

## **Council**

**Monday, 10th October, 2011**

## **Minutes**

### **NORTH PLACE AND PORTLAND STREET - PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Mayor invited Jeremy Williamson, the Managing Director of the Cheltenham Development Task Force to make his presentation.

Jeremy Williamson advised that the presentation was in two halves, the first half would be open to the public but the second half would need to be taken in exempt session given the financial and commercially sensitive content. The public would be permitted to return to the chamber for the debate.

He apologised on behalf of Graham Garbutt, the Independent Chair of the Advisory Board, who had hoped to attend but was unable to for medical reasons.

He introduced the presentation (see attached) and highlighted that the number of residential properties referred to in the presentation, 122, differed from the 130 referenced within the report that was circulated in advance of the meeting. This was a consequence of the decision to create more houses and less apartments.

The following responses were given by Jeremy Williamson to questions from members;

- Construction time would be 18 months.
- Diverts to alternative parking would be in place but there were no funds for an electronic signage system.
- Cosmetic improvements could be made to the Grosvenor Terrace car park, though this would require funding.
- The revised development brief for this site was approved by Council in December 2010. The brief allowed for uses including residential, commercial and/or leisure and therefore did not exclude a hotel or food store.
- It would be for the Planning Committee to undertake an Impact Assessment in determining whether there was a need for a hotel and ultimately the planning application.
- The level of response to the consultation (168 of a possible 120,000 residents) was an unfortunate reality of any such consultation. Key issues had been identified as a result of the exercise which would be addressed by the applicant. There would be further consultation at the appropriate time.
- An option for underground/croft parking was included in the development brief but not stipulated. The proposed scheme did include residential under-croft parking.
- An exact figure for those against the proposal for a food store would be made available to Councillor Godwin outside of the meeting.

The Mayor moved a resolution and it was;

**RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining agenda items as it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, if members of the public are present there will be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in paragraph 3, Part (1) Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, namely:**

**Paragraph 3; Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)**

Members of the public were ushered from the public gallery.

Jeremy Williamson talked through the slides of the presentation which contained financial and commercially sensitive information and answered questions relating to this information.

Once discussion had concluded, members of the public were welcomed back to the Chamber.

The Mayor addressed the public and explained that she had been contacted by members of the public who were under the impression that this item would go before Council in November.

Whilst she understood their concern about the change of date, this item was simply giving Council an opportunity to make its views known to the Cabinet in advance of them making a decision on Tuesday 18 October. She reassured members of the public that they were able to put questions to the Cabinet. Members called for the deadline to be extended from 10am on Tuesday 11 October to 10am on Thursday 13 October. This was agreed and would be publicised on the website.

Those speaking in defence of the scheme had been impressed with the process thus far and urged those with concerns to consider the bigger picture and accept that there would be elements of any scheme that some people would not fully support.

Councillor Wheeldon spoke as the Ward Councillor for the St. Pauls area and as a resident of Cheltenham, living within 300 metres of the site. The majority of residents within his Ward had welcomed the inclusion of a food store and personally, he was delighted that the new homes would be constructed to code 4 sustainability, resulting in utility bills 30-40% lower than average. He put forward Crabtree Place as a short term parking solution and queried whether parking at the Prince of Wales Stadium could be considered as a long term solution.

The Leader apologised to the public for any confusion regarding the date on which this item would come before Council. The decision was for Cabinet but given the magnitude of the decision it was important that Council were in agreement. Ultimately the Council could only proceed with something that a developer was willing to deliver and Council had agreed the scheme brief in December. This was not to say that the Planning Committee did not have a role to play.

The Cabinet Member Built Environment thanked his Council colleagues for what had been a generally positive discussion and welcomed the acknowledgement of some members that there were many varying aspirations for the site, which included concert halls, ice rinks, etc. He accepted that there were concerns, including those legitimate concerns of residents in close proximity to the site about short and long term parking solutions.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

**RESOLVED that Council recommend to Cabinet that it should appoint Augur Buchler Partners Limited as the preferred bidder to undertake the redevelopment of North Place and Portland Street sites.**