

Newport Unlimited

Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 22 March 2007

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

Apologies: Councillor Bob Bright, Councillor Erryl Heath, and Gerry Keighley.

Also in

Attendance: David Ward; Steven Slocombe, Andrew Dakin, Kevin Dooley, Paul Tarling, and Richard Jefferies

1. Minutes

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 22 February 2007 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

2. Chief Executive's Progress Report

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

Progress on key projects and target dates for the regeneration programme were reported.

The main issues arising were:

Former Art College Site

There was concern that whilst some work had started on demolishing some outbuildings, no scaffolding was up nor was protection work taking place yet. It was reported that the Council was to serve a final ultimatum on the owners and the Council was making arrangements to enforce a resolution to serve notice and carry out the essential works

A project team was being put together to consider a longer-term development brief for the long-term future for the building.

Ebbw Valley Rail Link

Major concerns remain about the link not coming direct to Newport. It was reported that the link to Newport was part of the SEWTA Rail Strategy but not currently a high priority.

IT WAS AGREED to receive a presentation to the Board on the Ebbw Valley Project.

Flood Defence Works

It was reported that Planning Applications were in and an offer had been made by a developer in respect of flood defence works. The proposals would leave no gaps in the flood defence works to the Eastern river bank. It was considered that, with this in mind, there should be further consideration in terms of marketing the Pirelli residential site.

Modus Friars Walk

There was some concern about the lettings profile, but it was noted that the recent article on Newport in the Sunday Times (11 March 2007) will help raise the profile of Newport amongst potential retailers.

IT WAS AGREED that an update would be prepared for presentation to the Partners.

University Site

Members were updated on progress and it was confirmed that site would not to be sold at less than market value.

Crindau Gateway

IT WAS AGREED that an update on the marina proposals would be prepared for a future presentation to the Project Co-ordination Group and Board.

Board Members

Members were informed that the Sub Group had met and progress was being made. The Chief Executive was asked to prepare a full report on the deliberations and action taken for consideration by the Board at its next meeting.

3. Project Coordination Group

The minutes of the recent meeting of the Project Coordination Group were circulated and noted.

4. Hospital Consultation Exercise

The Board was informed of the outcome of the Gwent Healthcare Trust's 'Clinical Futures' Consultation Exercise regarding the future of regional health services (the Specialist and Critical Care Service) in Newport and local health services.

Board Members were very disappointed that the Gwent Healthcare Trust were still planning to close the Royal Gwent Hospital in central Newport and to relocate its regional services to a rural location on the edge of Cwmbran and only its local services to a site in Newport reducing the number of beds in Newport from 800 to 350. The Board remained of the view that the most logical and sustainable option was to relocate all of the Royal Gwent and the Specialist and Critical Care Centre on the site opposite the Royal Gwent in Newport.

IT WAS AGREED to ask the Chief Executive to prepare a further report for consideration by the Board.

5. Draft Business Plan

The Draft Business Plan was circulated for comment by Board members and partners. It was explained that the City Council's Cabinet would be asked to comment on the draft. Members were asked to respond to the draft business plan. Details of comments received would be reported back to the Board.

6. Marketing Activity Review

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

The Board noted the current and planned activities and asked for regular updates on the activity and outcomes.

IT WAS AGREED to ask the Corporate EIN to make a presentation to the Board on work being done to promote Wales and where Newport fits in to these activities.

7. Thanks to Steven Slocombe and David Ward

As this was the last Board Meeting at which the two longest serving members of the Newport Unlimited team would be present, the Board expressed their thanks for their considerable contribution over the years to the success of the Newport regeneration programme. David Ward's enormous contribution to the Company was mentioned in the minutes of the previous Board meeting. Steve Slocombe has worked on the Newport regeneration programme even longer, as he worked on the Development Board prior to the formation of the URC and brought together the sites on which the new University Campus, Old Town Dock residential developments and the Pirelli industrial units are to be built, and has undertaken extensive networking on the Company's behalf and through his Chairmanship of South East Wales RICS.

8. Next meeting

The next meeting was to be held 18 April 2007.