

## Newport Unlimited

### Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 9 September 2005

**Present:** Grant Watson (Chairman)  
Ed Bampton, Nigel Campbell, Councillor Ken Critchley, Chris Freegard,  
Gerry Keighley, Bob Macey, Graham Moore, and Don Wilkes

**Apologies:** David Bowler, Councillor Bob Bright, Professor James  
Lusty, Nic Neal, Karen Thomas, and Andrew Wilkinson.

**Also in attendance:** Councillor Mrs E Heath, John Burrows, Leigh Donovan, Richard  
Jefferies, Steven Slocombe, Paul Tarling and David Ward.

#### 1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2005 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

##### Filming In Newport

The filming to include Newport in a documentary programme on discovering Britain and its people had been completed. The film makers had agreed that they would be happy for Newport Unlimited to assist in the editing process.

##### Flood Prevention

The East Bank Strategy was acceptable in principle to the EA but no documentary evidence was yet available. The first test would be the planning application relating to the industrial units on the former Pirelli site.

##### Merger at the Assembly Government

Bob Macey considered that there was unlikely to be any changes in relation to the URC. Any changes that would arise would be likely to be in relation to the personnel to reflect the new arrangements.

##### University Merger

The proposed merger would not take place. The proposals for a riverfront campus would now progress on a phased basis. Funding issues were still to

be resolved and it was likely the project would involve a reduced configuration. The prospect of a joint city / university library facility was being explored by the two parties.

## **2. Chief Executives Progress Report**

The items within the Chief Executives report were contained in the review of projects (see Item 3, below)

## **3. Review of Projects**

### Bus Box

The scheme will be delivered in two phases.

There will be some changes to proposals following consultation. Public consultation has raised some concerns about use of Bridge Street. The project will include the bus box eventually making use of both sides of Queensway. The proposals for Station Square were explained and the project was still on course to commence in the first quarter of 2006 and be completed by the end of the year. The Cabinet Member would consider proposals in October and procurement routes were being considered.

### Retail Scheme

Both schemes are progressing well to date. One issue under discussion is the interface between the Modus and UBS schemes. The car parking for both schemes will be included in the Kingsway development. The bus box is also critical owing to the reduction in the bus station.

The Council is working on the lease with UBS and the Development Agreement with Modus and the Cabinet will be asked to agree Heads of Terms for the Modus development on 13 September. The UBS proposals will be presented hopefully later in the month.

The relationship with Debenham's remains positive. Debenham's formal agreement will be with Modus. The store has been designed.

As to Usk Way and Kingsway, The new line for both roads must be agreed in tandem. The contract needs to involve the whole length of road involved and discussions about traffic movement into the car park are being held.

Modus are planning to be on site in 2007. It is hoped that acquisitions can be completed via negotiations but a timetable for a CPO is in place for where this is not achievable.

There are some Planning / Design issues relating to the UBS scheme. It is essentially a refurbishment but there needs to be improved entrances / frontages.

**IT WAS AGREED** that the developers would be asked to make a presentation on progress to a future Board meeting.

#### Market Square and Old Green Slip Roads

Work now needs to be done to reappraise the proposals as part of the bus box / retail projects

#### Railway Station

Meetings are to be held with the Assembly Government, Newport Unlimited and Network Rail to discuss options. A new station is unlikely to be deliverable. By December an agreement needs to be in place to progress refurbishment. At the least this needs to involve the improvements to Platform 4 and the pedestrian access.

The Assembly Government will be likely to support to upgrade as part of the Ryder Cup project. This needs to be part of the ongoing discussions.

#### Cambrian Centre

There is a potential sale to a developer who would be likely to revisit the project details.

#### Usk Footbridge

The work was on site and is due for completion in May 2006.

#### Rodney Parade

The acquisitions were now completed by the WDA. Buildings had been demolished and the site cleared for the development as residential provision and a riverside walk.

Land levels need to be raised as part of the flood defence strategy.

#### Art College

The demolitions had opened up this attractive site. Costings were being provided in relation to open space in front of the building. It is a listed building with a resolution for residential use. There is dialogue between the Council and the owners and it was considered this is an important building to maintain.

### Crindau

Negotiations were continuing with Sainsbury about relocation. A developer was assembling options for a mixed use scheme. The key constraint for any development is vehicular access.

### George Street

The infrastructure work was complete. Planning permission had been granted for the first office block and a start was planned for October. The Magistrates Courts had purchased a site for court buildings and a Planning Application was expected from the Red Cross for a Headquarters building.

### WISP

WISP is a funding mechanism to provide the opportunity to attract private sector capital to construct speculative buildings. Proposals to provide a new office building at George Street as a pilot project for WISP funding were being examined. Whilst there had been lobbies that the WISP proposals may be in competition with private sector developments, the Board's view was that there had been no new quality projects of this kind in the City Centre for a significant time. The intention was to provide a single-user, HQ-type building.

### Old Town Dock

The remediation work was complete and the old dock exposed for development as a water feature. Heads of Terms were being discussed with the developers of Phase 1 and some 151 units were being proposed. The Design Commission was content with the proposals and it was hoped that there would be a start on site in the summer.

Board members wanted the executive at Newport Unlimited to ensure that consideration was given to the correct mix of residential development and that there was confidence in the levels of demand for the proposed residential units throughout the City. It was important to bear in mind the way the market was moving and the supply and demand equation.

### Pirelli Site

The site had been cleared and would be developed as mixed use with phase 1 as industrial units and phase 2 to include residential provision. The EA's stance on the planning application for the industrial units would be of interest. The East Bank Flood Strategy is vital to the proposed residential development in phase 2.

### East Newport

*(Gerry Keighley declared an interest in this item)*

The proposal at Llanwern Village would eventually add about 1000 new houses. The social infrastructure was being considered and plans were emerging for a new village centre, new primary school and community use. The comments of the UDP Inspector were now awaited. Following his report back, the project would need to be considered alongside the St Modwen proposals.

### Hospital Site

No commitment had yet been secured from the NHS. The WDA had been trying unsuccessfully to purchase the Corus site which was adjoined by the Mon Bank Sidings site, providing space for a new hospital development and related developments.

The future designation of the site was now in the hands of the UDP Inspector.

It was reported that Corus had gone to the market with its site and there were reports that a house builder was interested.

## **4. Newport West Development Strategy**

The Board was updated on the emerging West Newport Development Strategy. A consultant team 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.

Members were informed of the recently published WDA Property Strategy which had identified the need for a premier business park and the potential development of this area had been submitted by the Council. A group was considering the submissions.

Another important component of the emerging strategy for the area would be the junction strategy for the new M4.

A study on the possible conversion of the Hynix complex into a regional conference/exhibition/event venue had identified a potential market for a flexible regional facility capable of accommodating a range of uses including sporting events and concerts. Initial cost estimates had been prepared but

need to be set within the context of an outline business plan. The buildings and adjoining land are now in the ownership of the Welsh Assembly.

An initial assessment of development values in the area had been completed and the WDA is coordinating a marketing strategy for the Hynix Complex and adjacent land on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government set within the context of West Newport.

Work is underway to pull the various components of the emerging West Newport development strategy together. The objective will be to establish a detailed implementation plan that pays regard to:

- The West Newport Strategic Master plan;
- The Inspector's report into the Unitary Development Plan;
- The preferred junction strategy for the new M4;
- The proposed use of the existing Hynix buildings and adjacent land;
- The phasing of development land and the cash flow implications for delivering essential infrastructure;
- The marketing strategy for West Newport as a whole.

Following completion of this work a formal submission should be made to the Assembly Government seeking endorsement of the proposed development strategy for West Newport.

Members noted a further report will be presented to Board in due course.

## 5. Footbridge opening

The construction of the new structure began in July 2005 and is scheduled for completion in May 2006. Board members considered options in relation to:

- naming the bridge;
- opening the bridge;
- the person(s) asked to open the bridge;
- The short term usage of the bridge.

Members considered that as the bridge is a landmark feature, it would be important for an appropriate ceremony to open it. As to the name, Board members considered that the public ought to be engaged in the process of naming the bridge.

**It was agreed** to seek the agreement of the Council to set up a small working group to prepare and report back to the Council and the Board on the options in terms of the name, opening ceremony and use of the bridge for events.

**6. Corporate Governance Audit**

Last year Board Members were advised that a Corporate Governance audit of the company's activities was to be undertaken. It was agreed that this would be facilitated by the WDA on behalf of the three Founder Members.

The Chief Executive and Head of Corporate Services subsequently met with the auditors on a number of occasions to answer questions and help identify the key documents and systems that would be relevant to the audit.

Following these meetings the auditors undertook a review of the Designation Report, the company's Articles of Association and the Stakeholder Protocols. A summary document identifying key issues was considered by Board Members, along with a response from Newport Unlimited to each of the points raised. Each response reflects the present position and provides reference to supporting documents. It was recommended that the auditor undertakes a physical audit of a sample of the issues identified to verify the veracity of the URC's response and, if satisfied, he should then write his audit report based on the comments provided by us supported by the physical audit.

**It was agreed to** approve the response to the audit 'questionnaire' and the recommendation that the auditor should undertake a physical audit of a sample of the issues identified.

**7. Revenue Budget – First Quarter Outturn 2005/06**

The budget outturn for the first quarter was tabled.

**8. Project Coordination Team**

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

**9. Next Meeting**

The next meeting would be held on 14 October 2004 at 9.30 am at Gold Tops.