



## **Newport Unlimited Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 21 February 2008**

**Present:** Mr G Watson ( in the Chair); Mr P Bisson, Mr D Bowler, Councillor R Bright, Mr J Burrows, Mr C Freegard, Mr S Gibson, Mr G Jackson, Mr G. Keighley, Mr M Noor, Mr J Norvill and Ms K Thomas.

**Apologies:** Councillor Mrs E Heath and Mr D Roberts

### **Also in**

**Attendance:** Mr A Dakin, Ms J Daw, Mr L Donovan, Ms K Evans, and Mr R Jefferies

### **1. Thanks**

Board Members thanked Mr Simon Gibson for his invitation to hold this meeting at the new 2010 Clubhouse at the Celtic Manor Resort.

### **2. Declaration of Interest**

Mr M Noor declared an interest in any issues relating to the Old Rising Sun at Crindau.

### **3. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2008 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

#### Joint PR Arrangements

The Leader of the Council was keen to see progress on the proposals for joint PR work between Newport Unlimited, the City Council, and the University and the Celtic Manor.

The Chief Executive for Newport Unlimited agreed to progress the matter before the next Board meeting.

#### Advertising on Stations

The Chief Executive reported that following a visit to view advertising opportunities at Newport station, it was considered that there were further and more effective options to pursue than those recently presented to the Board. A further report on options would be presented in due course. The matter would be raised at a meeting with rail executives to be held in the coming weeks. Contact with the Head of the Rail Team at the Assembly Government would be arranged.

## Proposed Presentations to the Board

The following proposed presentations to the Board were endorsed:

- Modus on progress on the City Centre retails scheme;
- The developers of the Former Art College to discuss progress and future plans;
- The Master plan for West Newport, to include the Hynix Building;
- St Modwen to consider progress on their proposals.

### **4. Newport Housing Demand and Supply Analysis**

The Board received a presentation from Knight Frank who were reviewing current and future residential demand and supply in Newport and areas of influence. Board members were told that Knight Frank are currently midway through their commission and were looking at trends and patterns and considering issues in relation to supply and demand. A housing market analysis was ongoing as were travel to work patterns.

Board members made it clear that they were looking to Knight Frank to provide a precise tool to inform decisions on what can and ought to be built within the city and what should be developed. The Board would be looking to the final report to provide a short term perspective to assist in the disposal programme and a longer term perspective of what can be expected in terms of demand and the best possible mix of provision, bearing in mind financial trends.

### **5. Chief Executive's 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. Board members noted that fourteen phase 1 projects were now on site with six others on 'green'. Fourteen projects were on 'amber' with issues to resolve. Only two projects were on 'red', they being the Ebbw Valley rail link to Newport and the Gwent Healthcare Trust's proposals in relation to the regional hospital proposals.

The main issues raised were:

#### Ebbw Valley Rail Link

The South Wales Argus was continuing to provide a public face to the campaign to secure a Phase 2 link into Newport as quickly as possible. In addition, Newport Unlimited's Rail consultant was continuing to press for a station stop in Newport on the existing Phase 1 track, adjacent to the hospital district.

#### Hospital Site

A letter had been received by the Leader of the Council from the Welsh Assembly Government's Health Minister, Edwina Hart, in which she stated that, following the

approach by the Leader of the Council, she had sought further information from the Wales Transport Research Centre on the travel data provided by the Trust and by the Council and NU. The analysis by the Wales Transport Centre raises some questions about the methodological approach adopted by the Gwent Healthcare Trust and the Minister has referred it back to the Trust for their observations. The Minister was also examining potential capital costs and revenue affordability of the hospital proposals within the context of the all-Wales Capital Programme.

A final decision was not expected for some months. In the meantime, the Board **AGREED** that progress should be made on the masterplanning and SPG for the area and for the strategic significance of the northern part of the Whiteheads/Monbank site to be recognized for its prominent city and regional location, its sustainable transport access credentials, and its strategic employment role. Ideally the strategic employment role of this part of the city would be continued by the relocation of the Royal Gwent Hospital's services and staff into two new hospitals on the northern part of the Whitheads / Monbank site. In the event that only one hospital is located on the site then the remainder of the northern part of the site, fronting onto Cardiff Road, should accommodate prestigious office developments and high employment densities in view of its central location and good transport connections. The remainder of Whiteheads / Monbank would accommodate a significant number of houses and some other mixed uses, thereby conforming with the requirements of the UDP.

#### Job Creation

In terms of job creation in Newport, it was agreed that sites needed to be identified for significant employment in the city by way of a balanced offering which would be attractive but would not compete in a negative manner with one another for employment opportunities. It was recognized that there was a shortage of suitable city centre office development sites and that further work was needed in identifying space.

#### Five Year Review

An evaluation framework had been received and was currently under consideration.

#### Friars Walk

Modus aimed to go unconditional in March with a start on site in April. Over 60% of floor space had been pre – let and this was very encouraging.

#### Station Yard Developer

A preferred developer had been identified. It was important that the mix of provision on site was office – led.

#### Crindau

**IT WAS AGREED** that a report would be presented to the Board examining the various options and opportunities for the Crindau project, setting out how a phased development could be achieved and informing board members of potential costs, opportunities and obstacles.

### Riverside Park – Jack’s Pill

**IT WAS AGREED** that further options for dealing with the Pill would be examined.

### Hotel Site OTD

**IT WAS AGREED** that a full report on progress and issues relating to BREEAM excellent status would be presented to the Board.

### River Defence Strategy

Board members were very pleased with the significant progress on this matter which was a major achievement and would contribute significantly to the regeneration of the city.

## **6. Marketing Activity Review**

The Marketing Executive reported on recent, current and planned short term marketing activity for Newport Unlimited. The Board noted the current and planned activities. The Board was informed that a new strategy would be presented to its next meeting.

## **7. Capital Expenditure – Third Quarter Outturn**

Members were updated on the spending from the development programme budget as at the end of the third quarter of the current financial year.

Most projects from core grant were still anticipated to spend in line with expectations as reported in the mid – year review. Work planned to commission a Planning Application in relation to Crindau had not progressed as planned but opportunities for use of the funds were being examined.

The Managing Director explained that expenditure on projects led by the City Council was likely to be via phased expenditure.

Board members noted the current position.

## **8. Revenue Expenditure**

Members were informed of the spending from the revenue budget as at the end of the third quarter of the current financial year. Current predicted expenditure was well below the budget forecast which meant that the founder members were likely to be asked for less of a contribution. The main reason for the under spend was owing to staff vacancies.

Board members noted the position.

## **9. Receipts Profile**

Board members were advised of the likely receipts profile over the coming years. Details of the projection for receipts from land sales and land holdings were set out in the report.

Members were informed of the main sources of receipts in the current year and projected sources of receipts in coming years.

Members considered that securing the development of the Pirelli site was very important.

#### **10. Timetable of Projects**

The Chief Executive was asked to examine the programme for projects to be on site by 2010 to ascertain whether there was anything that needs to be focused upon, given the importance of the Ryder Cup.

#### **11. Next Meeting**

20 March 2008