

Newport Unlimited

Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 20 December 2006

Present: Grant Watson (in the Chair), Piers Bisson, Councillor Bob Bright, John Burrows, Nigel Campbell, Councillor Erryl Heath and Grenville Jackson

Apologies: David Bowler Chris Freegard, Professor James Lusty, Gerry Keighley, Karen Thomas and Don Wilkes

Also in

Attendance: David Ward, Andrew Dakin, Leigh Donovan, Peter Kelly, Paul Tarling, Phil Jardine and Richard Jefferies

1. Minutes

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 15 November 2006 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

1.1 Matters Arising:

Board Membership

Vacancies on the Board will be advertised in January 2007. It was confirmed that a sub group comprising the Chair, the Chief Executive and a representative of each of the Founder Members should meet to finalise arrangements for the Board places.

Former Art College

It was reported that meetings had been held with the owners of the Art College and they had stated they would do the urgent repair work. If there was no evidence of progress, Notices would be served on 12 January and work would be undertaken by the City Council at the expense of the owners.

Meeting Dates

Meeting dates for the coming year had been agreed but some consideration would need to be given to the date of the meeting planned for December 2007.

2. Chief Executive's Progress Report

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

Progress on key projects and target dates for the regeneration programme were reported. Members were pleased to note the positive progress on the vast majority of projects and in particular progress was being resumed on the University project, Jack's Pill Phase 1 (Westmark), and Pirelli industrial units, and that work had started on the railway station with the building of the new Platform 4.

The Main issues arising were:

Retail Schemes

Generally the programme was progressing well. Modus was now working to achieve the required number of pre-lets. There were discussions about one potential lessee and the current position held by the Council and Newport Unlimited's officials was supported.

Royal Gwent Hospital

Newport Unlimited and Newport City Council had objected strongly to the Gwent Healthcare Trust's proposals for the regional specialist and critical care unit to be sited at Llanfrechfa rather than at an excellent site in Newport which would be of greater benefit to the whole of Gwent than the rural site at Llanfrechfa. The objections had been based on sound healthcare, environmental, transport and sustainability arguments of relevance to the whole of Gwent and not just to Newport. The Trust and CHC would be considering the responses to the consultation exercise in January and February 2007.

Old Town Dock Hotel Site

A report would be presented to the Board in January 2007.

3. Project Coordination Group

Minutes were circulated for information and noted.

4. Jack's Pill Phase 2 a – Presentation by Developers, Edward Ware Homes

The Board received a presentation from Edward Ware Homes and the Development Team regarding their proposals for development of part of the Jack's Pill site at Old Town Dock.

Members were informed of progress and informed that the developers had exercised their option on the Salty Yachts site.

The Board was presented with the format of the scheme and given an overview of the design process. Details of the current plans were presented, although this was described as 'work in progress'

The Board was informed that it was hoped that a planning application would be submitted in February 2007 following a meeting with the Design Commission at the end of January. A start on site was planned for the summer of 2007.

Members of the Board discussed how the potential for a footbridge over Jack's Pill was being considered as part of the riverside walk although no firm proposals had been worked up or costed.

The Board pointed out to the developers that it was important to have in place a robust consultation process prior to the submission of a planning application.

The Board was also concerned that the issue of car parking and how it fits in with the riverside walk needs to be overcome.

The developers stated that the Board's concerns about reducing opportunities for antisocial behaviour would be addressed by design.

The Board thanked the developers for their presentation and asked for comments made by the Board to be taken account of as the scheme progresses.

5. Ryder Cup Wales

The Board received a presentation from the Chief Executive of Ryder Cup Wales who described the role of Ryder Cup Wales, explaining that its role was to ensure public sector commitments in the bid were met.

Ryder Cup Wales would be involved in direct delivery and would seek to exploit opportunities to promote Wales and Newport. For the first time, the Ryder Cup logo would carry the name of the host city, thus providing greater opportunity for promotion of Newport.

Ryder Cup Wales would also seek to maximize wider benefits such as raising the profile of golf in Wales and also working with schools to set up an education programme to benefit younger people in the city.

It was important to bear in mind the scale of the event and to ensure that infrastructure was in place, recognising that whilst this is a major opportunity, it also carries a significant risk. Policing levels and availability of emergency services needed to be at the right level and access to and from the event would need to be efficient.

It was important to receive written confirmation from the Assembly Government that funding in place for the highway works. The Assembly Government Cabinet would also be considering wider implications and funding implications for the other various elements within the Assembly Government organisation.

The Board thanked the Chief Executive for his presentation.

6. Marketing

The Board received details of the recent, current and planned short term marketing activity for Newport Unlimited.

Arising from the report, the Board considered that efforts should be made to significantly increase the database of business and property contacts.

The Board also considered it needed regular information on marketing activity and outcomes.

Board Members looked at a potential design concept for marketing the City. It was considered that the proposed design for use at events was a useful marketing tool and that further consideration needed to be given to which opportunities were best for this type of place marketing and the target audiences.

7. Retiring Board Members

The Chairman referred to the impending retirement from the Board of Mr Nigel Campbell and Mr Don Wilkes. He thanked both for their excellent service to the Board and to the City. Nigel Campbell responded that he had enjoyed his time on the Board and wished the Board and the City success for the future. Don Wilkes, who was unable to attend the meeting, had responded likewise by letter.

8. Date for the Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on 24 January 2007 at 9.30am.