

GLOUCESTER HERITAGE URBAN REGENERATION COMPANY LTD

MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS FORUM MEETING

Venue: British Waterways Board Room – Commercial Road

Monday 22nd March 2010 at 6pm

Present	Business Forum - Board Members	
	Michael Tallett-Williams - Chair	
	Peter Foyle - Vice Chair	
	Mark Owen	
	Forum Members	
	Angela Presdee	Tommi Nielsen
	David Tate	Peter Rust
	Simon Baldwin	Geoff Day
	Ian Simpson	Rachel Hossle
	Fred Reed	Richard Hardy
	Sholto Thomas	
	GHURC	
	Chris Oldershaw	Paul Erskine
	Guests	
	Mick Thorpe (Gloucester City Council)	Anna Gwinnett (Gloucester City Council)
188/10	Apologies	
	Martin Seccombe, Neil Draper, Roger Hanbury and Tony Markey	
189/10	Declaration of Interest:	
	None	
190/10	Minutes of the Business Forum meeting held 25th January 2010	
	<p><u>187/10:</u></p> <p>GD wished to clarify that he was warning against bias towards housing growth opposed to jobs in the URC targets, and was not recognising an existing bias.</p> <p>Minutes otherwise accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
191/10	Matters arising from those minutes:	
	None	
192/10	Feedback from the Board meeting 29th January 2010	
	<p>Blackfriars: A presentation was given by Sue Turner (Chosen Hill School), Geoff Rich (Feilden Clegg Bradley Architects) and Fran Mahon (Gloucestershire County Council) on the proposed Languages Immersion Centre. It was reported that the County Council are investing £5million into the project, with £4million being invested by other partners (combined total for investment by SWRDA, English Heritage and the County Council).</p>	

	<p>Marketing Gloucester: The URC have committed to continue to contribute £25,000 towards Marketing Gloucester yearly; however, it is the opinion of the Board that MG is not giving enough priority to marketing the City. It was identified by the Board that there is a need to produce a widespread marketing campaign for the whole city and that there is concern that too much resource is concentrated on events. It was also reported that in the order of £5,000 of the £25,000 would be committed to the Business Champions programme.</p> <p>Company Performance: Positive feedback was received on the operational performance of the Board and Executive Team, and the Board agreed that the Review of Company Operations was a useful exercise.</p> <p>Railway Triangle: GHURC and partners are looking at offering a package to Allstones to move their operations on to the Northern Triangle to facilitate housing development on the existing Allstones site. It is also considered that this needs to be linked into an expansion into green technology, with cooperation from Network Rail and other funding partners.</p> <p>Community Regeneration Protocol: The interim report was presented to the Board, showing the people side of the programme in terms of added value in employment and social change gained from regeneration projects. This report was welcomed by the board; however, it was considered that more work was to be done.</p>	
193/10	Canal Corridor – Mick Thorpe & Anna Gwinnett	
	<p>Following the failure of the BID proposal, the City Council was independently approached by many businesses in the area to explore alternative options to the BID. Following this, the City Council agreed to undertake a consultation exercise to identify the needs and concerns of businesses in the area.</p> <p>MT and AG tabled a document which has been drafted to allow businesses in the Canal Corridor to have their say on identified priorities and needs of businesses in the area, proposed land uses in the area for the forthcoming development plan and to ascertain what can help business districts to be successful.</p> <p>Bristol Road has been identified by the City Council as a key area for employment land, and this consultation will be used as a pilot for consultations in other employment areas. The information gained from this consultation will be fed into the Local Development Framework, which will be adjusted to protect and support key areas of employment land.</p> <p>AP pointed out that there is strong uncertainty from existing businesses over the risk of losing tenure on currently occupied land, as landlords are not willing to grant long leases because of the perceived risk of redevelopment of existing business districts. PF reiterated this, and pointed out that the businesses and landlords need certainty as soon as possible.</p> <p>MT reported that the draft development plan for the Joint Core Strategy will be published by the end of the year, and will set out Strategic Employment Retention Areas where employment districts are protected against redevelopment. MT also reported that potential zoning or land uses will depend heavily on the feedback from the consultation exercise and that there is a need for landowners to work together in this. Amends: Ultimately, the aim is to avoid businesses moving out of the Bristol Road area of Gloucester.</p> <p>MTW suggested that there is a need to offer words of comfort to the businesses in</p>	

	<p>the short term, to the effect of reassuring them that Bristol Road remains an important employment area. MTW further suggested that GHURC could take a lead role in this, as an arms length organisation.</p> <p>Amends: MT commented that having completed a number of planning briefs for the city centre we can turn our attention to preparing one for Bristol Road.</p>	
<p>194/10</p>	<p>Quays Creative – Anna Gwinnett</p>	
	<p>AG reported that the City Council has secured funding for small business incubator space for creative businesses, with space now available in the upper floors of Llanthony Warehouse. There is a need to attract 8 new businesses by the end of April to meet criteria targets for the funding; however, the City Council are very confident of doing so. The priority of the City Council will now shift from cultivating the upstart and growth of these small businesses to securing future funding for incubator space to maintain the future sustainability of the scheme.</p> <p>AG introduced the Gloucester Means Business Grant Scheme, and circulated a briefing note.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City Council has secured funding for this scheme based on the number of deprived wards within the local authority area and the number of empty shop units in the City Centre • The City Council is working with the South West Observatory to identify the key issues prevalent in Gloucester resulting in the relatively low number of business start-ups • The grant scheme is geared towards providing support for new business start-ups, where 50% of the first year rent is paid (up to a maximum of £3,000) for premises within the City of Gloucester • £35,000 is available in total, and the City Council is looking to secure future funding for the scheme, beyond the initial scheme timescale 	
	<p>MT circulated a note outlining the key aims for an Evening Economy Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an identified need to link the daytime and evening economy . keeping people in the City Centre after the shops close until the evening • The City Council are inviting comments on the draft key aims of the Evening Economy Group • There is a need for local businesses to join in and contribute to the Evening Economy Group in order to form a coordinated evening City Centre offer <p>GD commented that this is possibly not a good time to be promoting the evening economy, given the amount of construction work relating to the Economic Linkages programme.</p> <p>PR raised serious concern about the current City Council sanctions on City Centre parking which, in his view, were causing the City Centre to be unwelcoming on an evening. One particular issue raised was the fact that traffic wardens worked until 10pm at night, and the resulting discouragement for people to visit the City Centre in the evening at the risk of being clamped or ticketed. MO reiterated this point and commented that the overzealous attitude of parking wardens is also discouraging people to use the City Centre on a daytime, and that the City Centre needs to be a friendly place to work, live, shop and do business in order for people to use it.</p> <p>PR stated that the City Council need to implement action and review their evening parking enforcement regimes in order to prevent trade from being lost to neighbouring areas such as Cheltenham. He also urged the City Council to listen to</p>	

	<p>residents concerns and reasons for not entering the City Centre on an evening.</p> <p>MT acknowledged PR's concerns; however, he stated that the manner in which some City Centre establishments were run and maintained is a concern and that this is out of the control of the City Council.</p> <p>MO raised concern that seemingly minor issues such as street lighting and security of pedestrians and parked vehicles are very important in attracting visitors into the City Centre on an evening. He further suggested that the provision of safe parking in the City Centre would make a big difference. PR agreed and further stated that the newly installed LED street lights on Barclay Street were a cause for concern, given that they are not powerful enough for evening use.</p> <p>SB commented that there was a need to look at ways to make the City Centre more accessible by car on an evening, and cited traffic problems at the rush hour as a limiting factor to this.</p> <p>MTW stated the need to effectively communicate these issues to the City Council, and CO asked if MT could provide direct feedback to the Business Forum on the outcome of this feedback.</p>	<p>MT</p>
<p>195/10</p>	<p>Business Champions – Marketing Gloucester</p>	
	<p>Deferred</p>	
<p>196/10</p>	<p>Main Board Agenda Items</p>	
	<p>Gloucester Heritage URC Fifth Annual Business Plan CO gave a presentation to the Forum outlining the URC's activities over the past 12 months; the URC's planned activities for the next 12 months and the expected outputs of the URC until 2016.</p> <p>The URC Business Plan sets out an investment programme of £40m for 2010/11, including £30million from the private sector.</p> <p>Major schemes on site during the year will include both sections of the economic linkages (incorporating four new art installations), Merchants Quay, Blackfriars North Range (concert hall), Language Immersion Centre, residential development at St Oswald's Park, Contract Chemicals and along the Canal Corridor. In addition, it is anticipated that development partners will be appointed for both Kings Quarter and Blackfriars . Barbican site, during the year.</p> <p>IS reported that the decision over the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group's proposed development at Southgate Moorings is expected to be made at the Board meeting of the 20th April. He explained that there is a need to display to the company owners that they are spending money wisely.</p> <p>MTW questioned which aspects of the economic downturn are expected to have the greatest threat on fulfilment of URC output targets. CO stated that the downturn in the housing market had caused the greatest concern; however, public sector partners have acted to keep the momentum going with housing schemes.</p> <p>CO gave particular credit to Parmjit Dhanda in lobbying central government to secure the clearance for SWRDA to invest in the Economic Linkages programme.</p> <p>GD questioned whether the Magnificent Seven projects would be better placed to lever available public sector funding given that they are already in place. CO stated</p>	

	<p>the need to work up the projects to a stage where they are ready to go when the public sector funding becomes available and when the private sector shows signs of recovery.</p> <p>PF stated the need to use time effectively in order to push through planning briefs and planning applications to make it easier for projects to get up and running when we experience an economic upturn. CO also cited delays in pushing through Section 106 agreements as a factor which could hold back the implementation of development schemes.</p>	
<p>197/10</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p>	
	<p>None</p>	
	<p>Future Meeting Dates: Monday 24th May 2010, 6:00pm, British Waterways - Board Room - Commercial Road Monday 26th July 2010, 6:00pm, British Waterways - Board Room - Commercial Road</p>	

Author: Paul Erskine