

Chester Renaissance Board - Minutes
26 March 2015 9.00am - 11.00am

PDR Building 40, Thornton Science Park, Pool Lane, Ince, Chester, CH2 4NU

Attendees

Eric Langton (EL)	Chair Chester Renaissance
Phil Harris (PH)	University of Chester
Roger Croston (RC)	Croston Engineering
Andy Foster (AF)	Andy Foster Architects
Councillor Stuart Parker (SP)	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Councillor Adrian Walmsley (AW)	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Councillor Samantha Dixon (SD)	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Gemma Davies (GD)	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Nigel Bruce (NB)	Property Development Consultant
Katrina Michel (KM)	Marketing Cheshire
Phil Mayall (PM)	Muse
Ian Reay (IR)	Rivington Land
Peter Carstensen (PCa)	
Chris Capes (CC)	Chester Renaissance
Beth Skinner (BS)	Chester Renaissance

Presenter's

Dave Anderson (DA)	Northgate Project
Mark Paynter (MP)	Rivington Land
Caroline Thomas (CT)	Chester Renaissance
Philip Leigh (PL)	University of Chester

Apologies

Nigel Davies	West Cheshire College
Peter Cocker	Chester Civic Trust
Charlie Seward	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Alison Knight	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)

1.	<p>Welcome and introductions</p> <p>The meeting proceeded with introductions and a welcome from the chair</p> <p>The minutes from the previous meeting held on 29 January 2015 were confirmed as a correct record with the following adjustments to be made: Change reference of SD commenting on highways agreement during race season, include discussion on travelling to and from bus station and include reference that AW is Chair of Licensing Committee.</p> <p>The following review of action points were made: EL – the market vision document was circulated to board as requested and a presentation from Rivington Land is to follow. CC – informed that work is commencing on riverside promenade to improve access and also the Water sports Hub. Also mentioned a funding bid to improve Hoole Lane Bridge public realm. EL – confirmed that the draft letter against the Platinum Lounge SEV</p>	EL
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	<p>application was circulated to board members for comments and sent to CWaC Licensing. The application was due to be determined on 14th April but was seen as inappropriate during purdah, and therefore the hearing will take place on 7th July – 6 months after the license has expired.</p>	
2.	<p>Chairman's Report The following items were discussed:</p> <p>Paul Daniels has resigned as chair of Chester BID and will therefore no longer attend Renaissance Board. Members praised PD for his work with city centre management and his involvements which spread far beyond the BID.</p> <p>EL announced that this will be his last board meeting and his role as chair will end on 8 May. The process for a new chair will be circulated and EL encouraged any interested board members to apply.</p> <p>CC gave an update from a Central Business Quarter meeting on 24th March. Neptune are hoping to submit an application for Shot Tower with amendments to the original scheme. Further discussions will be taking place for Phase 2 of Waitrose with Neptune, Muse etc with the possibility of a parking and hotel development.</p> <p>SD – suggested including Canal & River Trust in the early discussions as they are keen to be involved.</p> <p>NB – commented on the steps from Waitrose car park to the canal and the 'L' shape feature which makes the edges unclear and potentially hazardous</p> <p>CC – confirmed that access officers have recently met with Waitrose and the steps now have clearly marked edging</p> <p>Action Point – Access officer report to be circulated to the board</p> <p>CC updated on the rows project following a positive discussion with THI. They are keen for us to submit a submission for comment and look to submit the THI application at the end of August 2015. CC informed that 25 applications were received last year with 14 approved making it a competitive process, but will positively allow areas to be prioritised. A two page outline will be submitted within the next few weeks.</p> <p>An update was also given on the Cathedral Quarter – lighting works are commencing with the company currently installing on site to be completed by Easter.</p>	EL
3.	<p>Northgate Development – Dave Anderson & Mark Paynter DA informed that the £13.5m funding has been approved as part of the Local Growth Fund for the Bus Interchange. Tender packs are being created for construction for a September/October 2015 start on site to open at the end of December 2016.</p> <p>DA introduced Mark Paynter, Director and Ian Reay, Project Manager</p>	DA/ MP

from Rivington Land who were appointed last Summer. A review of the masterplan is currently being undertaken with the concept scheme set to be fixed in June. DA mentioned involving existing commercial organisations such as the BID and will be engaging with member communities once the concept scheme becomes clear in June/July.

MP gave a detailed introduction to Rivington Land and the following points were highlighted:

- Rivington Land have completed 12 mixed-use urban regeneration schemes involving 250+ retail and leisure operators and have delivered over 3 million sq ft
- Chester sits outside the top 50 towns and cities yet is outperforming the retail average of the North West
- Chester has been benchmarked against similar key heritage cities including Bath, Cambridge and Oxford but it was highlighted that these cities all benefit from London retail and are driven by ‘day trippers’
- CGI images were presented on how the Northgate/market/cinema development could look as design ideas to be considered

EL – highlighted the changing circumstances of retail with the number of empty shops increasing as technology is changing

MP – agreed that this is an issue as retail moves on and develops, and a flexible scheme will be put together which could allow the size of units to be changed to provide an appealing product to retailers, such as with the success of Liverpool One

DA - informed of recent research stating that currently 12% of retail transactions are made online with that set to increase to 20% by 2020 in the UK. DA also stated that it will be essential to engage with the community when developing the wider masterplan.

KM – spoke about the level of competition with Liverpool, Manchester, Cheshire Oaks and Broughton Retail Park and with the city surrounded by secondary offers footfall is declining by around 4/5% each year.

A discussion took place on the similarity of Chester with cities such as Harrogate, York etc. which create a shopping destination combined with heritage.

PM – suggested that rather than focussing on how Chester compares to other historic cities, we need to have our own distinction that sets the city apart, highlighting a rooftop area for tourists would show the uniqueness of retail offer

PH – stated that in order to be distinctive we will need to enhance the environment and this is a great opportunity to make the city centre a top retail destination

NB suggested a workshop event to share information with the public and DA informed that little information can be shared at this point as it could jeopardise transactions.

Action point – NB and DA to discuss a potential Northgate

	workshop/consultation event to take place in July to share information with the public once the concept scheme is clear	
4.	<p>Dee House – Caroline Thomas</p> <p>CT updated the board on the current progress of Dee House and it's future plans. The following points were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dee House is a grade II listed building and its restoration is set out in the One City Plan as a key location in the city which sits on an unexcavated area of the amphitheatre • Discussions with English Heritage have proven positive with their support of the aspiration and the view that it should be retained • Two pieces of work have been commissioned to consider the wider strategic context • There have been a number of speculative developer enquiries who are interested in working on Dee House with a variety in the types of schemes • Russell Geomatics were commissioned to perform internal laser scans to produce full AutoCAD drawings of the building/site • The creation of a Statement of Archaeological and Historic Significance is underway by LP Archaeology which will identify the lack of robust data for below ground remains, assess the wider public realm and the significance of maximising connectivity and enhancing the amphitheatre • The proposed way forward for Dee House involves an open market procurement with a 2 stage process which will allow developers to work up schemes in more detail – a framework of acceptable uses will be provided • CT suggested that board representation on the panel for the appraisal process would be beneficial <p>SD – highlighted that the community may think the council are going to sell Dee House and it needs to be made clear that this is not the case CT – also informed that the list of acceptable uses has been drawn from planning policy and not in the context of Dee House</p>	CT
5.	<p>Thornton Science Park – Professor Philip Leigh</p> <p>PL welcomed the board to Thornton Science Park and proceeded to an introductory presentation with the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Chester officially took over Thornton Science Park from Shell, who gifted the entire site and facilities to the University in March 2014 • The site is 66 acres with 55 buildings which includes a Science and Engineering Faculty and the new High Growth Centre, which contains 60 incubation units • The site currently operates on a 25% faculty and 75% business basis • Irish Sea Rim Economic Research & Innovation Zone covers SW Scotland, NW England, NI, Eastern Ireland, Wales & IOM and was initiated to explore the potential for growth, innovation and 	PL

	<p>collaboration around the Irish Sea.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500,000 businesses, 30 universities and 600,000+ students are based within the Irish Sea Rim 	
6.	<p>AOB</p> <p>RC mentioned the recent publicity and commercial attraction with Richard III in Leicester and highlighted that the same could be done in Chester by further developing and telling the story of King Harold and the anchorite cell.</p> <p>Action Point – KM agreed to mention this to the cathedral and to report back at the next meeting. RC to liaise via email with KM.</p> <p>PH and board members proceeded to thank EL for his time as chair of Chester Renaissance and a gift was presented on behalf of the board.</p>	ALL
7.	<p>Dates of Meetings 2015</p> <p>28 May, 23 July, 24 September, 26 November</p> <p>Boardroom, 9 Abbey Square, Chester</p> <p>8am-10am</p>	ALL
	<p>Action Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access officer report to be circulated to the board • NB and DA to discuss a potential Northgate workshop/consultation event to take place in July to share information with the public once the concept scheme is clear • KM agreed to mention this to the cathedral and to report back at the next meeting. RC to liaise via email with KM. 	