunction with the local community through consultation events and regular communication with businesses and local organisations.

Company Structure



The board of directors oversees the strategic direction of the company and has responsibility for the allocation of resources.

The theme groups have responsibility for:

- Developing project ideas
- Feeding project suggestions back to the Board for approval
- Monitoring and reporting on progress
- Identifying obstacles

Directors

Board members:

Neil McNicholas – Manager, Co-op Bank

Mark Smithson – Director, D. Smithson

Paul Waring – Town Councillor (Secretary)

Ian Tervit – Owner, A Potter Tea

Elliot Ashton – Town Councillor

Newcastle-under Lyme Borough Council (represented by Cllr Elsie Bates)

THE PRIORITIES

The theme groups have identified a number of priorities which they feel will have a positive impact on the town and work towards achieving the vision.

These comprise short, medium and longer term actions of varying scale.

Priority 1: Marketing the area to raise awareness and increase footfall

Priority 1a: Develop a website for the town centre (*short term*)

Rationale: A relatively quick win for the town. This website will list all businesses in the town and give details of special offers, events, etc, thereby engaging businesses with residents and visitors. Longer term, this will provide a platform to link into other themes, e.g. the canal development.

In the process of securing funding and commissioning the work with the goal of having it live by end March 2014.

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| Lead body | Resources |
| KTCCIC (Marketing theme group) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Members Fund NBC Private sector sponsorship |
| Cost estimate | Milestones |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and build c.£2000 Ongoing maintenance £500p.a. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding by Dec 2013 Develop brief by Dec 2013 Commission work by May 2014 Website live by end Jul 2014 |

Priority 1b: Develop an events programme (*Medium term*)

Rationale: To increase footfall to the town, raise its profile amongst residents and visitors, support the retail businesses and develop a sense of pride and ownership amongst all stakeholders in the town.

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| Lead body | Resources |
| Kidsgrove Town Council (supported by the Events Co-ordination group) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kidsgrove Town Council Rotary Club NBC Community groups |
| Cost estimate | Milestones |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will vary by event (some are self funding) Develop new events c.£2,500 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indie Christmas campaign Dec 2013 Develop business toolkit by May 2014 2014 events calendar by Mar 2014 Indie Easter campaign April 2014 |

Priority 1c: Brand development

Rationale: A key part of re-defining Kidsgrove in the minds of existing and potential users is the development of a brand. A brand is the identity of a specific product (in our case, Kidsgrove town centre) that identifies one seller's goods as distinct from those of other sellers, whilst also giving a strong sense of what the product is (and isn't). Our brand identity will be the representation of our town through the conveyance of attributes, values, purpose, strengths, and passions and will be used as part of any promotional activities undertaken by the KTCIC on behalf of the town.

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| Lead body | Resources |
| KTCCIC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidsgrove Town Council • Rotary Club • NBC • Community groups • Schools • ATCM |
| Cost estimate | Milestones |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops, design work, etc. c. £5000 (but work being conducted by ATCM). • Publicity material (flyers, pull-ups, etc) c.£750 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATCM brand awareness begins Apr 2014 • ATCM branding programme ends Feb 2015 |

Priority 2: Increase engagement with the KTCCIC (*short term*)

Rationale: Only by developing a strong partnership that includes all stakeholders in the town can the Town team make a difference to the prosperity of Kidsgrove and ensure its own sustainability. As well as getting businesses involved, the town team will engage with the community, young people, local groups and the voluntary sector.

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| Lead body | Resources |
| KTCCIC marketing theme group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidsgrove Town Council • Rotary Club • Newcastle Borough Council • Community groups |
| Cost estimate | Milestones |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In kind support from partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter issued on behalf of Town Team – Jan 2014 • Official launch of KTCCIC – Mar 2014 • Schools engaged in Town team activities – Jun 2014 |

Priority 3: Kidsgrove Waterfront Project (*short, medium and long term*)

Rationale: This project will undoubtedly attract attention and provide a long-term benefit to Kidsgrove. It will have a significant impact on the business community, residents and visitors, raising the profile of the town potentially in a national context. It will provide huge opportunities for media coverage and provide a major step in delivering the vision for the town.

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| Lead body | Resources |
| KTCCIC E&I group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canal & Rivers Trust • Staffordshire County Council • NBC • Kidsgrove LAP • Kidsgrove Town Council • Police |
| Cost estimate | Milestones |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined based on 'visioning exercise' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up Kidsgrove waterfront project steering group by Sept 2013 • Dredging canal autumn 2013 • Begin consultation – Dec 2013 • Investigate funding by Mar 2014 • Draft action plan by Jun 2014 |

Priority 4: Enhancing the attractiveness and safety of the area
(*short/medium term*)

Rationale: A number of businesses expressed concern that the town was looking a little run down and could do with some cosmetic enhancement. This has spawned a number of smaller projects.

A: Floral displays and Hanging baskets

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| Lead body | Resources |
| KTCCIC E&I group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidsgrove LAP • Rotary Club • NBC Newcastle in Bloom team • Local retailers • Staffordshire County Council |
| Cost estimate | Milestones |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C.£50 per hanging basket | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcastle in Bloom team seek sponsors by Mar 2014 • Baskets in place May 2014 • Review of lighting column decoration May 2014 • Volunteers spring planting May 2014 |

B: Highways Team clean-ups

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| Lead body | Resources |
| KTCCIC E&I group | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Staffordshire County Council |
| Cost estimate | Milestones |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">No cost to KTT | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Areas nominated by traders (ongoing from Jun 2014) |

C: CCTV coverage of prime retail areas (*short/medium term*)

Rationale: A number of businesses expressed concern about antisocial behaviour and the potential for property damage through minor acts of vandalism such as broken windows, which had both a nuisance factor and cost implications.

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| Lead body | Resources |
| Kidsgrove LAP | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Kidsgrove LAPStaffordshire County Council |
| Cost estimate | Milestones |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">No cost to KTT | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Funding secured – Sept 2013Work commences in Market Street – Oct 2013Work completed – Dec 2013 |

Priority 5: Development of a Transport hub (*medium/long term*)

Rationale: Kidsgrove benefits from having a railway station a short walk from the town centre. There are a number of projects being explored which will help the town make more use of this asset.

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| Lead body | Resources |
| KTCCIC | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Kidsgrove Town CouncilStaffordshire County CouncilNewcastle Borough CouncilNetwork RailBus operators |
| Cost estimate | Milestones |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Noticeboard c. £1500Disabled access - tbc | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Noticeboard at station – Mar 2014Disabled access to far platform – end 2015Bus turning circle in place - tbc |

Priority 6: Explore changes to Market Street traffic flow (*medium/long term*)

Rationale: Retailers in Market Street have raised a number of issues relating to traffic flow in Market Street and the how it is affecting their business. Suggestions

for improvement include provision of nipper parking, disabled parking spaces and making the street one way. This has been a long-standing issue for the town and, whilst it is an important priority for the Town Team, it is a longer term project.

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| Lead body | Resources |
| KTCCIC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffordshire County Council Kidsgrove Town Council Newcastle Borough Council Businesses in Market Street |
| Cost estimate | Milestones |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be confirmed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canvass opinion from Market Street businesses – May 2014 Explore options with County Council – Jul 2014 |

Priority 7: Explore external funding opportunities *(ongoing)*

Rationale: Neither the Borough Council, nor the Town Council has the resources to fund all of these projects, nor can businesses be expected to contribute large amounts. External grants will be sought and applied for where possible.

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| Lead body | Resources |
| KTCCIC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kidsgrove Town Council Newcastle Borough Council |
| Cost estimate | Milestones |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No financial resources required but in kind support for compiling bids will be necessary | New funding sources will be applied for as required. |

Long term projects

The KTCCIC has set itself ambitious targets for the next two years but acknowledges that there are long term projects which also need addressing. The eight priorities will take up a substantial amount of time and energy but consideration will also be given to future needs.

Projects which the town team wishes to consider are:

- Develop prioritised programme of physical improvements
- Improve car parking and parking management
- Programme of support for existing and start-up businesses

Funding

The only source of funding the KTCCIC has available to it at the moment is £10,000 from Newcastle Borough Council, payable in two to three tranches, timescales to be confirmed.

The approximate amount of funding required is outlined for each priority along with possible sources of funding. Grants will be pursued where possible, as will sponsorship from local businesses.

A cash flow analysis and detailed action plan is to be produced to accompany this document.