



WELCOME TO THE FOURTH OF OUR PLANNED REGULAR UPDATES.

The short listing of consortia to develop Outline Solutions on North Place and Portland Street in April has been followed by much behind the scenes activity with the development teams including an initial bidder's day, meetings with the Borough planning team, and initial thinking presentations.

On 1st July this converted into the submission of 4 bids; one bidder withdrew earlier on in the process.

This was followed by formal presentations of proposals by the bidders to support their submissions.

The next step is to evaluate these bids against a pre-determined matrix in line with the OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) regulations which will result in two bids being taken forward for the last round; see further details below.

The calibre of the bid submissions is extremely encouraging and reinforces the interest that Cheltenham holds for developers. It is anticipated that the identification of a preferred bidder, followed by planning and delivery on this key site will stimulate further investment in the town and it is satisfying to note that the marketing of this site alone has caused a significant revival in interest from developers and investors alike.

As evidence of that upturn planning applications were approved on 21st July for Honeybourne Place which will yield about 150 new jobs in the town and at the Midwinter site which will deliver much needed housing with 40% being affordable.

Graham Garbutt – independent chair

PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

Works are in progress on the Eastern side of Imperial Gardens to completely renew the footpaths from the Queens hotel to the Quadrangle. The scheme is attracting much positive feedback and will be setting a new minimum standard for works in the central area.

The format of a central walkway and verges is drawn from historic references and responds well to the setting and the treatment of the tree pits.

The photographs below show the work in progress.



MEET A BOARD MEMBER Sarah Irvine



Having devoted the majority of her working life to the regional press, she has now become the managing director of successful newspaper and internet businesses across Gloucestershire, Somerset and Dorset. Her first managing directorship was at the Bath News & Media group where she spearheaded the revolutionary change that saw the Bath Chronicle newspaper become the first in the country to convert from being a daily title to a weekly in response to market needs. The success of the transformation helped the business to transform into a modern media company with not only a thriving weekly newspaper but also a strong and successful website.

Sarah's role then grew to incorporate a series of successful weekly titles throughout Somerset and Dorset before she added Gloucestershire Media with its two first class daily newspapers to her management portfolio in 2009. Sarah now is in charge of hundreds of staff across three counties, producing dozens of thriving titles and websites to a weekly audience of hundreds of thousands.

NORTH PLACE AND PORTLAND STREET



Your views are important to us!

It is pleasing to note that the programme for bringing forward the North Place and Portland Street car parks into viable economic use continues to programme.

The initial 115 expressions of interest resulted in 9 formal submissions from which 5 were selected to proceed on the basis of their track record and economic strength and partook in a Bidders day where a mass of information concerning the site and the aspirations of the town were discussed. This has been followed up by detailed discussions concerning the interpretation of the design brief and planning aspirations. One bidder withdrew due to other commitments and the remaining 4 bidders submitted their "outline solutions" on 1st July 2011 as agreed.

The evaluation process will reduce the 4 submissions to 2 and these last two bidders will then aim to increase the detail and specificity of their schemes with a view to securing preferred bidder status. However before this both bidders are expected to engage the public through a consultation exercise in tandem with the CBC.

It is expected that schemes will go public in late August in the week commencing 22/08/11 – initially with static displays at key community venues, the Municipal Offices and on-line and via the local media. However the key opportunity to view the plans will be from Saturday 3rd September to Saturday 10th September 2011 where it is proposed to have the two schemes on display with representatives from the bidding teams and Cheltenham Borough Council/Development Task Force based around a marketing trailer on the High Street in Cheltenham town centre. A licence application has been obtained for this event with a pitch between M&S and Republic, given the high footfall of this zone.

The public will be invited to identify how the two schemes can be improved upon, given that they meet the expectations identified by the public during the initial consultation for these sites.

All of these preferences and comments will be factored into the final decision making process by CBC.



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ST.MARY'S CHURCHYARD



With the various schemes developing around this historic centre including the Art Gallery & Museum extension, Boots Corner proposals and Brewery phase 2, attention has been focussing on the challenges and opportunities that this site poses.

In order to engage the public it is proposed to create a leaflet setting out thinking similar to that utilised for the Town centre. It is hoped to finalise this over the summer and we are grateful to key stakeholders including the Bishop of Gloucester, the Archdeacon of Cheltenham and Area Dean who will be providing input to the analysis.

It is hoped to have further engagement with English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund in due course.

Local Sustainable Transport Fund Bid

The bid prepared by Gloucestershire County Council with the support of a wide range of partners and submitted to the Department for Transport was unfortunately not successful. However, all is not lost. Whilst the bid was not successful it was equally not unsuccessful and GCC have been invited to resubmit the bid for the next round of funding. Once feedback has been sought from the Dept of Transport the County will determine with partners what approach to adopt for any second bid.

This bid if successful would provide the final funding to allow the closure of Boots Corner to through traffic by making it a pedestrian, cyclists and public service vehicle zone by providing both the hard measures such as junction alterations and the soft measures such as encouraging non-car transport as demonstrated in Worcester to deliver the traffic changes modelled by the Paramics computer model.

UPDATES

Presentations on progress of the Task Force were made to Constructing Excellence on 19th May 2011 and to the Construction Breakfast organised by Nick Bevan Consulting on 7th July 2011.

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