



## Newport Unlimited

### Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 19 November 2009

**Present:** Mr Grant Watson (in the Chair), Mr Gareth Beer, Councillor Matthew Evans, Mr Simon Gibson, Gerry Keighley, Ms Tracey Lee, Mr Pat Lewis, Mr Mabs Noor, Mr Dennis Roberts and Councillor Ed Townsend.

**Apologies:** Mr David Bowler, Mr Phil Jardine, Ms Eleanor Marks, Mr James Norvill and Mr James Price.

**Also in Attendance:** Ms Sheila Davies, Mr Andrew Dakin, Ms Delyth Lewis, Ms Krista Minter and Peter Rees.

#### 1. Declaration of Interest

Mr M Noor declared an interest in relation to any discussions by the Board relating to the development of the Gemelli business in the City Centre.

#### 2. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 17 September 2009 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 3. Chief Executive's Progress Report and Key Targets

The Interim Chief Executive reported on :

(1) The Friars Walk Retail Scheme

The report updated the Board on progress towards the delivery of the Friars Walk Scheme, which is being led by Newport City Council (NCC), with support and advice from Newport Unlimited (NU). The current plan being to take the scheme to the market during the course of 2010.

The Compulsory Purchase Order had been issued, with the next stage being the General Vesting Declaration, to be issued later this month.

It was reported that there had been reasonably consistent interest from potential developers and contractors in taking the scheme forward, should the opportunity

come back to the market. The opportunity to promote Newport and develop further potential retail leads for the City Centre would be taken at the MAPIC retail property conference between held between 18-20 November 2009.

(2) Hotel Site, Old Town Dock

Since tenders were last sought for the disposal of the proposed hotel site, the area of available land has changed slightly as a result in part of encroachment by Redrow (although this has now been resolved) and also because of some boundary issues in respect of the Southern Distributor Road. A new and fully accurate land ownership plan would be produced.

In parallel, work was also in hand to procure the services of an appropriate commercial agent to assist in the marketing and promotion of the site. This support was likely to be sourced via the Welsh Assembly Government's consultancy framework and was considered necessary in the current challenging economic climate, where active hotel developers and occupiers were likely to be few in number.

A dialogue was being maintained with the previously successful bidders Carrillion, who would be invited to submit a fresh proposal for the site as part of this latest tendering process. It was envisaged that discussions with all potential bidders would be completed within the next 6 to 8 weeks, with financial and design proposals being provided against an agreed development brief.

Arising from this report **it was agreed** that discussions be held with the Assembly Government to clarify BREEAM requirements before proceeding.

(3) Preparing for the Ryder Cup – Newport City Enhancement Programme

A significant programme of work was now underway or planned to ensure that the City would be ready for the Ryder Cup in October 2010.

Hosting the Ryder Cup in 2010 represents a significant achievement and a key milestone for Newport. By the end of 2009/10 financial year, it was anticipated that a total of £500million of private and public sector money would have been invested since the launch of Newport Unlimited on a range of projects designed to revitalise and regenerate the City.

Following the September 2009 Board meeting, the Welsh Assembly Government confirmed its agreement to contribute a total of £3.8m over 2009/10 and 2010/11 towards a £4.8m package of works specifically targeted at Ryder Cup related activities via the Newport City Enhancement Programme. The City Council was also providing £1m towards revenue related expenditure.

The City Enhancement Programme involves the delivery of over 30 projects located in and around the City, to be completed mainly by Summer 2010. It includes physical works and the renovation of iconic structures, such as the Newport Transporter Bridge, key access improvements, environmental and other enhancement works to the main transport corridors and gateways, signage and

interpretation, improvements to and screening of derelict land and unsightly buildings and other key initiatives such as the 'dressing' of the City.

The Ryder Cup Co-Ordination Panel, chaired by NCC, was also working closely with the event organisers and other key stakeholders such as the Police to ensure that the infrastructure networks are able to deal effectively with the large numbers of people moving into and out of the City on a daily basis whilst the Ryder Cup is taking place.

Arising from the report reference was made to the current limited publicity on the M4 Motorway for the Event. It was reported by NCC representatives that progress had been made to engage a consultant to advise on City Dressing issues, and publicity on the M4 would form part of the remit.

The Leader of the Council reported that the City Enhancement Programme was now in place. A priority programme, which included the cleaning of the Cenotaph had commenced. The Programme would be implemented over the next 6 months.

(4) Preparing for the Ryder Cup – Newport Railway Station Improvements

The £23m works to create the new railway station and passenger concourse at Newport Central were progressing well, funded by Network Rail and the Welsh Assembly Government. The programme was running approximately to programme, with completion of the major works by Network Rail's contractor scheduled for May 2010 and with a subsequent handover to Arriva Trains, the Train Operating Company, for a nine week fitting out period. The overall project was therefore expected to be fully completed in good time for the Ryder Cup.

The Interim Chief Executive reported some technical difficulties with the planned upgrading and refurbishment of the historic Victorian footbridge adjacent to the existing passenger/ticket office. These works formed part of the originally proposed scheme by Network Rail and Newport Unlimited (NU) were now actively working with the Welsh Assembly Government and Network Rail and advisers to see what options may be available to create the planned pedestrian access to Devon Place whilst allowing closure of the under-platform subway.

The Leader of the Council expressed concern about the reported difficulties with the planned upgrading and refurbishment of the footbridge and urged NU to pursue a permanent solution.

**The Board agreed** that a concerted effort be made to conclude the matter through contact being made with Network Rail by the Council, Newport Unlimited the Assembly Government and Ryder Cup Wales.

The Board noted progress on key projects and target dates for the regeneration programme.

#### **4. Marketing Activity Review**

Consideration was given to a report on recent, current and planned marketing activity for Newport Unlimited.

The Board was brought up to date on progress with :

- \* Events
- \* Newport 2010 Activity
- \* Creative Services

The Chairman reported on a recent, very negative article in the Estates Gazette about Newport's preparations for the Ryder Cup. A detailed discussion ensued about the article and the approach adopted by the Estates Gazette to obtain information for the article.

The discussion also referred to the need for the Board to review the way responses are provided for inclusion in publications.

The Chairman agreed to take the matter up with the editor of the Estates Gazette.

## **5. Development Programme – Spend to Mid Year**

Consideration was given to a report on the spend from the Development Programme budget as at the end of September 2009 i.e. at the mid year point of the current financial year and to provide a prediction of likely spend to the end of the financial year.

**It was agreed** to note the contents of the report and the financial table attached to the report. In particular to :

- Note spend against budget to the mid year point of the current financial year.
- Note the comments given below in respect of spend going forward on some projects
- Agree the revised spend profile.

## **6. Revenue Budget – Half Year Outturn**

Consideration was given to a report on the spend on the revenue budget as at the end of the second quarter of the current Financial Year (i.e. following the mid-year point).

**It was agreed** to note the contents of the report, and the financial table attached to the report. In particular to,

- Note spend against budget for the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the current financial year.
- Note that current predicted spend to the end of the year is well within budget provision (£935k).
- Note and agree the revised expenditure profile.

## **7. Proposals for Newport Unlimited presence at MIPIM 2010**

Consideration was given to a report on proposed activities and expenditure for Newport Unlimited's presence at MIPIM 2010.

**It was agreed** to approve the activities and expenditure set out in this paper, noting that some immediate financial commitments are required. All costs can be accommodated from within Newport Unlimited's existing 2009/10 revenue budget.

It is envisaged that this activity will demonstrate a good return on investment. The success of the event will however be reviewed with further activities to be proposed for MIPIM 2011, together with other high profile events during the year to make the most of Newport's association with the Ryder Cup.

## **6. Any Other Business**

None this time.

## **7. Future Meetings**

17 December 2009

21 January 2010