

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019 8.30am-10.30am  
Cloister Room, Chester Cathedral**

### **CHESTER GROWTH PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS**

Peter Carstensen, Harry Bolton, Chris Matheson MP, Cllr Adam Langan, Cllr Stuart Parker, Andrew Lewis, Carl Critchlow, Tim Stratford, Phil Harris, Andy Foster, Kate Howe, Nicholas Dobbs, Richard Grove, Ed Oliver, Cllr Richard Beacham

### **OTHER ATTENDEES**

Chloe Taylor, Paul Hickson, Ruth Wojtan, Caroline Thomas, Roz Munslow, Beth Skinner, Denise Heayns

### **APOLOGIES**

Peter Cocker, Andrew Bentley, Adam Wisher, Mark Livesey

	<p><b>Action Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add CWaC Financial Review to November board meeting agenda</li> <li>• Next CGP board meeting to have a focus on tourism, leisure and dwell time</li> <li>• Cllr Beacham to attend the City Wifi workshop on behalf of the CGP Board</li> <li>• Powerpoint slides from Local Area Industrial Strategy presentation to be circulated to board members</li> </ul>
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Introductions - Peter Carstensen</b> PC welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Chester Cathedral for hosting. The minutes of the last meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> June were approved.</p> <p>PC provided an update on two major planning events that recently took place with the Northgate and Racecourse applications being approved. CGP reps spoke in support at the planning committees and both teams have expressed thanks to the board. AL thanked CGP for support and consensus across the city should be celebrated.</p> <p>AF updated on the work of the Dee House Working Group with the next meeting scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> October where the group will be considering a private sector view of what could be done. The final working group meeting will be focused on how to frame the recommendations to the council.</p> <p>AL highlighted the Climate Emergency declared by CWaC and the important steps being taken for the borough. CWaC are also about to undertake community engagement on the 4 year budget financial review.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Add CWaC Financial Review to November board meeting agenda</b></p> <p>PC concluded by thanking CT for the work and support in the CGP team and wished her luck in the new role.</p>

2.

**Chester Cathedral Presentation - Tim Stratford**

TS gave an update presentation on Chester Cathedral with the following highlights:

- When opening the West Doors the Cathedral had double the number of visitors on that day therefore something to think about for the future
- Strategic Plan will be published at the end of the month
- Masterplanning is ongoing for the Cathedral estate which makes up ¼ of the old roman city, a large part being underused.
- 10 and 11 Abbey Square are currently being restored in collaboration with Abbey School
- Old roman barracks lie underneath the Deans Field with the value of exposing /remaining/city development to be explored
- Abbey Gateway restoration will take place within the next 2 years
- A feasibility study has taken place for 'Project Welcome' to open up visitor access and space to increase visitor numbers
- Would like to develop Chapter House into a lettable space for meetings and functions in the future
- Cathedral are close to securing the Knife Angel sculpture possibly in November

PC was keen to explore the Roman Barracks idea and suggested approaching a discussion in the wider context, as people are interested in the roman city and could be something that is packaged together with other tourism attractions to attract significant numbers. PC also highlighted the wasted opportunity of the Barclays Bank location as being a key site in the city which would be ideal for an improved Cathedral welcome, and CGP would welcome the chance to support this.

CM spoke of how different people have different ideas of what the Cathedral is for. TS informed of the large workforce of 66 staff, 32 children and 300 volunteers which leads to some disintegration internally, therefore knowing what the community wants gives something to collectively work towards.

TS highlighted how taking ropes away from areas inside the Cathedral showed the respect of visitors. Although there are no immediate plans it could be possible to see the softening of boundaries at St Werburgh railings and the opening of more doors.

SP enquired about the signage inside the Cathedral and routes to rooms etc. with TS informing internal signage is being worked on. Signage outside the Cathedral is limited as they are struggling to find a manufacturer to produce them however hope this will be resolved and in place within the next 6 months.

HB mentioned the interest of refurbishment works and how these would capture public interest with residents and businesses, with potential to tie into other projects.

EO gave an overview of the BID board and asked how the BID can help to be more involved in the business community through better communication. One point mentioned was ensuring the correct member of Cathedral staff attends the BID committees.

PH highlighted how there is not one website that shows everything happening in Chester and this information needs to be consolidated for one place to go, with board members agreeing. PC informed the next board meeting will be focused on tourism/leisure and dwell time and this will have an important role to play.

	<b>ACTION: Next CGP board meeting to have a focus on tourism, leisure and dwell time</b>
3.	<p><b>Chester City Gateway - Ruth Wojtan</b> RW informed that Adam Wisher from LCR had to give his apologies last minute so was unable to attend and will be invited back to a future meeting.</p> <p>RW provided a brief update on the project including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £7.5m has been secured for redevelopment of Chester Station</li> <li>• CWaC, LCR and Network Rail have signed a Collaboration Agreement and are currently in a scoping phase with partners. Development phase will commence in the new year with a masterplan for the area expected to take 8 months.</li> </ul>
4.	<p><b>City Wifi - Paul Hickson</b> PH gave an overview and update on the City Wifi project with the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project is being led by CWaC in collaboration with CH1 BID with the aim of free public wifi in Chester city centre</li> <li>• Workshops are being scheduled to design the front end experience for the user with potential for commercial opportunities and data gathering</li> <li>• Network will promote tourism and benefits the business community</li> <li>• Will be delivered in phases - phase 1 includes the install and first use and phase 2 will involve mapping</li> <li>• Main line into the City will be located at Storyhouse and work is currently ongoing to identify where the locations will need to be</li> <li>• The coverage in phase 1 will include the CH1 BID area and the coverage in phase 2 will grow to include City Road, Station, Brook Street and the River.</li> <li>• Customer experience is important and there is potential to gather information on why people have come to the city</li> <li>• Login page can be themed around specific events e.g. Christmas therefore advertising can be strengthened</li> <li>• Aiming for a soft launch/testing at the end of the year</li> </ul> <p>AL mentioned on the public wifi in Melbourne the first page which pops up is what's on/events which is useful and something to think about.</p> <p>HB highlighted how a questionnaire to log into the wifi would be a turn off for many people so needs to be designed carefully.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Cllr Beacham to attend the City Wifi workshop on behalf of the CGP Board</p>
5.	<p><b>Local Area Industrial Strategy - Chloe Taylor</b> CT gave an update on the Local Area Industrial Strategy with the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CWaC contributes 1/3 to Cheshire and Warrington with +3% average annual GVA which is showing positive messages</li> <li>• We have a distinctive strength in Manufacturing - growing faster than Great Britain and twice as productive</li> <li>• CWaC are 34% more productive in the financial sector than Cheshire and Warrington and 14% more than Great Britain</li> <li>• Chester is in the top ten creative cluster</li> <li>• Part time jobs in the borough are higher than average and housing mix is a</li> </ul>

	<p>challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural economy is important to the borough and we have strong links with MDA, LEP and Constellation Partnership</li> </ul> <p>A discussion took place on the themes coming out of the housing issues with CT highlighting the challenge of accessing housing provision for lower wages, and the LEP Housing Strategy is nearing completion.</p> <p>PC mentioned the importance of looking to the future and enabling the successes of the financial sector in Chester, also as being an important part of the euro transactions market.</p> <p>CT concluded by mentioning the LEP will finalise the LIS and CWaC will work closely with the LIAS with the creation of a delivery action plan.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Powerpoint slides from Local Area Industrial Strategy presentation to be circulated to board members</b></p>
6.	<p><b>High Street Heritage Action Zone - Ruth Wojtan</b></p> <p>RW gave an update on the Chester High Street Heritage Action Zone with the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chester Rows Revival - £1.2million win from Historic England</li> <li>Currently working up a programme design with HE which will be submitted in December and the final funding amount will be confirmed in Jan/Feb</li> <li>Project has three strands - Renew and Reuse, Rows Engagement and Rows Rebranded</li> <li>4 year programme that will start from April 2020</li> </ul> <p>RW gave special thanks to board members and partners for supporting the bid and look forward to working together on the project.</p>
7.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>PC highlighted the recent planning applications with the most notable being the application on the old Argos site for a 138 bed hotel.</p> <p>A discussion took place on the issue of rough sleeping in the city and on the Rows. RB mentioned the national crisis and the rising numbers as a very serious and challenging problem. Consultations are taking place on a new strategy and working together the community has a role to play. The lack of footfall on Eastgate Row creates opportunities for people to congregate therefore increasing footfall and filling empty units will help.</p> <p>TS mentioned how some cities have produced homeless charters to create synergy and record a clear agreed method and view of the approach to take. RB also informed of Outside In and the many organisations currently working together to help the issue</p>
8.	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019, 8.30am</p> <p>The Grosvenor Hotel, Chester</p>