

## NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

### NORTHAMPTON TOWN CENTRE COMMISSION STEERING GROUP

Monday, 10 April 2006

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Chris Cavanagh	NBC (in the Chair)
	Councillor John Caswell	NBC – Conservative Group
	Canon David Bird	Northampton Faiths Forum
	Stephen Chown	Future Northampton
	Councillor Trini Crake	NBC – Liberal Democrats Group
	Bob Colenutt	NCC
	Francis Glare	BDP Planning
	Mike Hayes	WNDC
	Councillor Arthur McCutcheon	NBC – Labour Group
	Linda Sgoluppi	Northampton Arts Collective
	John Sheinman	Sheinman Opticians
	Kirstine Storey	Northampton Chamber of Comm
	Steve Summers	Northampton Community and Voluntary Sector Forum
	Andy Tresias	Northamptonshire Police
	Tom Welsh	Northampton Community Forums
	Wayne Bontoft (on behalf of Mark Edwards)	Northampton Chronicle & Echo

#### **In attendance :-**

David Blandamer	NBC
Geoff Owen	NBC
Steve Pointer	NBC
Martyn Swann	NBC
Councillor Tony Woods	NBC – (invited to BDP presentation)

#### **1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Edwards, Chronicle and Echo and Sue Biddle, Town Centre Conservation Advisory Group.

Chris Cavanagh welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited members to introduce themselves as some organisation's representatives had changed. He also welcomed Councillor Tony Woods to the meeting who had been invited to listen to the presentation by BDP (item 5).

Chris Cavanagh reminded the Steering Group members that they should be feeding back the outcomes of the meeting to their groups/accountable bodies.

(Post meeting note :- Steering Group members will be invited to provide views from their feedback meetings at the next Steering Group meeting, and are encouraged to provide notes of their feedback sessions to Martyn Swann for TCC records)

## **(A) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2006**

Subject to the following amendment, the above minutes were agreed:

### **2. TCC steering Group Membership**

'.....inclusion of a major employer *in Northampton*.'

## **(B) MATTERS ARISING (NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA)**

None.

## **3 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Steve Pointer advised that following comments and suggestions by the Steering group, the Terms of Reference and Aims and Objectives had been updated, these tied in with the Council's vision, as stated in the Corporate Plan.

In terms of the Commission being time-limited, Steve Summers queried how long this would be. Steve Pointer commented that it was not possible to be specific about this, but the sole purpose of the Commission was to oversee the preparation of the Central Area Action Plan.

**Agreed:** That the Terms of Reference are agreed, subject to the inclusion of feedback mechanisms to the wider TCC membership.

## **4 MEMBERSHIP OF THE TCC STEERING GROUP/CHAIRING ARRANGEMENTS**

Martyn Swann reminded the Group that it had been agreed to expand the numbers by 2 or 3. As such, Chris Cavanagh advised that Charles Abolins from the Health Sector had been invited to join and had accepted. Tom Welsh commented that there had previously been a proposal to have representation from Further and Higher education and asked whether this had been resolved. Chris Cavanagh responded that he was due to meet with the University of Northampton and would raise this issue at that meeting.

Regarding the Chairing arrangements, Chris Cavanagh commented that it would be more suitable for a community member to Chair the Group. However, as there were some absences, in response to requests for Chris Cavanagh to Chair he would be happy to continue chairing in the interim, until this could be voted on.

**Agreed:** (1) That Chris Cavanagh would liaise with the University of Northampton regarding membership on this Group.  
(2) That Chris Cavanagh continues to Chair the Group on an interim basis.

## **5 NORTHAMPTON CENTRAL AREA DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND MOVEMENT FRAMEWORK - BDP PLANNING (BUILDING DESIGN AND PARTNERSHIP) - TO DISCUSS THE PROJECT**

Chris Cavanagh introduced Francis Glare of BDP to the Steering Group. He

explained that the commissioning of the Design, Development and Movement Framework constituted a good example of partnership working between NBC, the WNDC, NCC and English Partnerships. Chris Cavanagh also explained that additional NBC members had been invited to the Steering Group to hear the presentation by BDP.

Mike Hayes was complementary on the way the project had been managed and the way WNDC had been included in its management.

Francis Glare, director of BDP, was introduced to the Group. He explained that BDP was a consultant masterplanner, who had been leading on ideas for the town centre framework. BDP had been commissioned in January and had started work on 1<sup>st</sup> February.

Francis Glare gave a presentation on the work done by BDP so far. Among other things, they had looked at how to make Northampton more competitive, carried out a commercial property review, looked at the wider issue of transportation, as well as areas of investment, improvement and development opportunity. The challenge was to knit together all these areas, with the overarching theme being 'nurturing not reinvention'.

BDP's suggested vision to the Northampton TCC was that Northampton had a unique town centre, with a distinctive and familiar form and quality of buildings and materials, which was attractive to business and enterprise. The next steps would include masterplanning for the different sites and further consultation followed by a final report.

Chris Cavanagh invited members of the Group to make comments or ask questions.

Tom Welsh commented that he felt it was vital that this project linked with the Borough Council's forums in some way. He also referred to two previous studies of Northampton, which he felt should be taken into consideration during any future planning for the town centre.

Councillor Tony Woods referred to the potential areas for development identified in the presentation and warned that as these covered a very large proportion of the town centre, there was a danger of overwhelming what was already there. He also commented that a key problem was movement, as public transport had been 'lost' to an extent.

Francis Glare responded that there would not be development on all the sites identified; rather, proposals would be made for those sites that could deliver the most benefits when properly designed. Transport was also being looked at in some detail, in particular the ring road and how this could best be developed.

Linda Sgoluppi commented on the lack of local passion in this project. Chris Cavanagh responded that BDP had been commissioned to carry out an analysis and critique of the area and that the passion would primarily come from within Northampton after this. Francis Glare added that the area had a very strong

character and interesting history and the quality and strength of what was already here would be recognised. Chris Cavanagh highlighted that Francis Glare had passion about this project, and he and BDP had a long track record in contributing to urban regeneration. This view was supported by others.

Steve Summers had concerns that the consultation period was very short. Francis Glare acknowledged that the timescale was very tight, but commented that BDP was willing to take advice on how best the consultation should take place. Mike Hayes added that he felt a half-day session with the full Commission would be useful and that perhaps an exhibition or roadshow nearer the time of completion would be pertinent.

Francis Glare thanked the Group for their comments and questions, adding that he could be contacted should anyone have any further queries or comments. Chris Cavanagh thanked Francis Glare for attending.

## **6 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - A CONSIDERATION OF THE ROLE OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - KIRSTINE STOREY**

Kirstine Storey gave a short presentation to the Steering Group, outlining the background and business of the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber had 1300 members across the country, which accounted for 40% of the workforce and carried out a number of services for those businesses, such as training, network events, business information, lobbying and representation, business support and advice and so on.

Kirstine Storey advised that the Chamber of Commerce could be used as a potential channel to businesses for the TCC through various mechanisms. These included use of Chamber media, e.g. e-bulletins, the Website and business magazine, use of events and by drawing on the Chamber's consultation experience.

Chris Cavanagh suggested that the Group should give some thought to ways in which it would like to engage the Chamber of Commerce and discuss this at the next meeting.

**Agreed:** That consideration be given to the role of the Chamber of Commerce at the next meeting of the Steering Group.

## **7 TOWN CENTRE HISTORIC STUDY WALK - FEEDBACK**

Linda Sgoluppi and Councillor Arthur McCutcheon both commented that the historic walk had been excellent. Tom Welsh advised that he would willingly put on additional walks for anyone who had missed them.

**Agreed :** That the Steering Group members advise Martyn Swann of their interest in attending a further historic study walk by 15 May 2006.

## **8 TOWN CENTRE COMMISSION - CONSULTATION UPDATE**

Martyn Swann updated the Steering Group on recent and planned consultation. Various consultation reports were available on the TCC Website [www.northampton.gov.uk/tcc](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/tcc)

Martyn Swann highlighted the consultation with the Disabled People's Forum as an example of recent consultation. The report circulated with the agenda documented these views and this information could also be found on the Website along with other consultation reports.

## **9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Steve Summers advised that the Friends of Racecourse had recently commissioned a consultant to look at regeneration of the area. The Group noted this contribution.

**Agreed :** That Steve Summers liaise with the TCC about this initiative, to indicate useful development opportunities.

Martyn Swann commented that user-friendly maps of the Northampton Central Area were available.

## **10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that this would be timed to allow consideration of the next key piece of work.

