

**Friday 19th June 2020 8.30am-10.30am
Online Meeting**

CHESTER GROWTH PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS

Peter Carstensen, Harry Bolton, Cllr Stuart Parker, Cllr Adam Langan, Peter Cocker, Andy Foster, Andy Farrall, Nicholas Dobbs, Chris Matheson MP, Cllr Richard Beacham, Joe Manning, Katrina Michel

OTHER ATTENDEES

Robert Gatensbury, Beth Skinner, Stefan Brzozowski, Roz Munslow, Andy Seddon

APOLOGIES

Phil Harris, Andrew Lewis, Steph Ramsden, Andrew Bentley, Tim Stratford

1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions - Peter Carstensen PC welcomed everybody to the online meeting and highlighted an update on the number of business grant claims, number of claimants and raised if any significant redundancies have been announced.</p> <p>AF informed there is a prediction of between 35k-60k redundancies over the next 2-3 months in the Cheshire and Warrington area.</p> <p>RG gave a brief update on the High Street Heritage Action Zone to inform that we are now in a position to do some local promotion and are currently in the last stages of signing the grant agreement.</p> <p>The minutes from the last board meeting on 15th May were approved.</p>
2.	<p>Re-opening of Chester City Centre - All RG gave an update on the Chester High Street Cell and Recovery Action Plan with the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi-agency approach has been taken in preparation for the reopening of the high street • There have been three main areas of focus; pre-arrival, access and parking/getting around • Some roads will be closed, and paths will be widened so pedestrians can safely socially distance • Car parks will reopen, and hand sanitizer and toilets will be available at the Bus Interchange • A one-way system will be implemented on the Rows • There will be marketing/promotion to welcome people back into Chester which will link to the wider Destination Chester campaign • Ongoing issues are being picked up by the High Street Cell group, including access to toilets and anti-social activity

	<p>CC gave an update on the work of the CH1 BID with the re-opening of the high street with the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase one re-opening took place on 15th June – out of the 200 businesses who could of re-opened, just over half of them opened • A soft safety approach has been taken with communications to let people know the city is open • Posters have been placed in key locations to remind of social distancing, hand washing and how to move around the city • Monday 15th was the busiest day which has tapered off over the week – this weekend may be challenging • Primark opened their doors early due to demand, however other larger retailers who remained open during lockdown haven't seen much change • Many businesses have changed their core hours e.g. 11am-4pm • Roadworks on Foregate Street and Watergate Street are a key challenge and impacting businesses and taxis • Toilet provision also remains a challenge with only one toilet in Tesco available. CH1 BID and CRAG have sent a joint letter to CWaC officers to raise these issues. • Transport is also key with no park and ride running until early July. Linenhall and the Racecourse car parks will remain free until the end of July. • A proposal has been put forward to CWaC as part of the government funding to address the signage in the city, and look at permanent solutions, which links to opportunities with Destination Chester and theming/branding. • Focus now remains on the re-opening of hospitality on 4th July. The 1m/2m rule will impact on who will be able to open. <p>A discussion took place on whether toilets could be hired in, however there is a public health issue as they are potential infection points which would need regular cleaning, and government have advised against them. The lack of toilets does exclude people with medical issues, children or those walking into the city. RB spoke of the difficult position trying to balance the views of different groups in relation to this, and a responsible way needs to be found considering the advice.</p> <p>JM gave an update on Marketing Cheshire's approach with the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MC and CWaC have been making use of social media with positive engagement received • The timing of the Destination Chester campaign needs to be right as we don't want to push the visitor message too soon • From early June the tone of communication messages changed from public health to encouragement to enjoy the place in a safe way. <p>A discussion took place on the temporary signage in the city with views they are not welcoming, with possibly opportunities to make things more bespoke to fit Chester. It was also highlighted the signs are designed to warn of public safety in these public spaces, so may soften over time.</p>
3.	Re-opening and Management of Open Spaces – Peter Carstensen

	<p>PC voiced concern for the hospitality sector, especially independents and those operating from small establishments, who will find it difficult to re-open with the new guidelines.</p> <p>An idea was discussed on how a temporary outdoor hospitality space could be created to allow trading in more open spaces, such as the Racecourse, Cathedral or Castle Car Park. Tents, field kitchens and electricity points could be utilised.</p> <p>RB informed of the current plan to relax al fresco licensing which will allow businesses to spill onto the street in front of their premises, with no fees or planning applications. RB also highlighted how events like these may happen naturally but is something to investigate potentially taking forward.</p> <p>AF spoke of how Bristol are already doing this so may have already tackled some of the problems that may be encountered.</p> <p>JM suggested it could be a trial run in the summer for the Christmas markets later in the year, as social distancing may still need to be in place.</p> <p>A discussion took place on the recent anti-social behavior reported in parks and along the canal and river, with the need to engage and encourage the cleaning up of the walkway networks.</p>
4.	<p>Project and Programme Update – Harry Bolton</p> <p>HB gave an update on the Chester City Gateway project with the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical work has been undertaken as well as a design baseline study, market study and planning study • A schedule of stakeholders has been gathered and will be targeted over the next few weeks, including members of the CGP • Thought is now going into how the public consultation will be run, with ideas and views appreciated • Once these engagements have taken place work can start on preparing the constraints and opportunities and completing the masterplan strategy
5.	<p>AOB</p> <p>PC thanked board members for their contributions to the letter for the Prime Minister regarding the re-opening of Chester Zoo.</p>
6.	<p>Date of Next Meetings</p> <p>Friday 7th August 2020, 8.30am Friday 18th September 2020, 8.30am Friday 20th November 2020, 8.30am</p>