

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 3 February 2021
(This meeting was held remotely)

Present:

Members: Councillor C Miks (Chair)
 Councillor R Ali
 Councillor M Heaven
 Councillor T Jandu
 Councillor R Lancaster
 Councillor B Singh

Employees (by Directorate):

Law and Governance G Holmes, M Salmon

Property Services and
Development R Moon (Director of Property Services and Development),
 A Hunt

Transportation and
Highways C Knight (Director of Transportation and Highways), R Palmer

Apologies: Councillor G Hayre, P Male and E Ruane

Public Business

19. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

20. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2020 were agreed as a true record.

Further to minute 16/20 headed 'International Investment, Trade and Overseas Markets', the Board noted that the information they had requested relating to documents sent to businesses, would form part of the 'Support to Businesses' presentation to the Board at their meeting on 3rd March 2021.

21. Two Friargate

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a presentation of the Director of Property Services and Development that provided an update on the progress on the building of Two Friargate, part of the comprehensive regeneration of Friargate. The Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration was invited to attend the meeting for this item.

The presentation highlighted the following:

- £51.2m WMCA grant was awarded in January 2021 to help fund the next phase of office buildings
- The Friargate Joint Venture (JV) was formally established in Feb 2019 – the JV was the landowner of the Friargate sites
- The City Council approved £17m funding for the Two Friargate scheme in September 2020
- The Contractor was appointed and started on site in December 2020
- The City Council was purchasing the land and the Two Friargate building from the Friargate JV
- The building would be completed and ready for handover to the Council in Autumn 2022
- The building would be a best in class office building in Coventry and comparable with the best the region had to offer
- The building was next to UK's fastest growing rail station and 4 million people live within 25 miles of the site
- There would be 135,000 sqft of lettable office space across 12 floors (c.12.5% bigger than One Friargate) and space on the ground floor for a high-quality food or convenience retailer
- The building was targeting BREEAM "Excellent" (for environmental sustainability) and WIRED Platinum (for digital connectivity and resilience)
- Work would be undertaken to promote and market the building, and the city of Coventry, to private and public sector occupiers
- The project was developing and implementing management, security, waste, utilities, front of house and cleaning strategies, with an all inform service charge approach
- Lettings were likely to be secured 12 months from completion of the building onwards
- Set up and mobilisation would be ready for opening and occupation
- All was influenced by COVID context

Members also received a video of the Friargate Development Timeline and requested that the Weblink to the timeline be emailed to the Board. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator undertook to do this.

The Board questioned officers, received responses and discussed the following issues:

- The importance of lessons learned from the building of Friargate One – how maintenance could be managed and optimised going forward, the build quality, what worked well. The tender for the project included the requirements of lessons learned.
- Carbon footprint – Friargate Two was being built to a high environmental standard and environmental sustainability accreditation was being sought for the building
- The total project fund of £69m (£52m guaranteed grant funding and £17m Council funding) would ensure that the project would be completed - this included the land purchase in addition to the build
- A marketing Strategy was being prepared and specialist marketing agents would maximise marketing through social media, advertising, events, etc

- A Hoarding Strategy, which would link to the City of Culture, was being prepared for the site to ensure it promoted the City of Coventry and its heritage
- The impact of Covid had not suggested that there would be an impact of letting the space with Estate Agents advising that office space was still required
- Discussions are on-going with potential occupants of the building
- The ground floor would be available for a high-quality food outlet – it would be promoted to a number of potential occupiers who would be required to meet specific standards with the successful company selected through an application process. This would be an operational decision
- The construction contract had been agreed during the Covid crisis with issues associated with the pandemic taken into account when identifying timescales - a target date for completion of the project of 2022 was a contractual element.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) notes the presentation on the progress on the building of Two Friargate and has no further recommendations to make.

22. Rail Station Masterplan

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a presentation of the Director of Transportation and Highways that provided an update on the progress the implementation of the Rail Station Masterplan. The Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration was invited to attend the meeting for this item.

The presentation highlighted the following:

- Coventry was the UK's 13th largest city, facing unemployment 6.6%, which is above West Midlands (5.7%) and national average of 3.7% (2019 figures)
- The city aspired to strengthen its high growth economy, requiring commercial and housing development to support growth – 45,000 new jobs and 42,000 new homes by 2031
- Improving transport connections was critical to facilitate growth and rail had a vital role to play.
- HS2 bypasses Coventry and could potentially mean a reduction in the some of the fast London services Coventry benefits from
- Investment in rail infrastructure would enhance the case for retention of fast London services and help to provide better connectivity, including direct services to East Midlands
- There had been a significant growth in passenger numbers at Coventry Railway Station which had more than doubled in last 10 years and continued to grow, making it one of fastest growing stations outside of London - the Station stairs and concourse was now at capacity during peaks, in 2019/20 there were 2000+ passengers hourly, projected to increase to 4000+ passengers per hour by 2043
- The Coventry Rail Story had been developed in response to the challenges presented by HS2, significant passenger growth and projected future growth at Coventry Railway Station
- The existing building opened in 1962, was Grade II listed and had limited opportunity for expansion to cater for capacity

- Coventry Station Masterplan had been developed to provide a fitting gateway to the city, delivering high quality infrastructure and a seamless transport interchange to support rail growth
- The scheme would: provide increased capacity at Coventry Station and support passenger growth; improve accessibility for passengers; offer better integration for public transport interchange; provide sustainability – EVCs and cycle hub; provide an enhanced retail offer and passenger facilities; be sympathetic to the existing grade-II listed building; support the Friargate development; and create an attractive/fitting city gateway
- The wider benefits included: environmental and air quality benefits; promotion of physical activity – increased walking and cycling; improvements to accessibility – step free access; improvement to rail and bus connectivity; help the case for retention of fast London services; support regeneration, development and job creation – including Friargate and City Centre South; and support housing growth
- The Station Masterplan project had been 5+ years in development, led by Coventry City Council
- The Project Team were working with key partners including Network Rail, DfT, Avanti, TfWM, Friargate JV and other train and bus operators
- £77m+ funding was secure via CWLEP Growth Deal, WMCA Devolution Deal, DfT and other public sector sources including the Council
- Buckingham Contracting Group Limited had been awarded the main construction contracts for Phases 1 and 2, while BCM were undertaking substation works
- The main works commenced on site in 2019, following preparatory works including demolition of the Rocket Pub and construction of the access tunnel under Warwick Road
- There had been many design, logistical, legal and funding challenges along the way – including land acquisition by CPO, meeting the robust design requirements and safety standards of rail industry, negotiation of the commercial deal for the car park, and programme and funding challenges resulting in some changes to the delivery model.
- Phase 1 included: an additional footbridge with lifts and stairs to each platform 1-4; full height glazing to both footbridge and staircases; an extension of platform canopies to replicate the existing canopies in shape and form; and the existing retaining wall on platform 4 would be modified to allow for a footbridge lift shaft
- Phase 2 would: provide a second Station Building and and Car Park with a lower concourse new station building to provide direct access to the bus interchange via an Access Tunnel, Platform 1 and out to Station Square and the existing station building; an upper concourse access to the new footbridge and Warwick Road; provide 5 retail units, passenger waiting rooms, toilet facilities and cycle hub; and a lift direct to the car park and footbridge
- A Transport Interchange would: enable buses to move from Station Square to the new interchange; offer traffic and step free access from the station to the transport interchange via Warwick Road access tunnel which linked directly to the station concourse; offer flexibility to increase the number of buses serving Coventry Station. The design was currently being finalised, team working with architects and TfWM

- Highway works would include: an upgrade to the existing Central Six roundabout on Warwick Road; a new egress from the Station car park to Warwick Road; the creation of a two-way link connecting the ring road and Westminster Road which would unlock development land
- Existing Station Enhancements - £250k of the Station Masterplan budget had been assigned to provide an uplift to the existing Grade-II listed station building. Works included a deep clean, treatment on flooring, updating wayfinding, replacement skylights on platform 1, alongside a programme of public art interventions. May 2021 was the target to deliver the bulk of the programme. Potential further funding would come forward from Avanti for further public art interventions and improvements to the cycle facilities and routes

The presentation also provided an update on NUCKLE 1.2:

- The bay platform was due to be delivered in parallel with other CSMP works but had been delayed due to tender costs for construction being significantly over budget
- The delivery model had been changed, with Network Rail now leading on revised GRIP 3 Options Selection Study to provide a more cost effective and viable option
- The updated full business case would be subject to DfT approval
- The target to was to deliver the scheme by March 2023
- Exploring timetabling opportunities to being forward enhanced rail service sooner as a result of reduced service provision in response to Covid19

The timeline for the Programme was as follows:

- Footbridge, Canopies & Access Tunnel: October 2018 – Summer 2021
- Highways - Warwick Road: February 2020 – Spring 2021 and Western Link Road: August 2020 - February 2021
- New Station Building, MSCP & Public Realm: Jan 2020 – Summer 2021
- Bus Interchange: April 2021-Summer 2021
- NUCKLE bay platform – Spring 2023

The most significant risk to the programme was Entry into Service process which Network Rail were leading on. Other key risks included the impact of COVID 19 on the workforce and supply chain, alongside the impacts of Brexit on materials to be imported from the EU.

Members requested that the Weblink to the Rail Station Masterplan be emailed to the Board and the Scrutiny Co-ordinator undertook to do this.

The Board questioned officers, received responses and discussed the following issues:

- Design principles – the Council had worked with its Planning and Conservation Teams and with the Railway Heritage Trust and have had regard for and respected the existing buildings
- The £250,00 allocated for upgrading interiors was considered a starting figure with proposals to pursue further funding for this purpose as the work was progressed

- Car Parking – over 1,000 car parking spaces would be available with the new Car Park offering 633 spaces, 80 residual spaces on the Warwick Road side, as well as the continued use of the existing station parking
- Communication – communication for residents had been in place throughout the scheme with a Residents Liaison Group meeting regularly. A newsletter to residents was currently being prepared.
- There would be no impact of Brexit on the scheme, the project was secure
- The freehold of the flats had now been obtained – it was suggested that, should the flats be retained, an exterior refurbishment be undertaken to improve the visual impact of the building.
- The Welcome to Coventry sign, set alongside the track on the approach to the City, would be refurbished and an additional sign would also be implemented
- Traffic surveys were undertaken annually, with the results reported to the Community Liaison Group
- The installation of currently stored City Council owned artwork to enhance Coventry Rail Station and the wider area, should be investigated
- Growth in passenger numbers had been explored over a number of years in order to inform the Masterplan with the new station able to accommodate 4000+ passengers per hour going forward
- NUCKLE Electrification – Network Rail now had a revised programme. There was a case for the Coventry/Nuneaton line used for freight to be electrified as a priority.
- Midlands Connect, a sub-national transport body, was championing a business case for a Nottingham/ Leicester/Coventry line
- Landscaping, planting and greenery would be included in the project to visually enhance the area and improve the environment, with high quality planting proposed outside the Rail Station

The Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration thanked officers for their many years of hard work on this very complex project.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) **Notes the contents of the presentation at Appendix 1 to the Briefing Note.**
- 2) **Recommends that the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration considers the installation of currently stored City Council owned artwork at the Coventry Rail Station and the wider area, and agrees that a Briefing Note be submitted to him requesting consideration of the Board’s recommendation.**

23. **Work Programme 2020/2021**

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) notes the Board’s Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2020/2021 and requests that an item headed ‘Gigafactory’ be added to the ‘Suggested Items for 2021/2022’, to be considered at a future meeting of the Board at the relevant time.

24. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.55 pm)