

## Newport Unlimited

### Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 24 January 2007

**Present:** Grant Watson (in the Chair), Piers Bisson, Councillor Bob Bright, John Burrows, David Bowler, Chris Freegard, Grenville Jackson and Karen Thomas.

**Apologies:** Councillor Erryl Heath, Professor James Lusty and Gerry Keighley

**Also in**

**Attendance:** Andrew Dakin, Leigh Donovan, Kevin Dooley, Steve Slocombe, Paul Tarling and Richard Jefferies

#### 1. Minutes

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 20 December 2006 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

##### 1.1 Matters Arising:

###### Ryder Cup

Chris Freegard reported that a letter was expected in the near future confirming that funding for the infrastructure works would be included in the Transport Grant announcement

###### Edward Ware Homes

Edward Ware Homes had invited all members of the City Council to a presentation in February, setting proposals and inviting questions and comments.

#### 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. The Chief Executive was pleased to report the positive progress on the majority of projects.

The Main issues arising were:

#### Promotion of Newport.

The Chairman asked for an update on how Newport is being promoted.

#### Former Art College

The City Council's Cabinet had authorised the serving of an Urgent Works Notice. The Urgent Works Notice will empower the City Council to directly undertake the work necessary to preserve the building and to seek to recover the costs from the owners. The cost of the urgent works would need to be accommodated as an amendment to Newport Unlimited's business plan.

The next step would be for the Cabinet to consider using CPO powers if considered necessary.

There were concerns about the potential ongoing visual aspect arising from the urgent works and a recognition that it was important to take positive action to move forward in order to bring the premises back into use as early as possible.

#### West Newport

**It was agreed:** In the light of manufacturing expansion in the West Newport area, it was now important to revisit the master plan for the area, taking account of the new developments, the desired office park and any potential developments at the Hynix buildings.

#### Flood defence Works

**It was agreed:** The Board is to be updated on progress on the flood defence strategy and any outstanding issues, to be supported by visual representations of the current position.

#### City Centre

All schemes were generally on target. It was hoped that Modus would go unconditional in the summer.

Funding was to be made available by the Assembly Government for the highways work in the City centre, including an experimental scheme to close the slip road. Reaction to the closing of Kingsway had been limited.

#### Old Town Dock

Some significant changes to the landscape of Old Town Dock were expected in the coming months. Redrow was expecting to commence their housing development in the next month, including the demolition of the Black Clawson sheds. The adjacent site was now likely to be the site for hotel development. Also expected at the northern end of Old Town Dock was a start on site at Easter for the Opal development for 450 student residences and then Westmark going on site in the summer.

### Hospital District / Network Rail Ownership

**It was agreed** that an option appraisal would be undertaken in relation to the site currently owned by Network Rail and that there would be further discussions on possible further action regarding securing the site.

### MIPIM

**It was agreed** to approve the attendance of Andrew Dakin to represent Newport Unlimited at the MIPIM conference in France in March 2007 on the same basis as the URC has been represented in previous years and not taking a separate stand at the event.

### Richard Owen

The Chief Executive thanked Richard Owen for his excellent work on regeneration within the City and wished him well in his new role with Gloucester URC.

### Board Membership

**It was agreed** that vacancies on the Board will be advertised in the next week or so. It was confirmed that a sub group comprising the Chair, the Chief Executive and a representative of each of the Founder Members will meet to finalise arrangements for all vacant Board places. The constitutional arrangements for the formal appointments would need to be confirmed.

## **3. Project Coordination Group**

Minutes were circulated for information and noted.

## **4. Public Relations - Presentation Freshwater**

The Board received a presentation from Freshwater who had been working with Newport Unlimited since November 2004 and whose role was to raise the profile of Newport and its regeneration programme.

The action plan included news releases and quotes, feature output and set pieces. The PR Campaign had resulted in some successful and high profile results including significant UK – wide, Wales – wide, local and specialist media coverage. The campaign had been successful in receiving two Gold's and a Grand Prix awards at a recent PR awards ceremony for Wales and was now being considered for national awards.

The campaign would move forward as developments progressed by way of news releases, feature pieces, discussions with journalists and promotion of significant regeneration events.

The Board emphasised the importance of:

- Promoting Newport as the 'City of Newport'
- Building on improving connections with Ireland and to examine PR opportunities in Ireland
- Trying to ascertain whether there had been a change in perception of Newport in the national perspective.

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

## **6. Marketing**

The Board received details of the recent, current and planned short term marketing activity for Newport Unlimited. It was noted that a review of the marketing strategy was being prepared for the Board.

## **7. Old Town Dock Hotel Development**

The Board was informed of the process followed by a group of officials representing the founder members and Newport Unlimited in examining all expressions of interest received for the development of a hotel site as allocated in the brief for Old Town Dock.

Following a short listing and interview process, the Group had prepared a proposal for the Board.

Details of each bid and the Group's appraisal of each were circulated and discussed by the Board.

### **It was agreed**

To agree the principle of the Group's recommendations to the Board to approve the selection of Rightacres Property Company as preferred developers and Alfred Mc Alpine / New World Leisure as reserve developer **subject to** the proposed operators meeting with a group to include representation from each of the Founder Members and the group being satisfied with the operators commitment to developing and running the facility

It was further agreed that the development would need to be as energy efficient as possible.

## **8. Development Programme – Third Quarter and End of Year Forecast**

The Board was advised of spending against budget to the end of the third quarter and the forecast end of year spend. It was noted that the revised end-of-year spend forecast is less than that forecast in November 2006. This is primarily due to works in and around the Old Town Dock area being considerably less than originally anticipated. Some of the reduction is also a direct result of slippage in the delivery timescales of some projects.

## **9. Revenue Budget – Third Quarter Outturn and End of Year forecast**

The Board was advised of spending from the revenue budget to the end of December and also expenditure projected to the end of the year for each budget line. This was compared to the information provided at the November Board meeting.

Members noted that the end of year spend forecast is within budget provision.

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

The next meeting would be held on 22 February 2007 at 9.30am.