

## Newport Unlimited

### Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 13 May 2005

**Present:** Grant Watson (Chairman)  
David Bowler, Councillor Ken Critchley, Chris Freegard, Gerry Keighley,  
Bob Macey, Graham Moore, Karen Thomas

**Apologies:** Councillor Bob Bright, Nigel Campbell, Professor James Lusty, Nic Neal,  
and Don Wilkes

#### 1. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Board held on 14 April and 21 April 2005 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

##### Railway Station

A meeting had been held with Network Rail in relation to development aspirations for the station yard. A mixed use scheme of residential and office development was being considered.

#### 2. Chief Executive's Report

##### Retail Scheme

The City Council's Cabinet had received presentations by both proposed developers who had been selected for further evaluation during the Cabinet's earlier discussions on 14 April 2005.

The Cabinet was also provided by King Sturge with further analysis following the special meeting of the Board. Both presentations to the Cabinet were fully detailed and brought out the important elements to allow the Cabinet to make an informed choice. Important choices had to be made balancing the design and financial aspects of the bids.

The various elements of each bid were considered very carefully. It was a significantly difficult decision as Cabinet members considered both schemes to be deliverable. Full attention was given to the presentations and to the views of professional officers. The Cabinet resolved to appoint Modus as the preferred developer for Newport's City Centre retail regeneration scheme, the bid being judged the most

economically advantageous to the City Council, having regard to the financial and design issues.

In order to ensure the project was effectively led and managed it had been decided to establish a project team, with John Burrows, as Project Director, to report to a Steering Group and quarterly meetings of the Chairman of Modus and Leader of the Council.

Good progress was now being made with UBS on the Kingsway project and it was hoped that a report would be available for the Board in June.

It was now important to initiate positive promotion of the proposals and to provide regular updates on progress to maintain a high profile and credibility with the public.

#### Pirelli Redevelopment

*Gerry Keighley declared an interest in this item*

The successful contractor for the construction of the employment units would be appointed shortly with an immediate request to obtain full planning permission for the development which will be submitted to the City Council by the end of May. The joint venture between the WDA and Newport and Gwent Chamber of Commerce Enterprise and Industry is progressing. The timescale for start on site is as programmed in September this year.

#### Cambrian Centre

The prospective developers were progressing to select their funding partner by the end of May. Initial discussions have taken place about the legal agreements which need to be in place and details of the scheme, which will alter the development appraisal, are being finalised. When this has been established the formal appraisal of the scheme can be concluded and a more detailed paper will be brought before the Board.

#### Old Town Dock

Tenders are due to be received on 1st June for the first phase of the residential development at Jack's Pill. It is proposed to report back to the Board on the outcome to the June meeting.

The first phase of the reclamation scheme is nearing completion and as part of this work it was required to expose the old dock to consider its condition with a view to utilising a section of the dock as a water feature, consistent with the master plan prepared for the development. Initial investigation reveals that there is a significant part of the old dock walls intact together with the substantial coping stones which could fulfill the aspirations for the water feature. Further work is now required to consider the feasibility and viability of pursuing this objective.

The extent of contamination contained within the first phase was less than anticipated which means that there are savings on the contract which will enable the second phase, covering the Victoria Wharf element to progress quickly.

#### MIPIM Property Conference

Reference was made at the last Board meeting about attendance at the recent MIPIM property conference at Cannes. Members were presented with papers which reported on the outcomes of the event.

The Board was informed of the MAPIC conference, which is to be held in November, and which specifically relates to the retail trade. Following research last year the WDA has decided to attend the conference/exhibition this year and to take a stand. The costs are likely to be in the order of £50,000 and in view of the focus on retail in Newport, members agreed to contribute £10,000 out of the marketing budget for the current year.

No contribution was made to the MIPIM event with all costs falling on the WDA with the exception of the Chief Executive's travel and subsistence.

#### URC Annual Symposium

The 4<sup>th</sup> URC Annual Symposium was being held in Walsall on the 12-13 May. Newport Unlimited staff and officers of the City Council were attending the conference

#### Key Targets

Progress on key targets was noted. An explanation was provided where there had been any change in circumstances. Members asked for reconsideration of how the information on timing was presented.

### **3. West Newport Master Plan**

A consultant Team led by Bradford Moreton had been commissioned to prepare a master plan for the area south of the M4 Junction 28 including the land adjacent to the LG complex in West Newport.

The draft land use plan for the West Newport Strategic Master plan complements and reflect UDP policy. The main land uses proposed are housing, industry, research and development and related office uses, a primary school, neighbourhood retail within a district centre, hotels and associated leisure, transportation infrastructure and public open space. It is also proposed to redevelop the existing Hynix facility into an international exhibition centre.

As to phasing, the Master Plan recognised 3 distinct timeframes

Phase 1 would include employment development activity that could commence within two years and housing activity that could commence within two years.

Phase 2 would include employment development activity that could be commenced within four years

Phase 3 would include a primary school and neighbourhood centre and employment development activity that can start within eight years.

Board Members congratulated the Director of Planning & Strategy on interpreting the consultants' work.

It was recognised that this was an excellent site in terms of access, labour supply and potential but there were concerns as to how end objectives for the area might be achieved. The Board considered that before the Master Plan could be recommended for consideration by the stakeholder organisations there was a need for a financial model to be developed. There was a need also to examine whether there was enough value generated to make a reasonable contribution to infrastructure costs and the proposed balance of commercial and residential development needed further examination.

#### **4. Usk Footbridge**

The cost of the bridge has risen since April 2004 and the principal reasons were outlined to the Board at its meeting in February. Concerns were raised by the Board regarding escalating costs. The contractor/design team has, as part of the partnering contract, explored a range of value engineering issues with a view to

establishing a 'best value' target cost. These measures were reported to the Board in March.

The partnering contract seeks to deliver the completed bridge for an agreed target cost. The contract has a pain/gain clause ensuring that in the event of a cost overrun, the budget implications would be capped. Any savings below the target cost are to be shared 50/50 between the contractor and the employer.

A revised figure has been allocated in the draft Business Plan for 2006/2007.

The objection period for the CPO had closed and no objections were received thereby avoiding the need for a public inquiry.

Newport Unlimited staff have been working with Newport City Council's Urban Regeneration Manager to prepare a draft logistics plan examining co-ordination issues surrounding the footbridge, retail scheme, Kingsway car park and the Usk Way dualling. The conclusion is that the footbridge should be delivered according to the agreed programme.

Macgregor Smith had been commissioned to prepare a phased public realm strategy for the bridge to satisfy planning conditions. The first phase will be delivered in parallel to the bridge contract.

As to lighting, a series of options, all of which could be delivered in budget, were presented to the Board.

### **Agreed**

Subject to an allocation of costs on a 50/50 basis between the Agency and the City Council, to support a WDA contract to a negotiated target cost as agreed to construct the Usk foot/cycle bridge together with an enhanced lighting scheme – details to be agreed- not exceeding £250k.

To be presented with a recommendation in relation to the officers' preferred lighting scheme at the next meeting of the Board.

## **5. End of Year Outturn for 2004 – 05**

The Board received information showing spending for the 2004/05 operational year. The end of year outturn is within the overall provision made by the founder members.

Members noted the outturn of spend for the 2004/05.

## **6. Draft Business Plan and Development Programme**

The new draft Business Plan for 2005 was discussed. It moved the three- year Development Programme on one year and revised the programme in the light of progress and programme slippages experienced in 2004/5.

The Plan showed the overall programme for the next 3 years and shows the expenditure profile for each of the 50 to 60 projects which make up the programme. As last year the programme is divided up into the 15 principal geographical areas of activity and these are grouped further into about 7 areas for ease of location - City Centre Retail Core; City Centre Market Square and Station Area; City Centre Riverfront; Crindau Gateway; Old Town Dock, George Street, and Pill Gateway; Other Central Areas; and Newport East, West, and City Wide Transport Measures. Most of the activity in the next three years in concentrated in the City Centre and Old Town Dock areas.

It was recognised that the Business Plan and Development Programme is a working document and figures change all the time. Nevertheless, there is a need to establish the general direction a priorities each year as represented through the allocation of resources and the phasing of the projects and this plan establishes that base for 2005. There have been a number of changes since the 2004 plan and these will be explained at the Board meeting.

### **It was agreed**

To approve the Draft Business Plan, which includes the Draft 3 year Development Programme for 2005/6 to 2007/8, as the basis for the URC's work over the next three years and for submission for approval by the three Founder Members as required by the Company's Articles of Association.

## **7. Arrangements for the AGM**

The Board considered arrangements for the Company's second Annual General Meeting at 9:30 am on Wednesday, 8 June 2005, immediately before the start of the June Board Meeting. The content of the agenda was also discussed.

### **It was agreed:**

- a. To approve the arrangements for the holding of the Company's Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, 8 June 2005 at 9:30 am;
- b. To approve the Agenda for the AGM;
- c. To issue the Notice of Meeting for the AGM attached to this report.

**8. Project Coordination Group**

Members noted the minutes of the meeting of the Coordination Group.

**9. Next meeting**

8 June 2005, at 9:30 am.