

**\*PLEASE NOTE VENUE**

## **Ouseburn Management Board**

**Tuesday 10 February 2009 at 5.45 pm**

**Meeting to be held at The Biscuit Factory, Stoddart Street, Shieldfield, Newcastle upon Tyne**

**Contact Officer: Steve Laws – Telephone 211 5118**

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## **AGENDA**

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- |  | <b>Time</b>    |
|--|----------------|
| 1. <b>Apologies for Absence</b>                          |                |
| 2. <b>Minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2008</b> | <b>5.50 pm</b> |
| 3. <b>Matters Arising</b>                                | <b>5.55 pm</b> |
| 4. <b>Portland Green Development</b>                     | <b>6.00 pm</b> |
| Presentation by Brian Ham of Metnor.                     |                |
| 5. <b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>                  |                |

# Ouseburn Management Board

10 February 2009  
(5.45 pm – 7.30 pm)

## Notes of an Inquorate Meeting

### Present:

Rachel Scott - Ouseburn Arts and Culture Steering Group  
Brenda Gray - Ouseburn Trust

### Also Present:

Councillor G Cooper  
Brian Ham - Metnor  
Ray Bland  
Ron Dougall - Shieldfield House  
Carlos Sabido - Shieldfield (TARA Chairman)  
Peter Kay - Ouseburn Trust  
Stefan Larsson - Student  
Nora H Sweeney - Shieldfield Resident  
Rick Anderson - Resident

William Ions Resident

### In Attendance:

Dale Bolland - Economic Development Officer  
Rob Newton - Strategic Developments Team Manager, Newcastle City Council  
Ros Kain - Planning Department  
David Cross - Ouseburn Regeneration Team  
Steve Laws - Democratic Services

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Psallidas and Sheila Spencer.

## 2. MINUTES

In view of the fact that the meeting was inquorate, it was AGREED that consideration of the minutes be deferred until the next meeting.

## 3. PORTLAND GREEN DEVELOPMENTS

Brian Ham of Metnor was in attendance to make a slide presentation on proposals for development at the above.

D Bolland (Economic Development) opened the meeting by explaining the remit of the Ouseburn Management Board, the fact that a key aspect of regeneration within the area involved the private sector with a series of planning applications having been made. Tonight's presentation was the latest in a series on proposed development. Such planning applications would be considered by the City Council's Development Control Committee which would take into account all views expressed both by the Management Board, other committees who had been involved as well as individual and group comments. Planning officers of the City Council were in attendance at the meeting to answer any queries raised by members of the public.

B Ham then went on to make his slide presentation on behalf of the Metnor Group PLC, explaining the particular features of the location and the proposals of the developer. Interest in the site had first been expressed by the company approximately 3 years ago, with the Vardy Garage site interest having been acquired. It was noted that the boundary of the proposals extended to fence and tree-line at the back of the Berger Paints site. It was also noted that there had been considerable cinder and ash on the site, requiring treatment for contamination. Although the site had originally been acquired by the company with the intention of building housing, Council policy at that time had precluded such an initiative. Subsequently, the Company had suggested proposals for an office block (which had included traffic surveys) but changes in national priorities one year ago had also precluded such a development. Therefore, a third proposal was now envisaged, being a student village (with other elements). This involved 10 buildings in total (the purposes of which were explained at the meeting) including retail elements for one building and a possible medical facility on one ground floor. At the request of the Planning Department, the design provided for a good quality street on the Portland Road "line". A number of other specific points were made as follows:-

- B Ham explained the essential difference between a "detailed planning application" and "outline planning application".
- It was noted that an "Energy Centre" was proposed as part of a "green" proposal aspect of the scheme. This would provide all hot water for students (but not heating) run from a wood-chip system.
- The timescales of the proposed development were reported which (subject to planning permission) would commence on site in 2010.
- At present the proposals involved provision of 1,931 beds, although this could be reduced as a result of design detail.
- Developer discussion with representatives of the University on use of cars had revealed that a prerequisite of a student taking a bed space was that they did not have a car. There was also a "healthy" ratio of cycle spaces (with secure indoor parking).
- A series of computer generated images of the proposed development were shown. During examination, it was reported that the City Council had asked the

developer to consider some of the proposed facades differently.

- On the question of public consultation, it was confirmed that there had so far been four consultation events organised by Metnor, with over 100 written responses received.
- On the question of the City Council requiring Section 106 planning gain monies from the developer for this proposal, B Ham emphasised that Metnor were making suggestions to the City Council on how these monies could be expended, including possible contribution to a small play area outside Caring Hands, the location of the play area outside Nelson Street, the "grading" of the steps area on Stoddart Street in a more "inviting" manner, better trees, bench space and articulated routes through the site via Shieldfield Green. Also, he suggested that the size of the proposed scheme justified "patrols" in the area; possibly a patrolled night time route, as well as a day time route. There were also ideas for the City Stadium site, to improve the useability of that space.
- City Council officers stressed that the use of Section 106 monies was a matter for the City Council and not for the developer.

A full and detailed discussion ensued, during which a number of points were made as follows:-

- (a) R Bland suggested that the last 5 minutes of the presentation on use of Section 106 monies was perhaps conjecture in that determination of the use of such monies was the responsibility of the City Council and not the developer. In response, B Ham emphasised that the City Council were obliged to spend Section 106 monies in the area of the development, but decision was of course a matter for the Council's discretion. However, Metnor had taken the unique step of making positive suggestions for the Council to consider.
- (b) In response to a query on whether the proposals for a 'green' power plant would be taking place within Phase 2 of the proposed development, B Ham confirmed that this would be taking place as part of Phase 1. A resident queried whether there had been any analysis by the developer on the outputs/emissions of burning woodchip (i.e. toxins etc), B Ham reported that advice had been taken on clean-burn technology, with minimal emissions within current guidelines. Alternatively, gas could be used. In response to a specific query, there had been no specific examination on how/where ash would be removed from site.
- (c) A resident having made reference to the fact that St. Dominic's, Heaton etc had been mentioned at previous Board meetings, a resident went on to stress that in her view the proposals were not for a student village but specifically just for student accommodation. However, the resident was in favour of the use of Section 106 monies. In response, B Ham re-emphasised the unusual steps the developer was taking, in response to consultation, in making specific

suggestions on the use of Section 106 monies by the City Council.

- (d) A resident emphasised local concerns that all students had to pass through the Shieldfield area to get to the development and that this would result in a "ghetto".
- (e) A Planning Department Officer stressed that Section 106 monies had to be relevant to the application – and for such issues as accessibility, open space improvements within strict planning guidance etc. A member of the public suggested that the people of the area generally should be deciding on how Section 106 monies were spent. Councillor Cooper reminded the meeting that the planning application might not be approved, in which case Section 106 monies would not be made available. He went on to point out that the Ouseburn Councillors were organising a public meeting to take discuss the upgrading of City Stadium.
- (f) A resident pointed out that traditionally, the City Council had held Section 106 monies centrally, with the use of such monies (apart from highways elements) becoming somewhat "blurred". Unfortunately, there appeared to be no certainty that all Section 106 monies would be spent in a way that would mitigate any potential problems arising from the developer going ahead. Planning decisions could not be predicated, based upon speculation. There was already a substantial number of students in the local area and it was suggested that the indigenous population did not like the idea of a very large transient population being imposed upon them.
- (g) In response to comments made above, B Ham suggested that this kind of critical mass allowed the developer to manage aspects of behaviour. Also, this would lead to considerable number of flats being released back to the local population. These were two significant factors. He also went on to point out that this particular site had been derelict for 15 years. In his view, the developer's proposals for use were the most benign use in terms of traffic generation terms etc. He also stressed that this had been the third different attempt to provide a development suitable to the area based upon City Council Planning Officers advice.
- (h) A resident queried how much of the Section 106 monies would be specifically allocated to the Shieldfield area. In response, it was indicated that a proportion of the contributions would be allocated to the area, but the amount would be subject to further consultation.
- (i) R Bland referred the meeting to the University's website in terms of numbers of student developments already in the area and in taking these figures into account, together with recently reported figures for Shieldfield/Winn products (400), Stephenson Building (300+), Melbourne Street, together with a flyer from Whelan last year; these combined figures were very substantial. He therefore queried whether the City Council had properly held consultations in Shieldfield and the surrounding areas about whether the community wanted this level of student accommodation, as opposed to the piecemeal development which appeared to be taking place with developers taking criticism every time an

application situation arose. In response D Bolland (Economic Development) suggested that the Council could not set limits. A resident queried whether in 2 years time it was possible to ascertain how many students would be living within the area and whether anyone at the City Council had worked out these numbers. Another reference was made to Leeds Council which had tried to set an upper limit for student housing, but this had not been allowed under planning regulations.

- (j) A resident having made reference to the unacceptable car parking situation on Howard Street, it was suggested that this was not necessarily a problem caused by students.
- (k) A resident queried what would happen if a student occupying a flat within the proposed accommodation bought a car. It was confirmed that this would be against the terms of his or her occupancy.
- (l) In response to a query from members of the public, B Ham reported car parking provision for the development as follows:-
  - (a) offices – 106 spaces,
  - (b) supermarket - 15 spaces
  - (c) possible health outlet – 15 spaces
  - (d) pay and display – 13 spaces
  - (e) 51 spaces for student development (allocated on a needs basis, but also on a paid basis)
- (m) On a point of clarification, D Bolland (Economic Development) confirmed that, irrespective of any development scheme, there was a departmental wish to implement effective proposals for parking in the area. It was appreciated that obtaining Section 106 monies may be a means to get this done more quickly
- (n) It was pointed out that the City Council would be taking over parking responsibilities from the Police, which with the proposed parking schemes in the area should improve the Shieldfield and Battlefield situation significantly.
- (o) A resident queried why it was not possible to build an underground car park in the City Stadium area if it was not possible to build on the Stadium land itself. In response, B Ham, suggested that this was technically possible although it was a matter for the Council who owned the area.
- (p) In response to a resident's query on the breakdown of yes/no's on the written responses received by the developer as a result of consultation, B Ham suggested that this had been approximately 60% in favour and 40% against. However, it was noted that those in favour came from principally from the

Heaton side of the development and those "against" from the Shieldfield area. Night time noise appeared to be a matter of some significant concern. (NB: B Ham agreed with the aforementioned 'breakdown' in general terms but suggested that the issue was not quite as "black and white" in analysis).

- (q) Councillor Cooper advised that local councillors had formally objected to the development for a number of reasons as follows:-
- The need for additional student beds in the area had been questioned
  - The development was not in accord with a number of various planning documents
  - There were concerns about the "mix"
  - The development appeared to conflict with a number of Council strategies (such as Sustainable Strategy)
  - The issue of "massing".

There were also member concerns that outside of term time, the area could effectively become a "ghost town".

- (r) It was confirmed that there was a proposal for one block to provide a licensed premises.
- (s) With regard to 'phasing', Brenda Gray (Ouseburn Trust) queried whether a situation could be envisaged where a start could take place on student accommodation but then, based upon a change in demand, the proposal could be converted for other use. B Ham responded in the affirmative, pointing out that the developer was being very careful in design so that if in the future there was a need to change or there was a change in demand, accommodation could easily be converted into, say, family accommodation.
- (t) In response to a query on whether the apartments were being designed pre-let, B Ham advised that the accommodation was being designed specifically for Northumbria University. It having been queried whether the University were on the verge of entering into a formal agreement with the developer, B Ham advised that there would be no such arrangement until planning consent was available.
- (u) In expressing a preference to see mixed development with affordable housing in the area rather than development for a transient population (i.e. students) a resident made reference to previous statements that the developer had been driven to these proposals by the City Council. In response, and on a point of clarification, B Ham advised that this had been a mixture of City Council response and changes in central government policy.

- (v) Queries having been raised with regard to the timetable and costs of the development, B Ham advised that if the developer started building next year, completion would take place approximately 6 years from that time. Construction plus "extras" would be in the region of £100m and would involve approximately 900 construction jobs.

In conclusion, those present were thanked for their attendance at this public meeting and it was confirmed that all points would be taken into account for subsequent feedback.