

**Friday 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020 8.30am-10.30am  
Online Meeting**

**CHESTER GROWTH PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS**

Peter Carstensen, Harry Bolton, Cllr Stuart Parker, Cllr Adam Langan, Peter Cocker, Carl Critchlow, Andy Foster, Andy Farrall, Nigel Driver, Chris Matheson MP, Cllr Richard Beacham, Nicola Said, Katrina Michel

**OTHER ATTENDEES**

Jamie Matthews, Robert Gatensbury, Beth Skinner, Stefan Brzozowski, Roz Munslow

**APOLOGIES**

Phil Harris, Andrew Lewis, Steph Ramsden, Nicholas Dobbs, Joe Manning

	<p><b><u>ACTION POINTS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing structure to be circulated to board members</li> <li>• PC to write a letter to the Police highlighting the ASB issue and requesting further support</li> <li>• CWAC COVID-19 Dashboard to be circulated to board members</li> <li>• PC to coordinate statement for beginning of September to publicise what Chester has achieved</li> <li>• JM to present an update on the Western Relief Road in Spring 2021</li> </ul>
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Introductions - Peter Carstensen</b> PC welcomed everybody to the meeting and the minutes from the last board meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June were approved.</p>
2.	<p><b>Council Staffing Structure for Regeneration – Robert Gatensbury</b> RG gave an update on the recent personnel changes to the staffing structure in the Council’s Regeneration team. Catherine Walker, Head of Economic Growth is now in post and Gemma Davies, Director of Housing and Economy is due to start in September.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Staffing structure to be circulated to board members</b></p> <p>PC highlighted the positivity in additional recruitment and puts the team in a good position moving forward.</p>
3.	<p><b>Update on BID Initiatives and City Centre Economy – Carl Critchlow</b> CC gave an update on the re-opening of the City with the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% of businesses are open – mixed feedback has been received</li> <li>• 20 businesses have permanently closed – expect more over the coming months</li> <li>• Footfall is 50% down on the same period last year</li> <li>• Pedestrianisation has been extended until 8pm each evening</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat out to Help Out has been positive and going well, however real impact won't be seen until the end of the week</li> <li>• Signage remains a challenge with need for something more permanent</li> <li>• Roadworks ongoing on the bollards, Northgate and Foregate Street is making the city difficult to navigate</li> <li>• Increased anti-social behaviour has been a problem with aggressive begging a recent issue – currently seeking support from the police and CC would welcome opportunity to discuss with PC</li> </ul> <p>TS informed Cathedral footfall was at 50% last week, ahead of other cathedrals in the country and on track with other large tourist attractions. TS however highlighted vehicle access to the estate for deliveries has been extra difficult due to the roadworks on Northgate Street, and has since met with Sean Traynor to discuss the issues.</p> <p>RB spoke of the issue that three times as many people are currently in the homeless system compared to the same time last year. Work is continuing to try and engage however many have already been to multiple housing sites in the borough. A more targeted approach is being taken, and an alternative giving scheme will be live at the end of the month working with the BID.</p> <p>CC expanded on the aggressive begging issue informing that members of the public have been threatened, and with a low police presence in the city there is no one to challenge these people. Question was raised if it would be worth finding out what PCSOS and CSW are being instructed to do as it is having a significant impact on the city.</p> <p>The alternative giving scheme working with CWAC/BID/Outside In will encourage people to donate to a charity which helps people off the streets, rather than directly which would help tackle the issue.</p> <p><b>ACTION: PC to write a letter to the Police highlighting the ASB issue and requesting further support</b></p>
4.	<p><b>Economic Statistics Update – Robert Gatensbury</b></p> <p>RG gave an update on the recent economic statistics with the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheshire West and Chester has a borough wide COVID-19 dashboard available on its website which will be shared with board members</li> <li>• There has been a 24% drop in the number of job vacancies compared to last year</li> <li>• Claimant rate from December-June increased by 75%</li> <li>• 94% take up rate on the Business support grants and 700 discretionary grants have also been paid out</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION: CWAC COVID-19 Dashboard to be circulated to board members</b></p> <p>PC mentioned the significant number of job losses announced at Airbus, highlighting the full impact will not be seen until the furlough scheme ends.</p> <p>RB mentioned the council's Insight and Intelligence team have been asked to track new openings in the city centre, and there have been many enquiries for stalls in the market.</p> <p>PC suggested publishing a statement/press release at the beginning of September to publicise what has been achieved and the positive steps Chester has taken.</p>

	<b>ACTION: PC to coordinate statement for beginning of September to publicise what Chester has achieved</b>
5.	<p><b>Chester City Gateway Update – Peter Carstensen</b>  PC gave a brief update from HB on the Chester City Gateway project with the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage one is concluding with baseline analysis and initial consultation complete</li> <li>• The stage one report will be presented in the next month</li> <li>• Opportunity mapping will take place next for key sites and identifying early wins</li> <li>• Stage two will start in September reengaging with stakeholders</li> </ul>
6.	<p><b>Update on Western Relief Road – Jamie Matthews</b>  JM gave an update on the Western Relief Road project with the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial proposals set out in 1990 with a decision being made in 2017 that the alignment was no longer fit for purpose</li> <li>• MDA Prospectus highlights the Chester-Broughton growth corridor and provides strategic link to support the future growth and unlock connectivity</li> <li>• Issues include cross border movements and increased congestion, traffic emissions, air quality etc.</li> <li>• Opportunities include improved connectivity cross border, address key congestion and pinch points, unlock development sites and improve active and sustainable transport</li> <li>• There is a cross border formal agreement to prepare a study to review and identify the new corridor alignment.</li> <li>• Options Assessment Study of the area has produced some broad end to end options</li> <li>• Next steps include updating the Chester traffic model at the end of this month</li> <li>• Strategic Outline Business Case will be produced through the Autumn</li> <li>• Report of outcomes are expected in Spring 2021</li> </ul> <p>A further discussion took place with JM informing that current guidance for the project to secure money is to demonstrate economic value for money which includes opening up development sites and ensuring it is sustainable.</p> <p>PC mentioned involvement with the project in previous years with the key aim to take traffic out of the city centre, however the further west the road gets the less impact this has. JM informed the model does show a degree of relief on the inner ring road network, and the updated model will consider the new Wrexham Road development.</p> <p><b>ACTION: JM to present an update on the Western Relief Road in Spring 2021</b></p>
5.	<p><b>AOB</b>  PC encouraged board members to devote some time over the next few months to ‘blue sky thinking’ to help formulate some ambitions of what can be achieved and generate more ideas to feed into future plans.</p>
6.	<p><b>Date of Next Meetings</b>  Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020, 8.30am  Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020, 8.30am</p>

