

Newport Unlimited

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 22 August 2007

Present: Councillor RC Bright (in the Chair): Mr J Burrows, Mr C Freegard, Councillor Mrs E Heath, Mr M Noor, Mr J Norvill, Mr D Roberts, and Mr C Munday (for Mrs K Thomas).

Apologies: Mr G Watson, Mr P Bisson, Mr D Bowler, Mr S Gibson, Mr G Keighley, Mrs K Thomas, and Mr G Jackson (delayed on route to the meeting).

Also in

Attendance: Mr A Dakin, Mr L Donovan, Mr P Tarling, Mr S Trythall, Mr P Jardine, and Mr R Jefferies

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Annual General Meeting held on 18 July 2007 were confirmed as a true record.

The minutes of the Board Meeting held on 18 July were confirmed as a true record subject to amendments in section 5 clarifying the position on BREEAM Excellence and Carbon Neutral/Zero issues. It was noted that extensions and refurbishments were not caught by the requirements and that anything starting on site after 2007 would need to be BREEAM Excellent, and that it was also noted that it was a recent residential project, certified as carbon zero, which had additional construction costs of 40%.

2. Chief Executive's Progress Report and Key Targets

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. Board members were also presented with information on the timetable for projects on site, shown by district and by sector.

It was very pleasing that of the 35 main projects scheduled for a start on site before 2010, only 2 projects were on 'red' (not progressing), 12 projects were on 'amber' (giving some cause for concern with progress), and 21 projects were on 'green' (progressing largely in accordance with the programme) in the adopted 'traffic light' system.

The main issues arising were:

Ebbw Valley Rail Link

Board members considered that it was unlikely that SEWTA would change its priorities on transport grounds alone. It was considered important to continue to lobby for the Newport link as a regeneration issue as well as a transport issue. Members were informed that consultants were looking at value for money issues and that the issue would be discussed in the project coordination group.

Hospital Site

Whilst work on securing the site was progressing well, issues remain about the likelihood of the regional hospital and specialist and critical services remaining in Newport.

The Board considered that efforts to press the case for Newport should continue, and a submission should be made to WAG, on the following grounds:

- ⌚ Sustainability
- ⌚ The financial advantage of providing both facilities on one site
- ⌚ Cost
- ⌚ The impact on travelling times for a large proportion of the population
- ⌚ Jobs
- ⌚ Regeneration

Work was being carried out to gather information on relative costs.

It was agreed that the key tasks list would show this as two separate items, one in relation to planning and developing the site, and the other in terms of progress in securing the Specialist and Critical Care Centre and the new Local General Hospital.

Cambrian Centre / City Spires

It was confirmed that planning consent, subject to conditions, had been granted.

University Campus

There were some discussions about the amount of the site to be used during construction and Chris Freegard reported that the University's VC had said that UWN would try to be helpful with regard to this issue.

Staffing issues

The Chief Executive informed the Board of the current staffing difficulties arising from the departure of the Marketing Executive and the departure of the Office Manager/PA, and the consequential impact on the Company's work. Current staffing issues were considered. Members asked to be updated on progress in filling the posts.

Susan Sullivan

The Board wished to record its thanks and appreciation for the unstinting service and work undertaken by Sue Sullivan who had recently left the post of Office Manager and PA to the Chief Executive. Sue was recognised as a central figure in the team and had contributed significantly to the success of the URC over the past 5 years. The Board wished to record its best wishes to Sue for success in her new post as Office Manager for the National Federation of Builders Cymru.

3. URC Project Coordination Group

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 August 2007 were circulated.
Arising from the minutes:

All Wales Parking Policy

It was agreed that the Board would request further information on the proposals by way of a report.

Ryder Cup

It was pleasing to note work was soon to commence on the A449

Highway Works

The Leader of the Council stated he would ask for an update on highway works in the city centre.

Crindau – Big Lottery

It was agreed that the City Council would meet with colleagues from Torfaen to discuss the joint bid and opportunities for promotion.

4. Rodney Parade – City Vizion

The Board received a presentation by Taylor Wimpey on the Rodney Parade residential scheme which they called 'City Vizion'.

Members were told that the principles within the Section 106 Agreement had been agreed and it was hoped that it would be signed off within the coming two weeks. As to the CPO, an announcement was expected in about two weeks. The transfer of the land was expected in October and a contractor had been appointed for the majority of the construction programme, including the riverside walk.

Phases for the work had been changed to allow activity on site as soon as possible.

Phase 1 would now be between Maindee School and the River, Phase 2 would be the new square at the Art College to Colne Street and the remaining area around the Robert Price Yard in Phase 3.

The key dates were as follows:

October 2007: Start on site

March 2008: Complete Flood defence works

January 2008: Phase 1 commences

December 2008: Phase 1 is complete with 50 units

October 2007: Phase 2 commences

December 2010: Phase 2 is complete with 207 units

August 2008: Phase 3 commences

December 2011: Phase 3 is complete with 229 units.

In response to questions from the Board the representatives of Taylor Wimpey stated they would seek to complete the riverside walk as soon as possible but safety was the main concern during construction. It was confirmed there would be no impact on use of the footbridge during construction, although some footpaths would be affected at various times.

It was pointed out to representatives of Taylor Wimpey that the land needed to be raised to 9 metres and there should not be reliance on the riverside edge works as a flood defence. The flood defence works should be promoted as 'riverfront works'.

The Leader of the Council was reassured the civic square would be constructed in high quality material.

5. 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. Arising from the report, the Chief Executive was asked to provide a note to the Leader of the Council on the proposals for an exhibition at Westminster.

6. Revenue Budget – First Quarter Outturn

The Board received information on spending from the revenue budget as at the end of June 2007

Agreed

To note spend against budget for the 1st quarter of the current financial year.

To note that a further report on spend to the mid-year point will be available at the November meeting. That paper will include, where appropriate, revised forecast of spend to the end of the financial year and make recommendations on the virement of funds between budget lines, where necessary.

7. Development Programme

Board Members received information about spend from the development programme budget as at the end of June 2007

Agreed

To note spend against budget for the 1st quarter of the current financial year.

To note that a further report detailing spend to the mid year point and providing an updated forecast of spend to the end of the year will be tabled at the November Board meeting.

8. George Street Bridge

It was agreed to ask the City Council to examine the possibility of cleaning and lighting George Street Bridge

9. Board meetings

A schedule of Board meetings 2008 was agreed.

The next meeting of the Board was agreed as 20 September 2007.