



## Newport Unlimited

### Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 16 August 2006

**Present:** Grant Watson (in the Chair): John Burrows, Nigel Campbell, Chris Freegard, Councillor Erryl Heath, Gerry Keighley, Karen Thomas, and Don Wilkes

**Apologies:** Piers Bisson, David Bowler, Councillor Bob Bright, Grenville Jackson, Professor James Lusty, and Phil Jardine.

#### Also in

**Attendance:** David Ward, Andrew Dakin, Kevin Dooley, Paul Tarling and Richard Jefferies

#### 1. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting and the Board meeting held on 12 July 2006 were confirmed as a true record and the Board minutes were signed by the Chairman.

##### Exhibition about the East Bank Developments

It was confirmed that the proposed exhibition on the east bank of the river was to provide information on the range of developments on the east bank. Board Members discussed potential locations at the intention to use large panels attached to the former Robert Price Building showing the regeneration projects.

Board members asked officials to finalise proposals for the exhibition and to consider a location or locations providing the maximum opportunity for local people to be informed.

The Board was informed of the proposal for Modus to prepare an exhibition in the City Centre to show their proposals. It was suggested officials should examine whether this would provide an opportunity for exhibiting wider proposals for the city.

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

The Chief Executive updated the Board on the issues and meetings that had arisen since the last Board meeting.

As to the key projects, overall progress was generally good and physically the City is looking different as a result of the recent demolition of the Kingsway Car Park, the construction of the new footbridge and the road works.

Arising from the report:

### Retail Scheme

The Board was informed that it was now likely that agreement with UBS would be unconditional in the next week. The start on the new car park could then commence in September. The Board thanked the City Council and URC officials who had worked so hard with UBS to achieve progress.

As to the Modus scheme, a way forward on the CPO had been agreed. The Development Agreement with Modus was now likely to be removed from escrow. Just two issues were now to be resolved before the Modus scheme could go unconditional – the CPO inquiry and the lettings requirement. There was confidence that both could be resolved.

Board Members were very pleased to note that the timescale from 'selection of a preferred developer' to a 'start on site' was now likely to be achieved in just two years.

### Art College

A Section 106 Agreement had been signed. The possibility of grant from appropriate sources was being discussed. Officials were asked to examine the viability and appropriateness of grant aid.

The proposed developers should now be asked for a definite timetable and some evidence of being able to proceed. If this was not forthcoming, action would need to be taken as discussed previously by the Board.

### University

Discussions were continuing with the University. The City Council's Managing Director reported that one approach to the City Council in respect of land values could not be supported.

### Railway Station Proposals

Network Rail had approached the Council and would be making a presentation to Council members on the proposals for the station and platform 4.

It was suggested that a similar presentation may be made to the Board.

Members continue to be concerned about the timing and proposals for the Ebbw Vale link and it was agreed that a briefing, updating members on the current position, should be provided to the Board.

### Old Town Dock

The Board was informed that the Planning Committee had deferred consideration of the scheme. There were concerns about the potential impact for the rest of the Old Town Dock proposals if the scheme was unable to achieve permission. A way forward was being discussed.

As to the proposed hotel site, some significant interest was reported. The Board would be updated at the next meeting.

### East Newport

The Board was informed that St Modwen would be making a presentation to the Board on proposals.

### Hospital Proposals

Members of the Board remain concerned about the current proposal from the Gwent Healthcare trust to locate a new regional specialist and critical care unit for Gwent on a greenfield site east of Cwmbran. It was confirmed a suggested response would be presented to the Board. The response would support the medical reasons for the restructure of services but continue to press the case for locating regional and local hospital services in Newport based in particular on healthcare, environmental and sustainability considerations. It was important to seek support from the public and politicians throughout the greater Gwent area, based on healthcare arguments.

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

Recent minutes were circulated for information

### **4. Marketing Activity Review**

The Board noted a report which provided information on current and planned marketing activity.

Arising from the report:

**It was agreed** that a report seeking approval for attendance at the MAPIC and MIPIM events in France would be presented to the Board at its next meeting

### **5. Joint Funded Events with the City Council**

Newport City Council and Newport Unlimited are both involved in organising and supporting events within the city to promote regeneration or to market the city. It was proposed to work together on an agreed shared and jointly – funded programme of priority events. The Board considered a programme and a suggested joint ‘basket’ of events which addresses Newport City Council and Newport Unlimited’s mutual agenda

of increasing Newport's profile, creating a vibrant city centre and encouraging spend in the local authority to support jobs.

It was agreed to approve the principle of a Joint Funding of City Events. The contribution of the Assembly Government to the programme was acknowledged.

## **6. Footbridge Launch and Opening**

Initial proposals for the launch and opening were explained as unachievable. The Board was informed that the Assembly Minister Andrew Davies would attend the city to open the bridge on 12 September.

**It was agreed** Officials should work to finalise arrangements for 12 September, to link into the morning event to be held by the City Council to celebrate the 100 year anniversary of the Transporter Bridge, and to work toward an opening event at the new footbridge at about 1.30pm.

## **7. PR and Marketing Approach**

The Board considered proposals for promoting Newport and how best to take forward PR and Marketing activity.

The Board was presented with details of activity and media used or considered so far and discussed priorities for the future. Time and resource issues were raised and discussed and the role of the Assembly Government in promotion of Wales within the international market was recognised.

The Board considered that promotion at this stage needed to attract investment with presentations and pitches for business still playing a crucial role. The bonus of the Ryder Cup needed to be exploited as much as possible.

UK promotion to attract investment was considered a major priority. Promotion of the improved shopping offer would need to be timed and handled properly for maximum impact.

It was important to sell the improving image of Newport and to highlight the excellent transport, excellent labour supply and other selling points for the city, such as access to the countryside and so on. It was important to sell the city to company advisors and intermediaries.

The improving image of the city needed to be promoted UK – wide but also with local people who live and work in the City so that they could also act as ambassadors by having a positive outlook.

Officials were asked to pull together a PR and Marketing approach and to consider contributions from developers who would wish to promote their part in the City's regeneration.

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

The next meeting would be held on 13 September 2006 at 9.30 am.