

Chester Renaissance Board - Minutes
29 January 2015 8.00am – 10.00am
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
Councillor Stuart Parker (SP)	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Councillor Adrian Walmsley (AW)	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Councillor Brian Clarke (BC)	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Councillor Samantha Dixon (SD)	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Nigel Bruce (NBr)	Chartered Surveyor
Peter Cocker (PC)	Chester Civic Trust
Phil Mayall (PM)	Muse
Nick Brown (NB)	Marketing Cheshire
Peter Carstensen (PCa)	
Roz Munslow (RM)	Chester Renaissance
Chris Capes (CC)	Chester Renaissance
Beth Skinner (BS)	Chester Renaissance

Presenter's

Dave Anderson (DA)	Northgate Project
Alison Knight (AK)	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Ruth Wojtan (RW)	Chester Renaissance

Apologies

Nigel Davies	West Cheshire College
Gemma Davies	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Charlie Seward	Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC)
Katrina Michel	Marketing Cheshire
Paul Daniels	CH1 BID Company

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 27 November 2014 were confirmed as a correct record with the following review of discussions undertaken:</p> <p>EL – commented on letter from board regarding Cheshire Oaks planning application that went out to local papers and deemed report accurate.</p>	EL
2.	<p>Chairman's Report</p> <p>The following items were discussed:</p> <p>The Duke of Westminster Foundation has pledged £100,000 towards the new theatre bringing the grants total to £200,000 for the project.</p>	EL

	<p>A number of board members attended the Eastgate Gate public meeting at the Mill Hotel. The project is likely to cost around £25,000 with £10,000 pledged by The Mill Hotel and a further £1000 pledged by University of Chester. The new gates under Eastgate Clock would be closed 4/5 times a year with ceremonies taking place for each.</p> <p>EL – expressed his personal reservations about the timings and suggested that weekly ceremonies at set times would be of more benefit for tourists.</p> <p>A discussion took place on current road works within/around Chester and the problems that are being caused. The traffic congestion has caused major issues and if communications aren't being made then it may put people off coming to Chester.</p> <p>Action Point – Write a letter to Sue Begley from Highways regarding the traffic flow interference within the city centre and identify utilities.</p> <p>PH – felt as though the issue is the strategic coordination in the city and there should be better coordination within highways</p> <p>PM – informed of a Manchester/Salford agreement in which no works take place beyond a certain date in November in relation to Christmas retail period, which shows influence and coordinated working.</p>	
3.	<p>Northgate Development – Market Discussion – Dave Anderson</p> <p>DA presented a detailed update including the visuals of the scheme for Chester Market. The following points were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chester has been home to a market for over 850 years and the new market is part of the vision for Northgate. • The current market location is fixed and will be located on the ground floor with the new cinema above. • The new market hopes to draw people in with good transport links, integrate with surrounding retail, be a destination for fresh food, have appealing architecture, encourage an experience and appeal to multi-user groups. • Case studies including Bury Market in Lancashire were shown as a success story with their quality interior space design and vibrancy • In Spring/Summer 2014 consultations and focus groups took place with the general public which some board members were involved with • Core principles for design and operation were created following these consultations which are included in market vision document. <p>Action Point – Market vision document to be circulated to board</p> <p>DA spoke of the importance of business growth and the potential for incubator units for new start up traders, which could possibly feed into the market square, high street and the rows - demand may need to be tested before being implemented.</p>	DA

	<p>SD – asked if Rivington are talking to other markets in the borough as many traders have a number of stalls in other areas and shouldn't be overlooked DA – advised that Rivington aren't yet engaged with others but are looking to, for example Ellesmere Port</p> <p>A discussion took place regarding the ownership of the market and how it will be managed in the future. It is unknown who will manage the market in the future and this is an issue to be addressed. DA – advised that the management of the market is being looked at by Rivington who are talking to different companies. PC – mentioned the marketing of Northgate as a whole with the new market as something that shouldn't be overlooked</p> <p>Discussions also took place on the importance of bus usage with the market. A survey with 292 respondents showed that 1 in 6 people get off the bus at Princess Street. DA stated that there will be additional stands within Northgate and the new interchange will have services that travel on to these additional stops.</p> <p>DA informed that the construction of the new bus interchange will allow the current bus station to be moved by the end of 2016, and the market build can commence.</p> <p>EL concluded the discussions highlighting the need for a clear view on how the market will be managed and marketed suggesting for DA to give a wider Northgate update at the next meeting.</p> <p>Action Point – DA to present the wider plans for Northgate at the next board meeting in March</p>	
4.	<p>Rows Project – Alison Knight AK gave an update on the Rows project and Heritage Lottery Fund bid. A meeting took place in early December with Sara Hilton from HLF to present the project vision and proposal details, along with a tour of the rows. Recent feedback from Sara is that they can see the significance of the rows within the city, but would like a clearer view on the wider heritage offer before they would consider funding a new attraction.</p> <p>AK informed that Sara is interested in the wider context of how history/heritage fit in within Chester, such as Grosvenor Museum and the castle area, and would like to see current projects i.e. Lion Salt Works in place. A heritage asset framework is being created to develop a clearer approach. This work will delay the project by 4 months but will create a more strategic focussed scheme.</p> <p>Also discussed was the possibility of a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme for phase 1 of the rows which would fit in with the priorities with HLF. CC explained that the maximum THI grant is £2mil with</p>	AK

	<p>potential to be matched, which could deliver significant public realm improvements.</p> <p>Further conversations took place regarding the ownership of the rows and the significance of maintaining good connections to move forward.</p>	
5.	<p>Waterways Strategy & Water Sports Hub – Ruth Wojtan RW updated the group on the progress of projects from the Waterways Strategy which was launched in June 2014.</p> <p>RW presentation included details of King Charles Tower Green and the £220,000 secured to deliver the improvement. Once the project has gone to consultation to local residents, the project can be moved forward and will involve the opening up of green space and linking of the tower and walls. RW proceeded to show the board images of architectural lighting mock-ups for the tower which hope to improve the entrance gateway to the city.</p> <p>RW also discussed the redevelopment of the Boat House currently occupied by Queens Park High School. The new Water Sports Hub partnership involves British Canoeing, British Rowing, Royal Chester Rowing Club, Active Cheshire, Sport England and CWaC/Chester Renaissance are facilitating the project.</p> <p>RW – highlighted the positivity in Sports England being on the project steering group and suggested for board members to become advocates for projects. A position statement is also released after each steering group meeting.</p> <p>SP – commented on the key element of getting the governing body of the school on board with the project and the support that they have shown. Also, the support from Sport England and British Rowing is very valuable in recognising the potential of the Dee.</p> <p>AF – expressed a conflict in relation to nearby residential properties who may be affected by traffic and the potential for noise, stating that the social aspect of the facility is a concern for local residents.</p> <p>A discussion took place regarding under-used access points to the river with the hope that the good work with the waterways strategy can help to improve the number of water visitors in Chester.</p> <p>Action Point – CC agreed to get an update on the current progress of the riverside promenade and the improvement of access by the canal, as further discussions are taking place about the issues for flood risk.</p> <p>SD mentioned the Canal Towpath which has been closed since July but is being worked on to open at the earliest possible time.</p>	RW
6.	<p>AOB SD informed that Platinum Lounge, a sexual establishment venue (SEV) located on Bridge Street Rows currently has its licence up for renewal and asked for any board members who felt strongly about appealing against the application to email their objections to CWaC Licensing by</p>	ALL

	<p>17th February.</p> <p>It is noted that AW is chair of the Licensing Committee and left the meeting before discussions took place.</p> <p>Discussions took place around the nature of activity in that area and the effect it could have on the Rows project. The creation of new visitor attractions would increase the number of school children and families in that area making it an inappropriate location for a SEV.</p> <p>A members only vote took place to indicate whether an objection letter should be submitted from the Chester Renaissance board or as individuals. 5 approvals were given and 1 objection.</p> <p>Action Point – EL and CC to draft a letter from the board against the SEV application and circulate to members for comments. Final draft letter will be sent to CWaC Licensing.</p> <p>PH spoke about the High Sheriff Awards and the substantial number of finalists in Cheshire West, with 2 from Chester.</p>	
7.	<p>Dates of Meetings 2015 Date of next meeting: 26 March, Thornton Science Park, 9am-11am</p> <p>28 May, 23 July, 24 September, 26 November Boardroom, 9 Abbey Square, Chester 8am-10am</p>	ALL
	<p>Action Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a letter to Sue Begley from Highways regarding the traffic flow interference within the city centre and identify utilities. • Market vision document to be circulated to board • DA to present the wider plans for Northgate at the next board meeting in March • CC agreed to get an update on the current progress of the riverside promenade and the improvement of access by the canal, as further discussions are taking place about the issues for flood risk. • EL and CC to draft a letter from the board against the SEV application and circulate to members for comments. Final draft letter will be sent to CWaC Licensing. 	