

## CITY CENTRE REGENERATION BOARD

ABERDEEN, 10 February 2014. Minute of Meeting of the CITY CENTRE REGENERATION BOARD. Present:- Councillor Boulton, Chairperson; Councillors Boulton, Crockett, Forsyth, McCaig, Young and Yuill; and Robert Collier (Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce), Steve Harris (Visit Aberdeen), Derek McCrindle (Scottish Enterprise), Richard Noble (Aberdeen Inspired) and Professor Ferdinand Von Prondynski (RGU). Officers in attendance:- Valerie Watts, Gordon McIntosh, Angela Scott, Rita Stephen, David Leslie, Sandy Beattie, Neil Bruce, Dr Maggie Bochel, Angela Taylor, Andrew Win, Anna Crilly, Vikki Cuthbert and Stephanie Dunsmuir. Also in attendance for article 8 – Councillor Ross Grant, Susan Bree (Aberdeen Inspired) and Nathan Farquhar (Momentum).

### APOLOGIES

1. Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Sir Ian Diamond and Colin Crosby.

### MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The Board had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 2 December 2013.

With reference to article 4 (Smarter Cities Masterplan), Bob Collier referred to the retail seminar which had been held, and stated that it had been exceptionally good. He added that it would be helpful to get a progress report back to the Board from the seminar.

With reference to article 5 (AOCB – Communications Protocol), Mr Collier asked if the media protocol had been prepared. Angela Taylor, Communication Officer, circulated copies of the protocol to the Board.

#### **The Board resolved:-**

to approve the minute as a correct record.

### REMIT OF BOARD AND ORDER OF AGENDA

3. The Chairperson reminded members of the role and remit of the Board, noting that the Council had agreed a sum of £20 million to facilitate city centre regeneration projects. She stressed how important the role of the Board was to ensure that projects were robust and costed, adding that it was crucial that sustainable funding solutions were available as the Board could not simply rely on the £20m which had been made available. The Chairperson explained that Board members could bring forward costed projects, and advised that Andrew Win, the new City Development Programme Manager, would meet individually with stakeholders to discuss the delivery arrangements around any suggestions. Projects would be evaluated, and the Board would then make recommendations to Council on what should be progressed. Derek

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McCrintle asked about the timescale for the individual meetings, and Andrew Win advised that he had already met with Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce and planned to make contact with other members over the next couple of weeks.

The Chairperson also proposed that the running order of the agenda be amended to take the Strategic Infrastructure Plan as item 2, and the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme update as item 6.

### **The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to note that Andrew Win would arrange individual meetings with Board members to discuss delivery arrangements for proposed projects; and
- (ii) to agree the amended agenda running order.

### **STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN - UPDATE**

4. The Board had before it a report prepared by David Leslie which provided an update on the projects within the Strategic Infrastructure Plan (SIP) which related to the city centre, namely,

- City Centre Regeneration
- Marischal Square Development
- Central Road Infrastructure (Berryden Corridor and South College Street)
- Art Gallery Redevelopment
- Accelerate Aberdeen
- Mither Kirk
- Aberdeen Arts Centre
- The Lemon Tree
- Music Hall

Mr Leslie advised that due to the number of projects in the SIP which related to the city centre, it was important that Board members were aware of projects which were already underway; to ensure that there was no overlap.

Gordon McIntosh introduced Andrew Win, the newly appointed City Development Programme Manager, and advised that this was a crucial role to ensure the delivery of city centre projects. Mr Win was very experienced in delivering individual projects as part of his previous role. Mr Win explained that he had been particularly involved with the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre and Aberdeen Hydrogen projects, and added that he would be able to assist stakeholders in identifying projects which would also support the masterplan.

The Chief Executive advised that a number of posts had been approved by Council as a result of its commitment to the SIP, and explained that new appointments had been

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made within the team of the Director of Housing and Environment. Interviews were to be held on 11 February for the SIP post which reported directly to the Chief Executive, and she suggested that a paper on the governance structure could be presented to the next Board meeting for information.

The Chairperson noted that the report was particularly helpful to ensure that all Board members had the same knowledge of the ongoing projects currently happening within the city. She added that the appointments would assist the Board in moving quickly on projects. Bob Collier agreed that the appointments showed great progress, and suggested that the retail seminar be added to the list of projects as this also demonstrated progress. He added that it was important to demonstrate pace and progress, as well as communicating this to the public following meetings of the Board. Dr Bochel advised that the retail study was being taken forward as part of the Local Development Plan and therefore there might not be much to report until the next stage of the Development Plan was presented.

The Board then received an update on the recent meeting between Gordon McIntosh and Network Rail. The Chairperson advised that the meeting had been very positive and Network Rail were keen to engage with the Council. Professor Von Prondynski asked if any specific proposal had been put to Network Rail, and Mr McIntosh stated that the purpose of the initial meeting had been to open dialogue and discuss a variety of projects, as well as highlighting the importance of the involvement of Network Rail in the masterplanning process. Mr McIntosh had written to Network Rail to confirm the content of the meeting and the next steps. Mr Collier asked if it would be possible to share the content of this letter with the Board, and Mr McIntosh undertook to find out if this would be possible, given the potentially commercially sensitive nature of some of its content. Councillor Young added that Network Rail could have a critical role in the masterplanning process and suggested that a representative from Network Rail could be invited to a future meeting of the Board.

### **The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to note the project updates contained within the report;
- (ii) to request that the retail study be added to future progress reports;
- (iii) to note that a paper setting out the SIP governance structure would be presented to a future meeting; and
- (iv) to note that Gordon McIntosh would circulate the letter from the Council to Network Rail to Board members, provided it was acceptable to do so in terms of commercial sensitivity.

### **ACCELERATE ABERDEEN - PRESENTATION**

5. The Board received a presentation from Rita Stephen in relation to the Accelerate Aberdeen project. Mrs Stephen explained the context of the project, noting

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that Aberdeen City and Shire had the highest number of broadband subscribers, but some of the lowest speeds. Mrs Stephen advised that the project had been established to provide the world class infrastructure required in the city and informed the Board that Aberdeen had been the successful winner of the UK Government Urban Broadband Fund to become a 'Super Connected City', receiving £5.5m of funding from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Mrs Stephen explained the various streams of the project and the actions being undertaken to progress each one. Within this she highlighted areas of challenge and how the Programme Group aimed to address these areas.

Mrs Stephen also provided an update on the voucher scheme, which was to be used as a mechanism to enable small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to subsidise the connection fee for superfast services and ultrafast broadband services. She explained that various activities were being undertaken in order to advise and target SMEs. £4.2 million had been ring-fenced for the voucher scheme.

Mrs Stephen highlighted the other ongoing work in relation to in-building Wi-Fi. She explained that there would be no cost to the public purse in relation to this project, other than the officer time needed. The project would mean that Wi-Fi would be readily available within libraries and community centres. The other project – the Innovation Centre – was a first for Aberdeen and related to creating a technological accelerator programme in the city. Mrs Stephen advised that both Universities were working with the Council on this project to encourage new creative businesses in Aberdeen, while sharing access to enterprise knowledge.

Finally, Mrs Stephen appealed to the Board to promote the take-up of the voucher scheme to their members, particularly Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce and Aberdeen Inspired.

### **The Board resolved:-**

to thank Mrs Stephen for the presentation.

## CITY CENTRE PLANNING APPLICATIONS

6. The Board had before it a report prepared by Dr Margaret Bochel which set out recent city centre planning applications which had been approved, and advised of potential sites which might be the subject of applications at a later date. Dr Bochel explained that the recent spate of developments in the city demonstrated that the Planning service was trying to process applications as quickly as possible. She added that there would potentially be 7000 employees in the new developments which would have an impact on spending in the city centre. Derek McCrindle noted that it was a very helpful report which demonstrated the annual take up for commercial space and would help to inform the masterplanning process.

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Gordon McIntosh advised that a draft paper was being prepared in relation to maximising the opportunities from city centre development and suggested that this could be brought to the next meeting of the Board.

**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to note the report; and
- (ii) to note that a report in relation to maximising the opportunities from city centre developments would be presented to the next meeting.

**CULTURE - ABERDEEN ART GALLERY REDEVELOPMENT**

7. The Board had before it a report prepared by Neil Bruce which provided an update on the redevelopment of Aberdeen Art Gallery and the associated Museums Collections Centre.

Mr Bruce referred to the unsuccessful application to Creative Scotland's Large Capital Fund for £2 million towards the overall costs of the redevelopment, and the additional cost to the Council as a result. He also highlighted the delay to the work on the Museums Collections Centre as a result of the need to review the specification, and advised that he would provide an update on the delay to a future meeting of the Board and how it affected the overall programme.

**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to note that Mr Bruce would keep the Board updated on the delay to the work on the Museums Collections Centre; and
- (ii) to note the content of the report.

**CITY CENTRE MASTERPLAN AND DELIVERY PROGRAMME UPDATE**

8. The Board had before it a report by Sandy Beattie which provided an update on the procurement options and programme for a Masterplan and Delivery Programme to secure the future of Aberdeen city centre.

Mr Beattie explained that there were three options for the preparation and delivery of the Programme, namely public procurement, private procurement, and the Council appointment of an internal masterplanning and delivery team dedicated to the city centre. He advised that the private procurement approach was not recommended, due to the risks in relation to control, funding and the legality of whether the Council could be involved in such a process. While an internal team could be assembled for the project, it was felt that there were risks in relation to salary structures, recruitment and

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the availability of the necessary skills to carry out the various work packages, and therefore this approach was also not recommended.

There were four main options for public procurement – open, restricted, framework and competitive dialogue. Mr Beattie talked the Board through the four options and the advantages and disadvantages of each. He advised that the restricted procurement process was recommended in order to appoint a team with the best chance of developing an appropriate masterplan and delivery programme, and referred to the procurement timetable set out in the report. He highlighted the tight timescale but advised that this would allow officers to report back to the Board prior to the Council meeting in June. Mr Beattie added that two representatives from the Board would be asked to join the Evaluation Team to assess the submissions from the pre qualification questionnaires and invitation to tender stages of the process. He advised that this would require a large time commitment from the two representatives, as they had to participate in the entire process and no substitutes could be allowed. Mr Beattie added that the report before the Board would be referred to the Council meeting of 5 March for approval.

At this juncture, it was proposed that an Urgent Business Committee be called for later in the week to allow the report to be considered at an earlier date and it was agreed that Councillor Crockett and the Chief Executive would meet separately outwith the meeting to discuss the arrangements.

Bob Collier referred to the agreed timescale of projects recommended by the Board being reported to the June meeting of Council, and asked how the timetable set out in the masterplan report would affect that decision. Mr Beattie explained that the report before the Board for consideration would not have an impact, as there would be two strands of work reported to Council in June, namely the finalisation of the procurement for the masterplan, and the statement of recommended projects from the Board. Professor Von Prondynski asked how the two strands would be co-ordinated, and Mr Beattie advised that the two key drivers for the masterplan were the Strategic Infrastructure Plan (SIP) and its consistency with the masterplanning process, and the City Centre Development Framework and the supplementary guidance for the Local Development Plan. He added that the masterplan would involve short, medium and longer term projects; however none of the projects mentioned to date contradicted any ongoing work. The Chairperson noted that Andrew Win, the new City Development Programme Manager, would have a major role to play in co-ordinating the project proposals from Board members.

Mr Collier referred to the procurement brief which had been prepared following workshops held in June and August, and asked if the revised version of this could be circulated to members of the Board. Mr Beattie advised that this would be included as part of the invitation to tender, and added that he would be happy to receive any further comments from the Board on the brief.

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Mr Collier asked for an explanation of the differing roles of the Evaluation Team and the Project Team and Mr Beattie advised that the Project Team would provide support and expertise throughout the process, but the Evaluation Team was specifically in place to evaluate any bids which were submitted. It was noted that the Evaluation Team would report to both the Board and Council. Mr Collier suggested that the scope of the programme was so large that it might be advantageous to look at the brief in terms of key city centre regeneration components. Once these were agreed, the focus could be placed on issues where no agreement had been reached. Mr Beattie stated that this was a useful suggestion but that it was important to keep the holistic nature of the masterplan in mind. Mr Collier further suggested that it would be helpful for an away day to be arranged to allow the Board to comment on the detail of the procurement brief. Mr Beattie agreed that this would be useful, and suggested that it could be arranged through the Masterplanning team prior to the invitation to tender. Derek McCrindle asked if the Board would sign off on the criteria and weightings for the procurement process and Mr Beattie proposed that the away day could be structured to allow discussion of these.

The Chief Executive referred to the procurement timetable, and requested that Board members take the opportunity to explain the timetable to their networks where possible in order to communicate the procurement regulations to which the Council had to adhere.

There was a short discussion around the two Board representatives for the Evaluation Team, and Mr Collier advised that he would take up one of the places, adding that he was also happy to serve on the Project Team.

Richard Noble referred to the industry day to be held on 10 March and the process to be followed for notifying companies, and Mr Beattie explained that the Council's procurement team would ensure that this was done.

Andrew Win advised that he would be looking into the governance of the process and the role of the Board in relation to the invitation to tender. Mr Collier explained that he had spoken to Sir Ian Diamond prior to the meeting, and he had been in agreement with the points he had raised today to the Board, and had highlighted that it would be necessary to have a plan in place for the next six months. An early meeting would be arranged between Andrew Win and Sir Ian Diamond to discuss matters.

**The report recommended –**

That the Board –

- (a) note the proposed restricted procurement approach outlined in sections 5.13-5.17 of the report;
- (b) agree to contribute as appropriate to a project team and evaluation team; and
- (c) note that the report would be referred to Council on 5 March 2014 for approval.

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**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to request that an Urgent Business Committee be convened to allow the procurement process set out in the report to be approved at an earlier date than the Council meeting of 5 March, and to note that the Chief Executive and Councillor Crockett would meet separately to discuss arrangements for the meeting;
- (ii) to note that the Masterplanning team would arrange an away day for Board members as soon as possible to allow them to comment on the detail of the procurement brief;
- (iii) to agree that Board members would share and explain the procurement timetable within their networks;
- (iv) to note that Bob Collier would take up one of the two places available to the Board on the Evaluation Team; and
- (v) to note that Andrew Win would arrange an early meeting with Sir Ian Diamond.

**ABERDEEN INSPIRED - WAYFINDING PROJECT**

9. The Board received a presentation from Susan Bree, Chief Executive of Aberdeen Inspired, and Nathan Farquharson of Momentum Sign Consultants in relation to the Wayfinding Project.

Ms Bree explained that Aberdeen Inspired felt that there was a dire need for new signage in the city centre which would direct people towards various locations. She explained that there would be 58 map totems at key arrival and departure points, and five larger suspended lettering signs at key points in the city centre. Following a tender process, Momentum Sign Consultants had been appointed. A detailed design had been produced and it was planned to deliver the pilot stage of the project by April 2014. Funding had been made available through Aberdeen Inspired for the pilot stage, but Ms Bree advised that they were now approaching the Board to request funding for the full project.

Mr Farquharson then talked the Board through the proposed locations, which took account of where people arrived into the city. Most of the navigation would lead people between the retail hubs. He advised that the pilot scheme of four locations in a central hub in the city centre would allow the designs to be tested, and would enable user feedback to be obtained. Mr Farquharson advised that the map diagram on each totem would be specific to the location of the totem. The header on the totem would direct people to the most popular direction from that area. Each totem also included a contextual map which highlighted areas of interest such as the beach and Old Aberdeen. He stressed the benefits of the scheme, stating that Aberdeen was a great city but that it was hard for visitors to comprehend and navigate. It was also felt that the project would regenerate the quieter parts of the city.



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Ms Bree referred to the suspended signs, and suggested that the design of these could be produced in conjunction with the Universities.

Professor Von Prondzynski stated that the totems seemed very high with small writing. Mr Farquharson advised that the totems were 2.3 metres high. Professor Von Prondzynski added that it would be useful to have the Universities referred to on the totems.

The Chairperson noted that there had been concerns raised in the past by disabled people in relation to perceived 'street clutter' and asked if there had been any consultation with disability groups. Ms Bree advised that the Disability Forum had been involved in the early stages of the project, and Mr Farquharson explained that a walkabout had been undertaken to check locations and available space. He added that slim totems could be used in particular areas if required. Gordon McIntosh added that it would be necessary to allow enough space for street sweeper access.

Ms Bree explained that Aberdeen Inspired had approached a few government organisations but had been refused funding as a result of being a limited company. She stated that the shopping malls would be re-approached following the meeting to ask if they would be willing to contribute to the project. Dr Bochel highlighted the £735,000 capital cost of the project, and asked how much the revenue cost would be each year. Mr Farquharson advised that the revenue costs would be approximately £25,000 to £30,000 a year. The totems were expected to last for a minimum of 10 to 15 years. Councillor McCaig pointed out that the city centre maps might need to change significantly based on the discussions around city centre regeneration, and Mr Farquharson explained that the maps were designed to be updatable. Dr Bochel asked if the cost to amend the maps was included in the £25,000-£30,000 revenue costs and Mr Farquharson advised that this was the case.

The Chairperson asked if the totems would be illuminated at night, and Mr Farquharson explained that this was not planned based on the figures presented before the Board. He added that there were excessive costs for lighting and digitising the signs. Professor Von Prondzynski noted that many people now used digital products to find their way around an area, and asked if there was any way to connect the digital method with the physical totem. Ms Bree suggested that a QR code or something similar could be used.

**At this juncture, Richard Noble and Bob Collier declared an interest as Chair and Board member of Aberdeen Inspired respectively. Mr Farquharson, Councillor Grant and Ms Bree left the meeting.**

The Board discussed the proposal and agreed that 50 totems would be excessive, although there was general support for the overhead signs. The Board considered that

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there were merits to the proposal, but there were potential issues around the possible reconfiguration of the city centre, and the perceived difficulty of tying the physical totems in with digital solutions to wayfinding. Professor Von Prondzynski advised the Board that the University's IT team were currently working on the design of a wayfinding application which could potentially be used by the general public.

Mr Noble noted that a great deal of work had already been undertaken in relation to the proposal, and added that the number of totems could be reviewed if that was the only stumbling block. Councillor Yuill agreed that it was not necessary to have 50 totems, and added that he shared the concern around pavement clutter, but noted that the project would be a fast way to effect change in the city centre.

The Board discussed alternative funding sources for the project, as well as the evaluation criteria for the pilot phase. There were also concerns raised around the ongoing revenue costs for the project. The Board further discussed whether the £20 million City Centre Infrastructure Fund should be utilised for the project, and agreed that the funding should come from elsewhere, particularly until the overall spending plan for the £20 million had been agreed.

**The Board resolved:-**

to request that officers prepare a report on the project for the Council meeting of 5 March 2014, with particular emphasis on (a) suggestions for alternative funding solutions for the project; and (b) the proposal that the pilot scheme be evaluated before any funding commitment was given.

**DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

10. The Board had before it the dates for future meetings in 2014, namely:-
- 11am, Wednesday 23 April 2014
  - 11am, Wednesday 11 June 2014
  - 11am, Monday 15 September 2014
  - 11am, Friday 28 November 2014

The Chairperson advised that a date would be sought for the 'away day' in relation to the procurement process for the City Centre Masterplan. Bob Collier suggested that it might be helpful to identify an additional date for a potential Board meeting in May.

**The Board resolved:-**

to note the dates.

- **COUNCILLOR MARIE BOULTON, Chairperson**