

Chester Renaissance Board - Minutes
24 July 2014 8.00am – 10.20am
Boardroom, 9 Abbey Square, Chester CH1 2HU

Attendees

Eric Langton (EL)	Chair Chester Renaissance
Phil Harris (PH)	University of Chester
Roger Croston (RC)	Croston Engineering
Andy Foster (AF)	Andy Foster Architects
Katrina Michel (KM)	Marketing Cheshire
Alison Knight (AK)	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Councillor Samantha Dixon (SD)	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Councillor Adrian Walmsley (AW)	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Paul Daniels (PD)	CH1 Chester BID
Nigel Bruce (NB)	Chartered Surveyor
Stephen Langtree (SL)	Chester Civic Trust
Sally Williamson (SW)	Chester Renaissance
Chris Capes (CC)	Chester Renaissance
Roz Munslow (RM)	Chester Renaissance
Ruth Wojtan (RW)	Chester Renaissance

Apologies

Peter Carstensen (PCa)	
Councillor Stuart Parker (SP)	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Nigel Davies (ND)	West Cheshire College
Peter Cocker (PC)	Chester Civic Trust
Charlie Seward (CS)	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)

1.	Welcome and introductions Chairman welcomed the meeting. Previous minutes agreed.	EL
2.	Chairman's Report Housing sub-group have met and will report back to September Board meeting. Action: CC to circulate notes more widely. SD commented that Commonhall Street needs to work closely with Rows as there is overlap. Shot Tower – Neptune are coming back with amended plan for development. HLF Heritage Investment Strategic Framework – key development. The Cheshire and Warrington Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal was announced and some good investment coming in for various projects, including £13.5m for Chester which will enable the new bus interchange and several other transport projects to be progressed.	EL

	Commercialisation of city centre (Bo Concepts) is progressing – update at next Board meeting.	
3.	<p>Theatre and Library Graham Lister presented the latest Theatre and Library designs. Re New is the organisation tasked with transforming the Odeon to the new Cultural Centre to open Autumn 2016; working in partnership with Chester Performs. Relationship with Northgate imperative.</p> <p>Revised scheme but kept core elements – cost reduced from £41m to £37m. December Arts Council grant £3m successful, shows their belief in the scheme and is the biggest regional scheme. Have submitted planning application. Working with Bennetts Associates Architects, Charcoal Blue Theatre Planners.</p> <p>Exhibition and consultation lots of support for design and scheme in general. Action: GL will share report.</p> <p>Will have two-season stage – change for summer programme. Foyer can have live screening and films during day.</p> <p>PH asked about enablement and access of the new centre and GL confirmed that the Arts grant is very connected to this, also have a very able access consultant leading on this for customers and performers, and is a dementia friendly building. SD confirmed that members of the Theatre Member Working Group feel very reassured on this issue.</p> <p>Still funding gap but confident of private sector investment announcements in coming months.</p> <p>Action: CC to circulate GL’s presentation.</p> <p>RC informed Board that he is unhappy with glass façade and shared some examples, in his opinion, of good and bad architecture in the city.</p> <p>AF doesn’t think that criticisms of the past can be levied at the new cultural centre and suggested that the current designs should be in the public domain to show that the theatre is much more than its façade.</p> <p>SL confirmed that the Civic Trust is yet to comment on the façade although is very supportive of the scheme as a whole.</p> <p>SD commented that to a certain degree it is a question of taste and GL has been willing to meet to discuss concerns.</p> <p>PH is looking forward to seeing the biggest theatre project in this part of Europe develop.</p> <p>KM felt that this will bring a new group of visitor to the city and it’s</p>	GL

	important to get the current images out in the public domain.	
4.	<p>CH1 Business Improvement District PD updated the Board following the successful 'yes' vote in June. 60% turnout, 75% yes, 68% rateable value.</p> <p>£0.5m per year for commercial initiatives in city centre and will secure other sponsorships. CH1 BID company starts 1 September 2014.</p> <p>SD commented on how hard PD and the Board had worked to secure this for the city.</p> <p>AK echoed that and hopes to work in a mutually respectful way for the city i.e. parking, events etc. and confirmed CWaC are keen to work together.</p> <p>Action: EL to have a catch up with PD.</p> <p>RC asked how the budget will be spent and PD confirmed that will be an AGM and clear audit trail for the business plan.</p>	PD
5.	<p>Rows Transformation Project Definition EB presented latest on the project will fellow team members Tony Barton (Donald Insall Architects), Ruth McKew (Headland), Peter Middleton (L&R Consulting).</p> <p>Likely to have discussions with HLF in October so will bring more information to September Board. A number of projects are possible but need to focus on right ones for best chance of funding success. It's a mixed use site with medieval heritage and complex issues to maintain significance and restoration. Looking at centres or quarters in the rows.</p> <p>Looking at other examples around the globe i.e. urban rangers in Lowell Massachusetts.</p> <p>SD noted there are key partnerships to work with who occupy properties on the rows now i.e. Chester Performs and Sanctuary Housing.</p> <p>AF is against more 'quarters' in the city. Would need to look at who would run something like an 'urban ranger' scheme as it falls between the local authority and the private sector. Also key to see how this project fits with wider heritage in the city.</p> <p>AK confirmed that CWaC have just completed an HLF priority framework which includes heritage, will circulate more widely.</p> <p>AW notes it isn't just what the rows will look like, but need to make sure they are occupied, especially once Northgate is built.</p> <p>SL confirmed that the Civic Trust fully supports this initiative, although</p>	EB

	<p>not enamoured with 'quarters' either. It is a shame about the decline of some of the signage and access and would be good to improve this. The Civic Trust have occupied Bishop Lloyd's Palace for 20 years and keep to get the empty shop on row level as an interpretation centre, could use panels in windows. Intrigued to hear about opportunities for volunteering.</p> <p>RC believes that the long term plans for the rows should be communicated to the public.</p> <p>Board noted congratulations to the team on work done to date.</p>	
6.	<p>Northgate Update on Board report. Keep on agenda for future meetings.</p> <p>AK meeting HLF next week will update at next Board.</p>	AK
7.	<p>AOB Board agreed project updates are useful to find out what is happening.</p> <p>Suggestion to invite new Northgate Development Manager to Board meeting. <i>Post meeting note – will attend November meeting.</i></p> <p>AF noted that Chester should be careful about the number of initiatives that will rely on pro bono and volunteers. Need to be mindful of other ways to work.</p>	All
8.	<p>Dates of meetings 2014 25 September, 27 November Boardroom 9 Abbey Square, Chester 8am – 10am</p>	ALL
	<p>Action Points Item 2. CC to circulate housing sub-group notes more widely. Item 3. GL to share theatre consultation report. Item 3. CC to share GL's presentation. <i>Post meeting note: presentation too large for email but all information available on the website www.renewchester.co.uk.</i> Item 4. EL and PD to meet re CH1 Chester BID.</p>	CC