



## Newport Unlimited

### Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 8 February 2006

**Present:** Grant Watson (Chairman)  
Councillor Bob Bright, David Bowler, Nigel Campbell, Councillor Ken Critchley, Chris Freegard, Gerry Keighley, Professor James Lusty, Bob Macey, Karen Thomas, Councillor Mrs E Heath (Observer)

**Apologies:** Don Wilkes

#### Also in

**Attendance:** John Burrows, Leigh Donovan, Kevin Dooley, Philip Jardine, Richard Jefferies, Gareth Prosser, Susan Sullivan and David Ward

#### 1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2006 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

#### University

Professor Lusty informed members that the University Board of Governors would be discussing proposals for the Riverside campus in the coming week. Reports would be presented subsequently to the Newport Unlimited Board and the City Council's Cabinet.

#### Housing Demand and Site Development

Members were advised that they would be presented with a report on the housing demand strategy at the March meeting of the Board.

#### Meeting with the First Minister

Councillor Bright informed Board Members that he had met with the First Minister on 6 February (with Chris Freegard, John Burrows and Bob Macey) and had strongly promoted the case for future funding for the work of Newport Unlimited and its Founder Members. The First Minister felt that it was important that Newport Unlimited could demonstrate the scale of activity and the recoupment of receipts and funds in the coming years. Such data was important to allow any political decisions at the Assembly Government to be informed ones. Any presentation to the Assembly Government would need to draw out what is being achieved and where the programme is benefiting from receipts. It was also important to highlight private sector leverage in the schemes and to show levels of interest from developers.

It was confirmed that the Assembly Government was currently factoring in two-thirds of the revenue cost of the URC. No commitment had been made, however, beyond the first tranche.

The Board expressed its thanks to Councillor Bright for efforts in raising these issues with the First Minister.

### **IT WAS AGREED**

That there be a meeting of officials in the coming weeks but that a report be prepared for the next Board meeting highlighting how the case was being made to the Assembly Government.

#### Post of Chief Executive

The Chairman reported that the outcome of the selection process had been the appointment of John Burrows as Chief Executive. Board Members endorsed the appointment, congratulated Mr Burrows and asked that a press release be issued in this respect.

#### Number of Directors

Chris Freegard stated that he had checked the issues relating to compliance regarding the number of Council appointed Directors on the Board. Any vote of the Board would be in accordance with the Articles and Memorandum of Association which restricts the voting rights of Council appointed Directors to not more than 20% of the total vote. Therefore, there is no issue of the company being classified as under Local Authority control.

#### Legal Position of the Company following the WDA/WAG Merger

Morgan Cole would be preparing amended Articles and Memorandum of Association to take account of the advice previously given, and noted by the Board, on the implications of the merger.

#### Usk Footbridge

Chris Freegard reported discussions were continuing with the Lord Lieutenant who was investigating the possibility of a member of the Royal Family opening the bridge.

## **2. Chief Executive's Progress Report**

The items in the Chief Executive's report relating to the appointment of the Chief Executive, the Leader's meeting with the First Minister, and the Marketing strategy, were dealt with at other points in the meeting.

### West Newport – Potential Development

The Board was informed that the need to attract external funding for development relating to the Hynix Building had been recognised. An approach had been made by a major developer who is interested in the possibility of a major investment in West Newport.

### Key Tasks and Targets

The Key Targets Schedule and progress on projects was noted. An explanation was provided when there had been any change in circumstances.

## **IT WAS AGREED**

### 1. Railway Station and Ebbw Vale Link Railway

That a meeting would be arranged to involve the Leader of the Council, Newport Unlimited, the Assembly Government and Network Rail to discuss progress and the way forward on all issues relating to rail developments in the city centre, particularly the Ebbw Vale link.

### 2. Usk Footbridge

That a celebration event be considered, involving perhaps an exhibition at the Riverfront showing progress made on schemes and the 'fly through' on the day when the masts were being moved into place.

### 3. Flood Prevention Works and Capital receipts

That officers would investigate, and report back on, ways in which the flood prevention works necessary on the east bank of the river could be facilitated, even if this involved sites in private ownership. This would then allow the proposals for development at all sites, including Pirelli, to progress unhindered.

It was recognised there might be a role for the City Council through the prudential borrowing arrangements.

### **3. Project Coordination Group**

The minutes of the most recent meeting of the Project Coordination Group were circulated to members.

### **4. Marketing Strategy and Operational Plan**

Members viewed an interactive presentation providing information on planned developments and progress in the Central, Eastern and West Newport development areas. Board members considered that the interactive presentation was a valuable additional tool in promoting the city but considered:

- The commentary/voice over should be improved.
- The presentation needed to be able to be viewed without commentary in some situations.
- Further thought ought to be given to the purpose of the presentation and its potential audiences.
- Information within the presentation was out of date and needed updating.
- The presentation needs to be easily updated as developments progress.

Members also viewed the updated version of the 'flythrough' and were impressed with the improved version now available.

The Board also considered a proposed marketing strategy and operational plan. Members recognised the work put into developing the document but considered:

- The marketing strategy should be consistent with marketing developments at the City Council
- The strategy should focus on promoting the City of Newport rather than Newport Unlimited as a company although it needs to say that there is a strong team who will do all they can to make things easy for investors in the City - developers, businesses, retailers, service providers – encouraging development and assuring people that they can invest with confidence, pointing out successes to date.
- The document need not include significant introductory commentary or appendices but should concentrate on a sharper focused document on opportunities for promotion.
- The marketing strategy needs to promote Newport as a location for development whilst at the same time promoting the City.

- Consideration needs to be given to the diverse audiences who will be reading the document, including local people, occupiers and developers.

#### **IT WAS AGREED**

That further discussions are held on how best to amend and take forward the strategy and that a subsequent draft be presented to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

#### **5. Revenue and Capital Budgets**

Board Members were informed of spend on the revenue and capital programme budgets following the third quarter of the current financial year and provided with a forecast of spend to the end of the financial year.

To date spending generally had been within budget both in terms of Capital and Revenue and the forecast spend to the end of the year anticipates a moderate under spend against provision.

Members noted the position.

#### **6. Date for the Next Meeting**

The next meeting would be held on 8 March 2006 at 9.30 am.